

**POLI 350: PEACE SCIENCE RESEARCH**  
SPRING 2022 · UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

## INSTRUCTORS

Prof. Mark Crescenzi  
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## COURSE INFORMATION

Section 1: Tuesdays & Thursdays 12:30–1:45PM, Genome Sciences 1370  
Section 2: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:00–3:15PM, Dey 303  
Course Website: <https://sakai.unc.edu/portal/site/poli350-sp22>  
Credit Hours: 3

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

POLI 350 is a course-based undergraduate research experience (CURE) that introduces you to the practice of quantitative research on peace, conflict, and conflict resolution. You will work in teams to develop original research projects that answer policy-relevant questions in the field of peace science. Through hands-on experience with data gathering and analysis, you will learn how to develop and test novel hypotheses about the causes and consequences of conflict as well as the processes of conflict resolution and management.

The course will be structured in two parts. In the first part of the course, you will develop skills needed to engage in peace science research. To build this toolkit, you will familiarize yourself with existing research in the field and learn how to manage and analyze data. In the second part of the course, you will put what you have learned in practice. Working in teams, you will formulate a research question and develop a novel hypothesis. You will then engage in multiple rounds of analysis, receiving peer feedback along the way. At the end of the semester, your group will create a final research report and present your findings at a class mini-conference.

## COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Learn how to formulate a research question, hypothesis, and research design
- Develop empirical research skills, including gathering and analyzing data
- Gain experience with a collaborative and iterative research process
- Learn to present research findings through written, digital, and oral communication

## TARGET AUDIENCE

This course is appropriate for undergraduate students at any level. No prior experience in research or data analysis is required.

## COURSE PREREQUISITE

POLI/PWAD 150 (International Relations & Global Politics) is a prerequisite for this course.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

### MODE OF INSTRUCTION

As long as it is possible to do so safely, we will be meeting in person this semester. We understand the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may require changes to this plan and will be monitoring the situation closely. If we need to change the format of the course temporarily due to outbreaks of illness, we will announce this via email and the course Sakai site. When we meet in person, we expect that everyone will abide by the university's community standards, including wearing a mask at all times (see Carolina Together).

### CLASS SESSIONS

Our class sessions will incorporate a mix of lectures and active learning opportunities. To get the most out of the course, it is important for you to come to class prepared and actively participate. Before each class, you should complete the assigned reading for the day. In class, you are encouraged to ask questions at any point. If something is not clear to you, there's a good chance that someone else in the class is thinking the same thing! To accommodate students who may need to miss class due to the ongoing pandemic, we plan to livestream and video record our class sessions and will post any lecture slides on Sakai.

### SAKAI

Sakai will be your primary source of information for the course. On Sakai, you will find a dedicated page for each unit of the course, which will provide links to readings, assignments, and all other class materials.

### OFFICE HOURS AND EMAIL

We encourage you to take advantage of our office hours if you have any questions about the course at any point during the semester. We will plan to hold a mix of in-person and Zoom office hours. You are also welcome to contact us with questions via email. We will try our best to respond within 24 hours on weekdays and 48-72 hours on weekends.

## COURSE MATERIALS

### TEXTBOOK

The following textbook is required. You may purchase a hard copy of the book or access an electronic copy available **for free** through the UNC library.

- Powner, Leanne C. 2015. *Empirical Research and Writing: A Political Science Student's Practical Guide*. CQ Press.  
<https://methods-sagepub-com.libproxy.lib.unc.edu/book/empirical-research-and-writing-a-political-science-students-practical-guide>

All other readings for the course will be available on Sakai.

### STATA

You will also be required to have access to Stata, a data analysis software. You have two options for accessing Stata. First, you can purchase a six-month student license to Stata 17 (basic edition) for \$48. Alternatively, you can access Stata for free through the university's Virtual Lab. Information on both of these options can be found on Sakai.

## GRADUATE RESEARCH CONSULTANTS

In this research-exposure course, you will be working with two Graduate Research Consultant who will assist you in the research project.

- Kellan Borrer (kellan@live.unc.edu)
- Steven Saroka (ssaroka@live.unc.edu)

The GRC program is sponsored by the Office for Undergraduate Research (our.unc.edu). We encourage you to visit this website to see other ways that you might engage in research, scholarship and creative performance while you are at Carolina.

## GRADING

ASSIGNMENT	DUE DATE	PERCENTAGE
Research Question (Individual)	2/8	20%
Data Analysis I (Individual)	2/22	10%
Data Analysis II (Individual)	3/1	10%
Research Design (Group)	4/5	10%
Research Poster & Report (Group)	4/26 (Poster) 5/3 or 5/5 (Report)	35%
Class Participation (Individual)	–	15%

### ASSIGNMENT #1: RESEARCH QUESTION

The first assignment involves the identification and justification of a research question for original research within the structure of the parameters provided by your instructors. Your job is to select a problem or puzzle in peace science and briefly provide what you think your answer or solution would be. This 500-word paper is an individual assignment, due on February 8.

### ASSIGNMENTS #2 AND #3: DATA ANALYSIS

You will also complete two assignments that will require you to analyze and interpret data in Stata. These assignments will provide you with the opportunity to apply the statistical tools covered in class, as well as give you familiarity working with Stata. These are individual student assignments due on February 22 and March 1.

### ASSIGNMENT #4: RESEARCH DESIGN

This fourth assignment is your first group task. Once we have the individual research questions, your instructors will organize them by content and/or method. We will then form research teams that will work together for the rest of the semester. As a group you will identify one research question and an initial hypothesis. You will then develop a research design to test your hypothesis. Your group will submit a written description of your research design and present it to the class. This is a group assignment, due on November 5.

### ASSIGNMENT #5: RESEARCH POSTER AND REPORT

The final major assignment in this course is a group poster and research report. This will give you an opportunity to disseminate the results of your research in multiple formats commonly used in professional settings. First, your group will create a scientific poster that visually presents an overview of your research project and findings. Second, your group will write a research report that follows the format of a short academic research note (~ 4,000 words). The poster will be due on April 26. The research report will be due during the final exam period (Section 1: Tuesday, May 3 at 12:00 PM, Section 2: Thursday, May 5 at 12:00 PM).

We will devote much of the class time in the last month of the class to your group research projects. After you submit your research design, your group will begin working on collecting and analyzing data for your project. To provide an update to the instructors on the status of your project, you will need to submit the current version of your dataset and Stata code on April 19. We will hold an in-class peer review session on April 21. This will give you a chance to get feedback from your classmates on your poster. Your participation in the peer review session will be incorporated in your class participation grade. The final iteration of your group project will focus on integrating the feedback for your peers, GRCs, and instructors in the final research report.

During the final exam period, we will hold a mini-conference where each research team will present its final research findings. These presentations will be a component of the final grade for the research report.

#### GROUP PROJECT CONTRACTS

As you all know by now, group projects pose a unique set of challenges (a.k.a., collective action problems). Graduate Research Consultants will be on hand to help you manage your team needs and assist with the group tasks. In addition, each team will create group contracts that specify the expectations and requirements of the group. The contracts must include an expulsion clause that specifies when and why a group member may be expelled from the group. All members of the team must sign this contract.

#### CLASS PARTICIPATION

The majority of the class will be devoted to discussions of scholarly work. At first, this will be published scholarly work designed to orient you to the scope of the problem we will analyze. Later in the semester, however, the scholarly work will be that of your own and your peers. The class will proceed in an interactive seminar format, with as little lecturing as possible. You are expected to have read the assigned material when we discuss it in class. We will ask questions, and the class will be responsible for providing the answers. Students should feel free to ask questions and debate the topics at hand. There are no wrong questions (well . . . not many), and you are strongly encouraged to participate even if you found the readings difficult or problematic. Part of what we want you to practice is the art of deciphering analytical work, so we do not begin the course with the assumption that you understand everything you will read on the syllabus. The participation grade evaluation will be based on the quantity *and quality* of comments and questions and demonstration of knowledge of the course material. Attendance *per se* will not be evaluated, but if you are not in class you cannot participate. We will also break into active learning sessions several times throughout the semester. Your enthusiasm and attention in these sessions directly impacts your participation score.

#### GRACE PERIODS AND LATE PENALTIES

We will generally deduct a three-point penalty for each day that an assignment is late. However, we will give you two grace period days that you can use on any of the individual assignments (#1, #2, or #3). You will not receive any late penalties during the grace period. For example, you can turn in one assignment two days late and not receive a late penalty. Alternatively, you could turn in two different assignments one day late and not receive a late penalty. You do not need to notify us as to when you plan to use these grace period days. We will automatically apply them when grading assignments.

**GRADING SCALE**

A	93.00–100.00	B	83.00–86.99	C	73.00–76.99	D	60.00–66.99
A–	90.00–92.99	B–	80.00–82.99	C–	70.00–72.99	F	0–59.99
B+	87.00–89.99	C+	77.00–79.99	D+	67.00–69.99		

Note: We will not round final grades.

**COURSE POLICIES****COMMUNITY STANDARDS IN OUR COURSE AND MASK USE**

This semester, while we are in the midst of a global pandemic, all enrolled students are required to wear a mask covering your mouth and nose at all times in our classroom. This requirement is to protect our educational community as we learn together. If you choose not to wear a mask, or wear it improperly, we will ask you to leave immediately, and we will submit a report to the Office of Student Conduct. At that point you will be disenrolled from this course for the protection of our educational community. An exemption to the mask wearing community standard will not typically be considered a reasonable accommodation. Individuals with a disability or health condition that prevents them from safely wearing a face mask may seek alternative accommodations through Accessibility Resources & Service. For additional information, see Carolina Together.

**ATTENDANCE**

To succeed in this class, it is important for you to attend class. However, due to the unusual circumstances of the ongoing pandemic, we understand that situations may arise that prevent you from attending class and recognize the need to be accommodating. For everyone's safety, you should self-assess before coming to class whether you are experiencing any symptoms using the COVID-19 symptom list on the Carolina Together website. If you need to miss class for an extended period due to health reasons or another emergency, please be in contact so that we can work together to keep you on track with the course.

**UNC HONOR CODE**

You are bound by the Honor Code in taking exams and in written work. The Honor Code of the University is in effect at all times, and the submission of work signifies understanding and acceptance of those requirements. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Please consult with us or visit [honor.unc.edu](http://honor.unc.edu) if you have any questions about the Honor Code.

**GRADE APPEAL PROCESS**

If you feel you have been awarded an incorrect grade, please discuss with us. If we cannot resolve the issue, you may talk to our department's associate chair or appeal the grade through a formal university process based on arithmetic/clerical error, arbitrariness, discrimination, harassment, or personal malice. To learn more, go to the Academic Advising website.

## SYLLABUS CHANGES

With its focus on providing an active research experience, POLI 350 will be different from many of your previous courses at the university. This is an exciting opportunity, but it also means that we may need to be flexible in the semester ahead. The research process is often uncertain and unpredictable. At times, this may require us to spend more time on particular tasks than we originally anticipated. For this reason, we may need to make adjustments to the syllabus as the semester goes along. We will make sure to clearly articulate any such changes in class with as much notice as possible, and we will always communicate any updates through Sakai and email.

## PART I: BUILDING THE TOOLKIT

### UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO PEACE SCIENCE

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11

- No reading

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13

- *Puzzles of Modern Warfare*
- Sullivan, “War Aims and War Outcomes: Why Powerful States Lose Limited Wars”
- Bapat and Zeigler, “Terrorism, Dynamic Commitment Problems, and Military Conflict”

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18

- *Resolving Civil Wars*
- Reid, “Finding a Peace that Lasts: Mediator Leverage and the Durable Resolution of Civil Wars”
- Menninga and Prorok, “Battles and Bargains: Escalation, Commitment, and Negotiations in Civil War”

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20

- *Economics and Political Violence*
- Gustafson, “Hunger to Violence: Explaining the Violent Escalation of Nonviolent Demonstrations”
- Estancona, “Rebel Primary Commodity Markets, Price Shocks, and Supplier Victimization”

UNIT 2: FIRST STEPS OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS

TUESDAY, JANUARY 25

- *Research questions*
- Powner, Ch. 1

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27

- *Theories and Hypotheses*
- Powner, Ch. 2

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

- *Finding Sources*
- Powner, Ch. 3

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3

- *Peer Review Session: Assignment 1*

UNIT 3: DATA ANALYSIS TOOLS

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8 &amp; THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

- *Introduction to Statistics I*
  - *Measuring and Describing Variables*
  - *Bivariate Relationships*
- **ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE (2/8)**

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

- *Introduction to Stata I*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17, &amp; TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22

- *Introduction to Statistics II: Regression Analysis*
- **ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE (2/22)**

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24

- *Introduction to Stata II*



## PART II: GROUP RESEARCH

### UNIT 4: GROUP PROJECTS: RESEARCH DESIGN

TUESDAY, MARCH 1

- *Form Research Groups*
- **ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE**

THURSDAY, MARCH 3

- *Accessing Data Sources*

TUESDAY, MARCH 8

- *Group Activity: Identify research question and initial hypothesis*

THURSDAY, MARCH 10

- *Choosing a Design that Fits Your Question*
- Powner, Ch. 4

TUESDAY, MARCH 15 & THURSDAY, MARCH 17

- **NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK**

TUESDAY, MARCH 22

- *Quantitative Data Collection and Management*
- Powner, Ch. 7

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

- *Group Presentations: Research Designs*

TUESDAY, MARCH 29

- *Preparing Data for Analysis*
- Powner, Ch. 8

THURSDAY, MARCH 31

- **NO CLASS (Instructors attending ISA conference)**

UNIT 5: GROUP PROJECTS: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

TUESDAY, APRIL 5

- *Group Activity: Work on data collection and analysis*
- **ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE**

THURSDAY, APRIL 7

- *Writing Up Your Research: Reports and Posters*
- Powner, Ch. 9 & 11

TUESDAY, APRIL 12

- *Faculty Feedback on Research Designs*
- *Group Activity: Work on data collection and analysis*

THURSDAY, APRIL 14

- **NO CLASS: WELLNESS DAY**

TUESDAY, APRIL 19

- *Group Activity: Work on posters*
- **GROUPS TURN IN DATASET AND CODE**

THURSDAY, APRIL 21

- *Peer Review Session: Posters*

TUESDAY, APRIL 26

- Course Wrap-Up
- **\*\*\* GROUP POSTER DUE \*\*\***

POLI 350 MINI-CONFERENCES

SECTION 1: TUESDAY, MAY 3 AT 12:00PM

SECTION 2: THURSDAY, MAY 5 AT 12:00PM

- **\*\*\*FINAL GROUP RESEARCH REPORT DUE\*\*\***
- Groups submit a final written report and orally present their results to the class

## SERVICES AND STUDENT SUPPORT

### ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES

The University facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities. Accommodations are determined through the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS Website for contact information: <https://ars.unc.edu> or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

### COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more

### TITLE IX RESOURCES

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, interim: [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the EOC Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu).

### POLICY ON NONDISCRIMINATION

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, creed, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied. If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at [safe.unc.edu](http://safe.unc.edu)) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office, or online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.