

POS 6736
Conduct of Inquiry
Fall 2016

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Required texts:

Janet Buttolph Johnson, H.T. Reynolds, and Jason D. Mycoff, *Political Science Research Methods*, 8th ed. (CQ Press, 2016).

Philip H. Pollock III, *An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*, 5th ed. (CQ Press, 2016).

Assigned journal articles (below) are available via the Smathers Library e-journal link at www.uflib.ufl.edu, or off-campus with your gatorlink account at www.uflib.ufl.edu/ufproxy.html. Most articles also can be accessed, along with all book chapters, through UF e-Learning Support Services at <https://elearning.ufl.edu>.

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the research methods most commonly used to study political phenomena. Your assigned readings cover a variety of topics, but our focus here is less on the *what* than on the *how* of doing empirical political research. After discussing different stages of the research process, we will review several methodological approaches including some that you may already be familiar with from following the news: survey research (campaign and election-day exit polls), aggregate data analysis (economic indicators such as GDP and inflation, unemployment and crime rates), and experimentation (medical research on the effects of new drugs).

Your grade will be determined according to the following criteria:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Class participation | 15 percent |
| Exam (details tba) | 25 percent (Thursday, November 17) |
| Written assignments | 25 percent |
| Research design | 35 percent (due Friday, December 9, 4:00 p.m.) |

The nature of the exam, written assignments, and research design will be discussed in class. The research design is the principal task toward which we will be building right from the start. Students should probably try to select a topic related to their major field of interest, since this assignment can (in principle) be used as the foundation for later work in another seminar. Plan on discussing your research plan with me before you begin, but feel free to visit with other professors for additional guidance.

Regular attendance is assumed, as is active participation in class discussion. Although I may occasionally lecture on one subject or another (especially early in the semester), I expect students to be regular contributors. It is therefore critical for you to complete your assigned readings prior to class, and to be prepared to talk intelligently about them. Be assured that the failure to do either of these things will be reflected in your class participation grade.

Students are bound by the University of Florida's Student Code of Conduct. Anyone who commits an act of academic dishonesty, such as cheating on the exams or committing plagiarism on a written essay, will suffer appropriate sanctions and be referred to university authorities for further action. To ensure the originality of all written work, essays and your research paper must be submitted to turnitin.com by the time and date specified below. Here's how it works:

The first step is that you need to create a student profile:

1. go to www.turnitin.com
2. click on create user profile
3. fill in your personal email address
4. fill in your personal password
5. type of user: choose student
6. enter class ID (13068561) and password (conduct)
7. follow instructions

To log in after creating profile:

1. enter your personal email and password in the box on the upper right hand corner of the home page www.turnitin.com
2. click on *Conduct of Inquiry*
3. from there you can submit your essay or research paper (each of these has its own assignment folder), just like adding an attachment to an email.
4. be sure to get an electronic receipt; this will ensure that you are not penalized in the event that your essay is not properly logged in (something that doesn't happen often – but it happens).

For those who are uncertain, plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- quoting oral or written materials (including those found on the internet), whether published or not, without proper attribution;
- submitting a document or assignment that, in whole or in part, is substantially identical to a document or assignment authored by someone else; and
- submitting any written work that, in whole or in part, is substantially identical to work you have done for another class.

Any student with a handicap or special need should notify me (and coordinate with Student Services at 202 Peabody Hall) as soon as possible at the beginning of the semester. Every effort will be made to accommodate your situation within the guidelines set forth by the university.

A class listserv has been created so that I can send you occasional announcements and keep you informed about any changes that might occur in the schedule. You are automatically on the list by virtue of being enrolled in this course. You must, however, be sure either to check the email in your gatorlink account on a regular basis, or to forward all gatorlink messages to an account that you use more frequently.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (Aug 25) Course Overview and General Discussion

Johnson et al., *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapter 1.

Benjamin A. Most, "Getting Started on Political Research," *PS: Political Science & Politics* (December 1990).

Week 2 (Sep 1) The Research Process: Getting Started

Johnson et al., *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapters 2-3.

Jeffrey W. Knopf, "Doing a Literature Review," *PS: Political Science & Politics* (January 2006).

Christie Aschwanden (FiveThirtyEight), "You Can't Trust What You Read about Nutrition," January 6, 2016. [<http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/you-cant-trust-what-you-read-about-nutrition/>]

Virginia Gray et al., "Party Competition, Party Polarization, and the Changing Demand for Lobbying in the American States," *American Politics Research* (March 2015).

Leonie Huddy et al., “Expressive Partisanship: Campaign Involvement, Political Emotion, and Partisan Identity,” *American Political Science Review* (February 2015).

Be prepared to discuss the following:

- the Gray and Huddy articles, including their respective (a) research questions, (b) lit reviews, (c) hypotheses, (d) research design, (e) empirical findings, and (f) conclusions; and
- whether either article presented a “theory” in the sense that this term is used by Johnson et al. (chapter 2).

Have SPSS loaded on your laptop or tablet ready to use, and bring it to class.

First Written Assignment (both hard copy and electronic submission to turnitin.com are due at 3 p.m. on Sep 15): Select one of the optional readings for week #4. Write a short literature review (5-7 pages in length, 12-point font, double-spaced, properly cited, and carefully proofed for typos and spelling errors) based on that article plus two others that you are able to find on the same or a closely related topic. (note: at least one of these two should have been published more recently, preferably much more recently, than the one listed here) Your essay should be thematic in that it identifies theoretical and/or methodological connections among these studies – in particular, do they build upon one another, each adding something new to the mix? or is the more recent work a corrective, e.g., offering what the authors believe to be new and better ways of thinking about or researching the topic. *Hint*: Complete the assigned readings before going forward with this assignment. Doing so should give you some ideas about how to proceed.

Week 3 (Sep 8) APSA/Labor Day

No class.

Week 4 (Sep 15) Conceptualization and Measurement

Johnson et al., *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapters 4-5.

Jason Barabas et al., “The Question(s) of Political Knowledge,” *American Political Science Review* (November 2014).

Michael Coppedge and John Gerring et al., “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach,” *Perspectives on Politics* (June 2011).

Martin Gilens and Benjamin I. Page, “Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens,” *Perspectives on Politics* (September 2014).

Plus one of the following:

Melinda Gann Hall, “Electoral Politics and Strategic Voting in State Supreme Courts,” *Journal of Politics* (May 1992).

Thomas M. Holbrook and Emily Van Dunk, “Electoral Competition in the American States,” *American Political Science Review* (December 1993).

James H. Kuklinski et al., “Racial Attitudes and the ‘New South,’” *Journal of Politics* (May 1997).

William Mishler and Richard Rose, “Trust, Distrust and Skepticism: Popular Evaluations of Civil and Political Institutions in Post-Communist Societies,” *Journal of Politics* (May 1997).

Be prepared to discuss the following:

- conceptualization and measurement issues raised in each of the assigned articles, as well as avenues for future research on their respective topics (what was resolved and what wasn’t?); and
- ditto with whichever article you chose for your written assignment.

Week 5 (Sep 22) Data Analysis I

Johnson et al., *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapters 11-13.

Pollock, *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*, Chapters 1-5.

Second Written Assignment (hard copy is due at 3 p.m. on Sep 29): Complete the exercises in Chapters 1 (pp. 14-15), 2 (pp. 29-37), 3 (pp. 55-57), 4 (pp. 75-89), and 5 (pp. 106-116) of the Pollock book. A word of advice: You might consider handing in a xerox copy and keeping the original pages as a backup, or vice versa.

Week 6 (Sep 29) Making Causal Inferences: Experimental vs. Observational Designs

Johnson et al., *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapter 6.

Kevin Arceneaux, "The Benefits of Experimental Methods for the Study of Campaign Effects," *Political Communication* (no. 2, 2010).

Diana C. Mutz and Byron Reeves, "The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust," *American Political Science Review* (February 2005).

R. Michael Alvarez et al., "Mobilizing Pasadena Democrats: Measuring the Effects of Partisan Campaign Contacts," *Journal of Politics* (January 2010).

Ilyana Kuziemko et al., "How Elastic Are Preferences for Redistribution? Evidence from Randomized Survey Experiments," *American Economic Review* (April 2015).

Be prepared to discuss the following:

- the essential characteristics of an experiment, including the relative strengths and weaknesses of an experimental research design as compared to a non-experimental design;
- how those strengths and weaknesses are evident in each of the assigned readings; and
- whether and how an experimental design might be used to research a topic of interest in your area [hint: first identify an independent and a dependent variable that you believe might be causally related, then think about how that independent variable could be manipulated experimentally]

Week 7 (Oct 6) Sampling and Case Studies

Johnson et al., *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapter 7 (also review pp. 196-199).

Kevin J. Mullinix et al., "The Generalizability of Survey Experiments," *Journal of Experimental Political Science* (Winter 2015).

John Gerring, "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?" *American Political Science Review* (May 2004).

Anthony J. Nownes and Patricia Freeman, "Interest Group Activity in the States," *Journal of Politics* (February 1998).

Dan Reiter and Curtis Meek, "Determinants of Military Strategy, 1903-1994: A Quantitative Empirical Test," *International Studies Quarterly* (June 1999).

Michael Johnston, "Patrons and Clients, Jobs and Machines: A Case Study of the Uses of Patronage," *American Political Science Review* (June 1979).

Be prepared to discuss the following:

- reasons for sampling (or perhaps in some cases, not sampling);
- different types of samples, including the advantages and disadvantages of each; and
- strategies for eliminating sampling error.

Week 8 (Oct 13) Aggregate Data Analysis

Jarol B. Manheim et al., Chapter 11 ("Sources and Applications of Aggregate Data") in *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*, 6th ed. (2006).

Katherine Barbieri and Reuveny Rafael, "Economic Globalization and Civil War," *Journal of Politics* (November 2005).

Jamie L. Carson and Erik J. Engstrom, "Assessing the Electoral Connection: Evidence from the Early United States," *American Journal of Political Science* (October 2005).

Kim Quaile Hill, "Democratization and Corruption: Systematic Evidence from the American States," *American Politics Research* (November 2003).

Be prepared to discuss the following:

- what constitutes a "unit of analysis," and why this is important;
- the kinds of research questions for which aggregate-level analysis is appropriate, and the kinds of research questions for which it is not; and
- the internal and external validity of aggregate-level research.

Third Written Assignment (both hard copy and electronic submission to turnitin.com are due at 3 p.m. on Oct 20). Print copies of the gay rights/ambivalence survey conducted in May/June 2002 under the auspices of the Political Campaigning Program. Select two people (one can be a student, the other should be an adult from a non-academic background) and interview them separately using this questionnaire; record their answers by circling the corresponding number on the printed sheets (along with start time, end time, and respondents' first names). Write an essay (5-7 pages in length, 12-point font, double-spaced, properly cited, and carefully proofed for typos and spelling errors) in which you

- identify three or four hypotheses that could be tested using data from this survey;
- note which questions could be used to operationalize the concepts specified in these hypotheses;
- locate at least two published articles, books, or book chapters that would be part of a literature review should you ever decide to do the analysis and write a paper reporting your results (*hint*: a full reading of those published works is not required here, e.g., your discussion can be based on journal abstracts or book reviews); and
- evaluate the overall instrument based on your experience administering the survey, but also taking into account what you have learned so far in the semester (including week 9 readings).

Week 9 (Oct 20) Survey Research

Johnson et al., *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapter 10.

Jennifer Merolla et al., "'Illegal,' 'Undocumented,' or 'Unauthorized': Equivalency Frames, Issue Frames, and Public Opinion on Immigration," *Perspectives on Politics* (September 2013).

Stanley Feldman and John Zaller, "The Political Culture of Ambivalence: Ideological Responses to the Welfare State," *American Journal of Political Science* (February 1992).

Debra Javeline, "Response Effects in Polite Cultures: A Test of Acquiescence in Kazakhstan," *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Spring 1999).

Be prepared to discuss the following:

- the strengths and weaknesses (in terms of sampling, conceptual clarity, measurement, data analysis, or anything else) of the articles assigned this week, and those from previous weeks that employ survey research;
- a non-academic poll (you'll have to find one, but it really shouldn't be too hard) that you believe to be problematic in terms of either sampling error or measurement error. (*note*: bring a hard copy of the article reporting this poll to class, including the URL for online access, and turn in to the instructor with your name at the top)

Week 10 (Oct 27) Elite Interviews, Depth Interviews, and Focus Groups

- Jarol B. Manheim et al., Chapters 20 (“Focus Group Methodologies”) and 21 (“Elite and Specialized Interviewing”) in *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*, 6th ed. (2006).
- Stephen C. Craig, *The Malevolent Leaders: Popular Discontent in America* (1993), Chapter 5.
- L. Sandy Maisel and Walter J. Stone, “Determinants of Candidate Emergence in U. S. House Elections: An Exploratory Study,” *Legislative Studies Quarterly* (February 1997).
- Dennis Chong, “How People Think, Reason, and Feel about Rights and Liberties,” *American Journal of Political Science* (August 1993).
- Pamela Johnston Conover et al., “The Nature of Citizenship in the United States and Great Britain: Empirical Comments on Theoretical Themes,” *Journal of Politics* (August 1991).

Be prepared to discuss the following:

- the advantages and disadvantages of small-N qualitative studies based on either depth interviews or focus groups;
- specific research questions for which exploratory research using one of these two approaches might be appropriate; and
- an elite group that you might be interested in studying, a research idea (hypothesis) involving this group, and some thoughts about how you would go about gaining access to a sample of its members.

Fourth Written Assignment (both hard copy and electronic submission to turnitin.com are due at 3 p.m. on Nov 3). Using Chapter 10 in the Pollock book as a guide, submit a research proposal for your final paper. This proposal should (a) include one or two introductory paragraphs stating the research question you plan to address; (b) propose at least two hypotheses that will be empirically tested; (c) identify the data set that will be used to test them; and (d) specify measures for the independent, dependent, and control variables to be used in that test.

Week 11 (Nov 3) Data Analysis II

Johnson et al., *Political Science Research Methods*, Chapters 14-15.
Pollock, *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*, Chapters 6-10.

Fifth Written Assignment (hard copy is due at 3 p.m. on Nov 10): Complete the exercises in Chapters 6 (pp. 126-130), 7 (pp. 140-147), 8 (pp. 161-168), 9 (pp. 180-186), and 10 (pp. 205-210) of the Pollock book. Remember to keep either the original pages or xerox copies as backup.

Week 12 (Nov 10) Leftovers / Ethics in Social Science Research

Earl Babbie, Chapter 3 (“The Ethics and Politics of Social Research”) in *The Basics of Social Research*, 2nd ed., (2002).

Danny Hayes and Jennifer L. Lawless, “A Non-Gendered Lens? Media, Voters, and Female Candidates in Contemporary Congressional Elections,” *Perspectives on Politics* (March 2015).

Roderick P. Hart et al., “The American People in Crisis: A Content Analysis,” *Political Psychology* (September 2002).

Richard F. Fenno, Jr., “U. S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration,” *American Political Science Review* (September 1977).

Be prepared to discuss the following:

- topics of interest to political scientists where observational methods might prove to be useful;
- the types of social (and especially political) science research that you believe are most vulnerable to ethical problems; and most importantly . . .
- **your research proposal.**

Note: It would be extremely unwise for students to get an early start on homecoming weekend by skipping this class.

Week 13 (Nov 17) Exam

This exam will be cumulative (covering all assigned material) and administered during class time (3-6 p.m.) on Nov 17. Format and logistical details will be discussed in class. A **study guide** will be made available on Canvas.

Week 14 (Nov 24) Thanksgiving

No class.

Week 15 (Dec 1) Wrap-Up

This class will be devoted primarily to a review of the exam and further discussion of research papers.

Week 16 (Dec 8) Reading Day

Office hours (for any last-minute issues related to students' papers) will be observed and, if needed, extended to at least 4 p.m. **Both hard copy and electronic submission of research papers to turnitin.com are due no later than 4 p.m. on Friday, December 9.**