Senior Seminar: Elections and Election Administration
Dr. Martha Kropf
Political Science 4600: Senior Seminar
Spring 2020
T, Th, 8:30-9:45am

Office Hours: TBD
Email: mekropf@uncc.edu

***The standards and requirements set forth in this syllabus may be modified at any time by the course instructor. Notice of such changes will be by announcement in class and a new syllabus will be posted to Canvas.

Course Description: The course catalog says: **"**Seminar style exploration of a selected topic in the discipline. Includes writing a research paper and presenting the results to the class." For the Senior Seminar, traditionally, faculty members have created courses based on their interests. So, since I have conducted research in the area of election administration, this is my choice. Why? I have authored or co-authored two books and more than 25 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters. I have taught research methods for my entire career. I am uniquely able to guide you on this topic, but the key word is GUIDE. In this class, you will teach each other via research presentations. You will pick a topic about election administration that interests you. You will ask the research question. You will answer the research question. In today's world, it is absolutely necessary to be able to collaborate in a team setting, so I recommend creating a group. As problems arise (as they do in group settings), you will solve them. Even if you choose to form a group, you will have both individual and group presentations and written work.

So, you are putting all the skills you learned here in UNC Charlotte's Political Science major to work! I'm available to remind you of whatever you have forgotten.

In this course, we will have several small stakes presentations to prepare you for the big oral presentation. Additionally, we will have several small stakes written assignments to prepare you for the big written paper. Thus, you will earn a W and an O for the course.

The length of the paper is variable; but I suspect that the paper will be approximately 20-25 pages.

Required Readings:
Lots of articles.
My book if you want.

Grades (1,000 points possible; subject to change):
Four written summaries of peer-reviewed research articles (individual), 50 points each=200 points
Two oral summaries of peer-reviewed research articles (individual), 50 points each=100 points
Evaluation of the oral summaries of your classmates (individual), 50 points

Evaluation of self or teammates (individual), 50 points[1]

Final Paper Components (completed in your group or alone if you choose not to group): 150 points
       *Written Proposal, 25 points
       *Orally presented proposal, 25 points
       *Written literature review draft, 25 points
       *Written research design draft, 25 points
       *Orally presented research design, 25 points
       *Written analysis draft, 25 points

Final Paper (completed in your group or alone if you choose not to group): 450 points
       *Written final paper, 200 points
       *Oral presentation of final paper: 250 points

A standard 90, 80, 70% grading scale applies. Basically, you are trying to earn as many points as possible. There are 1,000 points you can earn. Good luck.

Additionally, attendance is required. I expect that everyone will have some sort of input on everyone else's work. It is my strong belief that we can create synergy. However, everyone gets sick or has family emergencies or events. Thus, three of your absences will be excused. ***Beyond that, you will lose 10 points off the top of your grade for every absence.*** If you have an official university event, I will consider those on a case by case basis, but they will not likely count toward your three absences. You will be responsible for whatever is due no matter what.

The Final Product of this class…

Form a group if you like (no more than four members), but I will expect everyone to talk whenever you present some part of your paper. You may also do this completely independently. You decide based on the topic in which you are interested. There can be real advantages for data collection if you have more people.

The papers will revolve around the election administration questions.

Possible ideas:
Use the Survey of the Performance of American Elections
Study polling places in March primary
How are voters in NC reacting to new voting equipment?
Given the recent court decision about voter ID in NC, do voters know what kind of ID to use?
Early voting effects on turnout
Partisanship and local election boards
Does voter identification policy affect voter turnout?
Does voter identification policy affect perceptions of fairness? Confidence in elections?

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[1] If your team is unable to work with you, then I reserve the right to dock your grade in any portion of the course. However, I expect teams to communicate, even when it is hard. If I need to enable that communication, then I will. If you complain to me, the first thing I will ask you is, "did you talk to your teammate about it?"

How could voter ID changes affect college student voting?
Polling place consolidation
Long lines—who leaves the line? Who shirks the line?
Do we have appropriate numbers of voting equipment in each polling place? Do we have a fair amount?
Do NC voters feel more confident now that we won't have DRE machines anymore?
Are voters who are disabled affected by election reforms?
Are voters who are disabled in NC more or less likely to vote?

I can give you literature on almost all of these topics. I know exactly where to get data on most of these, or can give you helpful insights on how to collect the data. I've been doing this kind of work for about 20 years.

Additionally, we will talk about how a good paper is structured and how to put together a research design that will allow you to test your hypothesis. These papers do not have to be statistical quantitative analyses; in fact, some may not be and moreover, some will be better tested with qualitative methods. However, do not equate qualitative with not being systematic or with relying only on the research conducted by others.

I expect that your paper will use at least ten academic peer reviewed studies to form the basis for it and provide justification about why your work needs to be done. You should probably choose from among the research summaries your group has done for that literature review.

Late Assignment Policy
All assignments are due in class by the date listed on the schedule unless I indicate otherwise. Since you are all advanced undergraduate students I expect there will not be any late papers or assignments. However, if you feel you need more time on any given project you can have it, but you will lose five percentage points of the grade for that project each day that it is late (for example, instead of getting 90% of the points for the assignment, you will only receive 85%). I want you to know I will leave this choice to you. Exceptions may be illness or family emergency, but I expect you to discuss these problems with me in advance. I reserve the right to ask for official documentation (i.e., a note from your doctor). If you are participating in an official university function (such as an athletic or student government event) or have an excused absence of some sort, you must let me know in advance of when you will be gone**. I expect such assignments to be turned in before you leave for your event, or late points will be subtracted as usual (commencing the day the paper is late whether that is when you are gone or not). No matter my late policy, all work must be completed by Friday, May 3 at 2:00pm or I will not accept it. Note: if you turn in work too late, you could get a zero anyway for that assignment (if it is late enough).**

Note: if you have signed up for a time to present your research article, paper proposal, research design or the final paper presentation, I expect you to be there. There will be no late policy for presentations. In other words, if you are not there to present, you will receive a zero.

Final Notes

1. If you have a disability that qualifies you for academic accommodations, please provide a letter of accommodation from Disability Services in the beginning of the semester. For more information regarding accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services in 230 Fretwell. Contact information: 704-687-0040 (tty/v) or email: disability@uncc.edu.

2. Students have the responsibility to know and observe the requirements of The UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. This code forbids cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, multiple submissions of academic work (without prior authorization), plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. Attempts at cheating during an exam can also be punished. Any special requirements or permission regarding academic integrity in this course will be stated by the instructor, and are binding on the students. Academic evaluations in this course include a judgment that the student's work is free from academic dishonesty of any type; and grades in this course therefore should be and will be adversely affected by academic dishonesty. Students who violate the code can be expelled from UNC Charlotte. The normal penalty for a first offense is zero credit on the work involving dishonesty and further substantial reduction of the course grade. In almost all cases the course grade is reduced to F. Copies of the code can be obtained from the Dean of Students Office. Standards of academic integrity will be enforced in this course. Students are expected to report cases of academic dishonesty to the course instructor.

3. It is my personal policy that there will be no discrimination on the basis of racial, religious, political, ethnic background, or on the basis of gender. You will be evaluated solely on the quality of your work and your attendance.

4. Did you read my attendance policy? You will lose 10 points from your grade if you miss more than three classes. Everybody has personal celebrations (e.g., weddings), gets sick, has personal crises, etc. That is why there are three absences allowed. However, if you believe you have a reason why you will miss more than three classes, please talk it over with me. Talk it over with me as soon as possible (The end of the semester is too late. It is impossible for me to have sympathy for you if you see that your grade is lower than you thought and then say, "but THIS happened".) I have been told that I am approachable—give it a try.

5. NOTE: THE **LATE** POLICY IS IN EFFECT FOR WORK, BUT PAPERS NOT TURNED IN BY 2:00pm on May 3 will receive a zero for that work. No exceptions.

6. Remember, there are no dumb questions…UNLESS, you ask the question at some point AFTER I am able to help you or clarify. Do not tell me some policy is confusing the day you know your grade and you are not happy with it. My response will only be "I'm sorry."

7. The use of cell phones, smart phones, or other mobile communication devices is disruptive, and is therefore prohibited during class. Except in emergencies, those using such devices must leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period.

8. No laptops please. Please take notes the old fashioned way.

9. I will conduct this class in an atmosphere of mutual respect. I encourage your active participation in class discussions. Each of us may have strongly differing opinions on the various topics of class

discussions. The conflict of ideas is encouraged and welcome. The orderly questioning of the ideas of others, including mine, is similarly welcome. However, I will exercise my responsibility to manage the discussions so that ideas and argument can proceed in an orderly fashion. You should expect that if your conduct during class discussions seriously disrupts the atmosphere of mutual respect I expect in this class, you will not be permitted to participate further.

10. All students and the instructor are expected to engage with each other respectfully. Unwelcome conduct directed toward another person based upon that person's actual or perceived race, actual or perceived gender, color, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, or veteran status, or for any other reason, may constitute a violation of University Policy 406, The Code of Student Responsibility. Any student suspected of engaging in such conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct.

11. UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. UNC Charlotte has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

> Please be aware that many UNC Charlotte employees, including all faculty members, are considered Responsible Employees who are required to relay any information or reports of sexual misconduct they receive to the Title IX Coordinator. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I must report the information to the Title IX Coordinator. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

> If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can contact any of the following on-campus resources, who are not required to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator: (1) University Counseling Center (counselingcenter.uncc.edu, 7-0311); (2) Student Health Center (studenthealth.uncc.edu, 7-7400); or (3) Center for Wellness Promotion (wellness.uncc.edu, 7-7407). Additional information about your options is also available at titleix.uncc.edu under the "Students" tab.

> 12. Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as "a lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life." Food insecure categories include: reduced caloric intake, reduced food quality, lack of variety in diet, disrupted eating patterns, and hunger. Research shows that college students experience food insecurity at higher rates than the American household rate, and that food insecurity can negatively impact academic performance and persistence. In recognition of this problem, UNC Charlotte offers assistance to students facing food insecurity through an on-campus food pantry. The Jamil Niner Student Pantry (JNSP) is located on the east edge of campus at 1224 John Kirk Road. It has regular hours which may change from semester to semester; please

see the website at https://ninerpantry.uncc.edu/ for schedule and details on its services, as well as resources about hunger and food insecurity among college students.

13. This course affirms people of all gender expressions and gender identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is indicated on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to correct me on your preferred gender pronoun. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	**2**	**3**	**4**
5	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9** Class Begins—Ice Breaker	**10**	**11**
12	**13**	**14** Introduction to Kropf, Lecture/Discussion	**15**	**16** Meet in the Library	**17**	**18**
19	**20**	**21** Lecture/Discussion	**22**	**23** Topic Discussion	**24**	**25**
26	**27**	**28** Written Summary #1 Due for all students (summary of peer-reviewed article) Oral Summaries (5)	**29**	**30** Oral presentation of article summaries (5)	**31**	

February 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	**3**	**4** Project Proposals Due Project Proposal Presentations (5)	**5**	**6** Project Proposal Presentation (5)	**7**	**8**
9	**10**	**11** Project Proposal Presentations (5)	**12**	**13** 2nd Written Article Summary due for all Oral Summaries (5)	**14**	**15**
16	**17**	**18** Oral Summaries (5)	**19**	**20** Third written summary due Oral summaries (5)	**21**	**22**
23	**24**	**25** Oral Summaries (5)	**26**	**27** Oral Summaries (5)	**28** Kropf to submit unsatisfactory grade reports	**29**

March 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	**2** SPRING BREAK	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
8	**9**	**10** Group work day	**11**	**12** Literature Review Due Group work day	**13**	**14**
15	**16**	**17** Oral Article summaries (5)	**18**	**19** Lecture/Discussion on Research Design	**20**	**21**
22	**23**	**24** Group work day	**25**	**26** Research Design Due for all Oral Presentation of RD (5)	**27**	**28**
29	**30**	**31** Oral presentation of research design				

April 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	**2** Oral presentation of research design	**3**	**4**
5	**6**	**7** Oral summaries of articles (5)	**8**	**9** Oral Summaries of articles (5)	**10**	**11**
12	**13**	**14** Group work in computer lab	**15**	**16** Group work in computer lab	**17**	**18**
19	**20**	**21** Analysis Draft Due Group work in computer lab	**22**	**23** Final Presentations (2)	**24**	**25**
26	**27**	**28** Final Presentations (2)	**29**	**30**	**Final Exam Day is Tuesday, May 5 at 8am. There will be five final presentations that day.**	

10

May 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						