

PSCI 4950: SENIOR CAPSTONE

Course Information

Class: PSCI 4950-860/861

Room: Roskens Hall 010B

Date & Time: T, 1:00-2:15

Instructor Information

Professor: Brett J. Kyle, Ph.D.

Office: Arts and Sciences Hall 275

Phone: (402) 554-3704

E-mail: bjkyle@unomaha.edu

Web: www.brettkyle.com

Office Hours: M-W 11:00 am–12:45 pm, and by appointment

Statement of Course Objectives

This course offers political science majors in their senior year a capstone experience. The primary purpose of the course is for students to refine their research, writing, and oral communications skills by writing and presenting a major research paper in the discipline. This course satisfies the advanced writing requirement of the general education curriculum.

Course Description

This course utilizes an inquiry-based learning technique that invites students to explore questions or problems, to make discoveries, and thoughtfully investigate those discoveries in their search for knowledge. This means that student success depends upon a strong motivation to learn along with the organization and self-discipline needed complete the requirements in a timely manner.

This course meets once each week for 75 minutes. Students are expected to attend class (see The UNOmaha Undergraduate Catalog). Excessive tardiness or absence (defined as more than two class sessions) will result in the student's final point total being reduced by 5% for each additional class session missed. The remainder of this course is internet-mediated through Blackboard.

Course Assignments and Student Evaluation

Participation (20% of the overall grade):

Students are expected to complete assigned readings prior to class, attend class, take notes, and participate in class discussion. Lack of such participation will result in a reduction of the student's class participation grade.

Occasionally, students are expected to complete short in-class or on-line assignments. Structure, timing, and value of these assignments will be at the discretion of the instructor.

Research Paper and Presentation (80% of the overall grade):

Students will research and write a high-quality paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the instructor.

Once the topic is chosen, it is strongly recommended that students consult with the professor on a regular basis and seek help whenever necessary.

All students must consult with the UNO Writing Center during the writing process. Spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, organization, writing clarity/precision is part of your grade at all stages of the work.

Papers must be carefully documented. Be honest, direct, and cite your sources. Transparency is essential to the successful practice of science.

The process of writing the paper will include the following components:

Component	Percentage	Due Date
Research Question	5%	January 24 (week 3)
Annotated Bibliography	5%	February 14 (week 6)
Literature Review	10%	February 21 (week 7)
Argument	10%	February 28 (week 8)
Research Design	10%	March 7 (week 10)
Analysis and Assessment	10%	March 14 (week 11)
Introduction and Conclusion	5%	March 28 (week 12)
Completed Draft of Paper	10%	April 4 (week 13)
Final Paper	20%	April 11 (week 14)
Completed Draft of Poster	5%	April 18 (week 15)
Final Poster and Presentation	10%	April 25 (week 16)
TOTAL	100%	

All assignments must be posted to Blackboard (see the ASSIGNMENTS tab) by noon on the day of class. Late assignments will be penalized 20% per calendar day. All written work must be turned in using SafeAssign.

In the final draft, the body of the paper should be at least twenty double-spaced pages in length, typed in black ink, 12 pt Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins. Otherwise, students are expected to follow the APSA Style Manual and Writing a Research Paper in Political Science.

Each seminar participant will create a PowerPoint and present his or her research to the group and to the faculty.

Students are required to retain a copy of all written work that they turn in to the professor. This may be photocopied or it may be stored digitally. Students must be able to produce this copy if requested by the professor.

Major Field Test:

Each student is required to take the major field test in political science (the fee is paid by the Department of Political Science). This is a standardized test from Educational Testing Services administered by the UNO Testing Center under secure conditions. Performance on the exam is not part of the course grade, but students will not be issued a grade unless the exam is taken. The results of the test are used by the Department for assessment purposes to determine curriculum strengths and weaknesses. Students must bring identification and follow instructions given by the exam proctor. Exam schedule TBA.

Determination of the Final Grade:

Grading Scale: In accordance with University policy (see The UNOmaha Undergraduate Catalog), the following scale will be used to determine course grades.

95.0 - 100.0% = A+, Outstanding

90.0 - 94.9% = A, Outstanding

85.0 - 89.9% = B+, Proficient

80.0 - 84.9% = B, Proficient

75.0 - 79.9% = C+, Satisfactory

70.0 - 74.9% = C, Satisfactory

65.0 - 69.9% = D+, Below Standard

60.0 - 64.9% = D, Below Standard

59.9% or below, Failing

A grade of C- or above in this course is required for graduation with a B.A. or B.S. in Political Science.

Readings

Text

Baglione, Lisa A. 2015. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: a Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*, Third Edition. Los Angeles, CA: CQ Press. Kindle edition is available.

Schedule of Class Meetings

Date	Topic	Assignment Due	Read
1.10	Course Overview		
1.17	Finding a Research Question		Baglione: 1-2
1.24	Citation and the Annotated Bibliography	Research question	
1.31	Library Orientation		Baglione:3
2.7	Faculty Presentations		
2.14	The Literature Review	Annotated Bibliography	Baglione: 4
2.21	Developing and Refining the Argument	Literature Review	Baglione: 5-6
2.28	The Research Design	Argument	Baglione: 7
3.7	Analysis and Assessment	Research Design	Baglione:8
3.14	Organization from Intro to Conclusion	Analysis and Assessment	Baglione:9
3.21	Spring Break		
3.28	Revisions	Introductions and Conclusion	
4.4	Revisions	Completed Draft	
4.11	Preparing for Poster Presentations	Final Paper	
4.18	In-Class Poster Presentations	Draft Presentation	
4.25	Public Poster Presentations	Final Presentation	
Exam schedule TBA	Major Field Test		

UNO Writing Center

The UNO Writing Center offers free one-on-one consultations with trained consultants to all students, faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help writers improve their writing skills and confidence in all types of writing, in all subject areas, and at all stages of the writing process. For more information about their hours and locations or to schedule an appointment, visit their website at www.unomaha.edu/writingcenter or visit them at their main location in Arts and Sciences Hall, Room 150.

UNO Speech Center

The UNO Speech Center Consulting Room provides free consulting and coaching services to all UNO students, faculty, and staff in preparing oral presentations. The Consulting Room can help you with presentation preparation, outlining, effective delivery techniques, along with any other presentational needs. Speech consulting will help at any stage in the speechmaking process, whether you are just starting to develop topic ideas or nearly finished with preparing a presentation.

Make an appointment by calling the Speech Consulting Room at 554-3201 or stopping by Arts & Sciences Hall 185. Appointments must be reserved at least 48 hours in advance of scheduled consultation date, allowing the Speech Center to ensure adequate facilitation and instruction.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty in any form is a very serious breach of the values that are integral to higher education and society in general. To use someone else's ideas without proper attribution (or any other form of academic dishonesty) is unacceptable. Carelessness in observing ethical standards is no more acceptable than is deliberate dishonesty. Students should be careful to understand, therefore, the policies, procedures, and possible sanctions (see the Student Code of Conduct, Article III, Section B, and the Academic Integrity Policy for Undergraduate Students).

Fairness in the Classroom

The instructor of this course is committed to support the learning of all students, irrespective of gender, race, age, religion, handicapping condition, or sexual preference. Students should be able to expect that their learning environments are free from any form of prejudice. Disparaging comments aimed stereotypically at any group and any questioning of the seriousness of purpose or academic commitment of students based upon group characteristics may undermine our educational mission. If such behavior occurs in class, students should first try talking with the instructor and identify specific examples of behavior by the instructor or by other students that the student finds offensive or disparaging. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, the student is encouraged to consult with the Department Chair and to seek the Chair's assistance in improving the classroom environment.

Students requiring special consideration must contact and work through the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities in EAB 117 (554-2872). This office then notifies the instructor in writing of the accommodations the student needs in compliance with 504/ADA.

Inclement Weather

The decision to close the university because of adverse weather conditions will be made by the university administration. This information will be available by public announcement through

various news media outlets as well as a recorded telephone message at 554-2255 and on the internet at <http://emergency.unomaha.edu/weather>.

In the event that inclement weather situations arise that result in the closure of local public schools, students should check Blackboard one hour before class starts for any special announcements by the instructor.