**Political Science (PSC) 208W: Undergraduate Research Seminar**

Spring 2015: Thursday, 2:00-4:40 P.M., LeChase 182

Instructor: Mitch Sanders, mitch.sanders@yahoo.com. Harkness 308, office hours to be determined

Through reading and critiquing political science research in American politics, comparative politics, and international relations, students will learn how to select a research question, formulate testable hypotheses, find and evaluate relevant literature, locate or collect data that addresses their research question, analyze the data, and write a research report. The primary task for the semester is to complete an individual research paper on a topic the student chooses jointly with the instructor. The course is not a prerequisite for writing a senior honors thesis, though it is good preparation for doing so.

**Course components and their contributions to student grades**

Weekly activities (25%). These will generally be distributed on Friday morning and due by the following Wednesday morning.

Class participation (25%). Active involvement in a shared learning involvement is among the most vital elements of education. Participation will take the form of contributions to discussions in and out of class, and leadership of in-class discussions about course readings as assigned.

Individual research project (50%). This will be an original research paper of approximately 20 pages. There will be several interim points of development and discussion as you work out your plans for the paper. Each student will present their research on the last day of class.

**Course schedule (Version 1.0).** Subject to revision based on student and instructor interest. Readings will be made available electronically.

**January 15. Introduction.**

**January 22. Types of research.**

* Thomas Friedman. “The First Law of Petropolitics.” *Foreign Policy* 2006.
* Michael Ross. “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics* 2001.

*Plus other Readings selected by students*

**January 29. Statistical methods for experimental data.**

* Alan Gerber, Donald Green, and Christopher Larimer. “Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Natural Experiment.” *American Political Science Review* 2008.
* Susan Hyde. “The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment.” *World Politics* 2007.

**February 5. Statistical methods for observational data, part 1.**

* Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret Roberts. “How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression.” *American Political Science Review* 2013.
* John Alford, Carolyn Funk, and John Hibbing. “Are Political Orientations Genetically Transmitted?” *American Political Science Review* 2005.

**February 19. Statistical methods for observational data, part 2.**

* James Gibson. “Intolerance and Political Repression in the United States: A Half Century after McCarthyism.” *American Journal of Political Science* 2008.
* Pippa Norris and Ronald Inglehart. “Islamic Culture and Democracy: Testing the ‘Clash of Civilizations’ Thesis.” *Comparative Sociology* 2002.

**February 26. Explanations and hypothesis testing.**

* Brett Ashely Leeds. “Do Alliances Deter Aggression? The Influence of Military Alliances on the Initiation of Militarized Interstate Disputes.” *American Journal of Political Science* 2003.
* Eric Gartzke. “The Capitalist Peace.” *American Journal of Political Science* 2007.
* James Fearon. “Rationalist Explanations for War.” *International Organization* 1995.

**March 5. Research projects: progress reports and next steps.**

**March 12. No class (spring break).**

**March 19. Literature review for research projects.**

**March 26. Progress report on research projects.**

**April 2. No class (individual meetings with instructor).**

**April 9. No class (individual meetings with instructor).**

**April 16. Discussion of paper drafts.**

**April 23. Presentation of research projects.**