Eastern Illinois University
New Course Proposal
PLS 2001, Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

Please check one:  X New course  □ Revised course

PART I: CATALOG DESCRIPTION

1. Course prefix and number:  PLS 2001
2. Title:  Intro to Research Methods
3. Long title:  Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science
4. Class hours per week, lab hours per week, and credit:  1-0-1
5. Term(s) to be offered:  X Fall  X Spring  □ Summer  □ On demand
6. Initial term of offering:  X Fall □ Spring □ Summer Year:  2009
7. Course description (not to exceed four lines):  This course will introduce students to basic concepts/techniques important in understanding and developing research in political science. Topics include research design, development of a literature review, and qualitative approaches to data collection/analysis such as case studies, focus groups, interviews, and content analysis.
8. Registration restrictions:
   a. Identify any equivalent courses  none
   b. Prerequisite(s)  none
   c. Who can waive the prerequisite(s)?
      n/a
      □ No one □ Chair □ Instructor □ Advisor □ Other (Please specify)
   d. Co-requisites (course(s) which MUST be taken concurrently with this one):
      n/a
   e. Repeat status:  X Course may not be repeated.
   f. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to which registration in the course is restricted, if any: Restricted to the following majors: Political Science, Social Science Geography Designation, Social Science Geography Designation, Social Science History Designation, Social Science Political Science Designation, Social Science Psychology Designation, and Social Science Sociology-Anthropology Designation.
   g. Degree, college, major(s), level, or class to be excluded from the course, if any:
      n/a
9. Special course attributes -- none
10. Grading methods (check all that apply):  X Standard letter □ C/NC □ Audit □ ABC/NC (“Standard letter”—i.e., ABCDF--is assumed to be the default grading method unless the course description indicates otherwise.)
11. Instructional delivery method:  □ lecture □ lab □ lecture/lab combined □ independent study/research □ internship □ performance □ practicum or clinical □ study abroad □ other
PART II: ASSURANCE OF STUDENT LEARNING

1. List the student learning objectives of this course:
   Students will develop a research question and a testable hypothesis
   Students will locate and utilize scholarly sources in developing a literature review
   Students will evaluate ethical questions and obligations in conducting research
   Students will apply non-quantitative approaches to a research project (case study, focus group, etc.)

2. Identify the assignments/activities the instructor will use to determine how well students attained the learning objectives:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Research Question and Hypothesis assignment</th>
<th>bibliography</th>
<th>Literature Review</th>
<th>Ethics assignment</th>
<th>Case study assignment</th>
<th>Focus group/interview assignment</th>
<th>Content analysis assignment</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students develop a research question and a testable hypothesis</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students locate and utilize scholarly sources in developing a literature review</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Students will evaluate ethical questions and obligations in conducting research</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will apply non-quantitative approaches to a research project (case study, focus group, etc.)</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

3. Explain how the instructor will determine students’ grades for the course:
   Research question/hypothesis assignment 10%
   Bibliography assignment 10%
   Literature review assignment 25%
   Ethics assignment 10%
   Case study assignment 15%
   Interview/focus group assignment 15%
   Content analysis assignment 15%

4. For technology-delivered and other nontraditional-delivered courses/sections, address the following: n/a

5. For courses numbered 4750-4999, specify additional or more stringent requirements for students enrolling for graduate credit. n/a

6. If applicable, indicate whether this course is writing-active, writing-intensive, or writing-centered, and describe how the course satisfies the criteria for the type of writing course identified. (See Appendix *.) n/a
PART III: OUTLINE OF THE COURSE
The course will meet once a week for fifty minutes over a fifteen week period. Details are listed below.

Week one – Introduction to course and discussion of research design, hand out design assignment

Week two – discussion of research design assignments and intro to identification of “scholarly” sources

Week three – Library lab and introduction to search strategies and use of search engines, hand out bibliography assignment

Week four – discuss bibliographies

Week five – discuss literature reviews and plagiarism, hand out lit review assignment

Week six – individual meetings to discuss literature reviews

Week seven – class discussion of literature reviews

Week eight – discuss research ethics, hand out ethics assignment

Week nine – discuss case studies, hand out case study assignment

Week ten – review case study assignments

Week eleven – review interview/focus groups, hand out assignment

Week twelve -- discuss interview/focus group assignments

Week thirteen – discuss content analysis, hand out assignment

Week fourteen – review content analysis assignments

Week fifteen – wrap-up discussion (where have we been, what this means for the next methods course in the sequence)

PART IV: PURPOSE AND NEED

1. Explain the department’s rationale for developing and proposing the course.

This course builds upon our existing efforts to provide students training and knowledge of various research methods and the role of research in political science. The course also is a response to an external evaluation of our department, as well as our own internal assessment data, which suggests that our students will benefit from additional exposure to the role of research in political science. The substantive material presented here covers an important gap in our existing curriculum that was lost when we combined two research methods courses into one (PLS 2033). While there was not enough material to justify a two course sequence with two three credit hour classes, it has become apparent that there is too much for a single course. Having a one hour introduction prior to taking the 2033 course will leave our students better prepared for upper division course work in political science.

2. Justify the level of the course and any course prerequisites, co-requisites, or registration restrictions.
Placing the class at the 2000 level with a number preceding our existing 2033 methods course is appropriate because the course prepares students for both the 2033 course and for other classes listed at the 3000 and 4000 levels.

3. If the course is similar to an existing course or courses, justify its development and offering.
   n/a

4. Impact on Program(s):
   This course is required for the undergraduate PLS major, the undergraduate PLS major with International Studies Option, and as a prerequisite for the departmental honors program in Political Science.

PART V: IMPLEMENTATION

1. Faculty member(s) to whom the course may be assigned: This course can be taught by any interested political science faculty member. The course will initially be taught by Jeff Ashley, Kevin Anderson or Karen Swenson.

2. Additional costs to students: none

3. Text and supplementary materials to be used (Include publication dates):
   There will be no textbook for the course, but articles that are especially good at illustrating a particular approach will be assigned (determined by the individual instructors).

PART VI: COMMUNITY COLLEGE TRANSFER
   There are no community college equivalents that can substitute for this course.

PART VII: APPROVALS

Date approved by the Political Science Department: April 9, 2008

Date approved by the College of Sciences Curriculum Committee: April 18, 2008

Date approved by CAA: May 1, 2008