

North American Studies Proseminar
Professor Katri Sieberg

North American Studies – Department of History and Philosophy

NAM 10

Wednesday 10-12; Fall 2009, Spring 2010; Pinni B 2078 Periods I-III
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Course Description

This course is designed to cover the basics of writing a research paper in North American Studies. This class will approach research from a political science perspective but will include methods from other fields, including history and economics. We will discuss issues in the philosophy of science – in other words: what is the point of doing research and what should we seek to accomplish when doing it? We will briefly cover basic research methods: Case studies, comparative analysis, empirical analysis, game theory – rational choice, and experimental analysis. We will incorporate issues from North America in all of these. Each student will write a research paper and will present the paper at the end of the course.

Class meetings: The class will meet once a week. Meetings will involve both lectures and discussions. Students should complete the reading assigned in the syllabus before each meeting.

Assigned reading: The articles to be used are listed below. Current events will be incorporated into the course discussions and the examinations. Students must read a good newspaper in addition to the readings. Suggested sources: *The Economist*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Herald Tribune*.

Plagiarism and Cheating: Plagiarism and cheating are serious infractions. “Plagiarism usually comes in two forms, unintentional and intentional. The first occurs when students fail to cite the work they use because of oversight or ignorance of the proper procedure. The second occurs when students deliberately try to cheat by passing off another’s work as their own, for example changing a few words of a passage to make it appear less identical. Neither form of plagiarism is acceptable. Plagiarism deemed intentional by the instructor will result in an automatic failing grade for the course, irrespective of one’s other work. Plagiarism deemed unintentional will result in an automatic grade of 0 (zero) for an assignment, and a second instance will lead to an automatic failing grade for the course.” (Krasno Syllabus, 2009) Remember, for any idea that you use from a source, provide an internal citation. If you use the exact words from a source, you must put it in quotes and then give an internal citation.

Grades: Grades will be weighted in the following manner: Participation 20%, Assignments 15%, Paper 50%, Presentation 10%, Discussant 5%.

SYLLABUS (Subject to change)

Week 1 (2.9.09): Introduction – What is Research? What is a Research Paper?

Week 2 (16.9.09): Philosophy of science I
Read: Popper, “Conjectures and Refutations” and “The Logic of Scientific Discovery”

Week 3 (23.9.09): Philosophy of science II
Read: Lakatos, “The Methodology of Scientific Research Programs”
Taagepera 2008, Preface and Chapter 1
***Assignment: Turn in** preliminary ideas

Week 4 (30.9.09): Philosophy of science III – Formal Theory I
Read: McCubbins and Thies, “Rationality and the Foundations of Positive Political Theory: (or, Rational Choice Without Apology)”

Week 5 (7.10.09): Methods – The Comparative Method
Read: Lijphart, Arend, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *American Political Science Review* 65, 3 (1971): 682-93.

Week 5 (7.10.09): Methods II – Empirical Analysis
Read: Sartori, Giovanni, “Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics,” *American Political Science Review* 64 (4) 1970: 1033-53.
Jackman, Robert W. “Cross-National Statistical Research and the Study of Comparative Politics,” *American Journal of Political Science* 29 (1) 1985: 161-82.

Fall Break

Week 6 (28.10.09): Regressions – bivariate analysis
Read: <http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/stathome.html> “Elementary Concepts in Statistics” and “Basic Statistics”
***Assignment: Turn in** preliminary literature review

Week 7 (4.11.09): Multivariate analysis
Read : <http://www.statsoft.com/textbook/stathome.html> “General Linear Models” “General Regression Models” and “Linear Regression”
http://www.norusis.com/pdf/DA_v13.pdf

Week 8 (11.11.09): Doing Empirical Analysis
Read: TBA

Week 9 (18.11.09): Formal Theory II
Read: TBA

Week 10 (25.11.09): Experimental Analysis
Read: Goeree and Holt, “Ten Little Treasures of Game Theory and Ten Intuitive Contradictions”

Week 11 (2.12.09): Research Paper Writing – Form and Style
Read: TBA

Week 12 (9.12.09): Experiments II

Read: Fréchette, Kagel, and Lehrer, "Bargaining in Legislatures: An Experimental Investigation of Open versus Closed Amendment Rules," *The American Political Science Review* 97 (2): 221-232.

***Assignment: Turn in** more extensive literature review

Winter Break

Week 13 (13.1.10) **Discussion of Projects**

***Assignment: Turn in** First Draft of Paper

Week 14 (20.1.10) **Presentation Design and Performance**

Week 15 (27.1.10) **Examples**

Week 16 (3.2.10) **Examples**

Week 17 (10.2.10) **Presentations**

Week 18 (17.2.10) **Presentations**

Week 19 (24.2.10) **Presentations**

Week 20 (3.3.10) **Presentations**