

POL 051: Scientific Study of Politics

Course Meetings: Monday and Wednesday, 12:10-1:30. Olson 217

Instructor: Jaime Jackson

Office: Kerr Hall rm 585

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Office Hours: Mondays 9:00-11:00am and by appt.

Required Textbook

Kellstedt, Paul and Guy Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Second Edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Additional articles will be assigned and made available on Canvas. The Kellstedt and Whitten (2013) book is on reserve at the library and can be used for up to 24 hours at a time.

NOTE: All course readings listed in the schedule should be read before arriving to class that day. Unless otherwise specified, these readings are required.

Required Statistical Package

All students will be expected to download R-Studio for the class. This is a free platform and the instructor will cover how to access and use this program during the course. Practice with this program will come well in advance of needing it for assignments. Please let me know asap if you will be unable to bring a computer to class and I will make other arrangements.

Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to learn the basics of political and social science research methods. While this course is a pre-requisite for all upper division political science courses, it will also be more broadly applicable to students wishing to pursue degrees in other social sciences. Throughout the course we will learn how to become better consumers and producers of political science research. Thus, while you will be expected to know how to apply certain methodological skills by the end of the course, a big component of our class will include being able to substantively analyze political science research. The course will be broken down into three modules: 1) the building blocks of poli sci research, 2) how to understand and use qualitative methods, and 3) how to understand and use quantitative methods. Some of the research discussed in class will use more advanced statistical methods. However, we will just be scratching the surface in order to help you prepare for your more advanced course work in political science.

Course Outline:

WEEK 1

Monday, Jan. 8th

Course Introduction and Expectations. Building Blocks of Poli Sci Research Part 1: Causality. *Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 1*

Wednesday, Jan. 10th

Building Blocks of Poli Sci Research Part 2: Theory Building. *Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 2.*

WEEK 2

Monday, Jan. 15th

NO CLASS. MLK Jr. Day. Campus Holiday.

Wednesday, Jan. 17th

Building Blocks of Poli Sci Research Part 3: Theory Building Application. Intro to RStudio. *No Reading.*

WEEK 3

Monday, Jan. 22nd

Building Blocks of Poli Sci Research Part 4: The Experimental Gold Standard. *Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 4 (only Sections 1 & 2); McDermott, Rose. 2002. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." read pages 31-41 only.* Hand Out HW 1.

Wednesday, Jan. 24th

Intro to Qualitative Methods Part 1: What are Case Studies? *Reading: Levy, Jack. 2008. "Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference."* In-class practice with RStudio.

WEEK 4

Monday, Jan. 29th HW 1 DUE ON CANVAS

Intro to Qualitative Methods Part 2: Evaluating Case Studies. *Kitschelt, Herbert. 1986. "Political Opportunity Structures and Protest: Anti-Nuclear Protests in Four Democracies."*

Wednesday, Jan. 31st

Intro to Qualitative Methods Part 3: Survey Methods and Expert Interviews. *No Reading.*

WEEK 5

Monday, Feb. 5th

Intro to Quantitative Methods Part 1: Data, Sampling, and Measurement. *Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 5.*

Wednesday, Feb. 7th

Intro to Quantitative Methods Part 2: Probability Theory. In-class practice with RStudio. *No Reading.*

WEEK 6

Monday, Feb. 12th

Intro to Quantitative Methods Part 3: The Mysterious P-value and Small-N Methods. *Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 7.* Hand out HW 2.

Wednesday, Feb. 14th

Intro to Quantitative Methods Part 4: Bivariate Hypothesis Tests. *Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 7.*

WEEK 7

Monday, Feb. 19th HW 2 DUE ON CANVAS

NO CLASS. MLK Jr. Day. Campus Holiday.

Wednesday, Feb. 21st

Intro to Quantitative Methods Part 5: Intro to Bivariate Regression. *Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 8.*

WEEK 8

Monday, Feb. 26th

Intro to Quantitative Methods Part 6: Continue with Bivariate Regression. *Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 8.*

Wednesday, Feb. 28th

Data Visualization and Creating Visuals in RStudio. *No Reading* Hand out HW 3.

WEEK 9

Monday, March 5th

Intro to Quantitative Methods Part 7: Multivariate Regression Models *Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 9.*

Wednesday, March 7th HW 3 DUE ON CANVAS

Intro to Quantitative Methods Part 8a: Evaluating Statistical Models. *OPTIONAL Reading: Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 12.*

WEEK 10

Monday, March 12th

Intro to Quantitative Methods Part 8b: Evaluating Statistical Models. *Reading: Ashworth et. al. 2008 1 and 2. Debate on Suicide Terrorism Analysis.*

Wednesday, March 14th

FINAL EXAM REVIEW. Final Exam Posted by 3:00pm. Due Thursday, March 15th by 5:00pm.

Grading

Your grade for my course will be based on three elements. First, you will be given three different homework assignments over the quarter that will ask you to review and assess the elements you've learned for the different modules of the class. You will always be given a week to complete these assignments. Second, you will have a 24 hours take-home exam that will be due during finals week. Lastly, part of your grade will be based on your level of participation in the course during individual and group activities used to help highlight specific elements of the course material. The grade breakdown is as follows:

Class Participation (10%)
Home Work Assignments (50%)
Final Exam or Paper (40%)

Late submission will be accepted up to three days after the due date. After three days assignments will no longer be accepted. Late submission will be penalized 5% for each day they are late, including weekends. All written work must reflect your own scholarship, in line with the UC Davis Code of Academic Conduct. For guidelines avoiding plagiarism see the SJA at <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/>. You are expected to be aware of these guidelines, ignorance of guidelines does not excuse a violation.

Course Policies

E-mail and Office Hours: Guidelines for e-mail correspondence with the instructor: (1) include the course in the subject line along with subject; (2) 24-hour response time during the week, 48-hour response time over the weekend; (3) please use the e-mail you would like your response to come to; (4) include any attachments you wish to have reviewed or that you have referred to in the body of the text; (5) check the discussion board on Canvas prior to submitting e-mail questions; (6) consider posting to the discussion board on Canvas if you have a general question; (7) create a prioritized list of your questions for office hours visits.

Attendance, Participation, and Weekly Readings: Class attendance and the corresponding assignments are mandatory. All students should come to prepared to participate in class discussion.

Grade Appeals: Students will have one week from when grades are posted to appeal their grade. All appeals must include a typed, double spaced statement explaining why you are requesting a grade appeal, and you must justify with evidence from your exam, paper, or summaries. If you choose to appeal your grade, the instructor reserves the right to increase or decrease the existing grade.

Academic Honesty

As a University of California student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy. Cheating and other violations of academic honesty are serious offenses. Students are expected to work independently on all graded assignments. Please refer to the UC Davis policy on integrity of scholarship for further details. Students who engage in cheating will earn an F (no pass) grade.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who, because of a disability, may require some special arrangements in order to meet any of the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to request accommodation for individual learning needs. UC Davis will make every attempt to accommodate all qualified students with disabilities.

Laptops and tablets are permitted in-class for note-taking and in-class activities only. Please do not disrupt your classmates by surfing the web or engaging in other activities.