

Political Analysis
POLI-325

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Office Hours:
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Fall 2014
Classroom: Elizabeth Hall 316
TR: 10:00am-11:30am

Course Description

This purpose of this course is to introduce students to the field of political science and to explore the most commonly used statistical methods to study political phenomena. Over the course of the semester we will examine various questions concerning politics such as: “What is the influence of public opinion on public policy in the United States,” or “What are the factors influencing regime stability?” The main focus of this course is not to provide definitive answers to these questions. Rather, our goal is to explore and learn about the techniques and approaches through which answers can be obtained. Simply put, our focus in this course is on the *how* rather than *what* and *why* of political research.

Course Objectives

- To expose students to basic statistical methodologies available to contemporary political scientists.
- To expose students to the software packages available to analyze data concerning various questions important to political scientists.
- To help students acquire the capability to critically examine empirical political research.
- To expose the student the variety of library and internet based information resources.
- To facilitate the student’s ability to develop and carry out a complete an empirical research project.

Required Texts

Philip H. Pollock III. 2012. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 4th Edition. Congressional Quarterly Press.

Philip H. Pollock III. 2012. *An R Companion to Political Analysis*. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

This course will use Blackboard as a course foundation. All readings marked with an asterisk on the syllabus can be found on the course website. All written assignments are to be submitted through the course website. Hard copies will not be accepted.

Course Requirements and Grades

Exercises	20%
Proposal	10%
Research Paper	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%

Exercises

There will be a series of exercises that will comprise 20% of your final grade. Further instructions on each exercise will be posted on Blackboard and discussed in class.

Proposal

You will write a 5-8 page research proposal which identifies your topic, its importance to the study of politics, some previous research conducted on the topic and spells out your hypotheses for the project.

Research Paper

Each student will select a topic from one of the datasets included with your workbook. The research paper will involve the formulation of a research question, a literature review, the articulation of hypotheses and statistical analyses of data. When completed, the paper should be between 15-20 pages in length. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, and properly cited. A detailed handout on organization, format and citation style will be posted on Blackboard.

Midterm Exam

The midterm examination will cover all of the reading assignments and material discussed in class from the first day of class through the date of the examination. The exam will be comprised of essay questions. The midterm is tentatively scheduled for **Tuesday, October 7th**.

Final Exam

The final exam will be cumulative, but the emphasis will be on lecture and reading material covered following the midterm. The final exam is the same format as the midterm and will be held on **Monday, December 8 from 1:00pm-3:00pm**.

There will be a 1 letter grade penalty for each day an unexcused paper is submitted following the due date.

Grading Scale

A 93-100	C 73-76
A- 90-92	C- 70-72
B+ 87-89	D+ 67-69
B 83-86	D 63-66
B- 80-82	D- 60-62
C+ 77-79	F 59 and below

Grades represent the instructor's final estimate of the student's performance in a course. The grade of A (+ or -) may be interpreted to mean that the instructor recognizes exceptional capacity and exceptional performance. The grade of B (+ or -) signifies that the student has gained a significantly more effective command of material than is generally expected in the course. The grade of C or C+ is the instructor's certification that the student has demonstrated the required mastery of the material. A student is graded C- or D (+ or -) when his/her grasp of the course essentials is minimal. The F grade indicates failure to master the essentials and the necessity for repeating the course before credit may be earned. **I** = incomplete. This is the grade given when a student cannot complete the work of the course because of illness or other extenuating conditions, and the instructor's academic Dean has approved an extension of time for the completion of a course. The work of the course must be completed two weeks prior to the last day of classes in the next academic session of enrollment (excluding summer term); but in all cases, except graduate thesis courses, it must be removed within 24 months from the date issued regardless of enrollment status; otherwise the **I** becomes an **F**. An **I** grade cannot be removed by repeating the course.

Class Attendance

Attendance is required and will be monitored by the professor. While attendance will not be part of your final grade, I will use attendance records to make decisions about final grades that are on the border between two grades. Absences from class and examinations will be excused only if the student provides verifiable documentation of accident, illness, or a university or legal obligation. Undocumented absences from examinations will result in a score of zero.

I approach the classroom as an exchange of ideas between scholars. Implicit in this statement is the idea that all individuals (including myself) will come to class prepared to discuss the reading material for the day. *An exchange of ideas cannot take place with only one person participating.* In order to facilitate classroom discussion I will frequently call on students to either answer a question or to provide their thoughts concerning the readings for the day. The best way to succeed in this course is to do the assigned readings, take notes if possible, and come to class with the intention of discussing the material you have read.

Incompletes

No student will be given an incomplete in the course without a verifiable accident, illness, or severe family emergency. If at all possible, these situations must be discussed with the professor prior to the end of the semester, in order for an incomplete to be given.

Extra Credit

There will be no extra credit awarded to any student for any reason. Please don't ask.

Academic Integrity

As members of an academic community, we are jointly responsible for maintaining intellectual and academic honesty. I expect that all work submitted for this course is your own, that contributions from others are clearly acknowledged, and that unauthorized assistance on exams or papers has been

neither given nor received. Stetson's honor pledge applies to all work done in this course. To indicate your commitment to academic integrity, I ask that you write the word "PLEDGED" with your initials or signature on each classroom test and quiz as well as major essays.

As a member of Stetson University, I agree to uphold the highest standards of integrity in my academic work. I promise that I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid of any kind on my tests, papers, and assignments. When using the ideas, thoughts, or words of another in my work, I will always provide clear acknowledgement of the individuals and sources on which I am relying. I will avoid using fraudulent, falsified, or fabricated evidence and/or material. I will refrain from resubmitting without authorization work for one class that was obtained from work previously submitted for academic credit in another class. I will not destroy, steal, or make inaccessible any academic resource material. By my actions and my example, I will strive to promote the ideals of honesty, responsibility, trust, fairness, and respect that are at the heart of Stetson's Honor System.

Special Needs

If a student anticipates barriers related to the format or requirements of a course, she or he should meet with the course instructor to discuss ways to ensure full participation. If disability-related accommodations are necessary, please register with the Academic Success Center (822-7127; www.stetson.edu/asc) and notify the course instructor of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. The student, course instructor, and the Academic Success Center will plan how best to coordinate accommodations.

The ASC also coordinates free tutoring on campus for students. You can meet with a tutor to review principles, learn content-specific study strategies, and enhance content area knowledge. To review the tutoring options available and schedules, please see our website [http:// www.stetson.edu/asc/tutoringschedule.php](http://www.stetson.edu/asc/tutoringschedule.php)

Office Hours

Please take advantage of my office hours. They are strictly for the purpose of helping you understand the material presented in the class. If you can't meet me during office hours I will be glad to set up an appointment so we can meet at a time when both of our schedules allow it. You can also contact me anytime through e-mail to ask a question or to set up an appointment if you have a problem meeting during my scheduled hours.

Technology

The use of cell phones for any purpose is prohibited in class. Please put your phone away prior to the start of class. If you are seen using your phone (texting, email, internet, etc.) you will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class. If you would like to use a laptop to take notes you may certainly do that. I ask that if you do choose to use a laptop that you sit in the front row. If you are seen using your laptop for anything other than classroom purposes you will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of class and prohibited from bringing your computer to class for the remainder of the semester.

Readings

All readings marked with an asterisk are on the course website

I. (August 21-28) Introduction; Studying Politics

Mannheim et al.*

R Companion, “Reference Guide” and Chapter 1

II. (September 2) Literature Reviews

Galvan*

Morrow*

Peer reviewed journal article write-up due on Tuesday, September 9th.

III. (September 4-9) The Definition and Measurement of Concepts

Pollock, Chapter 1

IV. (September 11-18) Measuring and Describing Variables

Pollock, Chapter 2

R Companion, Chapters 2 and 3

V. (September 23-25) Proposing Explanations, Framing Hypotheses, and Making Comparisons

Pollock, Chapter 3

R Companion, Chapter 4

Workbook exercises due on Thursday, September 25th Chapters 2 and 3, *R Companion*

VI. (September 30-October 14) Research Design and the Logic of Control

Pollock, Chapter 4

Workbook exercises due on Tuesday, October 2, Chapter 4, *R Companion*

Midterm Tuesday, October 7th

VII. (October 16) Making Controlled Comparisons

Pollock, Chapter 5

R Companion, Chapter 5

Research Proposal Due on Tuesday, October 16

VIII. (October 21-28) Foundations of Statistical Inference

Pollock, Chapter 6

R Companion, Chapter 6

Workbook Exercises due on Thursday, October 23rd Chapter 5, *R Companion*

IX. (October 30-November 6) Tests of Significance and Measures of Association

Pollock, Chapter 7

R Companion, Chapter 7

Workbook Exercises due on Tuesday, November 4th Chapter 6, *R Companion*

X. (November 11-December 4) Correlation and Linear Regression

Pollock, Chapter 8

R Companion, Chapters 8 and 9

Workbook exercises due on Tuesday, November 12: Chapter 7, *R Companion*

Workbook exercises due on Tuesday, November 26: Chapter 8, *R Companion*

Workbook exercises due on Tuesday, December 2: Chapter 9, *R Companion*

Final Paper Due on Thursday, December 4th