2013

391-01 American Politics Seminar

Mack Mariani
marianim@xavier.edu

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Contact Information
Instructor: Mack Mariani, Associate Professor
E-mail: marianim@xavier.edu
Office: 710 Schott Hall
Cell: (513) 508-6849

Office Hours
My office is located at Schott #710. I am available to meet between 9:00 am to 10:45 am on most Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Please text or e-mail me in advance to schedule an appointment (if you text, please include your name in the text). If these times do not work in your schedule, I'll work with you to find a better time to meet.

Course Description
This seminar is for students interested in pursuing research in the field of American politics, including (but not limited to) political parties, campaigns and elections, women and politics, and legislative behavior. The goal of this course is to acquaint students with methods of inquiry in social science and prepare them to engage in high-level scholarly research. Over the course of the semester, students will develop a research question on an important subject in American politics, review the relevant literature, and complete a research design and analysis that contributes to the existing body of scientific knowledge on the topic they have selected. Research proposals on subjects at all levels of American government (local, state and national) are encouraged. After taking this course, students will be able to:

- clearly explain major theories in American politics discussed in their own research as well as the research of their peers;
- critically evaluate competing explanations (theories) of political phenomenon;
- generate well-developed political arguments backed by evidence from books, journals, and secondary sources.
- interrogate assumptions underlying claims about political phenomena;
- understand key concepts, frameworks and methods used in the design of political science research.

Required Books

Canvas Course Management System
Course materials, including online readings, the syllabus, assignments and video lectures, will be accessible through the Canvas course management system.
Grade Distribution

Your final score in the class will be based on your performance on the following assignments/requirements:

20% Assignments
10% Open-Book Reading Quizzes
10% Proposal
30% Stage One Paper
30% Stage Two Paper

Grades will be based on the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>&gt;94.0%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77.0-79.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90.0-93.9%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>74.0-76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87.0-89.9%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70.0-73.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84.0-86.9%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60.0-69.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80.0-83.9%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade Policies

Late Papers and Assignments – Late papers (proposal/stage one/stage two) will receive a one-third letter grade penalty per-class period (an A paper becomes an A-, an A- becomes a B+, etc...). Late or incomplete assignments receive a 25% late penalty per class period.

Unfrozen Caveman Lawyer Rule - If you don’t know the answer to an open-ended question, tell me what you do know and you will receive partial credit. For the origins of this rule, check out this video: http://videosift.com/video/SNL-Unfrozen-Caveman-Lawyer

Participation – Students are expected to attend class, stay current with course readings, and actively participate in class discussions. If you are frequently unprepared for class or have more than four unexcused absences, you may receive a participation penalty up to one full letter grade.

Important Due Dates (Subject to Change)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday, September 23</td>
<td>Paper Proposal Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday, October 9</td>
<td>Rough Draft of Stage One Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, October 28</td>
<td>Stage One Paper Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 11</td>
<td>Rough Draft of Revisions of Stage One Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, November 25</td>
<td>Rough Draft of Stage Two Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday, December 9</td>
<td>Stage Two Paper Due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Overview of Papers and Assignments

Proposal
Each student is required to submit a 4-5 page research proposal that describes your topic and your proposed research plan. It should discuss theoretical concerns and describe the relationship you believe exists, offer hypotheses, describe how you plan to test those hypotheses. This statement must be accompanied by an annotated bibliography covering a total of 30 journal articles or academic books directly related to your research topic. This assignment is worth 10% of your course grade.

Stage 1: Introduction and Literature Review
A 10-page paper that introduces your research question, articulates the importance of the research, and describes where this research fits within the broader range of scholarship on this subject. This first draft should include an introduction, a literature review, and a summary of the main research question. Your review of the literature should be based on at least 25-30 journal articles or scholarly books directly related to your subject. Important non-scholarly (newspaper, other) sources should be in addition to the 25-30 scholarly sources. This should not be a semi-finished product (bullets, unfinished sections, etc); rather, it should be able to stand on its own as an independent paper. Stage 1 must include a title page, abstract and works cited page. This assignment is worth 30% of your final grade.

Stage 2: Research Design
A 15- to 16-page paper that builds off your introduction by laying out your research design, which should include a description of your sample, a review of your key variables and measures, the articulation of clear and testable hypotheses, and some consideration of how your design builds upon or improves upon previous research. You do not need to show/analyze results here but you must discuss how you will test your research question and offer some hypotheses as to what you expect to find. This should not be a semi-finished product (bullets, unfinished sections, etc); rather, it should be able to stand on its own as an independent paper. Stage 2 must include a title page, abstract and works cited page. This assignment is worth 30% of your final grade.

Assignments
Over the course of the semester, you will be asked to complete a number of assignments. The goal of the assignments is to keep you on track and ensure that you have a strong understanding of the literature and that you are applying the lessons you have learned to improve the clarity and organization of your paper. It is critically important that you complete the assignments on time so that you do not fall behind. Late or incomplete assignments receive a 25% penalty for each class period. In total, the assignments make up 10% of your final grade in this course.

Open-Book Reading Quizzes
Every two-to-three weeks, I will post a short open-book quiz on the assigned readings. Your engagement of the readings is important and will contribute to a well-researched, well-analyzed and well-written project. The reading quizzes make up 10% of your final grade in this course.
ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Students with Disabilities – Students in need of accommodation based on the impact of a documented disability should notify the course instructor and contact Cassandra Jones in the Learning Assistance Center at 513-745-3280 or e-mail jonesc20@xavier.edu to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Learning Assistance Center - The Learning Assistance Center (LAC) provides support services to facilitate learning. The LAC has two main purposes: tutoring and disability services. The tutoring services include subject specific tutoring, drop-in sessions, study skills assistance, and Supplemental Instruction (SI). For students with documented disabilities, services include accommodations such as extended time on exams, reduced distraction testing environment, note-taking assistance, and assistive technology. Services are provided in a positive and encouraging environment, which promotes appreciation for diversity and cura personalis. The LAC is located in the Conaton Learning Commons room 514. The web address is: http://www.xavier.edu/lac/.

Writing Center - The Writing Center offers free one-on-one tutoring on writing assignments for all Xavier students. The Writing Center is located in the Conaton Learning Commons room 400. http://www.xavier.edu/writingcenter/

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Honesty Policy - The pursuit of truth demands high standards of personal honesty. Academic and professional life requires a trust based upon integrity of the written and spoken word. Accordingly, violations of certain standards of ethical behavior will not be tolerated at Xavier University. These include theft, cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized assistance in assignments and tests, unauthorized copying of computer software, the falsification of results and material submitted in reports or admission and registration documents, and the falsification of any academic record including letters of recommendation. All work submitted for academic evaluation must be the student's own. Certainly, the activities of other scholars will influence all students. However, the direct and unattributed use of another's efforts is prohibited, as is the use of any work untruthfully submitted as one's own.

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