

**POLI 350: PEACE SCIENCE RESEARCH**  
FALL 2018 · UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

## INSTRUCTORS

Prof. Mark Crescenzi  
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Thurs 3:30–5:00PM

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Thurs 3:30–5:00PM

## COURSE INFORMATION

Meeting Times: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00–3:15PM, Murphey 111  
Course Website: <https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/poli350-f18>

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

POLI 350 is a course-based undergraduate research experience (CURE). It will introduce you to the practice of quantitative research on peace, conflict, and conflict resolution. You will work in teams to develop original research projects that answer policy-relevant questions in the field of peace science. Through hands-on experience with data gathering and analysis, you will learn how to develop and test novel hypotheses about the causes and consequences of conflict as well as the processes of conflict resolution and management.

The course will be structured in two parts. In the first part of the course, you will develop skills needed to engage in peace science research. To build this toolkit, you will replicate existing research in the field and learn how to gather and manage data. In the second part of the course, you will put what you have learned in practice. Working in teams, you will formulate a research question and develop a novel hypothesis. You will then engage in multiple rounds of analysis, receiving peer feedback along the way. At the end of the semester, your group will create a final research report and publicly present your findings.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Learn how to formulate a research question, hypothesis, and research design
- Develop empirical research skills, including gathering and analyzing data
- Gain experience with a collaborative and iterative research process
- Learn to present research findings through written, digital, and oral communication

## COURSE PREREQUISITE

POLI/PWAD 150 (International Relations & World Politics) is a prerequisite for this course.

## COURSE MATERIALS

The following book is required for the course:

- Powner, Leanne C. 2015. *Empirical Research and Writing: A Political Science Student's Practical Guide*. CQ Press.

All other readings for the course are available on Sakai.

You will also be required to have access to Stata, a data analysis software. Students can purchase a six-month license to Stata 15 (intercooled version) for \$45.

## GRADUATE RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

We will have two graduate research consultants (GRCs), who will be available to help you with research projects during the semester. Both of the GRCs are PhD students in political science who have several years of experience working on peace science research.

- Lucia Bird (lbird@live.unc.edu)
- Dan Gustafson (gustafson@unc.edu)

## GRADING

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	PERCENTAGE
Research Question (Individual)	9/18	20%
Replication (Individual)	10/9	15%
Research Design (Group)	10/30	15%
Research Poster & Report (Group)	12/4 (Poster) 12/8 (Report)	35%
Class Participation (Individual)	–	15%

### ASSIGNMENT ONE: RESEARCH QUESTION

The first assignment involves the identification and justification of a research question for original research within the structure of the parameters provided by your instructors. Your job is to select a problem or puzzle in peace science and briefly provide what you think your answer or solution would be. This 500-word paper is an individual assignment, due on September 18.

#### ASSIGNMENT TWO: REPLICATION

The second graded task involves the replication of an existing study in peace science. Your instructors will provide you with the tools you need to understand this study, find the data used in the study, and identify the methodology employed. You will then attempt to replicate these analyses on your own and critique the research design decisions made by the author(s). This is your chance to show how you would have done the study differently. This is an individual student assignment due on October 9.

#### ASSIGNMENT THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN

This third assignment is your first group task. Once we have the individual research questions, your instructors will organize them by content and/or method. We will then form research teams that will work together for the rest of the semester. As a group you will identify one research question and an initial hypothesis. You will then develop a research design to test your hypothesis. Your group will submit a written description of your research design and present it to the class. This is a group assignment, due on October 30.

#### ASSIGNMENT FOUR: RESEARCH POSTER AND REPORT

The final major assignment in this course is a group poster and research report. This will give you an opportunity to disseminate the results of your research in multiple formats commonly used in professional settings. First, your group will create a scientific poster that visually presents an overview of your research project and findings. Second, your group will write a research report that follows the format of a short academic research note (~ 4,000 words). The poster will be due on Tuesday, December 4, and the research report will be due during the final exam period on Saturday, December 8 (12:00 PM).

We will devote much of the class time in the last month of the class to your group research projects. After you submit your research design, your group will begin working on collecting and analyzing data for your project. To provide an update to the instructors on the status of your project, you will need to submit the current version of your dataset and Stata code on November 15. Failure to do will result in a three-point penalty on your final research project grade. We will hold an in-class peer review session on November 27. This will give you a chance to get feedback from your classmates on a draft of both your poster and your research report. Your participation in the peer review session will be incorporated in your class participation grade. The final iteration of your group project will focus on integrating the feedback for your peers, GRCs, and instructors in the final research report.

On December 4, groups will present their posters at the QEP Research and Making Expo, which will be held in the Great Hall of the FPG Student Union from 3:00-5:00PM. During the final exam period, we will hold a mini-conference where each research team will present its final research findings. These presentations will be a component of the final grade for the research report.

### GROUP PROJECT CONTRACTS

As you all know by now, group projects pose a unique set of challenges (a.k.a., collective action problems). Graduate Research Consultants will be on hand to help you manage your team needs and assist with the group tasks. In addition, each team will create group contracts that specify the expectations and requirements of the group. The contracts must include an expulsion clause that specifies when and why a group member may be expelled from the group. All members of the team must sign this contract.

### CLASS PARTICIPATION

The majority of the class will be devoted to discussions of scholarly work. At first, this will be published scholarly work designed to orient you to the scope of the problem we will analyze. Later in the semester, however, the scholarly work will be that of your own and your peers. The class will proceed in an interactive seminar format, with as little lecturing as possible. You are expected to have read the assigned material when we discuss it in class. We will ask questions, and the class will be responsible for providing the answers. Students should feel free to ask questions and debate the topics at hand. There are no wrong questions (well . . . not many), and you are strongly encouraged to participate even if you found the readings difficult or problematic. Part of what we want you to practice is the art of deciphering analytical work, so we do not begin the course with the assumption that you understand everything you will read on the syllabus. The participation grade evaluation will be based on the quantity *and quality* of comments and questions and demonstration of knowledge of the course material. Attendance *per se* will not be evaluated, but if you are not in class you cannot participate. We will also break into active learning sessions several times throughout the semester. Your enthusiasm and attention in these sessions directly impacts your participation score.

### GRADING SCALE

A	94.00–100.00	B	83.00–86.99	C	73.00–76.99	D	60.00–66.99
A–	90.00–93.99	B–	80.00–82.99	C–	70.00–72.99	F	0–59.99
B+	87.00–89.99	C+	77.00–79.99	D+	67.00–69.99		

Note: We will not round final grades.

### HONOR CODE

Honor Code: The Honor Code is in effect in this class and all others at the University. We are committed to treating Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at <http://instrument.unc.edu>. If you have questions, it is your responsibility to ask about the Code's application. All exams, written work, and other projects must be submitted with a statement that you have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code in all aspects of the submitted work.

## IMPORTANT NOTE

POLI 350 is a brand new course, and it is the first CURE course in political science at UNC. With its focus on providing an active research experience, it will be different from many of your previous courses at the university. This is an exciting opportunity, but it also means that we may need to be flexible as we explore this new class format. The research process is often uncertain and unpredictable. At times, this may require us to spend more time on particular tasks than we originally anticipated. For this reason, we may need to make adjustments to the syllabus as the semester goes along. We will make sure to clearly articulate any such changes in class with as much notice as possible, and we will always communicate any updates through Sakai and email.

## PART I: BUILDING THE TOOLKIT

### WEEKS 1–2: INTRODUCTION TO PEACE SCIENCE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 21

- No reading

THURSDAY, AUGUST 23

- *What is peace science?*
- Frieden and Lake, “International Relations as a Social Science”

TUESDAY, AUGUST 28

- *What is an academic literature?*
- Walter, “Bargaining Failures and Civil War”

THURSDAY, AUGUST 30

- *What is a research article?*
- Mattes & Savun, “Information, Agreement Design, and the Durability of Civil War Settlements”

### WEEKS 3–4: FIRST STEPS OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

- *Research questions*
- Powner, Ch. 1

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

- *Theories*
- Powner, Ch. 2 (pp. 21–44)

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

- *Hypotheses*
- Powner, Ch. 2 (pp. 44–54)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

- *Finding Sources*
- Powner, Ch. 3
- Librarian Presentation (Renée Bosman)

WEEKS 5–7: DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

- *Measuring and Comparing Variables*
- *Crosstabs*
- **ASSIGNMENT ONE DUE**

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

- *Making Controlled Comparisons*
- *Logistic Regression*

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, & TUESDAY, OCTOBER 2

- *Introduction to Stata*
- Gent and Shannon, “Bargaining Power and the Arbitration and Adjudication of Territorial Claims?”
- *Form Research Groups*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4

- *Accessing Data Sources*

WEEKS 8–9: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 9

- *Group Activity: Identifying and measuring variables in research projects*
- **ASSIGNMENT TWO DUE**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11

- *Choosing a Design that Fits Your Question*
- Powner, Ch. 4

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16

- *Group Activity: Identify research question and initial hypothesis*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18

- **NO CLASS: FALL BREAK**

## PART II: GROUP RESEARCH

WEEKS 10–11: GROUP PROJECTS: RESEARCH DESIGN

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 23

- *Quantitative Data Collection and Management*
- Powner, Ch. 7

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 25

- *Group Activity: Work on research design*

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 30

- *Group Presentations: Research Designs*
- **ASSIGNMENT THREE DUE**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 1

- *Preparing Data for Analysis*
- Powner, Ch. 8

WEEKS 12–14: GROUP PROJECTS: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, &amp; TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

- *Group Activity: Work on data collection and analysis*
- **NO CLASS Thursday, November 8 (Instructors attending Peace Science conference)**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15

- *Writing Up Your Research*
- Powner, Ch. 9
- **GROUPS TURN IN DATASET AND CODE**

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20

- *Group Activity: Work on research report*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 22

- **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

WEEKS 15–16: GROUP PROJECTS: PEER REVIEW AND RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27

- *Peer Review Session: Research Report*
- Powner, Ch. 10
- **Bring Draft of Group Research Report to Class**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29

- *Preparing Presentations*
- Powner, Ch. 11

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5

- *Poster presentations*
- QEP Research and Making Expo, 3:00-5:00PM, Great Hall, FPG Student Union

POLI 350 MINI-CONFERENCE: SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8 AT 12:00PM

- **\*\*\*FINAL GROUP RESEARCH REPORT DUE\*\*\***
- Groups submit a final written report and orally present their results to the class