

**Political Analysis  
POLI-325-01**

Dr. David Hill  
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Office Hours:  
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Spring 2011  
Classroom: Elizabeth Hall 319  
TR: 10:00am-11:15am

**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. 2009. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Congressional Quarterly Press.

Philip H. Pollock III. 2009. *An SPSS 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	15%
Proposal	10%
Research Paper	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	30%

### Exercises

There will be four exercises that will comprise 15% 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 either the “World” or “States” datasets which are 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 10-15 pages in length. The paper must be typed, double-spaced, stapled, 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 **Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>**.

### 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, May 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11:00am-1:00pm.**

**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

## **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 you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, and if you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please register with the Academic Resources Center (822-7127; [www.stetson.edu/arc](http://www.stetson.edu/arc)). You and the ARC staff can plan how best to coordinate your accommodations. You may notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations, but are not required to do so.

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. (January 13-18) Introduction; Studying Politics

Mannheim et al.\*

*SPSS Companion*, "Getting Started" and Chapter 1

#### II. (January 20-25) Literature Reviews

Cuba\*

Morrow\*

### **Peer reviewed journal article write-up due on Tuesday, February 1.**

#### III. (January 27- February 1) The Definition and Measurement of Concepts

Pollock, Chapter 1

Greene\*

IV. (February 3-8) Measuring and Describing Variables  
Pollock, Chapter 2

V. (February 10-15) Proposing Explanations, Framing Hypotheses, and Making Comparisons  
Pollock, Chapter 3

**Workbook exercises due on Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup> : Chapter 2 and 3, *SPSS Companion***

VI. (February 17-22) Research Design and the Logic of Control  
Pollock, Chapter 4

**Midterm Thursday, February 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Research Proposal Due on Tuesday, March 1<sup>st</sup>**

VII. (March 1) Making Controlled Comparisons  
Pollock, Chapter 5

VIII. (March 3-17) Foundations of Statistical Inference (**3 days**)  
Pollock, Chapter 6

IX. (March 22-31) Tests of Significance and Measures of Association (**4days**)  
Pollock, Chapter 7

**Workbook exercises due on Tuesday April 5<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 7, *SPSS Companion***

X. (April 5-April 28) Correlation and Linear Regression (**4 weeks**)  
Pollock, Chapter 8

**Workbook exercises due on Thursday, April 21<sup>st</sup>: Chapter 8, *SPSS Companion***

**Final Paper Due on Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>**