

Applied Political Behavior

Special Topics in Political Science

Fall 2022 – POS 4931

Professor: Hannah M. Alarian (she/her/hers)

Email: halarian@ufl.edu

OHS: W 10:00am-12:00pm, [online](#)

Website: hannahalarian.com

Class: Tu 3:00 PM – 4:55 PM

Th 4:05 PM – 4:55 PM

Location: Anderson 0019

Graduate TA: Jain Choi (she/her)

Email: jainchoi@ufl.edu

Undergraduate TA: Payton Lussier (she/her)

Email: payton.lussier@ufl.edu

OHS: Email for appt.

Course Description

This course will focus on the hands-on quantitative aspects of studying political behavior. Specifically, students will explore alternative study designs and their practical applicability in the field of political behavior. To this end, the course has two key objectives: 1) to introduce the process behind the study of political behavior and 2) enrich our understanding of cutting-edge research of political behavior in a global context. At the conclusion of the course, students will have demonstrated hands-on experience in study design, data analysis, data visualization, oral and written communication, and speaking on political behavior in a global context.

Course Requirements

- (1) [Weekly class discussion: 10%](#)
- (2) [Labs: 15%](#)
- (3) [Open Note Exams: 20%](#)
- (4) [Final Paper: 20%](#)
- (5) [Final Paper Proposal, Draft, & Review: 20%](#)
- (6) [Group Presentation: 15%](#)

Weekly discussion – 10%

This course relies on active and robust in-class discussion. Students should attend class ready to discuss the reading assigned for that class meeting. Participation may include providing personal insight to the material, outside articles, current events, or responding to classmates.

I understand some students may feel uncomfortable speaking in class, the class and I benefit from hearing a wide range of perspectives. I encourage you to step outside your comfort zone to ask,

answer, or comment on a question from time to time throughout the course. If you are someone who often is a frequent contributor to class discussion, I urge you be considerate of your fellow classmates and encourage an open conversation for those who wish to speak.

The course is also designed with a focus on engaging with current scholars on various topics of political behavior. I therefore expect students to come to class prepared to deeply engage with these scholars at weekly guest speakers. **These guest speakers will almost always occur via Zoom** (i.e., no in person session will occur on these days) to allow for smooth facilitation of our live interviews. Students will submit questions for our authors on a Canvas discussion board by 11:59pm two days prior to the class visit.

Labs – 15%

There are a total of six labs – five which will count toward your final grade. These labs will involve group and independent lessons using R. No prior experience with R or any other statistical software program is required for you to succeed in these labs. Keep in mind we will walk through the mechanics of the lab in class and will be present to assist with any problems you may have in class hours. Labs will be due by 11:59pm and as with all other assignments, no late labs will be accepted.

Open-Note Exams – 20%

There will be a total of two open-book/note exams throughout the course. These tests offer an opportunity to display your application and analysis of important concepts of research design. Tests are staggered in point value to reflect growing confidence with the material and course structure. The first test constitutes 7.5% of your grade and the second 12.5% No late or makeup tests will be accepted.

Final Paper – 20%

The final group paper is the main writing activity for the course. In this research paper (maximum 35 written pages), students will 1) describe the research question; 2) include a detailed analysis and; 3) develop a unique research design for a given political behavior. Students will have the choice of one of four question topics: electoral turnout, voting behavior, migration, or protest movements. Once a topic is chosen, each group will be randomly assigned a region (Europe or the US) and suggested dataset for which you will use to answer the question (i.e., section 2 of the paper). You must include both academic articles from your own outside research as well as readings from the course in your analysis. There are no paper rubrics but we will discuss the paper in great detail throughout the course of the semester.

You are expected to begin working on this project early on in course. We will have multiple opportunities to discuss this paper throughout the course individually and as a group. Electronic copies of the final paper must be turned in by the [final date and time](#). No late assignments will be accepted without prior approval.

Students will also include a response to their peer review comments attached with their final paper submission as a letter to the editor (to be discussed in class). **Submissions without these responses will be deducted 5% of their final paper grade.**

Final Research Paper Proposal, Draft and Review– 20%

Students will write a brief proposal of their final paper. This proposal should be three pages maximum. At a minimum, this proposal should include a proposed title, question, theories, and cases you will consider in your final paper. Students will post their proposal to Canvas by 11:59pm on the due date (5%).

Students will additionally move to write a brief draft of their final paper to assist them in the writing of their final paper. The draft should be eight pages with a one-page reference list. Drafts of these final papers will focus on defining the problem/puzzle examined, argument proposed, and most importantly the proposed study design to test the hypotheses. Students will post their proposal to Canvas by 11:59pm on the due date (10%).

After submission of the Final Paper draft, students will provide comments to one of their fellow classmates drafts within Canvas within two weeks (by 11:59pm on the due date). This response is worth 5% of your total grade. This response should be at least two pages and include: 1) a summary of the argument, 2) indicate strong components of the piece; 3) highlight elements that require additional discussion and; 4) suggestions for improvement.

Group Presentation – 15%

This assignment will require students in paper groups to create a presentation on 1) your question of political behavior and 2) the main findings of your final group paper. This presentation should be a coherent and collective analysis of your research and presentation of your original research design. Presentations will take the form of conference presentations, with each day organized as a panel of three paper topics. The Teaching Team will act as discussants, moderating audience (i.e., classroom) discussion. Presentations can include any multi-media format (e.g., video-clips, figures, podcasts, TikToks) and should be between 15 and 20 minutes in length.

Presentations will be recorded and posted to Canvas by a group member one full day before your scheduled class day. For example, if your group is scheduled on Thursday, you must post your presentation on Tuesday prior to 11:45am. All students are responsible for coming prepared with thoughtful questions for the presentation groups. All students will be evaluated on the clarity and content of their presentation as well as their ability to ask and answer questions to and from their fellow classmates.

Grading Scale

	A 94–100%	A– 90–93.9%
B+ 87–89.9%	B 84–86.9%	B– 80–83.9%
C+ 77–79.9%	C 74–76.9%	C– 70–73.9%
D+ 67–69.9%	D 64–66.9%	D– 60–63.9%
E < 60%		

Readings

There are no formal text books for this class. There are plenty of optional texts registered at the bookstore which are excellent resource guides for you throughout the class. You are responsible

for completing all readings prior to the class for which they are assigned. If you would like supplemental reading on any topic, please see me.

Class Policies

Syllabus

This syllabus is a living document. This means it is subject to change. All potential changes will be communicated with you in our class meetings and on Canvas.

In-Class Recording

In accordance with recent changes to Florida state law (CS/CS/HB 233), students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Zoom Account Log-in

For online days, you must log in to zoom using your UFL account. This will ensure you receive credit for attendance. If you must use a non-UFL or phone account during a class meeting due to technical reasons, you should email Undergraduate TA Payton Lussier.

Privacy Protection

As in all courses, unauthorized recording of discussion and unauthorized sharing of discussion materials is strictly prohibited. For guest visitor days, students should both attend with their camera engaged and participate orally and in writing. These discussions will never be recorded by the

professor nor any student. This policy is in place to ensure the privacy of our classmates and to ensure our material (and our ideas of that material) can be discussed openly and honestly.

Expected Workload

You should be aware that our course requires a *significant* deal of outside work including reading, writing, analysis, and preparing comments. As a Carnegie I, research-intensive university, UF is required by federal law to assign at least 2 hours of work outside of class for every contact hour. Work done in these hours may include reading/viewing assigned material and doing explicitly assigned individual or group work, as well as reviewing notes from class, synthesizing information in advance of exams or papers, and other self-determined study tasks.

For our 3-credit class, this means you should expect to spend 6-9 hours per week outside of class. This can of course vary by week, but plan accordingly. I strongly encourage you to speak to me in office hours if you encounter any struggles or difficulty.

Lecture Slides

I will post redacted lecture slides on a password protected link on my website at the conclusion of each class meeting. The password will be provided on the second day of class. The slides are meant as a guide and are in no way a substitute for lecture. My hope is that by providing redacted slides – which will often have definitions – you will not have to spend the entire class furiously note taking and can pay close attention to the lecture, ask questions, and participate deeply in class discussion. If, however, class participation or attendance wanes, I retain the right to end sharing lecture slides.

Grade adjustment policy

I do not under any circumstances round or adjust grades. This policy is not an attempt to be harsh but to hold all students in equal standing.

Absences

Absences are factored into participation and presentation grades. I understand that unforeseen events can arise and therefore missing one class will not harm your grade. However, a pattern of absences will result in a low participation score. If for some reason you must miss class outside of one meeting, you must contact me in advance (i.e., prior to class starting).

Late or Make-up Assignments

As stated above, no late or make-up assignments will be accepted without prior approval. If an assignment is submitted late without prior approval, it will receive a 0.

Generally, **at least one week in advance** notice is required for assignment or exam extension request. In accordance with university attendance policy, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. Other reasons also may be approved. Please note that assignment deadlines for other courses will not be considered.

COVID-19 Information

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit one.ufl.edu for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home (see above information about absences). Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

Contacting the Professor

Students should use Canvas to contact me. Although you may email me at my UF email account, the university strongly encourages we communicate via Canvas to avoid the potential of violations of student confidentiality protected by [FERPA](#). I strongly encourage students to visit my virtual office hours, scheduled [here](#), to discuss any course questions, comments, or concerns.

Email/Messaging Hours

You may email or message me via Canvas at any time that is convenient to you. I will respond within one business day between the hours of 8am and 5pm. If you do not receive a reply from me after 48 hours, please resend your message. Although I may sometimes reply outside of these designated hours, responses cannot be guaranteed after 5pm on weekdays, on weekends, or holidays. **This policy also is in effect for the class grader.** Please plan accordingly to have your questions answered in advance of assignment and exam deadlines.

Referencing the Professor

Often, students have questions over proper naming or titling etiquette for communicating with their professors. This is particularly confusing in courses which mix undergraduate and graduate students. In an effort to remove this confusion and reduce email anxiety, you may use any of the following acceptable references in all communication with me throughout the duration of our course.

- Professor Alarian
- Dr. Alarian
- Prof. A.
- Dr. A.

Both Graduate and Undergraduate TAs have asked that you refer to them by first names (i.e., Jain or Payton).

The use of any other references, titles, or names is not acceptable unless otherwise directly stated. I expect all communication between you and a member of the teaching team will be professional and appropriate in tone.

Inclusion, Equality, and Respect

Many topics covered in the course can be controversial, divisive, and often difficult. Creating an inclusive, respectful, and safe classroom environment is integral to the success of this course. To this end, all class members are expected to treat each other at all times with respect, courtesy, tolerance, fairness, and justice. We will work together as a class in this goal and I will continuously check in to ensure all students have the opportunity to be heard, respected, and consider new theories and ideas without prejudice.

Academic Integrity

The University of Florida is an institution of learning, research, and scholarship that is strengthened by the existence of an environment of integrity. It is essential that all members of the University practice academic integrity and accept individual responsibility for their work and actions. Students are responsible for doing their own work, and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction and referral to the university's Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied:

“On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code also specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions (sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code). Violations of the Honor Code is unacceptable and devalues the teaching and learning experience for the entire community. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. Should you have questions regarding academic integrity and honesty, I suggest reviewing the policies found on the University website and/or speaking with me during office hours.

A Note on Requesting Letters of Recommendation

I encourage you to apply widely to any fellowship, internship, training, award, or employment opportunity which comes your way. If you anticipate requesting I write a letter on your behalf, please note that I expect that you have attended multiple office hours and actively participated in class discussion throughout the duration of this course. It is unlikely I will be able to write a letter on your behalf without satisfying both of these conditions. Attending class itself, in other words, is not sufficient for a letter of recommendation. You can read more about my letter of recommendation policy on my [website](#).

Course Resources

Accessibility Services

If you have (or suspect you have) a learning or other disability that requires academic accommodations, you should contact the UF Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible (dso.ufl.edu/drc). Please be sure that necessary accommodations are properly documented by the UFDRC. To obtain a classroom accommodation, you must first pre-register with the DRC (352.392.8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an

accommodation letter which must be presented to your instructors when requesting an accommodation. I am always happy to make whatever accommodations you may need to be successful in the course.

Technology Resources

The entirety of our course will take place virtually, requiring the use of a working computer and access to audio-visual resources (e.g., webcam, microphones). If you are struggling to use Zoom or Canvas, please review these [UF Quick Start guides](#). This [link](#) also connects to UF resources regarding internet connectivity.

The UF Computing Help Desk can assist you with any of your technical issues. You can access the Help Desk 24/7 at <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu/>, 352-392- HELP (4357), or helpdesk.@ufl.edu. If you use email, write from your gatorlink@ufl.edu email address, or include your UFID and/or GatorLink username (NOT your password!) in the body of the email. Provide complete information regarding the course and content to which you are referring.

Finally, keep in mind that in a pinch you can dial in to our virtual class using your cellphone to participate in class.

Academic Resources

There are many other campus, academic resources you should take advantage of throughout the semester. These include:

- *E-learning technical support:* Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- *Library Support:* cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. teachingcenter.ufl.edu
- *Teaching Center:* Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. teachingcenter.ufl.edu
- *Writing Studio:* 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio Now offering [online consultation](#).
- *Student Complaints On-Campus:* sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-codestudent-conduct-code
- *On-Line Students Complaints:* <https://distance.ufl.edu/getting-help/student-complaint-process/>.

Crisis Resources

If you or someone you know is struggling with any crisis including but not limited to gender, sexual, racial, or domestic violence, there are many community and University of Florida resources available. Some of these include:

- *U Matter, We Care* (umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, umatter.ufl.edu)
- *RESPECT – UF Division of Student Affairs* (respect.ufsa.ufl.edu)
- *Counseling and Wellness Center* – available 24/7 (352-392-1575, counseling.ufl.edu)
- *Student Health Care Center* (352-392-1161, shcc.ufl.edu)
- *Multicultural & Diversity Affairs* (352-392-1217, multicultural.ufl.edu)

- *Hitchcock Field & Fork Pantry*- Assisting members of our campus community who experience food insecurity - pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center* (352-733-0111)
- *Gainesville Police Department* (non-emergency #: 352-955-1818, gainesvillepd.org)

My (virtual) office door is also always open to you. Please keep in mind I am a Title IX mandatory reporter.

Financial Related Services

In case of emergency financial need, UF's [Aid-a-Gator program](#) that provides students with emergency funding. The program is intended to “help our students need to cover costs related to unanticipated travel, additional technology requirements, or other needs related to an emergency situation.”

HealthStreet [Drive Up Services](#) provides clothing, toiletries, naloxone (Narcan), masks, and medical referrals. HealthStreet also has an [extensive list](#) of resources including: financial assistance, food/grocery and medicine delivery services, online exercise, mental health, recovery, support for parents, and suggestions for ways to socialize while physically distancing.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. I take these evaluations very seriously and expect students to provide honest, constructive feedback. These evaluations are conducted online at: evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at: evaluations.ufl.edu/results.

Semester Schedule

Week 1: Introduction to Political Behavior

What are the goals of this course? What can I expect to learn and understand at the conclusion of the course?

August 25

- Syllabus
- Green, Amelia. 2013. How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps.

Week 2: Defining Political Behavior in Political Science

What does it mean to study political behavior? What constitutes a political behavior?

August 30

- Dalton, Russell. 2014. "How we participate" in *Citizen Politics*.
- Hirschman, Albert. 1972. Chapter 1 in *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*.

September 1

Lab 1: R as a Tool

Week 3: Introduction to Behavioral Methods

Why do we engage in (or avoid) certain political behaviors?

September 6

- Gordon and Segura. 1997. "Cross-national Variation in the Political Sophistication of Individuals: Capability or Choice?" *The Journal of Politics*. 59(1): 126-147.

September 8

Lab 2: Importing & Merging Datasets

Week 4: Ethics and Experiments

How do we study behavior experimentally? What ethical considerations should we have in research?

September 13

- Fuji, Lee Ann. 2012. "Research ethics 101: Dilemmas and responsibilities." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 45(4): 717-723.

September 15 – Class Canceled – APSA conference

Week 5: Survey Experiments

What is a survey experiment? What can it help us do that surveys cannot?

September 20

- The Big Lie: Expressive Responding and Misperceptions in the United States

Guest Speaker: James Fahey

September 22

In-class Proposal Workshop

Come prepared to discuss group paper proposals in detail

Week 6: Exam and Sampling

How are we meeting our learning objectives? What does it look like to construct a sample in R?

September 27

[Exam I](#)

September 29

Lab 3: Sampling

FINAL PAPER PROPOSALS DUE BY MIDNIGHT

Week 7: Mixed Methodologies in Political Behavior Research

What other methods for understanding behavior beyond quantitative research? How can we integrate these tools to understand our political world?

October 4 – ONLINE COURSE

- Wellman, Elizabeth Iams. 2020. "Emigrant Inclusion in Home Country Elections: Theory and Evidence from sub-Saharan Africa." *American Political Science Review*. 1-15.

Guest Speaker: Elizabeth Wellman

October 6

Applied Research Activity

Week 8: Survey Methods

How do we measure political attitudes and behavior? Why does this matter?

October 11 - ONLINE COURSE

- Rosenfeld, Imai, and Shapiro. 2015. An Empirical Validation Study of Popular Survey Methodologies for Sensitive Questions. *American Journal of Political Science*.
- Berinsky, A.J., 2017. Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys. *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, 309–329.
- Graeme Blair. Survey Methods for Sensitive Topics.

Guest Speaker: Yang-Yang Zhou

October 13

In-Class Paper Workshop

Come prepared to discuss group papers in detail

Week 9: Observational Data

How can we estimate behavior using observation?

October 18 - ONLINE COURSE

- Shoub, Stauffer, and Song. 2020. Differences in Men's and Women's Policing Behavior: Evidence from Traffic Stops. *Working Paper*

Guest Speaker: Kelsey Shoub

October 20

Lab 4: Descriptive Statistics

Week 10: Political Behavior in International Relations

How can we understand the relationship between economic and political preferences? Are we acting in our best interest? Is our interest simply economic?

October 25 - ONLINE COURSE

- Weldzius, Ryan (with James Bisbee and James Raymond Vreeland). Political Cleavages and Exposure to the Global Financial Crisis. *Working Paper*.

Guest Speaker: Ryan Weldzius

October 27

Lab 5: Graphing

FINAL PAPER DRAFT DUE BY MIDNIGHT

Week 11: Applied Research

Are we exceeding our learning objectives? How can we improve our papers and presentations?

November 1

Exam II

PEER REVIEW COMMENTS DUE BY MIDNIGHT

November 3

- Rudolph, Lukas, and Thomas Däubler. "Holding individual representatives accountable: The role of electoral systems." *The Journal of Politics* 78, no. 3 (2016): 746-762.
- Alarian, Hannah M. "Cause or Consequence?: The Alternative for Germany and Attitudes toward Migration Policy." *German Politics and Society* 38, no. 2 (2020): 59-89.

Guest Speaker: Hannah Alarian

Week 12: Voting Behavior Panel

November 8

Presentation Groups 1-3

November 10

- Allen, Trevor J. "Exit to the right? Comparing far right voters and abstainers in Western Europe." *Electoral Studies* 50 (2017): 103-115.
- Highton, Benjamin. "Revisiting the relationship between educational attainment and political sophistication." *The Journal of Politics* 71, no. 4 (2009): 1564-1576.

Week 13: Electoral Turnout

November 15

Presentation Groups 4-6

November 17

- Hutter, Swen, and Rens Vliegenthart. "Who responds to protest? Protest politics and party responsiveness in Western Europe." *Party Politics* 24, no. 4 (2018): 358-369.
- Dostal, Jörg Michael. "The Pegida movement and German political culture: Is right-wing populism here to stay?." *The Political Quarterly* 86, no. 4 (2015): 523-531.

Week 14: Protest

November 22

Presentation Groups 7-9

November 24: THANKSGIVING

Week 15: Migration

November 29

Presentation Groups 10-12

December 1

Lab 6: Mapping

December 6th

Final Papers due December 10th (11:59pm)