
Introduction to Political Analysis
PS 372:002
Fall 2016

Course Time: MWF 11-11:50am

Location: Whitehall Classroom Bldg-Rm. 336

Instructor: Dr. Clayton Thyne

Office: 1625 Patterson Office Tower

Office Hours: MWF, 1-2pm (or by appointment)

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COURSE SUMMARY

This course is designed to introduce students to the skills for interpreting, conducting, presenting, and analyzing political science statistical research. Over the course of the term, you will learn how to think like social scientists while developing various skills required by the discipline: how to choose which method to employ, how to undertake original research (complete with data collection and analysis), and how to present your findings to colleagues. The goal at the end of this class is to help you understand and conduct quantitative political research that will be useful in both academic and professional settings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe and assess the logic of political science research in particular and of scientific research in general;
- Comprehend the basic concepts, steps, and design involved in the systematic research process;
- Achieve an intuitive understanding on using statistical software for data analysis;
- Learn how to analyze data, communicate research findings and be an intelligent consumer of research.

Course instructional methods

The course will be taught using multiple instructional methods. These methods will include lecture, group discussion and oral presentations with an associated critical discussion. Typically, course topics will be introduced via lecture format incorporating interpretive discussions. Literature discussions will utilize small group discussions following by classroom presentation and discussion.

Course required text and materials

Philip H. Pollock III, *The Essentials of Political Analysis* (CQ Press, 5th edition, 2016).

Recommended resources for additional exploration

The Essentials of Political Analysis student companion website:

<http://edge.sagepub.com/pollock>

This site is a particularly good resource for review of course materials.

EARNING GRADES

You will be graded in three ways. The first is a set of quizzes over the assigned readings and lecture notes, which come primarily from the course readings. The purpose of these quizzes is to make sure that you are keeping up with the readings and learning the material. They are meant to be easy for those who are putting in the required time and effort. The second set of assessments comes from a midterm and final examination. The final is cumulative. The third set of assessments comes from in-class assignments. Rather than demonstrating mastery, the in-class assignments are meant to help you work through the course content. Thus, the in-class assignments will be graded pass/fail based on your effort in working through the assignment.

I will calculate your final grade based on the following:

Quizzes (35% total)

Quiz 1, chapter 1: 5% of total grade

Quiz 2, chapter 2: 5% of total grade

Quiz 3, chapter 3: 5% of total grade

Quiz 4, chapter 4: 5% of total grade

Quiz 5, chapter 5: 5% of total grade

Quiz 6, chapter 7: 5% of total grade

Quiz 7, chapter 8: 5% of total grade

*Note that we will not take quizzes for chapters 6 or 9 because these align with the midterm and final exams.

Exams (55% total)

There will be two exams – a midterm and a final. Each will be a combination of identification, short answer and essay questions. The exams are designed to test your familiarity with the lecture material, reading assignments, and your independent ability to apply what you have learned.

Midterm exam; covers chapters 1-6; 20% of total grade

Final exam; covers all course content; 26% of total grade

In-class Assignments (9% total)

As described above, you will complete in-class assignments for each chapter. These will be graded pass/fail, and grades will be assigned based on effort rather than getting the correct answer. In-class assignments for each of the 9 chapters will be worth 1 point each.

Attendance and Participation (10% total)

The final part of your grade will be based on your attendance and participation. You will lose 20% of this grade for each unexcused absence (i.e., if you miss 5 sessions, the best you can do in

the course is a B). You must do more than simply attend the sessions to receive your attendance/participation grade. I expect regular participation and will count you as absent if you regularly fail to participate.

Final course grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

E = below 60

Midterm grades will be posted by 10/21 and will be based on the grading criteria in the syllabus.

ABSENCES

Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. *Senate Rules 5.2.4.2* defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit “reasonable cause for nonattendance” by the professor.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later than the last day in the semester to add a class. Two weeks prior to the absence is reasonable, but should not be given any later. Information regarding major religious holidays may be obtained through the Ombud (859-257-3737), http://www.uky.edu/Ombud/ForStudents_ExcusedAbsences.php.

Students are expected to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed (excused) per University policy.

Per *Senate Rule 5.2.4.2*, students missing any graded work due to an excused absence are responsible: for informing the Instructor of Record about their excused absence within one week following the period of the excused absence (except where prior notification is required); and for making up the missed work. The professor must give the student an opportunity to make up the work and/or the exams missed due to an excused absence, and shall do so, if feasible, during the semester in which the absence occurred.

Verification of Absences

Students may be asked to verify their absences in order for them to be considered excused. *Senate Rule 5.2.4.2* states that faculty have the right to request “appropriate verification” when students claim an excused absence because of illness, or death in the family. Appropriate notification of absences due to University-related trips is required prior to the absence when feasible and in no case more than one week after the absence.

MISSED QUIZZES AND ASSIGNMENTS

Make-up quizzes/assignments will only be given for documented excused absences as defined by the University (Senate Rule V.2.4.2) and are scheduled as needed. A missed quiz/assignment will result in a score of zero for that exam, unless an acceptable written excuse is presented within 48 hours of the missed examination.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Per University policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the University may be imposed.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Complete information can be found at the following website: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud>. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

Senate Rules 6.3.1 (see <http://www.uky.edu/Faculty/Senate/> for the current set of *Senate Rules*) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about a question of plagiarism involving their work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording, or content from another source without appropriate acknowledgment of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism.

Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work (including, but not limited to a published article, a book, a website, computer code, or a paper from a friend) without clear attribution. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work, which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be. Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone.

When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources or information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she has employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content, and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas, which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain.

Please note: Any assignment you turn in may be submitted to an electronic database to check for plagiarism.

STUDENT CONDUCT

Students are expected to maintain decorum that includes respect for other students and the professor, to regularly log in to the course, and to display an attitude that seeks to take full advantage of the educational opportunity. All students are expected to be prepared to work and actively participate in class activities.

ACCOMODATIONS DUE TO DISABILITY

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (DRC). The DRC coordinates campus disability services available to students with disabilities. It is located on the corner of Rose Street and Huguelet Drive in the Multidisciplinary Science Building, Suite 407. You can reach them via phone at (859) 257-2754 and via email at drc@uky.edu. Their web address is <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/DisabilityResourceCenter/>.

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. If you miss a class you are still responsible for the information covered. The instructor will not provide you with notes. I expect all students who attend class to arrive on time and ready to start class. It is disrespectful to the instructor and your classmates to show up late or leave early. During class please refrain from all disruptive behavior, including (but not limited to) reading newspapers, sleeping, talking during lecture, cell phone and pager use, and insulting classmate or instructors.

Please be aware that the instructor's pet peeve is students packing up their stuff before class ends. I will never keep you late for class because it is rude to assume that my lecture is more important than your time. Likewise, I will consider it rude if you assume that packing up your items is more important than my lecture. In regards to cell phones, it is absolutely rude to text or talk on the phone during class. That being said, I understand that you have lives and issues that may require immediate attention (as do I). If something important arises, please simply remove yourself from class momentarily and take care of the issue.

CANVAS

This course utilizes Canvas for essentially all facets of the course (quizzes, exams, readings, videos). You are expected to check Canvas regularly for all information pertaining to this course.

| Session/Date(s) | Topic | Preparation (prior to class) | Graded Assignment | Web Resources (optional, but highly recommended) |
|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Week 1 (08/24, 08/26) | Course intro | Read intro; purchase textbook | None | None |
| Week 2 (08/29, 08/31, 09/02) | The Definition and Measurement of Concepts | Read Ch1 | Ch1 quiz due by 8am on 09/07; in-class assignments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit the website of the Fraser Institute and view the PowerPoint slides on world economic freedom at http://www.freetheworld.com/powerpoint.html. Think about how the authors define freedom in this report. How does that compare to your own definition of freedom? 2. Visit the Pew Research Center's website at http://www.people-press.org/2014/06/12/appendix-a-the-ideological-consistency-scale/ and examine the questions in the Ideological Consistency Scale. Are the questions likely to produce a reliable measure of political ideology? Why or why not? 3. Visit the website http://thinkprogress.org/yglesias/2009/06/30/184432/political-journalism-just-cant-quit-the-ecological-fallacy/ and read the story. Have you found yourself committing the same type of ecological fallacy as the author of the article? How can you avoid that in your research? |
| Week 3 (09/07, 09/09) | Measuring and Describing Variables | Read Ch2 | Ch2 quiz due by 8am on 09/12; in-class assignments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch the video about levels of measurement at https://youtu.be/A5zlhbmBghI 2. Watch this fascinating video about measures of central tendency at https://youtu.be/5C9LBF3b65s 3. Dispersion is easily explained here: https://youtu.be/9mnjDp6tg-4 |
| Week 4 (09/12, 09/14, 09/16) | Proposing Explanations, Framing Hypotheses, and Making Comparisons | Read Ch3 | Ch3 quiz due by 8am on 09/19; in-class assignments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch the video explaining the difference between independent and dependent variables: https://youtu.be/EJTqG-RQeT8 2. Visit the following website to learn more about how to write a good hypothesis: http://iqa.evergreenps.org/science/resources/hypotheses/3-step-hypothesis-writing.html 3. Examine some of the line graphs on the following website that is intended to show that just because two variables may correlate it does not mean they are related: http://www.tylervigen.com/spurious-correlations |

| Session/Date(s) | Topic | Preparation (prior to class) | Graded Assignment | Web Resources (optional, but highly recommended) |
|---------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|---|
| Week 5 (09/19, 09/21, 09/23) | Research Design and the Logic of Control | Read Ch4 | Ch4 quiz due by 8am on 09/26; in-class assignments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visit the following website and examine the chart to see an example of several spurious relationships. http://utopiayouarestandinginit.com/2014/06/17/examples-of-spurious-relationships/ 2. Read the article at http://sites.duke.edu/hillygus/files/2014/06/HillygusPB.pdf for an example of research involving additive relationships 3. Watch the following video for an explanation of random assignment to either a test group or control group: https://youtu.be/V_GljFw6RZE |
| Week 6 (09/26, 09/28, 09/30) | Making Controlled Comparisons | Read Ch5 | Ch5 quiz due by 8am on 10/03; in-class assignments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine the poll at http://www.gallup.com/poll/184160/republicans-approval-supreme-court-sinks.aspx?utm_source=POLITICS&utm_medium=topic&utm_campaign=tile. What rival explanations should the pollster account for when measuring attitudes about the Supreme Court? 2. Visit http://www.cnn.com/2014/05/24/showbiz/game-of-thrones-america/ and review the comparison between America and Game of Thrones. Is this a zero-order comparison? Why or why not? 3. Visit http://sda.berkeley.edu/sdaweb/analysis/?dataset=nes2012 and produce your own cross-tabulation using an independent variable such as age or gender and a dependent variable such as support for abortion rights, gun control, etc. and examine the results. Now add a control for partisanship. Do the results change? If so, how and why? |
| Week 7 (10/03, 10/05, 10/07) | Foundations of Statistical Inference | Read Ch6 | none | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch the following video about sampling: http://study.com/academy/lesson/probability-sampling-methods-definition-types.html 2. Watch the video about random sampling v. random assignment: https://youtu.be/D3Em-dka2Vc 3. Watch the video on probability: https://youtu.be/QpfMwA0z_1Y 4. Watch the video on calculating a Z score: https://youtu.be/1o-t_mVDDYQ |
| Week 8 (10/10, 10/12, 10/14) | Foundations of Statistical Inference (continued) | Read Ch6 | Midterm exam, in-class, covers ch1-6, taken on 10/14; in-class assignments | See above |

| Session/Date(s) | Topic | Preparation (prior to class) | Graded Assignment | Web Resources (optional, but highly recommended) |
|--|---|------------------------------|--|---|
| Week 9 (10/17, 10/19...no class on 10/21) | Tests of Significance and Measures of Association | Read Ch7 | In-class assignments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch the video on Type I v. Type II errors: https://youtu.be/jFF_sS92syY 2. Watch the video on comparing sample means: https://youtu.be/zjz_CYQbVQw 3. Watch the video explaining chi-square: https://youtu.be/VskmMgXmkMQ |
| Week 10 (10/24, 10/26, 10/28) | Tests of Significance and Measures of Association (continued) | Read Ch7 | Ch7 quiz due by 8am on 10/31; in-class assignments | See above |
| Week 11 (10/31, 11/02, 11/04) | Correlation and Linear Regression | Read Ch8 | Ch8 in-class assignments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An explanation of linear regression in layman's terms (http://www.quora.com/How-would-linear-regression-be-described-and-explained-in-laymans-terms) 2. Video explanation of linear regression analysis of school year length with average life expectancy (https://youtu.be/fjGO3mrjskc) 3. A typical computer output of a linear regression model including a dummy control variable (http://www.cpp.edu/~jlkorey/POWERMUTT/Topics/regression_files/model3c.gif) |
| Week 12 (11/07, 11/09, 11/11) | Correlation and Linear Regression (continued) | Read Ch8 | Ch8 quiz due by 8am on 11/14; in-class assignments | See above |
| Week 13 (11/14, 11/16, 11/18) | Logistic Regression | Read Ch9 | Ch9 in-class assignments | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Watch the video at https://youtu.be/vq-4kWmzTo providing an example of logistic regression in action 2. Read the research article on congressional votes that employs logistic regression http://tinyurl.com/okr89bu 3. Read the following article and review the methodology section for its discussion of logistic regression at http://tinyurl.com/q7ulk3m |
| Thanksgiving week (11/21) | Flex day (content TBA) | None | None | None |
| Week 14 (11/28, 11/30, 12/02) | Logistic Regression (continued) | Read Ch9 | Ch9 in-class assignments | See above |

| Session/Date(s) | Topic | Preparation (prior to class) | Graded Assignment | Web Resources (optional, but highly recommended) |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Week 15 (12/05, 12/07, 12/09) | Summative Review; Dead Week | Review Ch1-9 | None | None |
| Week 16 (12/12-12/16) | Finals Week | | Final exam on 12/14 at 10:30am | None |