

**To:** Curriculum Committee

**From:** Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy

**Date submitted:** 29 September 2007

**Request for:** Course Creation

**Submitted by:** H. Micheal Tarver

**Approved by:** Department Head: H. M. Tarver

**Dean of School:** G. Duncan

**Reviewed by:** Registrar: Jimmy Woods

**Vice President:**

I. Catalog description: *Research Methods II*. Introduction to elementary descriptive and inferential statistics, with an emphasis on applications in political science. Prerequisite: POLS 2003 and POLS/HIST 2153 or PSY/SOC 2053. Completion of MATH 1113 recommended.

Number: POLS 3513

Title for Catalog: Research Methods II

\*Title for Course Inventory (24 characters):      Research Methods II

Description: This course provides an overview of elementary descriptive and inferential statistics, with an emphasis on applications in political science. It introduces the student to statistical techniques that are both common and useful for social science research. All political science students should be able to read and criticize statistics frequently presented in academic, media, and governmental reports. Students will acquire skills at formulating measures for concepts and variables, collecting evidence, creating testable hypotheses, and using basic statistical tools to identify patterns and evaluate data. A competitive job market makes skills and experience with statistics, programming, and numerical data analysis a distinguishing asset for social science graduates.

Effective date or term: Summer One 2008

\*Course fees: NONE

## II. Justification and feasibility of course:

- A. What is the need for this course? Who will take it? *This course will serve as an upper-level POLS course for students who have an interest in social science research. The course can also be used by HIST and HISE majors to meet certain degree requirements.*
- B. How does it relate to other work being offered by your department? Is there an overlap with other courses in the department? *The creation of Research Methods II will strengthen the offerings of the Social Sciences and Philosophy Department by further broadening the variety of courses being offered. There*

app CC 10/22/07  
app FS 11/12/07

would be no overlap with other courses in the department. While similar to PSY/SOC 3163, the courses are different in their approach and target audience.

- C. Is this course part of any general plan of development within your department? Explain. *Yes. The Department is attempting to broaden its offerings, in an effort to add greater depth and breadth to its courses. This course strengthens the Department's efforts at achieving the goals established by the History and Political Science Program Objectives – as detailed in the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy Assessment Plan and the National Council for the Social Studies Matrices.*
- D. How often will the course be offered? *This course will be offered every two years.*
- E. How will the course be staffed? *Prof. Donald Gooch, Assistant Professor of Political Science, will have primary responsibility to teach the political science research methodology courses.*
- F. When applicable, state with which departments you have specifically coordinated this change? (If unable to identify coordinating departments that change affects, Academic Affairs can offer assistance in identifying course use.)

List Department Head/  
Program Director Consulted:  
(Add to list as needed)

Indicate Support  
for Proposal  
(yes/no)

Date:

1. Dr. Dan Martin

Yes

1 October 2007

If no, please attach explanation from responding Department Head indicating why they do not support the proposal.

**Assessment Note:** *While this course does not directly relate to any specific departmental assessment goal, it does provide an additional course through which the department can continue to assess its students, both majors and non-majors. In specific, the course could be used to assess verbal and written communication skills and the ability to analyze, critique, and synthesize primary and secondary sources. The Departmental Assessment Committee will evaluate the course with the instructor to determine how best to incorporate the class into the Department's efforts at assessment. This course will also help build the Political Science program, as the Department moves toward the eventual creation of a B.S in Political Science.*

\*Updated 8/1/04

\*\*Updated 9/1/05

Political Science 3000 Sequence

**Research Methods II**

Donald M. Gooch

Class Time

Office & Office Hours

E-mail address

**Course Objectives:** This course provides an overview of elementary descriptive and inferential statistics, with an emphasis on applications in political science. It introduces the student to statistical techniques that are both common and useful for social science research. All political science students should be able to read and criticize statistics frequently presented in academic, media, and governmental reports. You will acquire skills at formulating measures for concepts and variables, collecting evidence, creating testable hypotheses, and using basic statistical tools to identify patterns and evaluate data. A competitive job market makes skills and experience with statistics, programming, and numerical data analysis a distinguishing asset for social science graduates.

While understanding statistical theory is important, this course attempts to balance theoretical and practical understanding of statistical concepts. Knowledge of mathematics through college algebra (equivalent to Math 1110 or 1120) is required, but no more. For undergraduates, this course satisfies the math reasoning proficiency requirement. For graduate students, this course serves as a prerequisite for other political science statistics and methodology courses.

Use of computers for research is a central feature of contemporary social science in academia as well as the private sector. You will learn computer applications for fast calculations of solutions to problems encountered in the statistics class.

**Course Requirements:** Successful completion of the course depends on reading the texts and completing the assigned homework problems. On occasion, you will be asked to turn in your homework for grading and review. Your performance in the course will be evaluated on the basis of three examinations (each worth 25% of the final grade), a brief research paper (15%), and attendance, participation, and homework assignments (10%).

The research paper should demonstrate your competence in applying statistics to a specific research problem. You may choose among several research topics using actual social science data. You will develop a concise research hypothesis that can be tested with data and computer analysis. You should briefly identify the source of your research problem, formulate it as a hypothesis for testing with available data, execute the appropriate test, and draw conclusions about the validity of the hypothesis. The text of the paper should be about eight to ten typewritten, double-spaced pages in length (twelve pages is the maximum). In addition to the text, your paper must include appropriate tables and graphs. Evaluation of this exercise will be based primarily on clarity of presentation and statistical craftsmanship rather than on the substantive or theoretical importance of the problem. You will select a topic and submit a one-page progress report outlining your hypotheses and data before Thanksgiving break, and your final research paper is due on the Friday of the last week of classes.

**Textbooks:**

Agresti, Alan, and Barbara Finlay. 1997. *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Delwiche, Lora D., and Susan J. Slaughter. 2004. *The Little SAS Book: A Primer*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Cary, NC: SAS Institute.