

IDS 4911: Undergraduate Research in Interdisciplinary Studies

Spring 2026, 3 credit hours

January 12 – April 22, 2026

MWF, Period 6 (12:50 -1:40 PM)

Rolfs Hall, 115

Instructor: Dr. Teresa Cornacchione

Office Location: 234 Pugh Hall

352-273-1088

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-2:30 PM; Wednesdays 2-3:30 PM, or schedule through [Calendly](#)

Email: tcornacchione@ufl.edu

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Rory Church

220 Pugh Hall

352-846-1575

Email: rwentworth.churc@ufl.edu

Course Description

This course provides firsthand, supervised research in Interdisciplinary Studies. Projects may involve inquiry, design, investigation, scholarship, discovery or application in Interdisciplinary Studies

The Spring 2026 Civic Scholars course will introduce students to issues about the pressing issues facing communities throughout the United States, through an interdisciplinary social science lens. With instructor guidance, students will design an original research project related to a domestic public policy issue. Potential areas of focus may include, but are not limited to, climate challenges, economics, social welfare, health and wellbeing, sustainable cities, and democratic governance.

The Graham Center Civic Scholars program provides undergraduate students with an entry-level opportunity to conduct an original research project. The course will introduce interdisciplinary social science research design and methods, and students will learn the components of the research process through hands-on learning activities, including forming research questions and theory development, identifying data sources and testing hypotheses, and interpreting and communicating results. Students will learn to critically analyze the strengths and weaknesses of methodological approaches used in research. Overall, this course is designed to instruct students on the appropriate way to conduct interdisciplinary research. To meet the objectives of this course, we will explore (1) the interdisciplinary research perspective, (2) the elements of the empirical research process, and (3) research design, and (4) how to appropriately communicate research findings. Students will develop an original research project related to the topic of domestic public policy issues and present their research at the Annual Bob Graham Center Research Symposium on Saturday, April 18, 2026, from 8 AM - Noon.

Student Learning Objectives. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Describe the interdisciplinary social science research perspective;
2. Explain central concepts related to the research process;

3. Develop appropriate and meaningful research questions;
4. Develop a research design appropriate to the research question;
5. Produce an original research project (individual & collaborative components)
6. Critically evaluate a deeper understanding of critical public policy issues impacting domestic public policy.

Readings

There are no textbooks required for this course. Texts will consist of scholarly articles, current news articles, policy papers, and online resources. These will be available through Canvas.

Reading of course material is required. Scholarly articles are listed in the course schedule below, under the weeks for which they are assigned. All scholarly articles can be accessed through the [UF Libraries website](#), if you need help navigating the library website, [tutorials are available here](#). From your computer, you will need to be on the [UF VPN Network](#).

Grading Policy

Your grade in this class will be based on four components: class attendance & participation and completion of in-class assignments, Perusall Readings, research drafts, and a final research paper. All assignments will be submitted via Canvas or in class. Late Assignments will not be accepted without a university-approved excuse and instructor approvals. Every component is worth 100 points, the weight of each is listed below:

Attendance, Participation and In-Class Assignments	25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance • Participation/In-Class Assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% • 15%
Perusall Readings	15%
Research Paper Drafts	20%
Final Research Paper	40%

Attendance, Participation and In-Class Assignments: You are required to attend class. By acceptance into this program, the expectation is that you will be present in class and willing to participate. Attendance will be taken daily. You are permitted two (2) unexcused absences with no consequence to your grade. In rare circumstances, we reserve the right to waive an attendance grade; but will only do so if provided documentation of a university-approved excuse (military service, documented illness, jury duty, university-approved activity, etc.). In-class assignments will allow you to engage with the material and your classmates to deepen your understanding of the research topic and/or the research process. Readings will be provided on Canvas and in class.

The instructors will grade your participation based on your observed behaviors in class, using the following guidelines:

- Poor Participation (D-F): The student rarely or never offers comments and questions in class, and/or does not appear to be regularly paying attention to lectures, presentations, or in-class activities. The student may only participate if prompted;
- Fair Participation (C): The student occasionally offers comments and questions in class, and/or is mostly engaged in class, paying attention to lectures, presentation, and in-class activities. The student may occasionally have to be prompted to participate;
- Good Participation (B-A-): The student regularly offers comments and questions that demonstrate more than surface level understanding of course material, and/or the student regularly pays attention to lectures, presentations, and in-class activities. The student rarely requires prompting to participate;
- Excellent Participation (A): The student regularly offers comments and questions that demonstrate more than a surface level understanding of course materials, and the student regularly pays attention to lectures, presentation, and in-class activities. The student never requires prompting to participate.

Perusall Readings: All readings must be annotated on Perusall, an interactive software that allows you to read and annotate a text along with your peers. While you are expected to review material prior to class, Perusall *annotations* must be completed no later than the Friday of the week they are assigned at 11:59 PM. You can highlight, ask questions, and respond to your classmates' comments and questions.

A good Perusall annotation engages with the material, and/or your peers' comments. We are looking for something more than "that's interesting." That being said, we are also not looking for paradigm-shifting comments. There is no minimum or maximum number of annotations per reading, but we do expect quality, thoughtful (and respectful) comments on the readings.

Civic Scholars Research Project: You will complete a research paper over the course of the semester. The research paper is 12-15 pages (typed, double spaced) and will address a topic of your choosing pertaining to domestic public policy. To assist in this task, the research paper is divided into five separate assignments, worth 20% of your grade, with the final product worth 40% of the grade. The due dates of each component are listed below. Instructions and the rubric for the final paper are available on Canvas.

- Research Question and Description of Topic: **January 26 @ 11:59 PM**
- Annotated Bibliography: **February 13 @ 11:59 PM**
- Literature Review and Theory: **March 6 @ 11:59 PM**
- Research Design Draft: **March 31 @ 11:59 PM**
- Research Symposium Slides: **April 17 @ 5:00 PM**
- Bob Graham Center Research Symposium: **April 18 @ 8:00 AM**
- Final Paper: **April 30 @ 12:00 PM**

Your final paper is due by **12:00 PM on Thursday, April 30 via Canvas**. The paper should include all parts listed above (and outlined in the final paper instruction guide). Your final paper should incorporate feedback from your previous drafts. Grades will be based on substance and style. Use proper grammar, appropriate language, and proofread and spell-check your paper!

Extra Credit: If you make an effort throughout the semester, you should not need extra credit. HOWEVER, there may be occasions when we will offer extra credit to the ENTIRE class to attend a guest lecture, view a program, etc. We will not offer individual extra credit.

Late Assignments: Late assignments be accepted with no penalty to your grade with a valid excuse. Otherwise, late assignments will only be accepted with instructor approval and may be subject to a 1-letter grade deduction per day late, up to a maximum of three days late. After the assignment is 3 days late, we will no longer accept it.

Grading Scale

I adhere to the following letter-to-grade conversion chart for all exams, papers, assignments, quizzes, and final grades. Grades ending in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole percentage point.

93 or above=A	90-92=A-	87-89=B+	83-86=B	80-82=B-	77-79=C+
73-76=C	70-72=C-	67-69=D+	63+-66=D	60-62=D-	0-59=E

Grade Changes: I am certainly open to and actively encourage you to challenge me both in class as well on disputed assignment grades – sometimes, I make mistakes and sometimes, it is possible that more than one answer or perspective is correct. If you present an empirically defensible case as to why your answer/assumptions are also correct (for which we originally took off points), we will gladly give back partial or full credit, depending on the quality of your argument.

However, at the end of the semester, there are inexorably a handful of students who send a late-night email requesting (and sometimes incoherently demanding) that we raise their final grade, whether from a D+ to a C-, or a B+ to an A- or anywhere in between. Two remarks on this rather bold and questionable strategy.

1. We try to be charitable in terms of the grading scheme already – both the attendance and participation grades (25% of your final grade) are designed to give your grade a “cushion.”
2. Secondly, the “But I NEED a/an (insert grade here)”, or “can you *just* raise my grade x-number of points” arguments reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of grades. Implicit in this statement is the assumption that grades are capriciously handed out on the instructor’s whim or fancy and are not based on the student’s demonstrated mastery of the material. Grades reflect your mastery of the course material. There are many things YOU can do to enhance your mastery of the material, and consequently, your grade.
 - Attend class regularly
 - Be present – pay attention in class and participate regularly
 - Read assigned materials

- Ask questions – either in class or during office hours or over email
- Do not procrastinate on assignments

We will not respond to emails asking for extra points, or for grades to be bumped up. If a student wishes to dispute a grade on an assignment or test, the student must request an appointment or come during office hours and present a compelling case as to why extra points should be awarded.

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For more information on those policies, and resources for students, please visit [this link](#).

Final (and perhaps reiterative) Notes on Course Protocol:

- Arriving late or leaving early is disruptive to all of us who made it a priority to get to class time and be here. Please enter and exit the classroom quietly within minimal interruptions and take a seat close to the door.
- Please keep private conversations private. Discussions with your neighbor are distracting for me as well as other students. If you have a thought on course material or a question, speak up! Please feel free to share your thoughts on the lecture topic with all of us.
- I reserve the right to dismiss individual students from the classroom for disruptive behavior and report them to the Dean of Students.
- I do not tolerate academic dishonesty in any form and will pursue the full penalties for violations thereof. For your reference, the University of Florida Academic Honor Policy is listed at [this link](#) .

Syllabus Change Policy:

Except for changes that substantially affect the parameters of evaluation, including grading and the scheduling of the final exam, this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor, but only when it is for the benefit of the students. I will provide you with advance notice in class and via your university registered email contact.

Course Schedule:

Part I: Introduction to the Course & Research	Topics	Readings/Assignments/Plan
January 12	What is research? What are current trends in domestic policy research? How do we pick a topic?	Syllabus Research Icebreaker – Craft of Research
January 14	Domestic public policy issues, cont. (what are the research questions out there?)	Read: Craft of Research, Chapter 1 & Lens of Science, Part 1 & 2 Read: Baglione, Chapter 2

January 16	No Class	No Class - SPSA
January 19 MLK Holiday/No Class		
January 21	Guided Research and Themes of Domestic Public Policy Developing a research question	Read: Craft of Research, 3.1 – 3.4 & Turabian, Chapter 2
January 23	Developing a Research Question cont'd	Workshop your research questions Elevator Pitch Activity in-class Step 1 due – Monday, January 26
Part II: Finding & Using Sources to Guide Research	Topics	Readings/Assignments/Plan
January 26	Bibliographies and Sources	Guest Speaker: Patty Takacs, UF Libraries Read: Baglione Chapter 3, p. 53-68.
January 28	Bibliographies and Sources	Sources Workshop
January 30	Applied Domestic Public Policy	Guest Speaker: Lauren Guagliardo OPPAGA Report: Florida Lottery
February 2	Sources and Annotations	Read: Turabian, Ch. 4
February 4	Types of Research	Read: Bos et al (2022) Assignment: IRB Exercise – Due Friday, February 6
February 6	Ethics of Research	Read: Lens of Science – Research Methods
Part III: Theorizing – Making Your Contribution	Topics	Readings/Assignments/Plans
February 9	Annotated Bibliographies	Workshop and Peer Review Step 2 Step 2 due – Wednesday, February 13
February 11	Literature Reviews	Read: Baglione, Ch. 4 Purdue Owl Article
February 13	Literature Reviews	Read: Collins & Reckhow (2024)
February 16	Theory Building	Read: O'Brien & Johnson (2025)
February 18	Theory Building	In-class Theory Recipe Exercise
February 20	Theory and Hypotheses	Review Theory Building and Hypotheses Workshop and Peer Review Step 3

Part IV: Testing your Theory with a Good Research Design	Topics	Readings/Assignments/Plans
February 23	Hypothesizing	Hypothesis Recipe
February 25	Research Design	Read: Lens of Science: The Scientific Method Step 3 due – Wednesday, March 6
February 27	Research Design	Read: Enders et al (2023) Qualitative v. Quantitative
March 2	Research Design	Read: Engel et al (2023) Qualitative v. Quantitative cont'd
March 4	Research Design	Workshop Data and Design: Data Exploration
March 6	Research Design	Workshop Data and Design: Concept, Operationalization, and Measurement
March 9	Review Research Design	Workshop Step 4
March 11	Workshop Research Design	Peer Review Step 4
March 13	Research Design	Individual Check-ins Complete – Individual Check-in Reflection
Spring Break: March 16 – March 20		
Part V: Putting it all Together and Communicating Your Research	Topics	Readings/Assignments/Plans
March 23	Introductions & Conclusions Framing Research	Read: Baglione, Chapter 9 Part 1 Step 4 due – Tuesday, March 31
March 25	Intro and Conclusions Workshop	Read: Baglione, Chapter 9, Part 2
March 27	Slides Workshop and Check In	Assign: Presentation Slide Template and Review Instructions Presentation Titles & Abstracts Due – 11:59 PM Wednesday, April 8
March 30	Presentation Tips and Tricks	Guest Speaker TBD (Dial Center) Step 4 due – Tuesday, March 31
April 1	Presentation Tips and Tricks	Guest Speaker – Presentation by Former Civic Scholar Abstract Recipe – In class
April 3	Practice Presentations	Class meeting in Pugh Hall, Room 210
April 6	Practice Presentations	Class meets in Pugh Hall, Room 210
April 8	Practice Presentations	Class Meets in Pugh Hall, Room 210 Presentation Titles & Abstracts Due – 11:59 PM Wednesday, April 8

April 10	Practice Presentations	Class Meets in Pugh Hall, Room 210
April 13	Practice Presentations	Class meets in Pugh Hall, Room 210
April 15	Final Presentation Prep	Workshop/Peer Check-in on Slides Symposium Slides Due – 5PM, Friday, April 17
April 17	Bonus Office Hours – No Class Meeting	Symposium Slides Due 12PM, Friday, April 17
Bob Graham Center Research Symposium – Saturday, April 18 beginning at 8 AM		
April 20	Symposium Debrief and Peer Review	Read: <i>Turabian, Chapter 16</i> In Class Peer Review of Paper
April 22	Peer Review Day and Finalizing Your Paper	In Class Workshop
Final Paper Due at 12 PM: April 30		

Bibliography of Course Materials

Baglione, L.A., 2018. *Writing a research paper in political science: A practical guide to inquiry, structure, and methods*. Cq Press.

Booth, W.C., Colomb, G.G. and Williams, J.M., 2009. *The craft of research*. University of Chicago press.

Bos, A.L., Greenlee, J.S., Holman, M.R., Oxley, Z.M. and Lay, J.C., 2022. This one's for the boys: How gendered political socialization limits girls' political ambition and interest. *American Political Science Review*, 116(2), pp.484-501.

Enders, A., Klofstad, C., Littrell, S., Miller, J., Theocharis, Y., Uscinski, J. and Zilinsky, J., 2025. Left-right political orientations are not systematically related to conspiracism. *Political psychology*, 46, pp.56-79.

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Collins, J. and Reckhow, S., 2024. The new education politics in the United States. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 27(1), pp.127-146.

O'Brien, T.L. and Johnson, D.R., 2025. Partisan identity, scientific and religious authority, and lawmaker support for science policy. *Social Forces*, p.soae188.

OPPAGA. 2025. Review of the Florida Lottery, 2024. *Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability*.25.02.

Perry, J. and Perry, E., 2015. *Contemporary society: An introduction to social science*. Routledge.

Turabian, K.L., 2019. *Student's guide to writing college papers*. University of Chicago Press.

Purdue OWL. 2018. Writing a Literature Review.

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