

**POL 214B: Political Research**  
University of California, Davis  
Winter, 2014  
593 Kerr Hall  
W 3:10-6:00pm

**Instructor:** Amber Boydston  
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**Office:** 684 Kerr Hall  
**Office Hours:** M 9:00-11:00am (and by appointment)

### **Seminar Description**

In this second half of our seminar, we will shift our focus from broad conversations about the scientific method to execution of the research projects you began last quarter. In some ways, our time together this quarter will be much less formal than it was last quarter, and reading assignments will be significantly lighter. At the same time, the seminar will be structured quite tightly around the count down (tick tock, tick tock) to your presentations in Week 9—that's right, Week 9—and the Finals Week deadline to “hit submit” by sending your paper to a journal or to an über intimidating person (we'll talk about options). Thus, in order to succeed in this course, you will need to stay in close contact with your advisor and maintain a schedule of self-imposed deadlines to get your paper from Point A (its current state) to Point B (hitting submit) by the end of the quarter. Oh yes, and we'll have some fun along the way too!

### **Books We Will Use**

Becker, Howard S. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists*, Second Edition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

McCloskey, Deirdre N. 2010. *Economical Writing*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.

Silvia, Paul J. 2007. *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*. Washington, DC: APA LifeTools.

Strunk Jr., William, E.B. White and Maira Kalman. 2007. *The Elements of Style, Illustrated*. New York, NY: Penguin.

- Note: Any modern edition will suffice, but why not spring for illustrations?

### **Additional Books for Reference**

Becker, Howard S. 1998. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Bolker, Joan. 1998. *Writing Your Dissertation in Fifteen Minutes a Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis*. New York, NY: Owl Books.

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research*, Third Edition. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Germano, William. 2005. *From Dissertation to Book*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Goldberg, Natalie. 1986. *Writing Down the Bones: Freeing the Writer Within*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.

Thomas, Francis-Noël and Mark Turner. 1994. *Clear and Simple as the Truth: Writing Classic Prose*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

## Grading

Participation, and Weekly Updates & Questions	25%
Mini Presentation	5%
Peer Review and Discussions (2 x 10%)	20%
Research Project:	
Game Plan & Backwards Calendars	5%
Paper Draft	10%
Practice Presentation	5%
Research Presentation	10%
Final Paper	15%
Hitting Submit	5%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Participation and Weekly Updates & Questions (25%)

Participation (showing up, having done the readings, participating in class discussion, and the quality of your weekly updates and questions) is worth 25% of your grade for this class. Accounting for the first week of class and the last two weeks when you'll be giving your presentation and then working on your paper, that's about 1/3 of a letter grade per class based just on participation. You can see this fact as a good thing or a bad thing, depending on your habits of preparation, procrastination, and participation. If you're used to coming to your graduate classes fully prepared and excited to participate, great. If not, let this be a wonderful opportunity for you to turn over a new proverbial leaf.

### Weekly Progress Update and Question

Each week **48 hours before class** you will be responsible for giving me a hard copy document with two pieces of information: 1) a brief "progress update" (one or two paragraphs, no more than 1 page) about what you've accomplished on your paper in the last week, and 2) at least one question that you want to get answered during class to help you with your paper. Feel free to submit additional questions about your paper or anything else (e.g., research methods, professionalization, my cats). The progress updates and questions you and your colleagues

submit each week will help me keep tabs on how everyone's project is developing and will help shape the format for our discussion of your papers.

### Attendance and Class Participation

Class participation is a must. Short of extenuating circumstances—which you should discuss with me on the first day of class if not before—silence is not acceptable in a graduate seminar. I reserve the right to call on students individually, and I will do so. No student can be a passive participant in this class and receive higher than a B+, assuming all work is perfect. Come Prepared. Talk. Participate. Ask Questions. *Carpe diem!*

### **Mini Presentation (5%)**

Once during the quarter you will be responsible for teaching the class about a topic you have been assigned.

Prior to your presentation, you are responsible for identifying any readings you would like the class to do (if applicable) ahead of time and getting an electronic copy of the reading to me to post at least one week prior to your presentation. If you assign a reading, then you should assume your classmates have done the reading before class. You should also consult additional sources beyond those you ask the class to read. For research design topics, Sage books are always good resources, as is *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Box-Steffensmeier, Brady, and Collier (Brad has a copy you can ask to borrow).

For the presentation itself, your goal is not to demonstrate how much you know about the topic but to teach your peers about it. Please do not get bogged down in the details of the readings or of the topic itself. Imagine that your classmates have never thought about this topic, and then design your presentation as a Cliff Notes so-what-style summary. **At the end of the presentation, your peers should have a basic understanding of what the topic is and what it's good for. Most importantly, everyone should walk away with a clear idea of how to apply what they've learned to their own work.**

Finally, although I'm calling it a "presentation," it doesn't need to be a formal presentation per se. You can stand up and talk if you like (with or without slides), or you can just lead a seminar discussion. You can distribute handouts, break the class into groups, ask everyone to complete an in-class assignment to discuss, lead us through charades, or offer an interpretive dance. Seriously, get creative. I don't care what you do, as long as you communicate the main "so what" of the approach as effectively and engagingly as possible.

### **Peer Reviews and Discussions (2 x 10% = 20%)**

Twice during the quarter, you will be assigned a classmate's research paper draft to read and evaluate. Your goal in critiquing your peer's paper is, first and foremost, to offer useful feedback. The secondary purpose of this assignment is to give you practice in reviewing and discussing another person's work. You will be asked to submit a written review of the paper (both to me and to the author) and also to discuss the paper in class. Your grade for both your written review and your in-class discussion will be based on the helpfulness of your comments

and the extent to which they follow the guidelines for giving good criticism that we will discuss in class.

### **Research Project (50% Total)**

Half your grade in this course is tied directly to your research project. You will be asked to submit a draft of your paper to me partway through the quarter (in addition to the two times when you will submit a draft to a peer); give a practice presentation of the paper; give a “real” presentation; submit the final paper to me and to your advisor; and, finally, send me electronic proof of having submitted the paper either to a journal or to a similarly-intimidating source (we’ll talk about these options in class). For each of these tasks, your grade will be based not only on effort and demonstrated improvement but also on the quality of the resulting product. Thus, it is imperative that you stay in close contact with your 214 advisor throughout the process. As in the first half of 214, your advisor will be responsible for half of the grade assigned to your final paper.

### **Late Assignments**

Assignments (i.e., your paper drafts, your backwards calendars and CV, your peer critiques, your final paper, and your proof of “hitting submit”) submitted after the listed due date will be accepted but marked down half a letter grade (i.e., 5%) for each 24 hours or portion thereof after the deadline, including weekends and holidays. For example, an assignment due Monday by 3pm but not submitted until sometime between Thursday at 3pm and Friday at 3pm of the same week would be marked down two full letter grades (i.e., 20%) below the earned grade. Bottom line: Don’t go there.

***You are responsible for staying in touch with me and with your 214 advisor throughout the quarter about your progress on your research project, especially if you experience any difficulties. Failure to do so will not only hurt your academic progress but may also turn you into a toad.***

## **Disabilities**

UC Davis encourages qualified people with disabilities to participate in its programs and activities and is committed to the policy that all people shall have equal access to programs, facilities, and admissions without regard to personal characteristics not related to ability, performance, or qualifications as determined by University policy or by state or federal authorities. I am strongly committed to the same policy. If you feel you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you need to contact the Student Disability Center at (530) 752-3184 as soon as possible to identify and document your specific needs. Additionally, it is your responsibility to contact me privately immediately at the beginning of the quarter so we can discuss how to accommodate your needs. Do not wait until just before an assignment deadline or an exam to inform me of a learning disability; any accommodations for disabilities must be arranged well in advance.

## **Academic Dishonesty<sup>1</sup>**

UC Davis and the Department of Political Science take violations of academic dishonesty seriously, as do I. 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. In cases of a violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Department of Political Science to impose appropriate penalties that are consistent with University guidelines. Academic integrity cases will be sent to the office of Student Judicial Affairs.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless I clearly state otherwise. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. See the following link for tips on how to avoid plagiarism:

<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf>. In general, every time you use another person's idea, you must cite the person at the end of the sentence in which you use the idea. Every time you use a specific phrase, even if the phrase is only two words long (e.g., "the fourth branch of government" or "streams of policymaking"), you must put the phrase in quotation marks and cite the original author at the end of the sentence in which you use the phrase. Citations should be based on the Chicago Manual of Style, specifically the APSA Style Guide.

Lying to or purposely misleading me or any other university official shall also constitute a serious violation of academic integrity.

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the text in this section has been directly obtained from the sections of the Princeton University website on Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities: <http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/rrr>.

## Weekly Assignments and Topics

Everything is required. You should do each day's readings before that day's class.

SPRING 2012	Professionalization	Mini Presentations	Your Project
Week 1 <b>MONDAY</b> March 31			READING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Syllabus</li> </ul>
Week 2 April 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature</li> </ul>	Work habits  Health habits	DUE MONDAY BY 3PM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Game plan</li> <li>• Backwards calendar for the quarter</li> </ul> READING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becker Ch. 1</li> <li>• Silvia Chs. 1-4</li> </ul>
Week 3 April 16		Goal setting  Using music to aid studying	DUE IN CLASS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 hard copy of your paper</li> </ul> READING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becker Chs. 2-3 (optional: Ch. 4)</li> <li>• Silvia Ch. 5</li> <li>• Pullum Chronicle of Higher Education piece, "50 Years of Stupid Grammar Advice" (Smartsite)</li> <li>• Strunk, White &amp; Kalman Chs. 1-2</li> <li>• Various web resources on outlining (Smartsite)</li> <li>• Malone piece on Slate.com, "The Case—Please Hear Me Out—Against the Em Dash" (Smartsite)</li> <li>• Zip File of Example Reviews</li> </ul>
Week 4 <b>MONDAY</b> April 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job Talks</li> </ul>	Literature organization	DUE IN CLASS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 hard copies of your peer review</li> </ul> READING: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Silvia Ch. 6</li> <li>• Strunk, White &amp; Kalman Ch. 3</li> <li>• McCloskey Ch. 1-10</li> <li>• Trebino article, "How To Publish a Scientific Comment in 1-2-3 Easy Steps" (Smartsite)</li> </ul>

<b>Week 5</b> April 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grants</li> </ul>	<p>Data organization</p> <p>Why political scientists should get political</p>	<p><b>DUE MONDAY BY 3PM:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft of your paper (for me)</li> </ul> <p><b>READING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McCloskey Ch. 11-20</li> <li>• Strunk, White &amp; Kalman Ch. 4</li> <li>• Heitman NYT Op-Ed, “Keep It Short” (Smartsite)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 6</b> May 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations</li> </ul>	<p>ANOVA</p> <p>Spatial modeling</p>	<p><b>DUE IN CLASS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 hard copy of your paper</li> </ul> <p><b>READING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• McCloskey Ch. 21-31</li> <li>• Strunk, White &amp; Kalman Ch. 5</li> <li>• Golash-Boza blog post, “Writing a Literature Review” (Smartsite)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 7</b> <b>MONDAY</b> May 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From paper to journal article</li> </ul>	<p>Paper writing vs. presentation writing</p>	<p><b>DUE IN CLASS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 hard copies of your peer review</li> <li>• Your CV</li> <li>• Backwards calendar for grad school (updated)</li> </ul> <p><b>READING:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wilson blog posts, “Publishing (and the Seven Deadly Sins)” (Smartsite)</li> </ul>
<b>Week 8</b> May 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comps</li> </ul>	Practice Presentations	
<b>Week 9</b>	PRESENTATIONS		
<b>Week 10</b>	PRESENTATIONS		
<b>Finals</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>DUE BY MONDAY JUNE 9:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To me: Final paper (in folder with earlier draft) AND proof of “hitting submit”</li> <li>• To your advisor: Final paper</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Congratulations—You Made It!</i></p>		