Memorandum

August 17, 2009

To: Faculty Senate Executive Committee

From: Valerie Balester, Chair
W Course Advisory Committee

RE: Request for course additions to the W Course graduation requirement

The W Course Advisory Committee voted to approve the following courses to satisfy the writing requirement for graduation. The W Course Advisory Committee reviewed each course and agreed that all aspects of the courses were consistent with guidelines for the W Course status requirement. Therefore, these courses should be included in the “W Designated Course” category to meet the writing intensive requirement for graduation.

Courses submitted for W certification:

- POLS 352 Empirical Democratic Theory
TO: Faculty Senate Executive Committee
FROM: Valerie Balester, Chair, W Course Advisory Committee
CC: Kim Hill, Department of Political Science
    James R. Rogers, Head, Department of Political Science
    Donald J. Curtis, AOC Dean, College of Liberal Arts
DATE: August 17, 2009
SUBJECT: REPORT ON PROPOSED W COURSE: POLS 352

We recommend that POLS 352 Empirical Democratic Theory be certified as a writing (W) course for the next four academic years (9/09 to 9/13). We have reviewed a representative syllabus and have determined that the course meets or exceeds the following criteria:

1. Percentage of final grade based on writing quality: 85%
2. Course content appropriate to the major
3. Total number of words: 5500
4. Instructor to student ratio for one section: 1:20

Students in POLS 352 write four papers and receive extensive feedback on drafts, including both comments and a checklist. For the second paper, which introduces students to scientific writing style, students are required to attend a conference with the instructor and have an opportunity to revise afterwards. Writing instruction includes class discussions of most common writing problems, and students examine and discuss model texts in different styles. The level of instruction and feedback is extensive and detailed.
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY W COURSE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Request for W or C Course Status
Submitted to the Chair, W Course Advisory Committee
University Writing Center, MS 5000

1. This request is submitted to Valerie Balester, Chair, W Course Advisory Committee, and concerns (enter prefix, number, and complete course title):
   POLS 352 Empirical Democratic Theory

2. Please have this form signed by both the Department Head and the College Dean.

3. Once signed, please submit this form to the University Writing Center, MS 5000.

Instructor / Coordinator: Kim Quaile Hill
Printed name and signature: Kim Quaile Hill
(Date): 6/18/09

Received: Valerie Balester
(W Course Coordinator, University Writing Center)
(Date): 7/1/09

Approvals:

Pamela R. Matthews
College Dean:
Printed name and signature: Pamela R. Matthews
(Date):

Department Head: James R. Rogers
Printed name and signature: James R. Rogers
(Date): 6/18/09
POLITICAL SCIENCE 352: EMPIRICAL DEMOCRATIC THEORY
W-Course Proposed Syllabus Modeled on the Spring, 2009 Calendar

Spring, 2009
TR 11:55 am -1:10 pm

Dr. Kim Hill
Office: BUSH 2092
Hours: TR 3:30 - 4:30 pm, and by appointment.
Phone: 845-8235
E-mail: e339kq@polisci.tamu.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The most important and general objective of this course is to educate you about how political scientists employ scientific research to understand the character of democratic government. One related objective is to distinguish the strengths and limitations of scientific knowledge as opposed to other forms of knowledge about political phenomena for helping us understand democratic political processes. A third general objective is to enhance your understanding of the purposes, character, and procedures of both theoretical and applied social science research building on what you learned about the latter matters in POLS 209 if you have taken that course. If you have not taken 209, I will provide you the key information you would have gotten there that is relevant to our work in this class. I review that key material in this course for the benefit of all the students.

We begin the course by considering ideas about and critiques of democracy from individuals writing in what I call a commonsensical tradition and those writing political philosophy. These works are meant to inform us independently about democracy, but we might also use them to initially guide scientific research on democracy. We will critique the value of commonsensical and philosophical knowledge in both of these respects. Thus one particular objective of the course is that you learn the value of such works for these purposes.

Next, we discuss the goals and procedures of scientific research. With these discussions as a foundation, we will then examine scientific definitions for levels of democratization, the degree to which various governments are democratic, and scientific research on the causes and consequences of differing levels of democratization. We will also consider in a modest degree applied efforts to advance democratization in the USA and other parts of the world and their prospects for success given what we know from theoretical work on the subject. We also will enhance your knowledge of the procedures for original scientific research to advance basic- or applied-science knowledge. Thus another specific objective of the class is to advance your understanding of the primary, existing scientific knowledge base about democratic political systems. Another particular objective is to increase your understanding of how to do research to advance that knowledge base.
However, this is also a writing-intensive, or University-designated W course. Thus other objectives of the course are to improve your ability to write various kinds of papers that are appropriate to this discipline, to learn how political science scholars and others who write professionally about politics do so most effectively, and to improve generally your writing skills as they might be of use in a range of professional settings.

REQUIRED READINGS

There are no books for purchase for this class. Instead, most of the readings are available on Electronic Reserve through the home page of the Evans Library. These readings are marked LR in the class schedule below. Instructions for how to access these electronic reserve readings are on the last page of this syllabus. You will also download a few readings from one or another site from the World Wide Web. Instructions for how to download such readings from the site www.ISTOR.org are also listed on the last page of this syllabus.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You will write four papers ranging in expected length from approximately 4 to 10 pages on selected topics that we will discuss over the course of the semester. For each of these papers I have either set aside one class day for discussion of the topic, assignment, and paper or we will have multiple class days in the computer lab to work on and discuss the paper. The purpose of these sessions is to promote general class discussion or to help you individually to master the conceptual and technical information you need for each paper, not for me to lecture or give you hints on how to write the papers. I also encourage you to let me read all your papers in draft to comment on them and make suggestions for revisions before you turn them in. One W course requirement, however, is that you have a personal discussion with me about a draft of one of your class papers (as explained in more detail below in the Schedule of Lecture Topics). The papers will collectively constitute 85 percent of your class grade, and the proportion of the total class grade for each separate paper is indicated in the class schedule below. The command of the course material from the lectures and readings that you demonstrate in these papers is the most important determinant of your grades on them. Yet because this is a W course, a paper will not earn a passing grade unless your writing in the paper is also graded to be at a passing level. But a principal goal of the class is to assist you in learning how to write well in your upper-division classes and after graduation. Therefore, I will provide extensive instruction in writing throughout the course. Further, I will give you considerable advice on outlines and drafts of the papers for the class. Some of the required reading for the class also addresses appropriate writing skills and the organization of written material for different kinds of writing objectives.

In addition I will grade you on class participation, which includes attendance at lecture sessions of the class, attendance at the computer lab sessions of the class the latter of which are of critical importance and thus will be recorded at each of these lab sessions, and class discussion of or other active engagement with the subject matter of the course in class sessions. Your overall class participation grade based on these components will account for 15 percent of your final grade. That is a big percentage, so you should keep this fact constantly in mind.
If you turn in a paper late, you must have a valid university excused absence that is appropriately documented for the relevant class day to avoid a late penalty for the paper.

COURSE POLICIES

What counts as a university excused absence? The following reasons are considered excused by Texas A&M University (Section 7.1 from student rules http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule7.htm)

1. Participation in an activity appearing on the university authorized activity list. You must notify your professor prior to the absence.
2. Death or major illness in a student’s immediate family.
3. Illness of a dependent family member.
4. Participation in legal proceedings or administrative procedures that require a student’s presence.
5. Religious holy day.
6. Illness that is too severe or contagious for the student to attend class (to be determined by Health Center or off-campus physician).
7. Required participation in military duties.
8. Mandatory admission interviews for professional or graduate school which cannot be rescheduled.

Students who miss graded work for excused absence have a very limited amount of time to notify the professor that the absence was excused and provide documentation. For specific information, go to: http://student-rules.tamu.edu/ and search for excused absence.

Regular class attendance is expected but not required, except I will be evaluating your participation grade in part based on attendance at regular class and computer lab sessions. Most of our regular class sessions will be lectures; a few will be entirely class discussion. I will always encourage questions and class participation, however, even during lectures. Further, the lectures and discussions provide the most important material in the class. Thus I cannot urge you too strongly to attend class without fail.

Students in this class may also be eligible for accommodation under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall, or call 845-1637.

The handouts used in this class are copyrighted. The handouts include but are not limited to the syllabus, literal handouts in class, and instructions for the class papers. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy them unless I expressly grant permission for you to do so.
The *Aggie Honor Code* states, "An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do." For more information and details on Honor Council Rules and Procedures refer to the web-site of the Aggie Honor System Office at [http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor](http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor). Among other possible violations explained in Honor Council Rules and Procedures, academic misconduct that is prohibited includes *cheating*, as on an exam or quiz; *fabrication of data or results* or otherwise submitting fabricated materials for a grade; the *falsification of research materials or findings*; submitting the same work, as for grades in more than one class; and *plagiarism*, which is presenting another person’s ideas, written words, or the like as your own work. If you have any concerns or questions about how these honor code rules apply to the work in this class, do not hesitate to discuss them with me.

Finally, I also strongly encourage you to meet with me during my office hours or by appointment if you have questions about the course material, the papers, or your progress in the course.

**SCHEDULE OF LECTURE TOPICS AND READINGS**

**Part I: Popular and Philosophical Understandings of Democracy**

**Jan. 20**  
Introduction to the class.

**Jan. 22**  
What is Democracy? What We Might Learn from a Casual Observation®


Discussion of the arguments in these readings about the character of democracy in *America and of the writing goals and style in Nader=s chapters.*

**Jan. 27**  
What is Democracy? What We Might Learn from Normative Philosophy and What is Normative Philosophy?


Lecture about and discussion of Raphael=s explanation of the goals of political philosophy and of his writing style and objectives.
Jan. 29  What is Democracy? What We Might Learn from Philosophy


Feb. 3  What is Democracy? Normative Philosophy as a Guide to Understanding The Benefits of Democracy


*PAPER 1 assignment handed out for 15 percent of the course grade.*

Feb. 5  Discussion session for first paper.


Bring a printed copy of *The Write Stuff* to class. Come prepared, too, with any questions you have about the assignment for this paper.

**Part II: The Basic Science Study of Political Phenomena Generally and Democracy Specifically**

Feb. 10  The Scientific Study of Political Phenomena


Lecture and discussion of the subject matter content of this book chapter *and of the writing purposes and style in it.*

Feb. 12  A Scientific Conceptualization of Democracy

Read: (1) Robert Dahl, *Democratization and Public Opposition* ch. 1 of *Polyarchy* (Yale University Press, 1971), LR.

Lecture and discussion.

*PAPER 1 due at the beginning of class.*
Feb. 17  
Measurement Theory Generally and for Dahl=s Conceptualization of Democracy

Read: Ted Robert Gurr, Principles of Operationalization, ch. 3 of POLITIMETRICS (Prentice-Hall, 1972), LR.

Lecture and discussion.

Feb. 19  
An Introduction to Statistical and Computational Methods for Political Science Research and Levels of Democratization in a Representative Sample of Political Systems Scientifically Assessed

Read: Kim Quaile Hill, Als There Democracy in America? ch. 1 of DEMOCRACY IN THE FIFTY STATES (University of Nebraska Press, 1994). LR

Lecture about and discussion of creating data on a research problem, creating a computer-readable data set, simple data analysis, and univariate analysis. Also, discussion of the writing goals and style of this book chapter.

Feb. 24  
Causes of Variation in Levels of Democracy: Some Theory and Hypotheses


Lecture and discussion.

Feb. 26  
Procedures for Testing Bivariate Hypotheses about Causes of Levels of Democratization

Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.


Lecture and exposition of correlational analysis, scatterplots, and hypothesis testing.
Mar. 3

Procedures for Testing Multivariate Hypotheses about Causes of Levels of Democratization

Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.

Read: Kenneth Hoover and Todd Donovan, Measuring Variables and Relationships ch.5, only the sections on Regression Analysis, pp. 106-112 and Why Multiple Regression..., pp. 112-116 in THE ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE THINKING (Wadsworth, 2008), LR.

Lecture and exposition of multiple regression.

Mar. 5

Tests of Hypotheses about Levels of Democratization
In American Governments And the Assignment for Paper 2

Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.

Skim: Cynthia McClintock and James H. Lebovic, Correlates of Levels of Democracy in Latin America During the 1990s, Latin American Politics and Society 48(Summer, 2006), 29-59. [Access this journal article by clicking on the e-journals link on the Evans Library homepage, and then follow the links that come up.]

More hypothesis-testing procedures and practice.

Discussion of the writing style and the format of the McClintock and Lebovic journal article.

PAPER 2 handed out for 20 percent of the course grade.

You are required to discuss a draft of the Second Paper with me in person at a mutually agreed time before 3:00 PM on the day before it is due. You are responsible for scheduling this meeting. A failure to schedule this meeting will result in a grade penalty on the paper.

Mar 10

Multivariate Analyses, Tables for Tests of Discrete Hypotheses and Causal Models

Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.

Read: Catherine A. Toft and Robert G. Jaeger, Writing for Scientific Journals I: The Manuscript, HERPETOLOGICA 34(June, 1998), skim most of this paper closely for the main ideas but read closely pages 544-548 on writing style.
In addition, I very much encourage, but do not require you to read: Steve Aaronson, *A Style in Scientific Writing*, CURRENT CONTENTS 2(January 10, 1977), 5-16. [To access this paper, do a web search on the title and it should come up as one of the earliest links.]

Statistical analyses for Paper 2.

_Discussion of the writing style advice in Toft and Jaeger._

_Mar. 12_  
Work on Paper 2 Analyses in the Computer Lab

**Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.**

_Mar. 17&19_  
Spring Break

_Mar. 24_  
The Responsiveness of Elected Officials to Public Preferences for Government Policy


Lecture and discussion.

_Mar. 26._  
Scientific Conceptualizations of Political Representation, I

Read: Patricia Hurley and Kim Quaile Hill, *In Search of Representation Theory*, *only those sections from the beginning up to the one on Minority Representation* (unless you wish to read more), revised version of a paper to be published in the OXFORD HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR (forthcoming, Oxford University Press). LR.

Lecture about and discussion of the content of this book chapter, _and of the objectives and writing style in it._

_Paper 2 due at the beginning of class._

_Mar. 31_  
Scientific Conceptualizations of Political Representation, II

È And the Assignment for Paper 3

**Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.**

Lecture, discussion, and initial work on the assignment for Paper 3.

_Paper 3 assignment handed out for 25 percent of the course grade._
Apr. 2  Independent Computer Lab or Other Work on Paper 3

Individual or group work on the paper.
Hill out of town on University business.

Apr. 7  Work on Paper 3 Analyses in the Computer Lab

**Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.**

Discussion with Hill as needed and work on the research for the paper.

Apr. 9  Work on Paper 3 Analyses in the Computer Lab

**Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.**

Discussion with Hill as needed and work on the research for the paper.

### Part III: The Applied Science Study of Political Phenomena and Democratization

Apr. 14  Applied Scientific Research & And the Conceptualization of the Research for Paper 4


Lecture about and discussion of applied research.  
*Discussion of the writing objectives and style in these chapters.*

*Discussion of the topic for PAPER 4.*

_Paper 3 due at the beginning of class._

Apr. 16  Conceptualization and Research Plan for Paper 4

**Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.**

Conceptualization, hypotheses, data analysis strategies for Paper 4. 
*Paper 4 assignment handed out for 25 percent of the course grade.*
Exploration of the data for the paper.

**Apr. 21**
Work on Paper 4 Analyses in the Computer Lab

*Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.*

Individual work on the paper with consultations with Hill.

**Apr. 23**
Work on Paper 4 Analyses in the Computer Lab

*Meet in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.*

Individual work on the paper with consultations with Hill.

**Apr. 28**
Work on Paper 4 Analyses in the Computer Lab

*Optional attendance Session in the department computer lab, Allen 2003.*

Individual work on the paper with consultations with Hill.

**Apr. 30**
Class Conclusion

Lecture and discussion of *Awhere we have been and where it can take us in the future.* @

**May 5**
*Paper 4 due to my office or my Department of Political Science mailbox in paper copy by 4:00 pm. Include your mailing address on the cover page of this paper if you would like to have me return it to you by mail.*
HOW TO ACCESS ELECTRONIC RESERVES FROM THE TAMU LIBRARY

1. Go to the home page of the TAMU library at http://library.tamu.edu and click on the link for Course Reserves on the left of the page.

2. On the next page that comes up, click on Search Course Reserves.

3. Then on the next page that comes up, click on Electronic Reserves and Reserves Pages.

4. On the next page, select my name in the A Instructor® drop-down list. Then click on Search.

5. Then follow the links to the reserves for POLS 352. Click on the title of the reading that you wish to access, and it will open in a PDF file.

6. Read the item on the screen or, better, print a copy to read and save.

7. Exit the reserves and library links.

HOW TO ACCESS READINGS IN JSTOR

1. Go to the JSTOR homepage at www.jstor.org from any TAMU computer and click on the Search option in JSTOR. (Alternatively, if you are working from home, you can go to the University libraries homepage at library.tamu.edu, click on Databases, and then enter the name JSTOR in the Search window and click Search. You will then have to login with your Net ID.) Then in JSTOR click on Advanced Search on the next page that appears.

2. On the next page that appears list the author of the article you are seeking, e.g. Segal, Jeffrey A., in the first line below Advanced Search. Then check the drop-down menu for Author instead of Full-text, and then check for Articles under the keywords Limit To and Type. Then check the box associated with Political Science journals from the list of scholarly disciplines that follows. Then click on Search.

3. Scroll through the list of publications by the author you have selected until you come to the article you are seeking. Click on the highlighted title of the article and it will open as in a PDF file. (continued)

4. Click on the Print option at the top of the page. Then click on Proceed with Printing on the next page that appears. The article will open in a new window (usually this takes a few moments to open). Click on the print icon to print the article.

5. Close out of JSTOR.

pols352-09c\SYLLABUS POLS 352 2009c.wpd