POLI 7964: Publishing Empirical Research

Spring 2016
Room: Stubbs 210
Th 9:00-11:50

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Course Description

This course is an advanced research workshop that will aid senior graduate students in polishing a preexisting piece of original empirical research and preparing it for publication in one of the discipline's peer-reviewed journals. The peer review research process will be discussed at length and students will be trained in various related tasks such as drafting conference presentations, producing replication data sets, and reviewing the work of other students in the course. There is no substantive focus for the course and students from all empirical subfields are welcome to enroll. The workload for the course will be relatively heavy and involves substantial amounts of collaboration between the instructor and students.

Course Prerequisites

There are a number of prerequisites for enrollment in this course.

(1) You should have previously completed the department's baseline empirical research training sequence, which includes POLI 7961, POLI 7962, and POLI 7963.

(2) In addition, you should have completed **at least one** of the following recent methods courses: Time Series Analysis (with Hitt), Categorical Analysis (with Garand or Henderson), Text Analysis (with Dunaway), or Experimental Methods (with Mann).

(3) Most importantly, you should have already in hand a fully-drafted research manuscript complete with introductory, theory, and data sections, as well as a roughly executed analytical section and preliminary set of results.

Course Objectives

The primary objectives of this course are threefold.

(1) Practicing the drafting and redrafting of manuscripts multiple times while accounting for comments and criticisms from your peers, professors, reviewers, and editors.

(2) Learning how to successfully navigate the peer review process, which includes selecting an appropriate journal, writing memos to reviewers, organizing replication data, and correctly formatting your manuscripts.

(3) Developing ready facility with a number of important tasks that support the peer review process, such as presenting at conferences, building rapport with colleagues in your field, and writing about your work to promote its findings to the general public.

Course Policies

Academic integrity is of paramount importance and evidence of plagiarism or cheating will result in a failing grade on the assignment in question. Except under the most extenuating of circumstances, **I do not accept late work** and each student is expected to **attend every course meeting** without exception. An unexcused absence will result in an automatic full letter grade deduction.

For each class meeting you will need to have (a) worked substantially on your own research manuscript and (b) in most cases, spent substantial time reviewing the work of one or more of your peers. There are also a number of smaller tasks with specific due dates.

During class meetings, the use of computers is acceptable for the purposes of referring to the course readings and electronic notes during discussion. Cell phone usage in class is unacceptable.The nature of class discussion will be such that we will focus on an individual student's work for fairly prolonged periods of time. These discussions are not opportunities for you to stop paying attention simply because we are not focusing on your work. My expectation is that all students are attentive to one another and offer comments and advice.

I do not have set office hours, but I am willing to meet with you at a time of your convenience so long as we have agreed on a time in advance. I am also happy to field inquiries though email.

Final grades will be allocated along the following rubric, pursuant to university policy:

Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade	Score	Grade
94-100	A	83-86	B	73-76	C	63-66	D
90-93	A-	80-82	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-
87-89	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	< 60	F

Technology and Submission Requirements

This is a paperless course. All submissions are to be made electronically to a shared DropBox space, which everyone in the class will have access to. For this reason, everyone must have a version of DropBox installed on her or his computer and Potter will share the folder with everyone on the first day of class. Throughout the semester, you will draft and redraft your own research manuscript. Each of these drafts must be professionally typeset using the LaTex typesetting software. On the first day of class, Potter will conduct an in-class lab for those students who are unfamiliar with the software. It is absolutely essential that you have **LaTex** and **DropBox** installed on your portable computer before the first day of the course. Other important materials will be made available on our **Moodle** page as they are needed throughout the semester.

Aside from your own manuscripts, you will practice writing reviews of your peers' work and also responding to the critiques of others. All of these responses will be uploaded to the DropBox folder. By the end of the semester, each student's project will have a thoroughly-documented timeline of drafts, feedback, and revisions. Supplementary materials such as presentation slides, replication code, and cover letters to journals will also be included in this folder.

Requirements and Evaluation

Participation – 20 points

It takes a village, as they say. Our scholastic work is only as good as the people that surround us and thus it is vital that you take the time to carefully evaluate your peers' work, come to class prepared to discuss, and remain focused during our meetings. As the instructor, I will be working to build a comfortable and collegial environment in the classroom. The ultimate aim is not only an excellent paper for each student by the end of the semester, but the creation of a long-term network of colleagues that you can rely upon for future work as well.

Entry Paper Draft – 10 points

Second Paper Draft – 10 points

Third Paper Draft – 10 points

Exit Paper Draft – 10 points

There is nothing more central to this course than the four drafts of your paper (entry and exit drafts, as well as two intermediate drafts). You must take these written assignments seriously and the succession of drafts must exhibit a positive trajectory of improvement. Each draft is a **complete** attempt at the full research manuscript – there are no partial or preliminary drafts for this course.

Peer Review Memos – 10 points

You will review the work of your peers on at least three occasions in this class. This process will include both written (out-of-class) and discussion-based (in-class) components. You will also submit memos in response to reviewer comments each time you submit a new draft.

Data Replication – 10 points

Analytical transparency is on the rise and many journals are adopting policies that require the full disclosure of all data and code at the point of publication. You will draft a replication data set for your project and you will also be asked to use another student's replication data set to reproduce the results of her project.

Mock Blog Post – 5 points

Political scientists are becoming more conscientious about disseminating their findings to a broader readership through blogs such as the MonkeyCage, FiveThirtyEight, and Vox. These blogs are also excellent examples of mainstream "data journalism" that relies on accessible discussion, innovative graphics, and analysis of current events. You are required to follow these blogs during the semester and you will practice writing a blog post based on your research paper.

Conference Presentation– 10 points

It is also important that you are able to convey the results of your research to a much different audience – namely, the academic community. This is primarily accomplished through short, 10-minute conference presentations, which we will practice and workshop in class.

Coffee with a Professor – 5 points

Finally, writing good research also requires that you are able to make contact with and solicit comments from senior colleagues. The course's final requirement is that you at some point take one of the professors in our department out for a cup of coffee (having given then a copy of your paper ahead of time) to discuss your project for the semester. This will require about $10 on your part, but this is a small sum considering the fact that you did not have to purchase books for the course!

Important Documents on Moodle

Course syllabus

Typesetting and bibliography management lab files

Manuscript outline and formatting criteria

DropBox protocol and submission process

Literature on journal rankings and choosing a journal outlet

Three full examples of Potter's rough drafts, redrafts, reviewer memos, and submissions

Guidelines on writing a review of a manuscript

Guidelines on writing a memo to reviewers

Outline of conference style presentation and LaTex slide template

Guidelines for writing a cover letter to a journal

Guidelines for replication data set submission

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Please see the below schedule for weekly assignments (**in bold**), major draft deadlines (**in red**), and in-class discussion topics. I think it is important to get a general feel for the structure of the semester as a whole. You might think of the workload as being divided into 5 iterative portions.

Week	Date	Class Period
1	Jan 14	Introduction
2	Jan 21	Introduction
3	Jan 28	Draft Day
4	Feb 4	Peer Review Day
5	Feb 11	Workshop Day
6	Feb 18	Draft Day
7	Feb 25	Peer Review Day
8	Mar 3	Workshop Day
9	Mar 10	Draft Day
		no class for two weeks
10	Mar 31	Peer Review Day
		no class for one week
11	Apr 14	Presentations & Workshop
12	Apr 21	Presentations & Workshop
13	Apr 28	Presentations & Workshop
14	May 5	Final Project Deadline

Week 1 / Jan 14 / Introduction and Technology

Assignment: install LaTex and a bibliographic interface before class.

Introduction and overview of requirements

Email sign up for DropBox access

In-class LaTex lab for first-time users

Week 2 / Jan 21 / Research Overview

Assignment: prepare brief presentation of your research topic for discussion.

Discussion of individual research topics

Overview of manuscript components and formatting

Overview of DropBox protocol and submission process

Week 3 / Jan 28 / Draft Day # 1

Assignment: Entry Draft Due, uploaded to DropBox before class

Discussion of peer review process

Discussion of academic journals by subfield and rank

Circulation of example review experiences

Assignment of papers for review

Week 4 / Feb 4 / Peer Review Day # 1

Assignment: peer reviews uploaded to DropBox before class

In-class workshop of student papers

Peers and Potter provide critiques

Discussion of writing a memo to reviewers

Week 5 / Feb 11 / Circle the Wagons

Assignment: prepare brief presentation about response to reviewers

Individual work updates

Lecture on manuscript content, data visualization, and use of appendices

Lecture on conference style presentations

Week 6 / Feb 18 / Draft Day #2

Assignment: Second Draft Due, uploaded to DropBox before class

Assignment: memo to reviewers uploaded to DropBox before class

Lecture on data replication

Lecture on summarizing research for public consumption

Assignment of papers for review

Week 7 / Feb 25 / Peer Review Day #2

Assignment: peer reviews uploaded to DropBox before class

In-class workshop of student papers

Peers and Potter provide critiques

Sign-up sheet for "coffee with a professor" assignment

Week 8 / Mar 3 / Circle the Wagons

Assignment: prepare brief presentation about response to reviewers

Assignment: mock blog post for MonkeyCage, FiveThirtyEight, or Vox

Individual work updates

Lecture on cover letter to journals

Lecture on selecting reviewer recommendations

Lecture on your manuscript's electronic footprint

Lecture on using LaTex and Beamer to draft presentation slides

Week 9 / Mar 10 / Draft Day #3

Assignment: Third Draft Due, uploaded to DropBox before class

Assignment: memo to reviewers uploaded to DropBox before class

Sign-up sheet for conference presentations

Assignment of papers for review

Week 10 / Mar 31 / Peer Review Day #3

Assignment: peer reviews uploaded to DropBox before class

Assignment: present results of "coffee with a professor" discussion

Peers and Potter provide critiques

Developing detailed plans for final journal submission

Week 11 / Apr 14 / Presentations

Assignment: select journal and write cover letter

Individual work updates

Week 12 / Apr 21 / Presentations

Assignment: completed replication data sets and codebook

Individual work updates

Assignment of peer replication projects

Week 13 / Apr 28 / Presentations

Assignment: summary of peer replication attempts

Individual work updates

Week 14 / May 5 / Final Journal Submission

Assignment: Exit Draft Due, uploaded to DropBox before class

Assignment: submit proof of journal submission