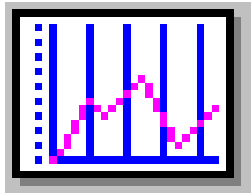


**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
AND  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**POSC 302**

**RESEARCH METHODS**



**HELPING THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES**

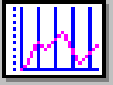
Let me paraphrase a story Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* told his readers a couple of years ago. Murray, a very religious individual, regularly appeared at his place of worship to ask his creator for helping winning the lottery. Week after week, month after month, Murray beseeched his lord, "Please. As a devoted believer, I faithfully obey your teachings. Why won't you help me win the lottery?" Years passed until one day, after he had again for divine assistance, Murray's god spoke:

"You want to know something, Murray?"

"Yes," he quickly replied.

"If you want me to help you, you have to buy a ticket."

This tale summarizes my attitude toward helping you succeed in the course. If you want my assistance or understanding, you have to "buy a ticket." You can start by reading this course guide very carefully, following instructions and completing work on time.

**POLITICAL  
SCIENCE 302 AT  
A GLANCE****IMPORTANT NUMBERS**

Class internet site:

<http://www.udel.edu/htr/Researchmethods>Instructor e-mail: [htr@udel.edu](mailto:htr@udel.edu)

Department phone: 831-2235

Instructor phone: 831- 1940

**Goals:** The course covers the analysis and interpretation of public opinion polls and other kinds of data. It should be of interest not just to students of political science but also those who want to acquire a marketable skill. If it's not one of the best courses you've taken, I'll be disappointed.

**Topics:**

- Converting general claims and verbal theories into research propositions.
- Fundamental statistical analysis.
- Graphical presentation of data.
- Internet and desktop computing.
- Composition and report writing

**Requirements:**

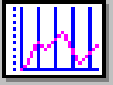
**Progress:** You can't succeed unless you have the discipline to keep up with the tapes and complete the requirements on time. If you tend to procrastinate, you should drop the course.

**Reading:** One textbook, one interesting paperback on American politics, one short manual, and a brief work on standard English usage.

**Research paper:** Five to ten page research report.

**Four assignments:** Short papers that analyze and interpret polls.

**Final examination:** Comprehensive in-class final worth 15 percent



**Electronic (E-)mail:** No credit but required. Each person is expected to use electronic mail.

### **COURSE PROCEDURE:**

This is the Focus version of political science research methods. The Focus section is intended for students living away from class, working full time, studying part time, or in other circumstances. Besides this syllabus they will receive additional instructions.

Each class has been video taped. A set of notes accompanies most of these tapes. The notes are available from the Focus office or the course web site.

You should understand right now that a “distance learning” course requires responsibility and self discipline. You are expected to work on your own. Don’t fall behind.

Assignments should be delivered or sent to 347 Smith Hall, which stays open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, except for holidays. Don’t try to leave material there after hours.

“Research Methods” is just what its title indicates, a course on social and political analysis. It contains a heavy dose of statistics but requires no mathematical background beyond high school algebra. Experience tells me that students have relatively little trouble understanding the statistical concepts and methods.

### **WRITTEN WORK:**

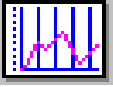
Far and away the best thing you can do for yourself in college is to learn to read critically and write effectively. I stressed composition and will frequently ask for revisions. Please think my attitude toward writing as doing you a big favor. I have also assigned a short paperback, *Woe Is I*, that you should take seriously. Buy it and enjoy!

### **READINGS:**

Books are available in the University Bookstore unless otherwise noted.

#### **Required Class Reading:**

- ✓ Johnson and Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition
- ✓ Wattenberg, *The Decline of American Political Parties 1952 - 1996*.



- ✓ O'Conner, *Woe is I*.
- ✓ *The New York Times*: A daily subscription (Monday through Friday) to the *Times*. Subscriptions (at a discounted price) are available at the Newark Newsstand located on Main Street, near Rainbow Records.

Keep in mind that the Bookstore returns unsold books to the publisher few days after the start of the semester. You should not delay purchasing any work you might need later.

### REQUIREMENTS:

Your understanding of the material is assessed in several ways:

**A final examination:** (15 percent). It covers the readings, lectures, class handouts and notes, films, information on the class web page, and any other matter that comes up in class. This exam may be scheduled before the semester ends. **Read your e-mail to find out when.**

**Assignments:** (10 percent each) Four short assignments that will ask you to apply what we are discussing to “real world” data and situations. Although these will be relatively short papers, they have to be done with care.

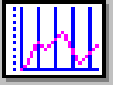
**Research Report:** (45 percent) A final “report” in which you pose a question or problem, design a strategy for investigating it, collect poll data, interpret the results using statistical and graphical methods, and write a summary. You might think of this as a report to a candidate or consulting firm that may or may not offer you a job depending on the quality of the research and presentation. Due May 22, 2000.

Note: you are required to read e-mail regularly in order to receive important class announcements.

### THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM:

**Electronic Mail:** (No credit but required) Each person in the class must know how to use electronic (computer) mail. It is an important part of the course. (In fact, I may ask you to submit some quizzes via e-mail.) Electronic mail provides a convenient way to ask questions, express opinions, and so forth.

**Web Page:** I have created a “web page” that contains a great deal of information relevant to the course. I want every one to read it with **Netscape**, **Internet Explorer**, or an equivalent



*htr@udel.edu*  
Internet:

## GRADING:

The plus-minus system is in effect in this course. See the web page for more details.

I have established a voice mail system for the course. You call from anywhere to listen to important announcements such as whether or not class will be canceled due to inclement weather. **80433**. To reach it dial (302) 831-4000 and, depending on where

**You should have a good dictionary. Use it if you don't understand any terms.**

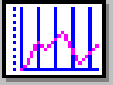
## OFFICE:

My office is in 434 Smith Hall. For an appointment send e-mail to \_\_\_\_\_ I will be happy to meet with you whenever you need help or simply want to discuss something.

You need to keep up with the material on your own. One good way to do that would be to set aside several days a week as class time. Then think of attending class as you would in any

If I don't have the assignments or paper on the due dates, you won't get credit for them. No one will get an incomplete because he or she fell behind. A course of this nature requires drop it now.

## LIST OF TOPICS



**This is an approximate list of topics. The notes and tapes tell you where you should be in the reading.**

- Topic 1: Translating substantive questions and claims into research propositions  
Reading: Johnson and Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods*, chapters 1, 2, and 3.
- Topic 3 Desktop computing, e-mail, the Internet.  
Reading: Class handouts.
- Topic 3: Research Design  
Reading: Prsby and Scavo, *Voting Behavior*, Chapter 1; Johnson and Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapters 8, 9, 10.
- Topic 4: Measuring Concepts.  
Readings: Johnson and Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapter 4.
- Topic 5: Sampling and Statistical Inference  
Reading: Johnson and Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapter 7.
- Topic 6: Secondary Analysis of Survey Data  
Johnson and Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapter 6.
- Topic 7: Managing and Analyzing Data on the Desktop  
Reading: Prsby and Scavo, *Voting Behavior*, Chapters 4 and 7.
- Topic 8: Statistical Analysis of Data  
Reading: Johnson and Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapters 11, 12, and 13.
- Topic 9: Research Reports  
Johnson and Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapter 14;  
O'Conner, *Woe Is I*, entire book.