

## Capstone Course in Political Science Political Science 500

Ethridge  
Spring 2010

This course is designed for Political Science Majors in their senior year. Students in the class will therefore have taken courses in research methodology and in a number of specialized subjects in political science. The Capstone is intended (a) to give each student an opportunity to design and carry out a research project on a topic in which he or she is particularly interested, and (b) to strengthen his/her understanding of the basic issues and problems encountered in the study of politics and government.

The first part of the course will be devoted to a discussion of the development of the discipline, some fundamental questions relating to the study of International Relations, Comparative Politics, Political Theory, and American Government, and the special problems encountered in applying scientific method to the study of politics.

There will be a brief quiz on this material on **February 15**. **The grade on the quiz will constitute 10% of the final grade.**

Each student will be required to submit a brief (3-5 pages) report analyzing the methodological choices made by the author or authors of a published political science article, selected from a list prepared by the instructor. **The grade on this report will constitute 20% of the final grade, and will be due on March 3.**

We will have no general class meetings after February 15, so that students can work on their research projects. However, students are encouraged to discuss their research projects with the instructor at any time.

The research projects will be completed in stages:

1. A draft research proposal (**Due March 15**)
2. A revised research proposal with annotated bibliography (**March 31**)
3. A first draft of the *research paper* (**submitted to the instructor and reader at least 5 days prior to the Workshop session for your paper**)
4. Participation once as *presenter* and once as *reader* in Workshops on draft research papers (**April 5—May 5; 10% of the grade**)
5. Submission of Final Research Paper (**May 20; 60% of the grade**)

**Workshops.** During the session in which the student acts as *presenter*, he/she will give a brief summary of the paper and respond to comments from the *reader* and from the instructor. When serving as *reader*, students will make constructive suggestions regarding the paper's research question, bibliography, methodology, and conclusions.

Following the suggestions received in the Workshops, each student will revise his or her research paper and submit it by **May 20**.

**Course Schedule:****January 25:**                    **Introduction****January 27, February 1:**    **Three Fundamental Problems in Political Science**Read: *The Federalist Papers*, #10 and #47, available at<http://www.foundingfathers.info/federalistpapers/fedindex.htm> ;Read: *Man, the State, and War*, by Kenneth Waltz, chapters II, IV, and VI (on e-reserve);Read: “Unequal Participation: Democracy’s Unresolved Dilemma,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, March 1997 (available at JSTOR, at the library’s website, under “Databases A to Z”)**February 3:**    **The Science of Politics**Read: Ethridge, *The Political Research Experience*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Chapters 1 and 13    (on e-reserve)**February 8, 10:**    **Examples of Peer-Reviewed Research by Political Scientists***Read:*Oliver and Mendelberg, “Reconsidering the Environmental Determinants of White Racial Attitudes,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44 (July 2000): pp. 574-589.Holbrook and Van Dunk, “Electoral Competition in the American States,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 87, December 2003.Berry, Ringquist, Fording, and Hanson, “Measuring Citizen and Government Ideology in the American States,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 42 (1998).Brockett, “Measuring Political Violence and Land Inequality in Central America,” *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 86 (March 1992).[All available on JSTOR]

- February 15:**            **Quiz**
- March 3:**                **Methodological Critique Papers Due (*in Bolton 674 or via email*)**
- March 15:**              **Draft Research Proposal Due (*in Bolton 674 or via email*)**
- March 31:**              **Revised Research Proposal, with Annotated Bibliography Due  
(*in Bolton 674 or via email*)**
- April 5 –**  
**May 5:**                **Workshop Sessions (*in Bolton 674*)**
- May 20:**                **Final Paper Due (*in Bolton 674 or via email*)**

### **Important Information for students in all UWM Courses:**

#### Participation by Students with Disabilities

If you need special accommodations in order to meet any of the requirements of this course, please contact me as soon as possible.

#### Accommodation for Religious Observances

Students will be allowed to complete examinations or other requirements that are missed because of a religious observance.

#### Academic Misconduct

The university has a responsibility to promote academic honesty and integrity and to develop procedures to deal effectively with instances of academic dishonesty. Students are responsible for the honest completion and representation of their work, for the appropriate citation of sources, and for respect of others' academic endeavors. Definitions of Academic Misconduct and procedures for enforcing related UWM policies may be found at

[http://www4.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/policy/uws14facdoc1686.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/uws14facdoc1686.pdf)