# POS 3733 – 83266

# Research Design for Political Scientists (Fall 2015)

## Tuesday and Thursday 12:15pm – 1:30pm

**Building 2, Room 2008**

Dr. Michael Binder

**Office Hours:** 2:00pm to 4:00pm Tuesday and Thursday or by appointment

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**Objectives**

This is the first course in our two-course research sequence and is required for all Political Science majors. As scientists we strive to find out how things work in the world around us so that we may better adapt and manipulate our surroundings. To do so in a way that is accepted by our peers and the world at large we must engage in systematic inquiry and analysis. By engaging in systematic inquiry and analysis we are attempting to remove subjectivity and let our findings ‘speak for themself’. Further, by doing so we are presenting our work in such a way that others may replicate and enhance our work thereby benefitting the field as a whole.

This course will introduce students to the basic principles of research design and scientific research, from the development of an idea or research question, creation of hypotheses, writing of a literature review and writing a research proposal. Students are shown how these concepts are applied to real data by real researchers in the real world to answer important social and political questions. We will explore a wide range of methods, including experiments, natural experiments, quasi-experiments, measurement using empirical data, and qualitative case studies. The readings combine textbook explanations of the methods with examples of how they are put into practice. Through a set of assignments, students will be asked to begin the process of conducting their own independent research concluding in the submission of a research proposal that will be the foundation for the second course in this research sequence.

**Required Texts**

Bundled package:

Johnson, Janet Buttoph and Reynolds, H. T. 2012. *Political Science Research Methods.* 7th ed. CQ Press. **(Referred to as J&R)**

Mycoff, Jason D. 2012 *Working with Political Science Research Methods*. 3rd ed. CQ Press. **(Referred to as Workbook)**

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Possess writing skills needed to communicate clearly and effectively; convey information essential to the discipline in an orderly and understandable manner.
2. Be able to effectively apply critical thinking and problem solving skills to political issues.
3. Demonstrate knowledge of concepts in research design.

**Professional Interactions:**

Be respectful and professional when you communicate with me, especially through email. Use this general “professional rule” when you email anyone in a professional setting (anyone that is not your friend or family member). General Rule: Use a greeting and address the person with their formal name (based on education) and conclude with a closing and your full name. In a university setting, you should address your instructors as “Dr.” or “Professor” and then last name. You can call me “Dr. Binder” or “Professor Binder.” You should also always spell check, edit for grammar and punctuation, etc. I suggest you use these guidelines for all of your courses at UNF and other professional experiences. Additionally, your professors at UNF teach more than one course, so you should specify (either in the subject or the body of the email), which course your question is in regard to.

**Course Resources:**

Course resources such as the syllabus, selected assignments, selected readings, etc. are available on Blackboard. Not all functions of Blackboard will be used for the course, but Blackboard is an essential communication tool that is used extensively in this course.

**Attendance & Participation:** Attendance is taken regularly and accounts for 30 points of the final course grade. Tardiness, leaving early, not paying attention and general apathy will reduce the points earned in this category.

**Calling Center:**

You are required to do one evening of telephone surveys for the Public Opinion Research Laboratory between October 5 – October 15. Public opinion plays a vital role in the democratic process, and experiencing firsthand how public opinion gets measured provides an understanding of the process that goes beyond the classroom. Attending the training session and completing one evening of calling successfully will earn you 15 points. Failing to attend training will PREVENT you from calling and you will receive zero points. If you do not successfully complete the evening of calling (showing up late, not showing up on your assigned day, goofing off, not calling enough numbers, disobeying the lab director, etc.) will result in only 5 points.

**Exercises and Assignments:**

Exercises and Assignments completed outside of class must be handed in at the beginning of class or submitted on Blackboard prior to class starting (12:15pm). Assignments turned in after class has begun (12:15pm or later in the day) will also be considered late. Some assignments (like the Research Proposal) are to be submitted online in addition to a hard copy. The assignments that must be submitted on Blackboard should be submitted to SafeAssign PRIOR to the beginning of class on the day that it is due. In order to complete these assignment you must upload the assignment (either a .pdf or .docx to SafeAssign) appropriately prior to class. I deduct 20% of the value of the assignment/exercise once it is late and then an additional 20% for each 24-hour period that the assignment is late. In order to maintain a level playing field for all students, no matter the circumstance, all late assignments are treated equally. You have the course schedule now. Remember, due dates are the absolute last minute assignments and exercises can be turned, you are free to turn in any assignment prior to that due date. If you suspect you may have difficulty getting an assignment in on a certain date, please feel free to turn it in early.

Please note, the Research Proposal has to be submitted with your full name, N number, term and year of this class as the name of the file that you are submitting. For example, “John Smith – N12345678 Fall 2015.docx” is the ***ONLY*** way the Research Proposal will be accepted. PERIOD. Until a file is submitted with that style of name of the document it will be considered late, and you risk earning zero points for the assignment if you do not turn it in appropriately and on time.

**Citations:**

Understanding how to properly attribute credit to the original author of an idea is an integral part of the research process. In order to avoid misunderstandings, the only form of citation accepted in this course is the APSA Style Manual. You can find the guide online: http://www.apsanet.org/media/PDFs/Publications/APSAStyleManual2006.pdf

**Plagiarism/Cheating/Academic Integrity:**

During exams, all phones must be turned off and put away. If I see a cell phone, I have to assume that you are using it to cheat. As such, you will ***fail the course*** and be subject to all appropriate disciplinary action as laid out in the university’s misconduct policies.

Blackboard includes a tool called “Safe Assign.”  This is a plagiarism checking device you may use for this course.  You **will** be penalized for plagiarism in an assignment.  Please note that Safe Assign is a limited tool; it does not find all forms of plagiarism.  You remain responsible for any form of plagiarism found in your final assignment, even if you have used Safe Assign.

Because students have the opportunity to learn about, check for, and avoid plagiarism prior to turning in the final paper, I have to assume any plagiarism I find in final papers is intentional. ***There are no “second chances.”  The same is true for other violations of academic integrity***.  That you “didn’t mean to” or “didn’t know” are not excuses for plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity. I am available to assist you; please see me if you have any questions about avoiding plagiarism ***before*** turning in your final papers!

In addition, all sources of reference from which students take quotations, major theories or concepts must be properly cited – using the APSA Style Manual. Submitting plagiarized work or any other forms of academic dishonestly will not be tolerated and such actions will result in ***failure of the course*** and potentially expulsion from the University. The University’s policy on plagiarism can be found at <http://www.unf.edu/registrar/forms/misconduct_policy.pdf>.

**Electronic devices:**

I understand that sometimes we forget to turn off our cell phones. However, I ask that you are curteous to others and try to remember to silence all phones and other electronic devices. This may go without saying but I need to say it, do not answer your phone and engage in conversation while class is taking place. If you need to take a call, please leave the class and do so, but do not make it a habit. Texting or web surfing on your mobile phone or your personal laptop is also prohibited during class.

**Class conduct:**

I ask that all students respect each other and maintain our classroom as a neutral environment where the diversity of opinion is welcomed. This respect also takes place in the form of your attending class regularly and arriving on time. Excessive absences and tardiness will be reflected in your class attendance score. Additionally, according to the UNF Code of Student Conduct disruptive behavior is defined as,

“Acts that impair, interfere with, or obstruct the orderly conduct, processes and functions of the University or the rights of other members of the University community. This includes acts that occur both inside and outside the classroom setting.” Some examples of disruptive behavior include the following: eating or sleeping in class, tardiness, engaging in private conversations during class, monopolizing class discussion, talking without being recognized, interrupting while others are talking, inappropriate language, making calls during class, etc. Students will initially receive a verbal warning when found in violation of this policy. If disruptive behavior should persist, points will be deducted from your class participation portion of the course and if deemed necessary, further action will be taken in accordance with the University’s Code of Student Conduct policies. *Source:* [*http://www.unf.edu/student-affairs/documents/Disruptive%2009.pdf*](http://www.unf.edu/student-affairs/documents/Disruptive%2009.pdf)

**Assignments and Grades**

Development of Research Question and Hypothesis

Exercise: Workbook 2-2, 2-3 10 points

Exercise: Workbook 3-3, 3-4 10 points

Quiz: Codebook 5 points

Quiz: APSA Manual Guide 5 points

Exercise: Workbook 5-1, 5-3, 5-7, 5-8 10 points

Assignment: Submission of Hypothesis 10 points

Quiz: Measurement and Causality 5 points

Literature Review

Exercise: Connections Among Sources (Bedford) 10 points

Assignment: Submission of Annotated Bibliography 10 points

Assignment: Submission of Literature Review in Class 30 points

Research Proposal

Exercise: Workbook 6-1, 6-3, 6-4 10 points

Exercise: Workbook 7-1, 7-2, 7-3 10 points

Exercise: Workbook 8-2, 8-3 10 points

Exercise: Workbook 10-2, 10-3 10 points

Assignment: Presentation 10 points

Assignment: Submission of Research Proposal Draft in Class 20 points

Assignment: Submission of Research Proposal Draft on BB 30 points

Assignment: Submission of Research Proposal 50 points

Attendance and Participation 30 points

Call Center - October 5 – October 14 15 points

Total 300 points

**Grade Scale:**

278 – 300 = A 248 – 259 = B 209 – 229 = C

269 – 277 = A- 239 – 247 = B- 179 – 208 = D

260 – 268 = B+ 230 – 238 = C+ 178 or less = F

**Tentative Course Outline:** (Subject to Change at Instructor’s Discretion)

Exercises and Assignments highlighted in **bold** under “Readings” column on their due date.

Readings/**Assignments/Exercises**

**in bold**

Dates Topic Due by date shown below

8/25 Introduction, Overviews

Learning Objectives

8/27 **Meet in the PORL 51/2222**

9/1 Empirical Political Science J&R 1

Research Minkoff 2012

9/3 Normative & Empirical Questions J&R 2

Units of Measurement

9/8 Beginning the Research Process J&R 3

**Workbook 2-2, 2-3**

9/10 Data Sets & Codebooks Codebooks

9/15 Generating Hypotheses J&R 4

Minkoff 2012 p. 8-12

**Codebook Quiz on BB**

9/17 **Meet in Library 2102B** **Hypothesis Due on BB**

Library Orientation

9/22 Annotated Bibliography An. Bib. links

APSA Style Manual

**Style Manual Quiz on BB**

9/24 Surveys J&R 10

**Workbook 3-3, 3-4**

9/29 Sampling J&R 7

**Annotated Bibliography on BB**

10/1 Calling Center Training **Workbook 10-2, 10-3**

10/6 Sampling **Workbook 7-1, 7-2, 7-3**

10/8 Literature Review Brians Chapter 3

Minkoff 2012 p. 6-7

10/13 Reviewing Literature **Bedford-Connect Sources on BB**

10/15 How to Write a Lit Review Brady & McNulty p. 115-117

Binder et al. p. 2-8

10/20 Hands on Writing Seminar **Lit Review (hard copy) Due In Class**

10/22 *No Class* **Go over Literature Review feedback**

10/27 Measurement J&R 5

10/29 Causality J&R 6

**Measurement and Causality Quiz on BB**

11/3 Causality **Workbook 5-1, 5-3, 5-7, 5-8**

11/5 Research Design Section Evans 2003 p. 72-75

Bobo & Gilliam 1990 p. 380

Jones 2013 p. 68-69

Minkoff 2012 p. 13-15

11/10 Hands on Writing Seminar **Draft Proposal (hard copy)**

**Due In Class**

11/12 Experiments **Draft Proposal on BB**

11/17 Quasi-Experiments **Workbook 6-1, 6-3, 6-4**

11/19 Empirical Observations J&R 8

**Workbook 8-2, 8-3**

11/24 Document Analysis J&R 9

11/26 *No Class – Thanksgiving*

12/1 Research Symposium A **Presentations Group A**

12/3 Research Symposium B **Presentations Group B**

Final Research Proposals Due

by **12:15PM** on **Blackboard’s SafeAssign**

As reminder, the Research Proposal has to be submitted with your full name, N number, term and year of this class as the name of the file that you are submitting. For example, “Michael Binder – N12345678 Fall 2015.docx” is the ***ONLY*** way the Research Proposal will be accepted. **PERIOD.** If you upload the document to SafeAssign with the incorrect file name, it will not be accepted.