

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA ASHEVILLE
FACULTY SENATE

Senate Document Number 2420S
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Statement of Faculty Senate Action:

APC Document 24 (POLs): **Updating course descriptions for POLS 290, 320, and 490**

Effective Date: Fall 2020

1. Delete: On page 267, the course description for **POLS 290, Political Analysis:**

An introduction to political inquiry and methodology, focusing on the process of making and supporting knowledge claims about political phenomena based on political science theory and methods. The class will also include instruction on reviewing the literature and using proper citation, as well as using and interpreting data. Prerequisite: one course from POLS 220, 235, 240, 261, or 281. Fall and Spring.

Add On page 267, in place of deleted entry:

An introduction to political science inquiry and methodology, focusing on the process of making and supporting knowledge claims about political phenomena. The course serves as an introduction to the methods of political science, emphasizing the development of theories and the substantiation of causal claims with evidence. The methods covered include both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Instruction on research design, review of the literature, proper use of citations, as well as collection, use, and interpretation of data will be covered. Prerequisite: one course from POLS 220, 235, 240, 261, or 281. Fall and Spring.

2. Delete: On page 268, the course description for **POLS 320, Challenges to American Democracy:**

An analysis of the institutional development of the presidency, legislature, courts and political parties in response to changes in the cultural, economic and social environment of American politics. Recommended prerequisite: POLS 220. See department chair.

Add On page 268, in place of deleted entry:

Explores the meaning of democracy in the American context and will attempt to evaluate how democratic the government of the United States is, and whether it lives up to its own founding ideals. These questions will be addressed by tracing debates and challenges that have persisted in American democracy from the founding to the contemporary period, including but not limited to: the role of race in American politics, the place of women in American politics, and the relationship between religion and American politics. Recommended prerequisite: Any 200-level Political Science course. See department chair.

3. Delete: On page 272, the course description for **POLS 490, Senior Research Capstone:**

A research class in which students undertake supervised investigation of political phenomena and present the findings of their research in an oral presentation. This course fulfills the senior competency requirements for Political Science majors. An IP grade may be awarded at the discretion of the instructor. Prerequisite: POLS 290. Fall and Spring.

Add: On page 272, in place of deleted entry:

A research class in which students undertake supervised investigation of political phenomena using political science methods that can range from qualitative research designs such as case studies or experiential inquiries to quantitative statistical analyses. Students may also tackle normative or conceptual questions, as well as conduct legal analyses. All students will produce an original research thesis and present the findings of their projects in an oral presentation. The course fulfills the senior competency requirements for Political Science majors. An IP grade may be awarded at the discretion of the instructor. Prerequisite: POLS 290. Fall and Spring.

Impact Statement: These changes should have minimal to no impact on departmental resources or staff or on requirements for majors and minors. Instead, these changes are meant to reflect what faculty are already doing in the classroom and to give the students more accurate information about the courses for which they are registering. The changes to the course descriptions for POLS 290 and POLS 490, in particular, are meant to provide more detailed information about courses that are required for majors and to be more inclusive of the different methodologies students may encounter and/or utilize in these courses. The updated descriptions will also more easily allow for different members of the Political Science faculty to teach these courses. The updated course description for POLS 320 should have the effect of increasing student interest in the course, both inside and outside the major. It is currently offered as a Diversity Intensive course, but the course description was outdated and did not reflect that mission.

Rationale: The rationale behind updating all three course descriptions is to provide more accurate information to students potentially registering for these courses about what happens and is covered in these classes. In the case of POLS 290, which is the required research methods course for the major, we wish to provide more detail about the array of methodologies that will be covered in the course and to make the description more inclusive of the diversity in our field. This change is especially important as the methods used and preferred by members of the faculty in the department are diverse and varied. In the updated description for POLS 490, our senior capstone course, we are aiming to inform students that they will have flexibility over how they execute their senior thesis project, and that there is no one recipe for success in the course. Both changes merely better reflect the realities of these courses as they are currently being taught.

The rationale behind the updated description for POLS 320 is that the old description is a relic of the material covered in the course when it was taught 5+ years ago, rather than the material covered in the course currently. Since 2016, the course has been offered as a Diversity Intensive course, and the materials and topics covered in the class have changed significantly, without a corresponding update to the course description in the catalog. As such, this change has been proposed to provide a better match between the description and the reality of the course.