POS 4734: Research Methods in Political Science
Department of Political Science
University of Florida
Spring 2020

Instructor: Andrew Janusz   Email: ajanusz@ufl.edu
Office: Grinter 311   Office Hours: Wednesdays 1-4

Grader: Long Xiao
Email: long.xiao@ufl.edu

Course Information

Lecture: Monday and Friday 8:30 AM - 9:20 AM (LIT 0223)
Lab Sessions: Wednesdays 8:30 to 9:20am (Weil 408D)

Course Description

This course is designed to teach students the "science" within political science. Part of this task is conceptual: helping students to think systematically about research design. To this end, students will learn how theory can inform measurement, data collection, and data analysis. Part of this task is practical: teaching students to critically evaluate scholarly research and conduct their own. Students will learn how to work with real world data, analyze it using appropriate statistical techniques, and draw appropriate inferences. With the conceptual and practical knowledge, students will be able to pose social science questions, identify appropriate measurement strategies and research designs, and answer questions about social phenomena using statistical techniques. As part of this process, students will utilize Stata, which is a powerful and commonly utilized statistical tool in social science research. Students will apply the conceptual knowledge and practical skills throughout the course in biweekly assignments. In a final research paper, students will apply everything they have learned by producing their own scientific research.

Course Objectives

This course is intended to prepare students to:

- Formulate research questions and research designs.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of alternative methodological approaches.
- Analyze statistical data and draw appropriate inferences.

Course Materials

There is one required textbook in this course. Students can purchase them in the UF Bookstore or online. All the other articles and book chapters can be found on the UF E-Learning (Canvas) at http://elearning.ufl.edu/.

Johnson, Janet Buttolph and H. T. Reynolds. Political Science Research Methods. (9th ed). Thousand Oak, CA: CQ Press, 2020.

In our lab session on Thursday, we learn how to use the statistical software, STATA. There are three ways you can access STATA:

• Academic Technology Labs (https://labs.at.ufl.edu/) around campus. Weil 408D is one of these labs.

• UF Apps (http://info.apps.ufl.edu/) is free and can be accessed anywhere from any operating system or device. To access data, you must save it to the "M drive." The process of accessing data on personal computers varies by machine, so I will have you work on university computers during lab sessions.

• Purchasing a license from Stata (https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/studentpricing/).

Course Requirements

1. Class Participation (10%)
   You are expected to attend all class meetings prepared for an in-depth discussion of the assigned course material. A portion of your final grade will be based on your participation. Please know that attendance is not equal to participation. Your grade will reflect not just whether you show up, but engagement in the discussion.

2. Complete assignments (25%)
   You are required to complete assignments. The deadlines for the assignments can be found in the class schedule below. Most of these assignments are exercises in Stata designed to help you learn how to use the software, apply the concepts and research techniques discussed in class, and prepare you to complete the final research paper.

3. Midterm exam (25%)
   There will be a closed-book in-class midterm exam on February 28, 2020, during our class. It is worth 25% of the final grade. Students should review all the class materials and apply them in answering the question(s).

4. Presentations (7.5%)
   Students will do 10-minute presentations in the last weeks of class on their research papers. They will motivate and introduce their research question, discuss their data and empirical approach, explain their findings, and lastly, outline how they would transform the project into an honors Thesis.

5. Final research paper (32.5%)
   Your assignment is to write a 15-20 page paper in which you pose a research question that contributes to the social science literature, derive hypotheses based on established theories and prior research, identify the appropriate methodology to test the proposed

relationship, and either conduct or propose a research design for evaluating that theory using empirical data.

To facilitate development of this research paper, students will develop a 3-page research proposal (5%). Students will then submit a preliminary draft (3.75%) as well as provide feedback on a classmate's preliminary draft (3.75%). The final research paper is worth (20%). Papers must be submitted to UF E-Learning (Canvas) on May 1st, 2020 at 7:30 AM. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, with size 12 font in a standard typeface. Students are encouraged to visit office hours to discuss their final papers over the course of the semester.

Grading Scale

I use the following grading scale: "A-" = [90-93.3), "A" = [93.4-96.6), "A+" = [96.7-100], with other letter grades following analogous intervals.

Course Policies

Late Assignments: Make-up assignments are only offered under valid and documented circumstances. Typically, all make-up work must be submitted within 72 hours of the grade submission deadline.

Exams: There is only one exam: one in-class mid-term, October 15. That exam will draw from all assigned readings up to that point. If you know you will miss the exam for a UF-sponsored commitment (e.g. traveling with debate team, softball team, orchestra, ROTC, etc.) *or* for some foreseeable personal commitment *that is not discretionary* (e.g. a scheduled medical procedure, like surgery) *or* because of an existential-level family emergency (e.g. death, medical emergency
you will be able to make-up the exam. If the miss is because of a scheduled event, you must let me know at least a week in advance (email is perfectly acceptable and preferred). I will work with you to make accommodations, but it is your responsibility to arrange with me to take a makeup exam.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to do their own work, as outlined in the UF Policy on Academic Integrity and published in the UF General Catalog. Although you are encouraged to work together in preparing for class discussions and exams, each student is expected to do their own work on all assignments. Violations will be subject to disciplinary measures as outlined by the University. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please consult me. The UF honor code can be viewed at: https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-honor-code/.

Grades and Appeals: You will be graded on your academic performance. This includes clarity of thought, knowledge of the material, composition, spelling, and grammar. Students can appeal grades that they believe are incorrect. Grade appeals will consist of a single typed page that identifies the problem and presents a reasoned argument that the grade fits the appeal criteria.

Disability Policy: Students who will request accommodations should register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) and provide me with documentation outlining appropriate accommodations. I am happy to meet with you during my office hours to discuss your needs.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Intellectual Introductions: Choosing a Research Topic

1/6   Course Introduction

1/8   Lab 1: Introduction to STATA

1/10*   Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 in Political Science Research Methods

Week 2: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

1/13   Chapter 3 in Political Science Research Methods

Knopf, Jeffrey. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS-Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 127-132.

1/15   Lab 2: Guest Lecture by our Political Science Librarian

1/17*   Reading_Political_Science_Research_Papers

Merolla, Jennifer, S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, and Chris Haynes. 2013. ""Illegal," "undocumented," or "unauthorized": Equivalency Frames, Issue Frames, and Public Opinion on Immigration." *Perspectives on Politics* 11(3): 789-807.

Complete the Research Topic MadLib

Week 3: Building Blocks of Political Science Research

1/20   Holiday - No Class

1/22   Lab 3: Data in Stata

1/24   Chapter 4 in Political Science Research Methods

Week 4: Data and Measurement

1/27   Collier, Paul and A. Hoeffler. 2004. "Greed and Grievance in Civil War." *Oxford Economic Papers* 56(4)

1/29   Lab 4: Data in Stata

1/31*   Munck, Gerardo, and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35(1): 5-34.

<u>Assignment 1 Due</u>

Week 5: Research Design

2/3   Chapter 6 in Political Science Research Methods

Campbell, Donald T., and H. Laurence Ross. 1968. "The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time-Series Data in Quasi-Experimental Analysis." *Law & Society Review* 3(1): 33-53. doi:10.2307/3052794.

2/5   Lab 5: Descriptive Statistics

Chapter 11 in Political Science Research Methods up to page 228

2/7   Gerring, John. 2012. "Mere Description." *British Journal of Political Science* 42(4):721-746.

Grimmer, Justin. 2015. "We Are All Social Scientists Now: How Big Data, Machine Learning, and Causal Inference Work Together." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48.1: 80-83.

Week 6: Sampling

2/10   Chapter 5 in Political Science Research Methods and Chapter 10 to page 202

2/12   Lab 6: Descriptive Statistics

2/14*   Chapter 11 in Political Science Research Methods 228 to the end

Wainer, Howard. 1984. "How to Display Data Badly." *The American Statistician* 38(2): 137-147.

<u>Assignment 2 Due</u>

Week 7: Qualitative Research

2/17   Chapter 7 & 8 in Political Science Research Methods

2/19   Lab 7: Data Visualization - Descriptive Statistics

2/21   Fenno, Richard. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *The American Political Science Review*, 71(3): 883–917.

<u>Research Proposal Due</u>

Week 8: Analyzing Relationships

2/24   Chapter 13 in Political Science Research Methods up to page 299

2/26   Lab 8: Cross Tabs

2/28   **Midterm Exam**

Week 9: Testing Hypotheses

3/9   Chapter 12 in Political Science Research Methods

3/11   Lab 9: t-tests and Correlation

3/13* Interpreting Tables Practice

Week 10:

3/16   Chapter 14 in Political Science Research Methods

https://egap.org/methods-guides/10-things-know-about-reading-regression-table

3/18   Lab 10: Regression

3/20   Chapter 14 in Political Science Research Methods

Review the Regression Interpretation Guide

Assignment 3 Due

Week 11

3/23   Karol, David, and Edward Miguel. 2007. "The Electoral Cost of War: Iraq Casualties and the 2004 US Presidential Election." *The Journal of Politics* 69, no. 3 (2007): 633-648.

Brambor, Thomas, William Roberts Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses." *Political Analysis* 14(1): 63-82.

3/25   Lab 11: Multiple Regression

3/27   Writing Studio Visit

Week 12: Experiments

3/30   Trochim, William, James P. Donnelly, and Kanika Arora. 2015. The Research Methods Database (3rd ed.) Mason, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing. Chapter 7

Dunning, Thad. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. Cambridge University Press, 2012. Chapter 1 & 2

4/1   Lab 12: Logistic Regression

4/3   Presentation Demonstration

Cunow, Saul, Scott Desposato, Andrew Janusz and Cameron Sells. "Less is More: Choice Set Size and Vote Choice." *Under Review*

<div align="center">

Assignment 4 Due

</div>

Week 13: Ethics

4/6   Desposato, Scott, ed. *Ethics and Experiments: Problems and Solutions for Social Scientists and Policy Professionals*. Routledge, 2015. Chapter 1

Willis, Derek. 2014. "Professors' Research Project Stirs Political Outrage in Montana." *New York Times*.

SKIM→Bursztyn, Leonard, Cantoni, Davide, Yang, David, Yuchtman, Noam, ad Jane Zhang. 2019. "Persistent Political Engagement: Social Interactions and the Dynamics of Protest Movements" NBER Working Paper: https://home.uchicago.edu/bursztyn/Persistent_Political_Engagement_July2019.pdf

SKIM→Fried, B. J., Lagunes, P., & Venkataramani, A. 2010. "Corruption and Inequality at the Crossroad: A Multimethod Study of Bribery and Discrimination in Latin America." *Latin American Research Review*, 76-97.

<div align="center">

Preliminary Draft Due

</div>

4/8   Lab 13: Data Visualization

4/10*   Ethics Continued

<div align="center">

Feedback Due (Submit online rubric)

</div>

Week 14: Presentations

4/13   Class Presentations

4/15   Class Presentations

4/17   Class Presentations

Week 15: Presentations

4/20   Class Presentations

4/22   Class Presentations

<div align="center">

Final Paper due 5/1/2020 via Canvas

</div>