UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL STUDIES
TERM : FALL 2014

COURSE #: POLS 3950 **SEC:** A01 **CRN**: 13309 **CREDIT HOURS:** 3

COURSE TITLE: Research Methods in the Study of Politics

PROFESSOR: Scott Sinclair

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FORMAT: Lecture

LOCATION OF CLASS: Human Ecology 304

TIME OF CLASS: Tuesdays 6:00-8:45

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 5:00-6:00

COURSE CONTENT AND DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an introduction to the key methods used in the study of politics. The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the elements of the social science research process and to the concepts, issues, and methods involved in conducting research in a public sector and political environment. At the broad level, the course will address philosophical questions concerning research methods, discuss political and ethical issues, explore empirical research methods, and apply practical matters of method and technique to a variety of political or policy topics.

To give students a foundation in research skills that can be applied in an academic setting or a work environment, the course will explore various research methods and approaches including data collection, statistical analysis and interpretation and presentation of findings. While the emphasis of this course will be on qualitative research methods, students will be introduced to basic quantitative methodological tools and issues and be expected to apply this knowledge in a basic way. At the end of the course, students will become discerning consumers of social science research, have an understanding of the central concepts related to research, and have a foundation to build on for more sophisticated empirical research methods.

Topics:
Bias, research ethics, data collection methods (surveys, interviews and focus groups), sampling and sample size, survey research design (questions, organization, measurement, scales and indexes), qualitative (non-reactive) and quantitative (experiments, quasi-experiments and natural experiments) research, introduction to statistical methods (descriptive and inferential)

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Assignment #1 (5%)
Assignment #2 (25%)
Assignment #3 (10%)
Assignment #4 (20%)
Final exam (30%)
Attendance and participation (10%)

GRADING SCALE

A+ = 90-100
A = 80-89
B+ = 75-79
B = 70-74
C+ = 65-69
C = 60-64
D = 50-59
F = 0-49

REQUIRED TEXT(S):

Winston Jackson and Norinne Verberg. 2006. *Methods: Doing Social Research*, 4th edition, Pearson Education Canada.

Other required readings will be made available to students.

Students are required by the Department to retain a copy of each assignment submitted to their instructors. Students should acquaint themselves with the University=s policy on plagiarism, academic dishonesty, academic fraud, cheating and examination impersonation in the University of Manitoba General Calendar. Students may also refer to the Faculty's website: http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/student/index.html which will provide detailed information on the issues and possible range of penalties for Academic Dishonesty. Unreturned term work will become the property of the Faculty of Arts and will be subject to confidential destruction.