

Methods in Political Science

Pols 2000-01, Spring 2018

Office hours: MWF 9:00-9:50 & Thurs. 3:45-6:45

Office: McGannon 123

Classroom: McGannon 118L

Instructor: Matt Millard

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Office hours: MWF 10:00-10:50, W 2:00-3:30, Thurs, 2:00-3:30

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the scientific study of politics. Students will learn how to construct, analyze, and criticize important questions relating to the discipline of political science. In doing this, students will learn about the process of inferential inquiry that is common to the entire field of the social sciences. Students will read a variety of literature in this class, ranging from the textbook (see below), to poorly constructed research studies, to double-blind, peer reviewed scholarly works in the field of political science. Students will learn what research methods/approaches are best suited to which questions and what strengths/ weaknesses these represent. Furthermore, students will be able to construct a sound research question that merits serious academic inquiry.

Requirements

Class participation/attendance (10%): Students are expected to attend class and are encouraged to participate in discussions. I will periodically call on students and if students fail to participate, their grades will suffer. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class and occasionally at the end of class. Students who show up to class more than ten minutes late will be marked as absent. This will be deducted from the student's final grade. Four points will be deducted per missed class from this total grade of 100. Legitimate excuses, such as family emergencies, sickness, or school-sanctioned events (such as participation in sports) do not constitute a missed class and will not be deducted from the student's attendance, provided it is cleared prior to the class meeting or, in the event of sickness, there is a written doctor's excuse. Students who miss class for one of these excused reasons will be **REQUIRED** to email me the reason why they were absent and should include in the subject line of the email "yourlastname-absence" if they wish it to count as excused. Students are also highly encouraged to speak with the professor before or after class regarding their absence. Students are allowed to miss three classes without a grade penalty. **It is impossible to do well in this course if you do not attend class!** Due to the difficult nature of the subject matter contained in this class, I will require every student to meet with me during the semester so that I may review their research presentation and to offer advice/direction. Failure to attend these pre-assigned meetings is mandatory and students who do not attend the out-of-class meeting will have five points deducted from their attendance grade.

Tests 40% (4 at 10% each): There are four tests that are scheduled for this course.

These tests will each be worth 10% of your course grade. These tests will be in class and will assess your ability to understand the information presented in the textbook and other readings/class discussions. These tests will be open notes (none electronic) but not open book. Additionally, a goal of these tests is to assess your ability to take the knowledge gained and apply it to your own interests. Finally, taking the knowledge you have learned and coupling this with your interests, you will develop a research project that applies what you have learned in this course. Make-up exams will only be permitted for those students who follow the make-up procedures listed in this syllabus.

Research Presentation (10%): Students will create a “mock-up” social science question to investigate and present to the class in the final meetings at the end of the semester. Students will be required to submit a proposal of a significant research question related to the social sciences. The professor will provide feedback throughout the semester, in the form of exams and one-on-one mentoring to offer advice as to how students can best design a study. Keep in mind that these poster presentations should be treated very seriously, as they act as a capstone to this course. Students, in the course of designing this research project, will follow the steps and address the problems that they learn in this course to adequately assess the validity and approach of their methods.

Discussion Articles (15%): Much of class on certain days will be discussion-based on an assigned journal article (or two), which will be posted on Blackboard. Discussion leaders will be assigned for the given week early in the semester, and will be expected to have read, taken notes on, and written a thoughtful summary of the article which will be due in class the day of the discussion. I will give an example of what this should look like prior to the first in-class discussion. A blank form will be posted online that students are expected to fill out fully. The class discussion will then follow from the summaries of the discussion leaders. Students who do a poor job in this respect are harming not only their own grades, but also the grades of their classmates. Though only a few students will be discussion leaders each week, **EVERY STUDENT MUST READ EVERY ARTICLE EVERY WEEK.**

Homework (10%): To reinforce learning of the core concepts covered in the various reading materials, students will be assigned four sets of readings in a particular body of literature. As with the discussion articles, students will fill out the online form. However, unlike the discussion articles, all students must do all of the homeworks. I will announce in class and by email when assignments will be made available on Blackboard. Assignments will be due in class on the date listed in the syllabus in hard-copy form. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT EMAILED COPIES!** Late homework: if submitted the same day (before 5PM), homework will be assessed an automatic 10% deduction. Homework will not be accepted after more than a day without documented evidence of an excused absence that is consistent with my classroom policies stated below.

Lab Assignments (5 @ 3% each): Students will be assigned a grade for the completion of assignments in the Methods Lab (POLS 2000-Lab). Each student should be enrolled in the Wednesday lab session. You will gain hands on experience using STATA software. This is a statistical package that will allow you to manipulate and analyze data. All labs will be started

with a brief introduction to the topic/skills you will need to complete the exercises. You will turn in the completed assignments at the start of the following lab session. The computer lab will be available during the 150 minute class period and I reserved the lab for additional lab time. This will allow you to complete the assignment in the week between lab meetings. Late labs will not be accepted and you will receive a zero for the lab. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL YOU BE ALLOWED TO MAKEUP A LAB, EVEN IF YOU HAVE AN EXCUSED ABSENCE!**

Required Texts

Understanding Political Research Methods: The Challenge of Inference. By Barakso, Sabet, and Schaffner; Routledge, 2014.

The Tao of Statistics: A Path to Understanding (With No Math). By Dana Keller. 2nd ed. Sage, 2016.

Readings

Students should read the pages listed in the text PRIOR to the date the class meets. In other words, for class on the first day, students should already have read what is listed. This material is “fair game” for any quizzes that might occur the day that the readings are covered.

Blackboard Readings

Readings that are not contained in the textbook will be posted online in Blackboard. If you are unable to find the readings on Blackboard or the link is broken, email me immediately to remedy the situation.

Grading Scale

All assignments will be graded out of 100-points. Letter grades for the final grades for this course will be assigned as follows:

A+	97-100
A	93-96.9
A-	90-92.9
B+	87-89.9
B	83-86.9
B-	80-82.9
C+	77-79.9
C	73-76.9
C-	70-72.9
D	60-69.9

I DO NOT “BUMP” UP GRADES, SO DON’T ASK! If you get an 89.4 average in this course, you get a B+ (it rounds down to an 89). If you get an 89.5 average, you will be given an A- (it rounds up).

Classroom Policies

As college students, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner. Classroom policies are set for the benefit of not only yourself, but also the other students enrolled in this course. The policies set below are designed to facilitate the learning environment and to ensure that professionalism is maintained at all times. The following are some (though not all) of the things that are expected of you:

Computers: Students are **prohibited** from using their computers, tablets, or other similar devices in this class. Though these devices are indispensable tools in today's world, I have come to find, more and more, that they serve more as a means to distract students instead of enabling them to get the most out of their classes. Students who have a documented learning disability approved by the institution or the note takers for students with documented learning disabilities are the only exception to this rule and, therefore, they are permitted to use computers, tablets, etc., solely to take notes for the student(s) with the disability. Students found to be using tablets, computers, cell phones, etc. (yes, I can tell when you are texting underneath your desk or behind a book) will be marked absent for class that day and have points deducted.

Emailing: When emailing the professor, students must write a formal, grammatically correct email. This means having a subject line title, a greeting, and a salutation (your name), as well as correct punctuation, etc. This is designed to familiarize students with the correct way to communicate in the "real" world (i.e.-how you would send an email to your boss at work).

Students who send an email without a subject line, a greeting (Professor Millard, Mr. Millard, Professor, etc.), or a salutation (just your name is fine) will not receive a response from me and I will not read their email.

Cell phones: Students are prohibited from using their phones for texting, browsing the internet, or making phone calls once class has begun. The use of cellular phones during a test/quiz in class, even if used only for the purpose of checking the time, will be considered cheating and will be referred to the dean's office.

Newspapers/magazines, etc.: Students are prohibited from reading non-course related materials during class.

Missed assignments: As college students, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner, just as you would do for a job. **THIS MEANS TURNING IN ASSIGNED WORK BY THE DEADLINE, SHOWING UP TO CLASS, AND, IN THE EVENT YOU CANNOT MAKE A DEADLINE OR MISS A TEST, YOU MUST INFORM ME BEFORE, NOT AFTER, THE FACT.** This means you should meet with me face-to-face or send me an email with ADEQUATE prior warning for me to either approve or deny your request. Failure to do so means that the student will not be permitted to make-up any missed assignments. I will not excuse absences that are not documented and are not cleared with me before the class actually meets. Quizzes cannot be retaken.

Academic Integrity: As with all classroom policy, the university's policy with regards to submitted work by students will be followed to the letter. All work that is submitted will be checked for plagiarism. For more on the institution's policy regarding academic integrity, please visit:

https://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_FINAL_6-26-15.pdf

The school's academic policy covers areas related to falsification, plagiarism, cheating, sabotage, collusion, and concealment. For more on the College of Arts and Science's policy, visit: <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

Basically, use your common sense and do not try to gain an unfair advantage over other students. Violators will be referred for adjudication and investigation through the proper channels.

If you have any questions about plagiarism (intended or unintended) or if you suspect a student of committing plagiarism or cheating, please inform me as quickly as possible, as I take academic integrity very seriously. If you have questions regarding anything related to academic integrity (or anything for that matter!) please don't hesitate to ask me!

Writing Services

I encourage you to take advantage of the writing services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with any kind of writing project, multimedia project, and/or oral presentation. They offer one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 977-3484 or visit <http://www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml>.

Students with Disabilities

Students who have disabilities are encouraged to contact the professor and inform him at the beginning of the semester (or give adequate prior notice before any academic activity this may affect) so that arrangements can be made for the student's benefit. (I do not need to know what the disability is, just need notification from the Office of Disability Services!) If you suspect you may have a disability or may need an accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services at:

<http://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/disability-services>

The instructor reserves the right to amend, adapt, and adjust this syllabus to the benefit of the students with adequate prior warning.

Schedule

January 17- Introduction to Course: What is Science?

READ:

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/10/opinion/sunday/whats-the-point-of-a-professor.html?WT.mc_id=2015-JULY-FB-DOM-EDU_AUD_DEV-0701-0731&WT.mc_ev=click&ad-keywords=DomEDUAD&r=1

And:

(READ “What is Science?”)

And:

Introduction (Textbook), pg. 1-8

January 19-No class (conference)

January 22- Chapter 1-“The Challenge of Inference” and How to Write for Academia and Article Draft.

January 24- Chapter 1-“The Challenge of Inference”

READ:

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/alexepstein/2015/01/06/97-of-climate-scientists-agree-is-100-wrong/>

January 26- Chapter 1- “The Challenge of Inference and Chapter 2-“The Research Question”

January 29- Chapter 2-“The Research Question”

January 31- Chapter 2-“The Research Question”

Homework and Discussion Article Example-Gerber and Green, 2000

February 2- Chapter 2-“The Research Question”

February 5- **Exam 1**

February 7- Chapter 3-“Linking Theory and Inference” Homework 1 due

Homework 1: Analyze

Zeev, M. and Russett, B. (1993). Normative and Structural Causes of the Democratic Peace, 2946-1986. *American Political Science Review*, 87(3), 624-638.

February 9- Chapter 3-“Linking Theory and Inference”

February 12- Chapter 3-“Linking Theory and Inference”

Article 1:

McDonald, M. P. and Popkin, S.L. (2001). The Myth of the Vanishing Voter. *American Political Science Review*. 95(4), 963-974.

February 14- Chapter 3-“Linking Theory and Inference”

February 16- Chapter 4-“The Challenge of Descriptive Inference”

Read: “Tao of Statistics”: 3, 4, 5

February 19- Chapter 4-“The Challenge of Descriptive Inference” and Discussion Article 2

Article 2:

Bertoli, Andrew. 2014. The World Cup and Interstate Conflict: Evidence from a Natural Experiment. Working Paper.
http://media.wix.com/ugd/c8c669_16b599e50cca4d6bb747ecf5de00ee5a.pdf
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February 21- Chapter 4-“The Challenge of Descriptive Inference”
Read: “Tao of Statistics”-6

February 23- Chapter 4-“The Challenge of Descriptive Inference”
Read: “Tao of Statistics”-10, 11

February 26- Chapter 4-“The Challenge of Descriptive Inference”
Read: “Tao of Statistics”-12, 13, 14

Article 3:

Wu, W. C. (2015). When do Dictators Decide to Liberalize Trade Regimes? Inequality and Trade Openness in Authoritarian Countries. *International Studies Quarterly*, 59(4), 790-801.

February 28- **Exam 2 & Due Date:** Research Proposal (2 pages, doubled-spaced, typed, turned in at beginning of class).

What phenomena are you investigating? Why is this an important question?
What is your theory? Your hypotheses? How will you operationalize this?
What do you expect to find? What are some of the relevant literature pieces you should cite? Where might you have problems? Other relevant information as needed.

March 2- Chapter 5-“Experiments”

Article 4:

Zorn, C. and Gill, J., (2007). The Etiology of Public Support for the Designated Hitter Rule. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 2(2), 189-203.

March 5- Chapter 5-“Experiments”

Homework 2: Analyze

Gartzke, E. (2007). The Capitalist Peace. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(1), 166-191.

March 7- Chapter 5-“Experiments”

March 9- Chapter 5-“Experiments”

Article 5:

Bishin, B. G., and Klofstad, C. A. (2012). The Political Incorporation of Cuban Americans: Why Won't Little Havana Turn Blue? *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 65(3), 586-599.

March 12-17-no class (Spring Break)

March 19- Chapter 6-“Large-n Observational Studies”

Read: “The Tao of Statistics”-22, 25, 26

Video (in class):

<https://www.khanacademy.org/math/probability/statistical-studies/types-of-studies/v/correlation-and-causality>

March 21- Chapter 6-“Large-n Observational Studies”

Read: “The Tao of Statistics”-27, 28, 29

March 23- Chapter 6-“Large-n Observational Studies” and Discussion Article 5

Article 6:

Sances, M. W. (2017). Attribution Errors in Federalist Systems: When Voters Punish the President for Local Tax Increases. *The Journal of Politics*, 79(4), 1286-1301.

March 26- Chapter 6-“Large-n Observational Studies”

Read: “The Tao of Statistics”-30, 32

Homework 3: Analyze

Gibler, D. M. (2007). Bordering on Peace: Democracy, Territorial Issues, And Peace. *International Studies Quarterly*, 51(3), 509-532.

March 28- Chapter 6-“Large-n Observational Studies” -

Read: “The Tao of Statistics”-37, 38, 39

March 30 & April 2- No class (Easter break)

April 4 & 6-No class (conference)

April 9- Chapter 6-“Large-n Observational Studies”

Article 7:

Zebrowitz, L. A., Franklin, R. A., Palumbo, R. (2014). Aligning Voters and Advancing Attractive Congressional Candidates. *Evolutionary Psychology*, 12(5), 1053-1065

April 11- Chapter 6-“Large-n Observational Studies”

Read: “The Tao of Statistics”-48, 49

April 13-**Exam 3**

April 16- Chapter 7-“Small-n Observational Studies”

Article 8:

Saiegh, S. M., Miguel, E., and Shanker Satyanath. (2011). Civil War Exposure and Violence. *Economics and Politics*, 23(1), 59-72.

April 18- Chapter 7-“Small-n Observational Studies”

April 20- Chapter 7-“Small-n Observational Studies”

April 23- Chapter 7-“Small-n Observational Studies”

Homework 4:

Examples of “bad” science:

Choose 1 to write a paper on (2-3 pages, same as others-still use shell). What is wrong with these studies? Why were they withdrawn? Why does this pose a problem for scientific inquiry? What was the fallout from these papers once recalled? Also, outline the argument of the paper (as in the other homework assignments).

1.) LaCour, Michael J., and Donald P. Green. 2014. When Contact Changes Minds: An Experiment on Transmission of Support for Gay Equality. *Science*, vol. 346:6215, 1366-1369.

Also, read this for guidance: <http://www.newyorker.com/science/maria-konnikova/how-a-gay-marriage-study-went-wrong>

Or

2.) RETRACTED: Ileal-lymphoid-nodular hyperplasia, non-specific colitis, and pervasive developmental disorder in children Wakefield, AJ et al. *The Lancet*, Volume 351 , Issue 9103 , 637 – 641.

Also, read this for guidance:

<http://www.cnn.com/2011/HEALTH/01/05/autism.vaccines/> and <http://www.webmd.com/brain/autism/searching-for-answers/vaccines-autim?page=1>

April 25- Chapter 8-“Conclusion”

Research Presentation Outline in Class

April 27- Chapter 8-“Conclusion”

Article 9:

Claxton, L.J. (2014). *Factors that Motivate Attendance at NCAA Division II Football Games: A Multiple Case Study*. (Dissertation, Northcentral Univ.) ONLY READ CH. 1 (1-16) AND CH. (57-68).

April 30- Chapter 8-“Conclusion”

May 2-**Exam 4**

May 4-Poster Presentations

May 7-Poster Presentations