Methods in Political Science
Political Science 300
Spring 2015

Steven Rogers
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Office Hours: M/W: 2 – 3 pm or by appointment
Email: smrogers@slu.edu

Class time: MWF 11:00am – 11:50am
Lab Time: Thursday 3:35pm – 6:35pm
Classroom: McGannon Hall 121
Lab Room: McGannon Hall 118L

Course Description
This course provides an overview of research methods in Political Science. Unlike most political science courses, this class does not concentrate on a particular subject area, country, or political era. Rather, it covers how political scientists go about investigating research systematically. This course will increase your understanding of political science and help you build skill sets that are applicable to political science and non-political science courses (and beyond the classroom). The course is organized in three related parts to understand the process of political science research, research designs employed by social scientists, and theory testing.

Course Requirements
Tests:
There will be three tests in this course. Tests will be in-class, closed-book, and closed-note. The purpose of these exams is to test both your factual and conceptual understanding of course material. Tests will consist of various question types that may include: multiple choice, definition recall, short answer, short essay, and mathematical computation. Test #1 will cover material from Section A (see below Class Outline). Test #2 will cover material from Sections A and B. Test #3 will be cumulative for the entire course. The days of Tests #1 and #2 will be determined based on how quickly we cover material, but you will be given 10 days notice before each test. Test #3 will take place during the final exam period.

Papers:
There will be three main written assignments in the course. For these assignments, you will choose one of two political science research topics. The first topic focuses on politics outside of the United States and addresses gender quotas in legislative elections. The second topic addresses the incumbency advantage in American elections. For each of these topics, you will write a literature critique, literature review, and research design. Each of these assignments is briefly described below and will be discussed further during the semester.

- **Literature Critique**: The literature critique will be a 7 – 10 page paper that provides in-depth evaluations of scholarly work done on your chosen topic. You will be given five scholarly works to critique, and you must independently identify and evaluate three additional scholarly works on the topic. The purpose of the literature critique is to assess each scholarly work’s theory or argument; the tests or evidence for this theory; main findings; and the strengths or weaknesses of the study. **Due February 27th**.

- **Literature Review**: The literature review is a 3 – 4 page paper that reviews each of the eight scholarly works from the literature critique in addition to two other, newly identified scholarly works. The purpose of the literature review is to better understand...
how to *concisely* convey to readers prior research findings’ and shortcomings. **Due March 30**th.

- **Research Design:** The research design is a 5 – 7 page paper. This paper should outline a theory, hypothesis, and how you will test your hypothesis to address an identified shortcoming in previous research on your chosen topic. **Due May 1**st.

**Homework, Problem Sets, and Quizzes:**
Problem sets and quizzes will be completed in-class, in-lab, and as homework. Quizzes will take place both in-class (sometimes in the form of Pop Quizzes) and on Blackboard. All assignments will be due by the beginning of class or lab period unless otherwise specified.

**Participation:**
All students are expected to complete assigned readings, regularly attend class, participate in discussion, and be prepared to do problems on the board. Your participation grade will be determined by how you meet these expectations.

You are permitted two unexcused absences. For each additional unexcused absence, your final course grade will be reduced by 0.5%. If you miss a pop-quiz or assignment due to an unexcused absence, you will receive a 0% for the assignment. An absence is only excused with written consent (e.g. email) from Professor Rogers.

**Grades**
Your grade for this course will consist of the following components and relative weights:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Overall Course Grade Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 3</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Critique</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework and Quizzes</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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There will be no make-up tests or deadline extensions given in this course. Exemptions will only be made with written (e.g. email) prior consent for planned events such as sponsored SLU activities or religious observances or under unusual circumstances such as a documented medical emergency. It is the student’s responsibility to request and obtain this consent. Late homework assignments will be marked down 25% for each day, and late papers will be marked down 10% for each day. There will be no assignments designated purely as “extra credit.” At times, there will be opportunities for extra credit within a problem set or test, but you cannot earn more than 100% credit on any assignment.
When determining the final grade, the following grading scale will be used. I will round final grades. Depending on the distribution of grades, I reserve the right to impose curves to assignments and final grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% - 100%</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>83% - 86%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>73% - 76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90% - 92%</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80% - 82%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70% - 72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87% - 89%</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77% - 79%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>below 60%</td>
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When translating letter grades into numeric grades, the midpoint of the range will be used (e.g. A = 96.5%, A- = 91%, etc.)

**Key Dates**
Due to the university calendar or Professor Rogers’ professional obligations, we will not hold class or lab on the following days:

- **January 19**: Martin Luther King Day
- **March 9 – 14**: Spring Break
- **April 2 – 6**: Easter Break
- **April 15 – 17**: Midwest Political Science Association Meeting in Chicago

**Course Evaluations**
Students are requested to fill out a course evaluation at the end of the course.

**Academic Honesty**
The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student’s own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination or quiz without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, sharing or receiving the questions from an on-line quiz with another student, taking an on-line quiz with the help of another student, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty.

All clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.
Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml

**Students with Special Needs-Disability Services**
In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at 314-977-8885 or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

**Required Texts**
The following texts should be available from the University Bookstore or online retailers, such as Amazon.com. Other readings will be made available via Blackboard.


**Recommended Book**
The following book provides excellent explanations of many of the statistical methods we will learn this semester. It is available from Amazon or Barnes and Noble for less than $20.

Course Outline
The following outlines the tentative class schedule and lab schedule for the course. Content covered in classes that meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday is divided up into three sections. We will start with Topic 1 in Section A and proceed sequentially. You will be notified in-class when you will be responsible for a topic’s readings.

Content covered in the lab section will follow the calendar listed on the following pages.

Class Outline

Section A: The Scientific Method

➢ Topic 1: Political Science as a Science
  o Kellstedt Chapter 1

➢ Topic 2: Research Questions
  o Barkso Chapter 2

➢ Topic 3: Previous Research
  o Barakso, 67 - 80
  o Johnson & Reynolds. Chapter 3.

➢ Topic 4: Theory and Hypotheses
  o Kellstedt Chapter 2
  o Barkso, p. 56-67; revisit 74 – 80

➢ Topic 5: Causality
  o Kellstedt Chapter 3
  o Barakso p. 23 – 35
 Topic 6: Measurement
  o Kellstedt Chapter 5: Sections 1-8
  o Barakso p. 83 – 94
  o Mayhew, David. “Divided We Govern.” Chapters 3 – 4. 2005

 Topic 7: Ethics

Section B: Approaches to Research

 Topic 8: Experiments
  o Kellstedt Chapter 4 Sections 1 & 2
  o Barakso Chapter 5

 Topic 9: Large N-Observational Studies
  o Kellstedt Chapter 4, Sections 3 & 4
  o Barakso Chapter 6
➢ **Topic 10: Survey Research**
  o White, Chapter 7
  o Barakso p. 95-99.

➢ **Topic 11: Small-N Observational Studies**
  o Barakso Chapter 7
  o White Chapter 8

➢ **Topic 12: Formal Theory**

Section C: Statistical Inference

➢ **Topic 13: Ordinary Least Squares**
  o Kellstedt Chapter 8.5

➢ **Topic 14: Multivariate Regression Analysis**
  o Kellstedt Chapter 9

➢ **Topic 15: Multiple Regression Model Specification**
  o Kellstedt Chapter 10

➢ **Topic 16: Limited Dependent Variables**
  o Kellstedt Chapter 11.1 – 11.2.2
Lab Outline

The following lists text book readings. Non-textbook readings will be assigned with homework.

- January 15 – No Lab
- January 22 – Literature Review
- January 29 – Introduction to STATA
- February 5 – Measures of Central Tendency
  - Kellstedt Chapter 5, Sections 9 – 12
  - Barakso p. 105 – 113
- February 12 – Probability and Distributions
  - Kellstedt Chapter 6
- February 19 – Hypothesis Testing
  - Kellstedt Chapter 7.1 – 7.3
- February 26 – Cross-tabulations
  - Kellstedt Chapter 7.4.1
- March 5 – Difference in Means
  - Kellstedt Chapter 7.4.2
- March 12 – Spring Break
- March 19 – Measures of Association and Correlation
  - Kellstedt Chapter 7.4.3
- March 26 – Bivariate Regression
  - Kellstedt 8.1 – 8.4
- April 2 – Easter Break
- April 9 – Bivariate Regression 2
- April 16 – No Lab
- April 23 & 30 – Multiple Regression