Course Description

This course will introduce you to the scientific method as applied by political scientists in their investigation of political phenomena in a variety of contexts. We will begin by briefly considering the development of the study of political phenomena as a science, and then move through the (social) scientific method, applying what we learn to everyday political events. The bulk of the course will be spent in consideration of various descriptive, inferential, and associational statistics that help political scientists answer the questions that they pursue in their research. Classes will be largely lecture-based, with some group work designed to provide practice in the concepts introduced.

Course Materials

There are no required books for this class. Lecture notes for the semester have been posted on the course's Blackboard site, and these may be used as a surrogate text for those comfortable filling in the blanks from the lectures themselves. For those desiring more detail, the book these lectures follow can be found at the bookstore:


There are, of course, innumerable other sources, some of which are available free on line. Two examples (offered for informational purposes only; I make no claim as to their utility) are [http://davidmlane.com/hyperstat/](http://davidmlane.com/hyperstat/) and [http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/](http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/). The first covers only statistics, the second links to more research-design-related issues. Others may be found easily via your favorite search engine.

Course Requirements

1. 3 Examinations (50%): There will be three exams during the semester, on the dates listed in the class schedule. All exams are comprehensive: all material previously covered in the course is fair game, though there is a focus on newer material in each of the last two. The first two exams each count for 15% of the final grade; the final exam counts for 20% of the final grade. The University has scheduled this class’s final exam for Monday December 8th from 10 am to 12 noon. The University may change this time and date; it is your responsibility to check on exam schedules during the week of finals.

2. 4 Problem Sets (40%): There will be four problem sets distributed throughout the semester; each counts for 10% of the grade. The handout dates and due dates are listed in the class schedule. These will be math-intensive problem sets that will allow you the opportunity to exercise your understanding of the origins and applications of the various statistics that we will learn in the course. You must show all work: you will be graded on both the answers given and on the work provided, and partial credit will only be given with work. While you may discuss these with others in the class, the final product to be turned in must be your own work.

3. Brief Research Analysis (10%): This will be due at the end of the last week of class, as listed in the class schedule. During the semester you will learn how both to use statistics to address real-world political issues, and to use commonly-available spreadsheet programs (e.g. Excel, OpenOffice, etc.) to compute these statistics. In this analysis, you will use this knowledge in undertaking a brief analysis of a political question. To do so, you will choose from provided data sets variables of interest, formulate a research question, analyze the question statistically, and write a brief (2 page, single-spaced, 12 pt font) paper detailing the question, the variables of interest, the statistical results, and your conclusions. More complete details and usable data sets will be posted on Blackboard during the first few weeks of class. Both the difficulty and the accuracy of the analysis will factor into the grade, and it will be possible to score higher than 100% on this assignment.
Administrative Policy

Student Responsibilities
Students are responsible for planning ahead by checking the Syllabus for upcoming readings and assignments. The material in this class can be difficult and builds upon itself throughout the semester, and so it is important not to fall behind. Reading the lecture notes ahead of time and coming to class with questions can greatly aid comprehension. In addition, all students are expected to contribute to a positive learning environment for fellow students. The instructor retains the right to ask a student to leave the classroom if the student is negatively contributing to the learning environment. Cellular phones, beepers, and pagers going off in class are distractions that contribute negatively to the class setting—be sure to turn off your electronic devices at the beginning of each class period.

Extra-Credit Work
Under no circumstances will extra credit work be permitted, though it will be possible to achieve “extra” points on the research analysis.

Late Work
All assignments are to be turned in on the announced due date by the end of the class period either directly to the instructor in class, or to the box on the instructor’s office door (Bellamy 541). Late assignments will not be accepted without legitimate, written excuses. The instructor retains the right to determine legitimate excuses.

Exams
Students are expected to be present for all exams at the beginning of the exam period. For exams occurring during the regular semester, students will be allotted the entire class period for the exam. For final exams, students will be allotted the entire final exam period that the University has appropriated. A ten-minute grace period will apply for the beginning of all exam periods. After the initial ten minutes have expired, students will be penalized 10 points for arriving late for an exam. Absences or late arrivals for exams will only be excused for participation in formally sanctioned University events, or extraordinary events if they are accompanied by sufficient (i.e. Health Services Excuse Forms) documentation within two calendar days of the absence or late arrival. The instructor reserves the right to determine what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance as well as what shall be considered “sufficient documentation.” If they have been excused for their absences, students will have five working days to make up a missed exam. If there are extraordinary circumstances which would prevent the student from making up the exam in five working days, the instructor must be informed of this fact prior to the expiration of the five day period. The instructor reserves the right to administer makeup exams in any format (multiple choice, short answer, essay), which may not necessarily correspond to the original exam’s format. If a student misses an exam and does not have an excused absence, the student will receive a zero for the exam.

Assignment of Letter Grades
Final course letter grades will be assigned based upon the scale shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>% Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-66.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59.9 and below</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Incomplete Grades
No incomplete grades will be given unless there is an agreement between the instructor and the student PRIOR TO the end of the course. The instructor retains the right to determine legitimate reasons for an incomplete grade.

The Deal
Though attendance is mandatory only on the first day of class, it is nonetheless strongly encouraged. The material can be difficult and lectures and group work will provide an additional spin on the material and additional opportunities for constructive practice. To further encourage attendance, I offer all students the following deal. Any student in this class will receive an extra three points on his or her final overall grade—and no less than a C- in any event—if he or she:

1. misses no more than three class sessions, not including those with a valid medical excuse presented to me in person on the first class day back from an excused illness. No other excuses will not count towards this quota.
of three sessions. It is the student's responsibility to sign in at the front of class within the first ten minutes of each class session, and all students participating in this deal must stay for the remainder of each class.

2. actively participates in group work and refrains from doing anything that could contribute to a negative working environment, including but not limited to the use of a computer, cell phone, pager, or other text messaging device. This includes discussions with other students during the lectures themselves. The instructor reserves the right to remove any student from the Deal for any such infraction at any time after a single warning, with no chance of appeal.

3. turns in all assignments on time, with exceptions made only for a valid medical excuse, as described under 1. This includes the problems sets, the written assignment, and the exams.

4. receives at least a 50% on every problem set, written assignment, and exam.

While these may seem like strict requirements, consider that a student's completion of the Deal not only provides a boost of effectively a third of a grade, but also guarantees a passing grade. Further, there is no penalty either for not taking part in the Deal, or for exiting the Deal in the middle. Grades for those not in the Deal will be given as above with no alteration.

**Academic Dishonesty**
All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless the instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly and properly cited. Students are responsible for policing themselves with respect to plagiarism. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty (plagiarism, cheating, academic misrepresentation, etc.) will receive a zero for the relevant assignment and will be reported to the proper university officials for further action.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**
Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the Student Disability Resource Center
97 Woodward Avenue, South
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
http://www.fsu.edu/~staffair/dean/StudentDisability/

**Syllabus Change Policy**
This syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.
Class Schedule

M Aug 25: Introductions
Nothing assigned

W Aug 27: NO CLASS

F Aug 29: NO CLASS

M Sep 1: NO CLASS—Labor Day

W Sep 3: Political Science as a Science I

F Sep 5: Political Science as a Science II

M Sep 8: Variables and Measurement

W Sep 10: Theories, Hypotheses, and Explanation I

F Sep 12: Theories, Hypotheses, and Explanation II

M Sep 15: Introduction to Spreadsheets and Basic Descriptive Statistics
H Chapter 2
Problem Set #1 Handed Out

W Sep 17: Measures of Central Tendency I
H Chapter 3

F Sep 19: Measures of Central Tendency II
H Chapter 3

M Sep 22: Measures of Dispersion I
H Chapter 4

W Sep 24: Measures of Dispersion II
H Chapter 4

F Sep 26: Measures of Dispersion III
H Chapter 4

M Sep 29: The Normal Curve I
H Chapter 5
Due: Problem Set #1

W Oct 1: The Normal Curve II and Review

F Oct 3: Inferential Statistics and Sampling
H Chapter 6

M Oct 6: Exam #1

W Oct 8: Estimation Procedures I
H Chapter 7

F Oct 10: Estimation Procedures II
H Chapter 7
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M Oct 13:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing I: One Sample I</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem Set #2 Handed Out</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W Oct 15:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing I: One Sample II</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Oct 17:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing I: One Sample III</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>M Oct 20:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing II: Two Sample I</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Oct 22:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing II: Two Sample II</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Due: Problem Set #2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>F Oct 24:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing III: ANOVA I</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem Set #3 Handed Out</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>M Oct 27:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing III: ANOVA II</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Oct 29:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing III: ANOVA III</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Oct 31:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing IV: Chi Square I</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Nov 3:</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing IV: Chi Square II</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>W Nov 5:</td>
<td>Introduction to Bi-variate Association</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Nov 7:</td>
<td>Review</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Due: Problem Set #3</td>
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<td>M Nov 10:</td>
<td>Exam #2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>W Nov 12:</td>
<td>Association between Nominal Level Variables I</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>F Nov 14:</td>
<td>Association between Nominal Level Variables II</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Problem Set #4 Handed Out</td>
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<tr>
<td>M Nov 17:</td>
<td>Association between Ordinal Level Variables I</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Nov 19:</td>
<td>Association between Ordinal Level Variables II</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Nov 21:</td>
<td>Association between Ordinal Level Variables III</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
M Nov 24: Association between Interval-Ratio Level Variables I
H Chapter 15

W Nov 26: NO CLASS (Happy Thanksgiving!)

F Nov 28: NO CLASS (Happy Thanksgiving!)

M Dec 1: Association between Interval-Ratio Level Variables II
H Chapter 15

W Dec 3: Association between Interval-Ratio Level Variables III
H Chapter 15
Due: Problem Set #4

F Dec 5: Final Exam Review
Due: Research Analysis Paper

M Dec 8 10 am-12 pm: Final Exam