Political Science Capstone Senior Seminar
PLSC 490, Sec 001, 3 credits
Fall 2011
Tuesdays/Thursdays, 12:30pm-1:45pm
Bancroft 339

Instructors
Dr. Karen Kedrowski
Dr. Christopher Van Aller

Office Location
328 Bancroft Hall
342 Bancroft Hall

Office Hours
T/R 9:30-10:30 a.m. and by appointment
T/R 3:30-4:30 p.m., Wednesday 11 a.m.-12 p.m. and by appointment

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803-323-4662
803-323-4667

Email
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vanallerc@winthrop.edu

REQUIRED TEXTS


All other required materials are available through Blackboard. Most are also available through J-STOR.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to provide all Political Science degree-seeking students with a team-taught, culminating capstone experience. In this course, we will collectively discuss a diverse set of readings that provide a comprehensive overview of the major theories and methods in each of the subfields in the discipline of Political Science: American Politics, Political Theory, Comparative Politics, International Politics, Public Law, Public Policy, and Public Administration. PLSC 350, a total of 21 hours of political science course credit, and senior status are prerequisites for this course.

COURSE GOALS
There are two main goals for the course. The first is to provide an overview of the theories and methods of the discipline of Political Science. The second is to provide a capstone experience through the writing of a lengthy research paper. Consequently, during the semester, students will, in consultation with their professors, select, design and write an original research paper to be presented to the class at the end of the semester.

This course meets the University Touchstone Program’s Intensive Writing requirement. This course also meets Goals 1.1, 3.3, and 4.3 of the Program: Goal 1.1: Read, write, and speak standard English; Goal 3.3: Conduct independent research; Goal 4.3: Understand the nature of social and cultural conflict and methods of resolution.

This course participates in the Global Learning Initiative especially in its discussions of Comparative Politics and International Relations.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
At the end of this class, students will be able to: (1) effectively demonstrate an understanding of the diverse theories and methods employed in the discipline of Political Science; (2) prepare a
professional, original, research paper in the field of political science that may be used in one or more of the following capacities: as a graduate school or employment writing sample; to deliver at a state, regional, national, or international Political Science conference; to complete an Honors Thesis requirement; to demonstrate proficiency in the design, implementation, and writing of an original political science research project.

STUDENT LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Essay Examination: This course is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the disciplinary subfields of and methodological approaches to Political Science. Students’ understanding of these topics will be evaluated on the two in-class exams scheduled during the semester. The second section will focus on writing the capstone paper. Students will be evaluated based upon their final paper.

Attendance, Readings and Class Participation: Attendance and informed class participation are important aspects of your grade, not to mention of successfully completing the course. Students must keep up with the required readings listed on the syllabus. This course is designed to be a participatory seminar course, in which faculty and students alike participate in generating knowledge. Therefore, students are required to read and think about all assigned materials before class, and to come to class ready to collectively engage the material. To this end, the instructors reserve the right to give quizzes and/or writing response exercises to evaluate your competent fulfillment of these obligations. Any such evaluation will be considered as a part of your participation grade.

The instructors will look favorably upon participation in discussion boards and wikis on Blackboard.

The instructors are also very approachable. Please feel free to come to us with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have as the class progresses.

In addition, during the Writers’ Workshop portions of the class, students will be expected to present or discuss the progress they are making on their papers. All students should come prepared to discuss the relevant portion of their papers during each class period.

Research Paper: The central work product students will generate in this course is a lengthy (20-25 page) research paper in which students will choose a topic and, using one or more of the epistemological approaches covered in this course, generate new knowledge about the topic.

Each student’s grade on the research paper will be determined on the quality of her/his final paper. However, to ensure that each student writes a paper that reflects her/his best work, this assignment is broken down into several required components. While these components are not graded individually, the final paper grade will be penalized if students do not complete each component and submit the components on their due dates. For more details, see Appendix 1.

Presentation: In lieu of a final examination, each student will present her/his paper to the professors and the entire class during the final examination period. Students may present the paper using PowerPoint, posters or other means. Each presentation should be no more than 10 minutes long.
CALCULATING COURSE GRADES:

In-class, Essay Examinations: 40%  (20% each)
Attendance and Class Participation 10%
Final Research Paper 40%
Paper Presentation 10%
Total 100%

Course grades will be determined according to the following criteria: 
A = 93-100%; A- = 90-92%; B+= 87-89%; B = 83-86%; C= 77-79%; C-=73-76%; D=67-69%;
D+=63-66%; D-=60-62% and F = <60%.

Please Note: Both instructors are equally involved in course development, instruction and student evaluation. The two instructors will grade each assignment independently and then discuss each student’s assigned grade. While each student may work more closely with one of the instructors on his/her research paper, both instructors will read each component and provide feedback to the student.

Please Also Note and Note Well: Your grade for the course will suffer if you flagrantly and/or repeatedly violate conventional standards of classroom decorum. Students are expected to treat other students and the professors with respect. Winthrop has a large campus, and the University provides many places where students can sleep, chat, surf the Internet, check email, use their cell phones, and so forth. This class is not one of those places. Furthermore, absent a personal emergency, students who come to class are expected to stay until the end of class unless they have made prior arrangements with us. In addition, the instructors abide by the CAS Technology Policy.

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

Attendance, Class Participation, and Taking Notes. Regular class attendance is expected and required. Excessive absences will lower your grade in two ways: (1) loss of note-taking from class lecture and discussion; (2) loss of class participation opportunities. Class participation, which requires your presence, will raise or lower grades on the border line. If prolonged illness or other problems cause you to be absent for an extended period of time, please contact the instructors. In addition, every student is expected to arrive on time. Arriving late or leaving early disrupts the class and is unacceptable.

Make Up Exams and Late Submissions. Students are expected to take exams on the days they are assigned. Written assignments and take home examinations are due at or before the start of class on the dates they are due. Students may take a make up examination or submit an assignment late in case of emergency. Students must call or email one of the instructors on the due date of the exam or assignment and be prepared to document the emergency in writing. The instructors will then determine whether a make up exam will be administered, and/or the degree of penalty (if any) that will be assessed on late assignments.

Students with Disabilities. If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact Gena Smith, Program Manager, Office of Disability Services, at 323-2233, as soon as possible. Once you have your professor notification letter, please notify the instructors so that they are aware of your accommodations well before the first assignment.

Student Conduct: This classroom is a place for lively exchange of ideas and discussion. However, all students will treat their peers with respect for their ideas and them as individuals,
even if they disagree. In addition, the faculty members will not tolerate any other inappropriate behavior or academic misconduct. Specifically we refer you to:

- **Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct**, Please see the [Department’s statement](#).
- **Cell Phones and Electronic Devices**, Please see the college’s policy on the [appropriate use of technology](#).

**Plagiarism Detection.** Students must submit all papers to the plagiarism detection website [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). Failure to submit papers to turnitin.com will result in an automatic grade of F. Late submission to turnitin will be penalized at the same rates as late in-class submissions. The course name and password will be distributed on Email via [Blackboard](#).

**Syllabus Change Policy:** This calendar is subject to change during the semester. We will provide any information on changes during class. It is your responsibility to keep track of this information

### SCHEDULE OF CLASS TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 23</td>
<td>Course Description, Requirements Writing Big Papers: Topics Strategies and Sources</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 30</td>
<td>Behaviorism and the Behavioral Revolution</td>
<td>Marsh and Stoker, Chapter 1 Scott and Garrison Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>What are Ontology and Epistemology, and Their Relevance?</td>
<td>Marsh and Stoker, Chapter 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 8</td>
<td>Postmodernism for Dummies</td>
<td>Michael Bérubé: “Postmodernism” from <em>What’s Liberal about the Liberal Arts</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 13</td>
<td>Rational Choice and Political Science</td>
<td>Marsh and Stoker, Chapter 2</td>
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<td>September 15</td>
<td>In-class writing workshop: APSA style and organizing the literature review</td>
<td>Scott and Garrison, Chapter 5 especially Winthrop University, “Evaluating Internet Sources.” Appendix A: List of Political Science Periodicals p. 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 27</td>
<td>In class writing workshop: Developing your research question, Honing your methodology, Identifying and collecting data.</td>
<td>Marsh and Stoker, Chapter 11 Scott and Garrison Chapter 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading/Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 29</td>
<td>Examination 1</td>
<td>Marsh and Stoker, Chapter 14</td>
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<td>October 6</td>
<td>Guest Lecture, Dr. Michael Bérubé</td>
<td>No assigned readings</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 13</td>
<td>Instructors’ conferences (in-class and by appointment): Research Question and Data Collection Final Day to Discuss Changing Paper Topic with Instructors</td>
<td>Scott and Garrison Chapter 4</td>
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<td>October 18</td>
<td>Fall Break. No Class.</td>
<td>Marsh and Stoker, Chapters 12 and 13.</td>
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<td>October 25</td>
<td>Marx and Marxism First 5 pages of paper due</td>
<td>Marsh and Stoker, Chapter 7 Manley, John. “Who Can We Shoot? Democratic Elitism, Marxism, and American Progressivism.” Available at <a href="http://www.iefd.org/articles/who_can_we_shoot.php">http://www.iefd.org/articles/who_can_we_shoot.php</a> Section I.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>In-class writing workshop: Compiling evidence, making an argument, writing up the data analysis, finding your conclusion</td>
<td>Scott and Garrison, Chapter 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>First 15 Pages of Paper Draft Due In-Class Writing Workshop: Writing Competently/Paper Formats</td>
<td>Scott and Garrison, Chapter 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 17</td>
<td>Political Science Assessment</td>
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<td>November 22</td>
<td>Rough Draft Due (20 page minimum) Peer Evaluations and Instructors’ Conferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 24</td>
<td>Happy Thanksgiving. No class.</td>
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<td>November 29</td>
<td>Instructors’ conferences, final issues</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Instructors conferences, final issues</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>December 8, 3:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Two copies of final paper due at 3 p.m. and submitted to turnitin.com</td>
<td>Class Presentations</td>
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APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH PAPER REQUIREMENTS

The central component of this course is a lengthy Research Paper, in which students will
generate new knowledge on a topic of Political Science. We recognize that this undertaking is
new to most students, and may be intimidating. Consequently, we have broken down the
research paper into five components. Only the last component, the Research Paper itself, will be
graded. However, to ensure that students can produce the best possible paper, the other
components are required, even if they are ungraded. As a result, each student’s final paper grade
will be penalized if s/he fails to complete any or all of the first four components, or completes
them late.

The ungraded components are 1) The Topic and Supporting Materials Paper; 2) two Instructor’s
Conferences; 3) Peer Review; and 4) Complete Rough Draft. We expect students to put in an
honest effort on these assignments. The better your work on these ungraded components, the
higher the quality of the feedback we can provide you, and better your final paper will be. If we
are not satisfied with the quality of these required, ungraded components, we may require you to
redo the assignment and/or penalize the grade on the Research Paper.

1) The Topic and Supporting Materials Paper (500 word minimum). In this assignment, each
student will describe her/his topic, articulate a specific thesis statement, explain what
methodological approach(es) will be used, discuss data sources and include an annotated
bibliography.

In the annotated bibliography, we expect each student to list and describe at least eight sources
that s/he has consulted and will use in her/his paper. Each description should be 2-5 sentences
long. The annotated bibliography should include:

- At least two relevant scholarly books;
- At least three scholarly articles; and
- No more than two contemporary news articles.

The following are not considered appropriate sources for a paper of this nature:
- Encyclopedias;
- “Wikipedia” or other on-line sources that are not vetted by an editor or peer reviewed.
  Blogs, personal web sites and the like are examples.
- Textbooks.

2) Instructor’s Conferences. Students are expected to meet with one or both of the instructors
of the course to receive additional comments and suggestions. The conferences will be held with
the instructor with the greatest expertise in the student’s topic. The first conference will be held
outside of class, and will be scheduled after the Topic Paper is submitted. This conference is
designed to help the student complete the paper. Subsequent conferences will be held during in-
class workshops and outside of class as necessary. Four are scheduled; two are required; students
may request additional conferences if they so choose.
3) **Peer Reviews.** Students are expected to participate fully in the peer-review component of this assignment. Students will bring the assigned portions of their papers to class for distribution to a small group of fellow students, who will critique their work. Students are also expected to provide meaningful criticism of their colleagues’ papers.

4) **The Incomplete Drafts.** Students are required to complete the paper in stages. The components and lengths of these drafts are listed above. These drafts will adhere to all of the requirements of the Research Paper, and the instructors and peers will provide specific comments on the content of the paper and make suggestions for improvement. Students are expected to take these comments seriously and to incorporate them into subsequent drafts.

5) **The Complete Rough Draft.** This draft will adhere to all of the requirements of the Research Paper and will be a *minimum* of 20 pages long, and the instructors will provide specific comments on the content and suggestions for improvement. Students are expected to take these comments seriously and to substantially revised the draft for the final Research Paper.

6) **The Research Paper.** This paper will be 25-30 pages long and include a minimum of 20 outside sources *other than* the data used in the paper. Students will use APSA style. The paper must be focused on a topic germane to Political Science, and include the following components:

- Introduction and thesis
- Literature review
- Justification of importance of research question
- Description of methodology and data sources
- Presentation of findings
- Interpretation
- Conclusion

**RESEARCH PAPER GRADING INFORMATION:** The Research Paper will comprise 50 percent of the course grade. This grade will be based on the quality of the final paper topic. However, those students who fail to complete all components of the assignment will see their final paper grades penalized. The penalties for missed components are as follows:

- Topic and Supporting Materials Paper: 5%
- Incomplete drafts: 10% (each)
- Instructors’ Conferences: 5% (each)
- Peer Review: 5% (each)
- Rough Draft: 15%

Required components that are submitted late will generate penalties at the instructors’ discretion.

Students who have a documented emergency that results in missing a component’s deadline will not be penalized.