

**The Pennsylvania State University**  
**Research Fellowship in Political Science/Sociology**  
**SOC/PLSC 497B, Fall 2002**  
**Tuesdays: 4:15-5:45pm, 119 Thomas Building**

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**Prerequisites:** permission of the instructors. The course is designed for students interested in learning research skills in the social sciences.

**Timing:** This course will be offered in Fall 2002 and Spring 2003. Students must enroll for BOTH Fall and Spring semesters. 1.5 credits per semester.

**Required Text:** Janet Buttloph Johnson, Richard A. Joslyn, and H.T. Reynolds. 2001. *Political Science Research Methods* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly. (Other assigned readings will be distributed in class.)

**Course Description:** Course materials will focus on political science and sociological research methods, measurement, and theory building. As part of this course, students will participate in a research project focusing on the roles and activities of interest groups and social movements in contemporary politics and tracing their growth and activities over the post-1950 period. All students who register for the course will be expected to devote several hours each week to the project performing content coding and data entry tasks. Students will work on the creation of a longitudinal database drawn from the Encyclopedia of Associations designed to allow us to trace the growth of interest groups, social movement organizations, and other associations over time from 1959 to present. Readings, class discussion and practical research experience are organized around identifying typical political science and sociological research problems and developing strategies to solve them. Most class sessions will be divided into two parts. The first half of class will be devoted to lectures and discussions about research problems and strategies generally, with readings and examples from published and on-going research projects conducted by the instructors on topics relating to interest groups, protest, social movements, and public policy. The second half of class sessions will be devoted to discussions about progress and problems encountered in your own coding of the Encyclopedia of Associations data. In addition, each student will prepare a research paper based on their own work and the larger project in which they participate. This paper will be due at the end of Spring semester, with research question, outline, and beginnings of a bibliographic search due at the end of Fall term.

**Course Requirements:** Students are expected to achieve proficiency in data coding and entry tasks, to complete the coding and data entry for a minimum number of cases (approximately 2,000 per semester), attend class, complete assigned reading before class, participate in class discussions, and to complete the project proposal (fall semester) and the project report (spring semester).

**Project Compensation:** Students will be compensated for the time they devote to performing content analysis and data entry tasks for the Encyclopedia research project. This does not include class time, time devoted to course reading or time devoted to developing and completing the student project. This work will be compensated at a rate of \$8 per hour. Funding comes from the National Science Foundation. Beyond the minimum requirement of the completion of approximately 2,000 cases per semester, students may work up to a total of 10 hours per week on the project.

**Grading:** This is a two-semester sequence. During the fall term, each student will receive a grade of “R,” which is for continuing research projects. Final grades will be given at the end of spring term for both semesters (that is, your “R” will disappear from your transcript and be replaced by the grade you earned). Grades will be based on the following formula:

- 40% Final paper
- 30% Combined total for presentations in class, including progress reports on your paper
- 30% Class participation

Note: All students must learn to code and participate in the coding process; that’s the nature of the entire course. Therefore, proficiency in coding and a minimum amount of coding are required for a grade of C or better.

<u>Class Meeting Date</u>		<u>Activities</u>
August	27	Introduction to Course
September	3	Secondary Data Collection: Chapter 9 in Johnson, Joslyn and Reynolds.
	10	The Policy Agendas Project: Chapter 2 in Baumgartner and Jones, eds, <i>Policy Dynamics</i>
	17	Measurement of Concepts: Chapter 4 in Johnson, Joslyn and Reynolds.
	24	Reliability of Measures: Read Ch 4 again (that's right!)
October	1	Exemplary Research: Nuclear Power. Baumgartner and Jones, <i>Agendas and Instability</i> , Ch. 4.
	8	Issue Coding: Policy Agendas Project. Read Appendix 1 and 2 from <i>Policy Dynamics</i> ; also datasets distributed in class or on line. You may use these in your papers.
	15	No Class (Fall Break)
	22	Exemplary Research: Minkoff Project. Reading TBA.
	29	Using Minkoff's data to study the Impacts of Association Growth
November	5	Exemplary Research: The New York Times Project. Reading: TBA.(One page description of first thoughts on your research project due)
	11	Using Newspaper Reports to Index Associations: Van Dyke, Soule and McCarthy.
	18	Erik's project on Environmental Interest Groups. Reading TBA based on Erik's dissertation project.
	26	Discussion of Student Project Ideas. (Student presentations)
December	3	Discussion of Student Project Ideas. (Student presentations)
	10	Wrap-Up and Planning for Spring Semester (Proposals due)