

Political Science 200
Methods of Political Science
Fall 2008
R. H. Bruhl

Syllabus

The object of this course is to provide the political science student an opportunity to learn the methods of political science by conducting primary research projects. The plan for the course includes no lecture-based examinations and no term papers, and relies instead on a number of student-designed primary data research projects to assess the students' understanding of the various research methods used in political science. These projects will cover the following methodologies:

1. Ethnography;
2. Closed-ended survey;
3. Open-ended survey;
4. Direct behavioral observation;
5. Historical analysis; and
6. In-depth interviewing.

To frame these various projects, we will also read several texts considered to be at the foundation of the scientific study of political and social behavior: *Politics*, by Aristotle; *The Prince*, by Machiavelli; *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, by Hume; and *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, by Weber. In addition to these works, the text for the course will be *Empirical Political Analysis*, by Mannheim et al., and we will read *The Vice Lords*, by Keiser.

Any student with special instructional needs is requested to discuss those needs with me at the student's earliest convenience.

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Projects and Grading

In order to experience the social science methodologies to be covered in this course, the student can expect to be engaged in two major projects and an assortment of homework assignments.

A. Projects (70 points)

1. The student will complete an ethnography of some small, informal group. (25 points)
2. The student will complete a group research project designed and conducted in class. (45 points)

B. Reading and Discussion (80 points)

1. *The Vice Lords*, by Keiser. (10 points)
2. *Politics*, by Aristotle. (20 points)
3. *The Prince*, by Machiavelli. (10 points)
4. "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs (10 points)
4. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, by Hume. (10 points)
5. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, by Weber. (10 points)
6. "The House Appropriations Committee," by Fenno. (10 points)

Parts A and B in combination represent 150 Total grading points.

Course grades will be assigned on a percentage basis:

90% and above "A"
80-89%....."B"
70-79%....."C"
60-69%....."D"
Below 60%....."F"