Administrative Unit: History and Social Sciences Department

Course Prefix and Number: POSC 490

Course Title: Independent Study in Political Science

Number of Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory Hours: 0

Catalog Description: Culminating experience for graduation with a B.A. in Political Science. Requires original research project and final paper. Grade of C or higher required. Prerequisite: POSC 390. Offered Spring.

Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s): POSC 390.

Text(s): Instructor should choose texts and/or journal articles that allow students to consider contemporary political questions from the perspective of a variety of subfields. Suitable themes for this course might include democracy, globalization of the role of the state in contemporary society.

Course Objectives:
- To conceptualize and carry out an original research project incorporating political science research techniques.
- To prepare a research article based on this project similar to those found in political science journals.
- To demonstrate familiarity with key concepts and theories of the field of political science.

Measurable Learning Outcomes:
- Demonstrate recognition and evaluation of concepts, principles, theories and perspectives of political science.
- Identify an appropriate, original research question in political science.
- Derive testable hypotheses from that research question.
- Identify and collect appropriate political data for a research article.
- Analyze data collected using appropriate methods.
- Describe and assess the significance of research findings in the context of the discipline as a whole.
- Develop the ability to orally present research findings in a professional manner.

Topical Outline (major areas of coverage): This will be a writing intensive seminar course in which students discuss major contemporary questions in political science and write short critical essays addressing these questions.

A major objective of the course is the writing of an original research paper requiring the students to collect and analyze data on an appropriate political science topic. Students must
present an acceptable research design containing an introduction, literature review, hypotheses, and methods sections, a completed first draft and a final version of the paper. The paper should be consistent in style and format to research articles appearing in major peer-reviewed political science journals. At the conclusion of the semester students will make an oral presentation of their work.

Students will conduct a program review which will contain a reflective summary of the student’s academic experience, an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the major program and suggestions about what strategies the faculty might employ in the near and long term.

A primary purpose of the culminating experience is to assess learning outcomes in the major. The assessment demonstrates the following set of characteristics.

- The experience occurs after the completion of appropriate foundational skills, electives, and requirements.
- Assessment instruments used in the experience measure student achievement of the stated learning objectives for the major.
- Departmental faculty members use the information given by assessment to improve teaching and learning in the major.

Material from this course may be tested on the Major Field Test (MFT) administered during the Culminating Experience course for the degree.

During this course the Academic Profile, short form, will be administered. This 40-minute standardized test measures learning in general education courses. The results of the tests are used by faculty to improve the general education curriculum at the College. The Major Field Test in Political Science will also be administered.

Recommended maximum class size for this course: 30

Library Resources: Online databases are available at http://www.ccis.edu/offices/library/resources.asp. You may access them from off-campus using your eServices login and password when prompted.

Prepared by: David Roebuck

Date: April 14, 2005

NOTE: The intention of the master syllabus is to provide an outline of the contents of this course, as specified by the faculty of Columbia College, regardless of who teaches the course, when it is taught or where it is taught. Faculty members teaching this course for Columbia College are expected to facilitate learning pursuant to the course objectives and cover the subjects listed in the topical outline. However, instructors are also encouraged to cover additional topics of interest so long as those topics
are relevant to the course’s subject. The master syllabus is, therefore, prescriptive in nature but also allows for a diversity of individual approaches to course material.

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