

# POS 4734: Research Methods

University of Florida | Fall 2025

## Course Information

### Meeting Place

FLI 0113

### Meeting Time

T: 10:40am – 11:30am

R: 10:40am – 12:35pm

### Final Exam

FLI 0113

Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>

R: 10:00am – 12:00pm

## Instructor Information

### Instructor

Matthew J. Uttermark, PhD

### Email

[matthewuttermark@ufl.edu](mailto:matthewuttermark@ufl.edu)

### Office Location & Hours

AND - 206

T: 11:30am-1:30pm &

R: 12:45 – 1:45 pm

## General Information

### Description

*There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics – Benjamin Disraeli  
(popularized by Mark Twain)*

Discourse within political science is filled with references to data and statistics. This course will help students understand how those data are produced and how to evaluate their validity. Specifically, students will learn to develop research questions, generate hypotheses, evaluate experiments and observational studies, measure variables, and perform statistical tests. In so doing, students will see how social scientists develop and test theories to explain phenomena. With these newly acquired skills, students will be better able to evaluate research they encounter in their professional and day-to-day lives. Additionally, the goal is to prepare students for the in-depth research and critical thinking skills needed in their future coursework.

Please be aware that this course relies on a different background than most other courses that our department offers. You do not need to be a math or computer-wiz to do well in this course - I was not when I took this course in college. However, the material in this course may not come as easily to you compared to other courses. I encourage you to set some time aside to reread the textbook, study/work with your classmates, and visit during office hours if concepts are unclear.

## Grading

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A	93-100	B	83-86.99	C	73-76.99	D	63 – 66.99
A-	90-92.99	B-	80-82.99	C-	70-72.99	D-	60 – 62.99
B+	87-98.99	C+	77-79.99	D+	67-69.99	F	< 59.99

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**Grade Rounding** As a matter of policy, the instructor does not round grades in graduate-level coursework. Please do not email the instructor at the end of the semester asking that your final grade be rounded up.

## Evaluation

**Class Engagement (10%)** Please attend class, ask questions, and be prepared to engage with the material. I encourage you to ask questions in class—especially when material is unclear. In this particular course, if you have a question on the material many of your classmates likely have the same question. Students who do not actively participate in class will not be eligible to receive higher than a C (70%) in this evaluation area.

**Assignments & Problem Sets (20%)** Students will have several assignments and problem sets over the course of the semester. These activities will serve as opportunities to practice statistical concepts covered in class. While each assignment is a relatively small portion of your final grade, it is important to work diligently on these assignment in order to do well on exams and presentations.

**Midterm (25%) & Final (25%)** There will be a midterm and finale, administrated in-class. Both exams will are designed to test your understanding of concepts and interpretation of research and statistical analysis. Students are allowed to use calculators. The test will be a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and short answer. More information will be provided when we come closer to the examination period.

**Methods Analysis Memorandum (20%)** We will discuss this project on the first day of class. Directions will be posted on the Canvas webpage.

**Please Note** Grades uploaded into Canvas are unweighted. Please refer to the evaluation criteria outlined above when considering your final grade for the course.

## Course Materials

### Required Text

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. The fundamentals of political science research. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Electronic copies of the textbook are available and can be used in this class.

This book should be available for purchase in the campus bookstore, Amazon.com and Chegg.com, among other sites. In the reading schedule, this book is referred to as K&W.

**Other readings (book chapters, journal articles) will be made available on the course site.**

## Class Policies

**Makeup Work** Make-up work will be accepted in this course if a student has a university approved absence. University approved absences include:

- A documented illness (or serious illness of a dependent child).
- A death in the family.
- Call to active military duty.
- Jury duty.
- A religious or work-restricted holy days.
- Official university activities (i.e., a student athlete competing in a meet).

It is your responsibility to inform me and get documentation before the absence occurs. For example, if you are ill the day of an assignment, I require a signed note from a medical doctor dated the day of the exam. I will then work to determine how to make-up the assignment. With the exception of the final project – which must be completed on time – late work submitted up to 48 hours after a deadline may receive up to half credit, unless otherwise documented.

**Incomplete Grades** I do not expect to hand out a grade of “Incomplete” to any student in this course. However, a grade of “Incomplete” will only be given if there is an agreement between the instructor and the student prior to the end of the semester. The instructor reserves the right to determine a legitimate reason for assigning an incomplete grade.

**Plagiarism** Any form of cheating will NOT be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing any written work you will receive an automatic zero on the assignment and will be reported to the university in accordance with University of Florida policy. Plagiarism is defined as: handing in a paper you did not write, attempting to pass off someone else's work as your own, or using your own ideas, information, or phraseology of other writers

without giving proper credit in your text. Self-plagiarism – handing the same written assignment for multiple courses – is also prohibited. See the university honor code for more information.

**Email Policy** Please avoid emailing the instructor with questions that can be answered by reading the syllabus. This document contains information on how your grade is calculated and what is covered each day in class. Additionally, if you wish to set up an appointment with the instructor outside of office hours, please provide a list of times to meet in the first email sent to the instructor. The instructor monitors email from 9am – 5 pm, Monday through Friday.

**Course Evaluations** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback professionally and respectfully is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email that they will receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

**Student Accommodations** Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, you will receive an accommodation letter to share with me. If you need accommodation, please follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

**Health & Wellness 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: 352-392-1575, [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu)
- RESPECT – UF Division of Student Affairs: [respect.ufsa@ufl.edu](mailto:respect.ufsa@ufl.edu)
- Counseling and Wellness Center: 352-392-1575, [counseling@ufl.edu](mailto:counseling@ufl.edu) (available 24/7)
- Alachua County Crisis Center's Crisis Line: 352-264-6789
- Student Health Care Center: 352-392-1161, [shcc@ufl.edu](mailto:shcc@ufl.edu)
- Multicultural & Diversity Affairs: 352-392-1217, [multicultural@ufl.edu](mailto:multicultural@ufl.edu)
- UFPD Office of Victim Services: 352-392-1111, [police@ufl.edu](mailto:police@ufl.edu)
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: 352-733-0111

**Academic Resources** The resources listed below are not exhaustive of all the academic resources that are available to students, but these encapsulate those that are helpful for students taking courses online, those seeking library support, or those looking for help with writing, tutoring, and general study skills:

- E-Learning Technical Support: 352-392-4357 (select option 2), [learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto:learning-support@ufl.edu)
- Library Support: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>.
- Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138, <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.
- Academic Resources: provides services like tutoring, <https://academicresources.clas.ufl.edu>.

**Academic Integrity** Students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. 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 Conduct Code specifies several behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

**Class Recordings** 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.

## Course Schedule

This syllabus is subject to change as necessary over the course of the semester. Regularly check Canvas and your e-mail for updates on any changes.

Date	Topic	Reading	Assignments (Date Distributed)
<b>Aug 21</b>	Course Introduction & The Scientific Study of Politics	Syllabus Review & K&W Ch. 1	CITI Certification Assignment
<b>Aug 26</b>	The Scientific Study of Politics & Theory Building	K&W Ch. 2	
<b>Aug 28</b>	Theory Building		Theory Mapping Assignment
<b>Sep 2</b>	Qualitative Research	Supplemental Reading on Canvas	Qualitative Interview Assignment
<b>Sep 4</b>	Qualitative Research		
<b>Sep 9</b>	No Class: Instructor at Conference		
<b>Sep 11</b>	No Class: Instructor at Conference		
<b>Sep 16</b>	Causation	K&W Ch. 3	
<b>Sep 18</b>	Causation		Data Analysis Assignment 1
<b>Sep 23</b>	Research Design	K&W Ch. 4	
<b>Sep 25</b>	Research Design		
<b>Sep 30</b>	Measurement	K&W Ch. 5	
<b>Oct 2</b>	Measurement		Data Analysis Assignment 2
<b>Oct 7</b>	Probability & Inference	K&W Ch. 7	
<b>Oct 9</b>	Probability & Inference		
<b>Oct 14</b>	Review		
<b>Oct 16</b>	Midterm		

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Assignments (Date Distributed)</b>
<b>Oct 21</b>	Getting to Know Your Data	K&W Ch. 6	Data Analysis Assignment 3
<b>Oct 23</b>	Getting to Know Your Data & Bivariate Hypothesis Testing	K&W Ch. 8	
<b>Oct 28</b>	Bivariate Hypothesis Testing		
<b>Oct 30</b>	No Class: Instructor at Conference		
<b>Nov 4</b>	Bivariate Regression	K&W Ch. 9	
<b>Nov 6</b>	Bivariate Regression		Data Analysis Assignment 4
<b>Nov 11</b>	No Class: Veteran's Day		
<b>Nov 13</b>	Multiple Regression	K&W Ch. 10	Memorandum Feedback Deadline
<b>Nov 18</b>	Multiple Regression		
<b>Nov 20</b>	Regression Extensions	K&W Ch. 11	
<b>Nov 25</b>	No Class: Thanksgiving Break		
<b>Nov 27</b>	No Class: Thanksgiving Break		
<b>Dec 2</b>	Review for Final		Memorandum Due
<b>Dec 11</b>	Final Exam		