

Course Syllabus: PL SC 496 Independent Study on Political Assassinations

Instructors:

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Meeting location: 218 Pond Lab

Meeting Times: Weekly, Wed. Noon.

Course Objectives

This is an independent study course on political assassinations. With a substantive focus on the causes and consequences of political assassinations, the course is designed to provide an introduction into scientific research design. In order for the associated writing credit to be awarded, the material required for earning the writing credit will be marked where appropriate.

Writing component:

In addition to the independent study component with its focus on political assassinations, this course is designed to accommodate a scientific writing component. The objectives of the writing component are as follows. Students will become comfortable with a systematic approach to the writing process. They will learn how to filter and synthesize collected information for use in the development of a convincing and logical argument. Emphasis will be placed on being a responsible social scientist, in that scientific information is communicated in an ethical manner.

Credits

Portions of this syllabus draws on syllabi from other courses, primarily:

Birdwell, Robert: ENGL 202A (Penn State); Chen, Ted Hsuan Yun: PLSC 308 (Penn State); Basta, Karlo: POL 499Y1Y (UToronto).

Assignments

<u>Grade Breakdown</u>	Non-writing	Writing
Five Writing Assignments	-	40%
One Final Paper	40%	30%
Weekly Data Collection Exercise	30%	15%
Weekly Reading Discussion	30%	15%

Short Writing Assignments

Students will complete a sequenced writing project consisting of the following five major assignments. These assignments are designed to serve as preparation for and components of the final project. The due dates for the assignments are listed below in the course outline.

- 1) Literature Review and Research Proposal
- 2) Theory Development
- 3) Measurement and Data Collection
- 4) Technical Research Design
- 5) Paper Outline

Final Project

The final paper will be a research paper on a topic of the student's choosing, subject to approval by the instructor. This final assignment will be due May XX, 2018.

Weekly Meetings

Students and the instructors will hold weekly meetings to discuss outcomes of the weekly data collection exercise and the assigned readings for the week.

Grading

Grades will be determined by a strict percentage. The grading scale is as follows:

A: 94 – 100; A-: 90 – 93; B+: 87 – 89; B: 83 – 86; B-: 80 – 82; C+: 76 – 79; C: 70 – 75; D: 60 – 69; F: below 60.

Course Outline (note: all dates/readings are subject to change):

I. Research Design

Week 1: Introduction and Philosophy of Science

- Keohane, 2009, "Political Science as a Vocation."
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/ps-political-science-and-politics/article/political-science-as-a-vocation/A72BD60FDD670B34D5F9395AFA2E15BB>
- Vasquez, 1997, "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs."
<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=8980341&fileId=S0003055400213063>

Week 2: Engaging the Discipline

- Knopf, 2006, "Doing a Literature Review."
<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=386229&fileId=S1049096506060264>
- Zinnes, 1980, "Three Puzzles in Search of a Researcher."
<http://isq.oxfordjournals.org/content/24/3/315>

Writing Assignment 1 - DUE BEFORE WEEK 3

Week 3: From Concepts to Operationalization

- Adcock and Collier, 2001, "Measurement Validity."
<http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayAbstract?fromPage=online&aid=93859&fileId=S0003055401003100>
- Herrera and Kapur, 2007, "Improving Data Quality."
<https://pan.oxfordjournals.org/content/15/4/365.full>
- Ray, 2007, "Validity of Measured Party Positions on European Integration."
<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0261379406000333>

Week 4: Introduction to Inference

- Keele, 2015, "The Statistics of Causal Inference."
<http://pan.oxfordjournals.org/content/23/3/313>
- Shadish, 2010, "Campbell and Rubin: A Primer and Comparison."
<http://psycnet.apa.org/journals/met/15/1/3/>

Writing Assignment 2 - DUE BEFORE WEEK 5

II. Scientific Writing

Week 5: Introduction to Social Science Writing

- Social Science as a Distinct Form of Inquiry (Friedman, S. & Steinberg, S. (1989). *Writing and thinking in the social sciences*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall)

- The Logical Structure of Social Science Writing (Friedman, S. & Steinberg, S. (1989). *Writing and thinking in the social sciences*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall)

Week 6: Critique, Review, and Theory

- Handout <https://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/Handouts/CriticalAnalysisPapers.pdf>

Writing Assignment 3 - DUE BEFORE WEEK 7

Week 7: Empirical Analysis and Findings

- Report of an Empirical Study (Lester, J. D. & Lester, Jr. J. D. (2006). *Writing research papers in the social sciences*. New York: Pearson/Longman)
- Chapter 8 (John W. Creswell. 2009. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd Ed. Los Angeles: Sage)

III. Political Assassinations and Instability

Week 8: Concept of Political Assassinations

- Iqbal, Z. and Zorn, C., 2006. "Sic semper tyrannis? Power, repression, and assassination since the Second World War." *The Journal of Politics*, 68(3), pp.489-501.

Writing Assignment 4 - DUE BEFORE WEEK 9

Week 9: Midterm Presentation and Feedback Session

Week 10: Theoretical Approach to Political Assassinations

- Frey, Bruno S. 2007. "Why Kill Politicians? A Rational Choice Analysis of Political Assassinations." Working Paper No. 324, Institute for Empirical Research in Economics, University of Zurich.
- Yammarino, F.J., Mumford, M.D., Serban, A. and Shirreffs, K., 2013. "Assassination and leadership: Traditional approaches and historiometric methods." *The Leadership Quarterly*, 24(6), pp.822-841.

Week 11: Data and Analysis on Political Assassinations

- Jones, Benjamin F. and Benjamin Olken. 2009. "Hit or Miss? The Effect of Assassination on Institutions and War." *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics*, 1(2):55-87.
- Torgler, B. and Frey, B.S., 2013. "Politicians: be killed or survive." *Public Choice*, 156(1-2), pp.357-386.

Week 12: Consequences of Political Assassinations

- Iqbal, Z. and Zorn, C., 2008. "The political consequences of assassination." *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 52(3), pp.385-400.

Writing Assignment 5 - DUE BEFORE WEEK 13

Week 13: Economy and Political Instability

- Aisen, A. and Veiga, F.J., 2013. "How does political instability affect economic growth?" *European Journal of Political Economy*, 29: 151-167.

IV. FINAL PAPER PRESENTATION AND SUBMISSION

Week 14: Course review and discussion

Week 15: Final Presentation and Feedback

Final Writing Assignment - DUE DURING EXAM WEEK

Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. The Department of Political Science, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic honesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe. All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor. In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not. Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any PSU administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity. In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. For more information, see: http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtml

Student Disability Resources

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides contact information for every Penn State campus (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit Student Disability Resources website (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>). In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: See documentation guidelines (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

Counselling and Psychological Services

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation. Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park (CAPS)

(<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/>): 814-863-0395. Counseling and Psychological Services at Commonwealth Campuses

(<http://senate.psu.edu/faculty/counseling-services-at-commonwealth-campuses/>). Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): 877-229-6400. Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

Educational Equity/Report Bias

Consistent with University Policy AD29, students who believe they have experienced or observed a hate crime, an act of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment that occurs at Penn State are urged to report these incidents as outlined on the University's Report Bias webpage

(<http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/>).

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