

Senior Seminar in Political Science
Christopher Newport University

Spring – 2019
POLS 490WI-1
T, TH: 4:30-5:45 p.m.
Location: MCM 300B

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Office hours: T/TH 2:45-4:30 p.m., Wednesdays 9-10 a.m., or by appointment
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Course Description (CNU 2018 course catalog description):

This seminar course is designed as a capstone academic experience in which each student is expected to demonstrate independent research skills, prepare and present a formal paper, and participate in the discussion and analysis of presentations by other members of the seminar. The formal paper should be a significant example of the student's academic credentials in terms of knowledge, skills, and abilities. In addition, each student will complete a standardized assessment relevant to the political science field. Partially satisfies the writing intensive requirement.

Course Objectives

Upon completing the requirements of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Write critically and analytically about an important political issue
- Express themselves orally about an important political issue
- Critically evaluate and critique ideas, arguments, and points of view put forth in political science research

Required Texts

- Style manual for political science (handout)
- Access to academic journals on databases (on Tribble library's website) such as:
 - JStore
 - ProQuest
 - EBSCOHostAnd many more... (go to Tribble library's [home page](#) and click "[Resources and Services](#)" and then look for the relevant tabs (such as "CNU catalog," "scholarly articles" to find the relevant literature that you are looking for.)
- Access to national/international news sources such as:
 - New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/>
 - Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/>

- Wall Street Journal: <http://www.wsj.com/>
- The Economist: <http://www.economist.com/>
- Foreign Affairs: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/>
- Financial Times: <http://www.ft.com/home/uk>
- Associated Press: <http://www.ap.org/>
- Brookings: <http://www.brookings.edu/>
- Politico: <http://www.politico.com/>
- Huffington Post: <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/>
- Slate: <http://www.slate.com/>
- Bloomberg: <http://www.bloomberg.com/>
- BBC News: <http://www.bbc.com/news>
- CNN: <http://www.cnn.com/>
- The New Yorker: <http://www.newyorker.com/>
- Reuters: <http://www.reuters.com/>
- Aljazeera: <http://america.aljazeera.com/>

Course Policies:

Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism is the stealing or passing off as your own the writings or ideas of someone else. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, quoting, summarizing, or paraphrasing ideas without giving credit to their source, submitting as your own work that has been copied or purchased from another student or other source, and permitting someone else to revise or edit a paper to the extent that it is no longer your own work. Plagiarism is not permitted and will result in a zero for that assignment and may result in an F for the course. It is your responsibility to know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

Moreover, this course is subject to the rules on academic honesty and integrity as set forth in the University Handbook. Please be aware that intentional acts of academic dishonesty and plagiarism will be dealt with severely. Each student is expected to understand the University's honor code, so students are strongly urged to review that section of the Handbook.

The Handbook (3) clearly states: "Misunderstanding of the Honor System will not be accepted as an excuse for dishonest work. If a student is in doubt on some point with respect to the student's work in a course, the student should consult the instructor before handing in the work in question." I expect that you will uphold the CNU Honor Code, below, in your preparations for this course:

On my honor, I will maintain the highest possible standards of honesty, integrity, and personal responsibility. That means I will not lie, cheat, or steal and as a member of this academic community, I am committed to creating an environment of respect and mutual trust.

Disabilities:

In order for a student to receive an accommodation for a disability, that disability must be on record in the Office of Student Affairs, 3rd Floor, David Student Union (DSU). If you believe that you have a disability, please contact Dr. Kevin Hughes, Vice President of Student Affairs (594-7160) to discuss your needs. Dr. Hughes will provide you with the necessary documentation to give to your professors.

Students with documented disabilities are to notify the instructor at least seven days prior to the point at which they require an accommodation (the first day of class is recommended), in private, if accommodation is needed. The instructor will provide students with disabilities with all reasonable accommodations, but students are not exempted from fulfilling the normal requirements of the course. Work completed before the student notifies the instructor of his/her disability may be counted toward the final grade at the sole discretion of the instructor.

Success:

I want you to succeed in this course and at Christopher Newport. I encourage you to come see me during office hours or to schedule an appointment to discuss course content or to answer questions you have. If I become concerned about your course performance, attendance, engagement, or well-being, I will speak with you first. I also may submit a referral through our Captains Care Program. The referral will be received by the Center for Academic Success as well as other departments when appropriate (Counseling Services, Office of Student Engagement). If you are an athlete, the Athletic Academic Support Coordinator will be notified. Someone will contact you to help determine what will help you succeed. Please remember that this is a means for me to support you and help foster your success at Christopher Newport.

Academic Support:

The Center for Academic Success offers free tutoring assistance for Christopher Newport students in several academic areas. Staff in the center offer individual assistance and/or workshops on various study strategies to help you perform your best in your courses. The center also houses the Alice F. Randall Writing Center. Writing consultants can help you at any stage of the writing process, from invention, to development of ideas, to polishing a final draft. The Center is not a proofreading service, but consultants can help you to recognize and find grammar and punctuation errors in your work as well as provide assistance with global tasks. Go as early in the writing process as you can, and go often!

You may visit the Center for Academic Success to request a tutor, meet with a writing consultant, pick up a schedule of workshops, or make an appointment to talk one-on-one with a University Fellow for Student Success. The Center is located in Christopher Newport Hall, first floor, room 123.

Course Requirements

The following is a breakdown of the grading process based on the course requirements. Please note that I do **not** curve individual assignments or the final course grade.

1. Prospectus, worth 15% of final grade.
2. Outline, worth 10% of final grade.
3. Research paper, worth 40% of final grade.
4. Final presentation, worth 10% of final grade.
5. Participation, worth 15% of final grade.
6. Departmental Assessment Exam/ Major Field Test, worth 10% of final grade.

Prospectus:

Each student will choose a topic to examine in her/his research paper (with guidance from the professor). The prospectus (3-4 pages of text, word-processed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman font) will pose a political research question, state your paper's thesis, summarize your methodology, discuss possible counter-arguments to your thesis that will be explored in the paper, and suggest a possible solution(s). The prospectus must also explain the political significance of the topic and include a preliminary list of your sources.

The prospectus is worth a maximum of 15 points. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** The guidelines for this assignment will be discussed thoroughly in class.

Outline:

Each student will complete a detailed outline of her/his paper. The outline (maximum 3 single-spaced pages, word-processed, with one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman font) should accurately reflect each part of your paper. It will include a complete list of sources, and will parenthetically cite throughout the sources you plan to use in your paper to support your thesis and counter-arguments. The outline is worth a maximum of 10 points. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** The guidelines for this assignment will be discussed thoroughly in class.

Research Paper:

The research paper is the major component of GOVT 490WI. Each student's paper will be based upon her/his previous written assignments for the course, which may include: a prospectus or literature review, and an outline.

- The paper should be about 20 pages of text. This requirement does not include the title page, abstract and/or outline at the beginning of the paper, or the works cited plus any appendices and/or tables and figures at the end of the paper.
- Rules regarding the length of the paper:
 - Papers that are **less than 18 full pages of text** will automatically be deducted one full letter grade.
 - Papers that are **less than 16 full pages of text** will automatically be deducted two full letter grades.
 - Papers that are **less than 14 full pages of text** will automatically be deducted three full letter grades.
 - Papers that are **less than 12 full pages of text** will automatically receive a failing grade.
 - Please note that these grade deductions will be in addition to any points deducted due to the overall quality, or lack thereof, of the paper.
 - → Papers that are **more than 22 full pages of text** require special permission by the professor, and may involve explanation of why extra pages are necessary to complete this assignment.
- Moreover, please adhere to the following guidelines:
 - The paper must be word-processed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins and 12-point Times New Roman font.
 - The paper must include:
 - (1) A clearly articulated research question,
 - (2) A thesis,

- (3) Analysis of a political issue,
 - (4) Appropriate methods/empirical strategies,
 - (5) Discussion of relevant counter-arguments, and
 - (6) Possible solution(s) to the political issue under study.
- The paper must include reference to a minimum of 10 scholarly sources that are used as evidence. If you are unsure of what constitutes a scholarly source, please consult the professor. Please note that no portion of this paper may be borrowed from a previous paper written for another course.
 - More specifically, the Undergraduate Handbook states (5) that “Unless permission is obtained in advance from the instructors of the courses involved, a student may not submit academic work for completion of assignments in more than one course. Students who perceive the possibility for an overlapping assignment in courses should consult with the instructors involved before presuming that a single effort will meet the requirements of both assignments.”
 - All papers will be run through plagiarism software, and any plagiarism that is detected will be dealt with severely and may result in the student failing the research paper component of the class and/or failing the entire course, and having the student's name turned over to CHECS as a violation of the CNU Honor Code.

The research paper is worth a maximum of 40 points. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** A separate handout will be provided with further details on this requirement. As with all of the assignments for this course, the guidelines for the research paper will be discussed thoroughly in class.

- In addition to turning in a hard copy of your research paper, a copy must also be uploaded to Scholar on or before the due date.

Presentations:

Each student will present her/his research at various stages of completion **two** times throughout the semester.

- The **first** presentation will explain the topic and offer preliminary methods. The first presentation is informal and will develop into discussions involving the entire class in which students receive feedback immediately following their presentations from classmates and the professor. This presentation will not be graded per se but will be counted as part of the participation component of the course.
- The **final** presentation is formal and will take place during the last few weeks of the semester. Each student will present her/his completed research project by explaining research question and thesis, summarizing the content and methodology of the paper, and explaining the findings and conclusions. Students are encouraged to use multimedia equipment and/or other technology during their presentations (if available).
- Each student will have 15 minutes to present their finished research project and the final presentation is worth a maximum of 10 points. You are encouraged to use Power Point to present your findings to the class, but no portion of the allotted 15 minutes are to come from the use of videos or other multi-media sources from the Internet. A separate handout will be

provided with details on this requirement. The guidelines for this component of the course will be discussed thoroughly in class.

***Note:** Students are expected to listen carefully to final presentations and to take notes in order to ask presenters questions and offer brief critiques in a 10-minute Question & Answer (Q&A) session immediately following each presentation.

Participation:

Class discussion is an integral component of the seminar and each student is expected to participate actively throughout the semester. The participation grade includes your comments in class, informal presentations, questions/critiques of presentations throughout the semester, and participation on Scholar.

Participation on Scholar requires the following components:

- **First**, students are required to post a “Prospectus Synopsis” on Scholar regarding their paper topic and explanation of its importance prior to the informal prospectus presentations.
 - ***Note:** Each student will then critique **three** other students’ explanations of their research to this point. Postings and critiques will be factored into the overall participation grade for the course.
- **Second**, students are required to email the professor the “Paper Summary” prior to the start of final presentations. Paper summaries will be a good opportunity to get the final feedback from the professor before writing up the full paper. Submitting the summary is mandatory although you will not be penalized if the summary requires substantial adjustments. Failing to submit the summary, however, will result in a 2-points deduction from the final paper.
- For each final paper presentation, students are asked to write 3-5 questions and/or substantive comments. These questions/comments will then be asked / offered during the Q&A session after each presentation. Additionally, questions and thoughtful commentary may be collected at the end of every presentation. These critiques will be factored into your participation grade for the course. Moreover, students are encouraged to use Scholar to send suggestions/comments to each other regarding their research throughout the semester.

Participation is worth a maximum of 15 points. **All forms of participation must be constructive and substantive in order to receive possible credit.** For example, merely stating that you like someone’s paper topic will not suffice to receive any participation credit. Instead, you must offer ways for your classmates to improve their research papers, suggest variables to include in their analyses, and/or possible sources to consult, etc.

Departmental Assessment Exam/Major Field Test:

All students enrolled in GOVT 490WI are required to take this exam. As per Departmental policy, 10% of your final course grade will be based upon the score you receive on this test. You will receive handouts on the Major Field Test at the beginning of the semester, and you are encouraged to visit the web site associated with the test to familiarize yourself with the test prior to it being administered in class.

Grading

For written work, the **A** range will comprise only work which features strikingly original thinking and/or argumentation, expressed in clear, cogent, error-free writing. Only students that go well beyond class materials and discussions (in thought, not extra research) will be considered for an **A** grade. Papers and examinations in the **B** range exhibit mastery of the course materials and discussions, expressed in clear, cogent, error-free writing. Papers and examinations in the **C** range exhibit inadequate understanding of the course materials and discussions and/or deficient, error-plagued writing. Papers and examinations in the **D** range exhibit wholly inadequate understanding of the course materials combined with deficient, error-plagued writing. Hopefully the **D** range and worse will not be an issue. Pluses, minuses, or flat grades within any of these ranges reflect the instructors' judgment of the merits of the paper or examination relative to other papers in the same range. All late assignments will be reduced 1/3 of a grade for every day they are late. Students may appeal grades they feel they received in error but I reserve the right to increase or decrease their grade upon reconsideration. To appeal you must explain, in writing, why you believe your grade is incorrect before coming to talk to me. I am willing to give "A"s when deserved but I am also willing to use the other parts of the grading spectrum to make sure that those whose work is truly outstanding truly stand out. Your work does not start at "A" level with subtraction for things wrong with it. I frequently give "B"s to work that is very good and without obvious shortcoming, and which only has the flaw of not being A quality work.

Grading Scale

94-100 A	74-76 C
90-93 A-	70-73 C-
87-89 B+	67-69 D+
84-86 B	64-66 D
80-83 B-	60-63 D-
77-79 C+	0-59 F

Tentative class schedule

(This schedule is subject to change if we require more or less time to adequately cover each topic)

Notes on course schedule:

- Please note that in addition to regularly scheduled office hours, I am available to meet in my office individually with students during class time noted below as "Independent Student Research / Writing."
- In addition, I strongly encourage students to schedule individual meetings with me as often as they wish throughout the semester, beyond those required, to discuss the various stages of their research projects.
- Students are also welcome to use the classroom during periods of "Independent Student Research / Writing" to discuss research ideas with one another.

Tentative class schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

1/8: course introduction

1/10: the process of conducting research

Bring typed 1-page description of preliminary paper topic(s) to class for discussion. List at least one research question you are curious about for each topic. List any ideas and resources you have (such as potential interviewees, survey targets, scenarios for experiments, etc.) This can be as general or as specific as you like at this point as the purpose of this exercise is to get you thinking about what topic you might like to write on for your paper. Be prepared to turn in your write-up at the end of class.

Week 2: Preliminary meetings

1/15-17: required individual meetings with professor

Come prepared to discuss 2 research topics that you would like to write about for your paper. This will be aided greatly by bringing with you typed answers to the following for each topic:

- *The general topic (and some background information of the topic) you want to research;*
- *Political significance of the topic*
- *The main puzzle you want to solve and a preliminary **research question**;*
- *Your hypothesis (or potential thesis and argument) and key variables;*
- *Counter-arguments;*
- *Methods and Empirical strategies;*
- *Scholarly sources.*

Week 3: class discussion of paper topics

1/22-24: in class discussions of project progress

Come prepared to share your research progress so far. We might not have time to discuss every project but it will be a good time to get ideas and learn from your classmates' projects. Be prepared to ask questions and provide constructive feedback.

Week 4: Individual meetings and independent student research/writing

1/29-31: individual meetings with professor

Week 5: independent student research/writing

2/5-7: write up the prospectus

Prospectus synopsis is due Friday 2/8, by midnight on Scholar. Each student should start a new thread and post the texts directly into the thread.

Critiques are due Sunday 2/10, by midnight on Scholar. By the order of last names, critique the synopsis of the three people after you. Each student should post your three critiques under the thread of the prospectus you are responding.

**Note: It is each student's responsibility to read their critiques before class on Tuesday, 2/12, and to come to class prepared to address any questions/comments raised therein.*

Week 6: Informal presentations of prospectus

2/12-14: 5-minute presentations of prospectus

Prospectus due on 2/14, by midnight

Week 7: independent student research/writing, class meeting if needed
2/19-21: continue with the research project

Week 8: independent student research/writing
2/26-28: make adjustments based on feedback from professor and continue with the research project

Week 9: Spring Recess
3/2-11: spring recess

Week 10: continue with independent research
3/12-14: individual meetings with professor, as needed

*Outline Due at the Beginning of Class on 3/19

Week 11: In-class discussion of research progress
3/19-21: informal reporting of progress, group Q&A

Week 12: major field test, administered in class
3/26-28: major field test
*Paper summaries are due on scholar on Sunday 3/31, by midnight

Week 13: Independent student research/writing, class meeting if needed
4/2-4: prepare for presentations

Research should be finished, no need to fully write up the paper yet. Each student meet with professor to discuss presentation materials and research results

Week 14: Presentation discussions
4/9-11: prepare for presentations, continue to meet with professor individually with presentation materials.

Week 15: Research presentations
4/16-18: in class presentations
*research papers due on 4/19

Final exam period: Continue with the rest of the research presentations

Timetable:

- 1/10: bring typed 1-page description of preliminary paper topic(s)
- 1/15-17: bring typed answers on 2 research topics when meeting with the professor
- 1/22-24: report progress to class
- 2/8: prospectus synopsis due
- 2/10: critiques of others' prospectus synopsis due
- 2/12: ready with succinct presentation of prospectus with some feedback to critiques
- 2/14: prospectus due

- 3/19: outline due (beginning of class)
- 3/26-28: major field test
- 3/31: paper summaries due
- 4/16: research presentations begin (get the PPTs and other presentation materials ready)
- 4/19: research papers due
- Final exam period: wrap up the research presentations