

POL 200 Political Analysis

SSB 225 & 021 MoTh 10:00 - 11:20

Instructor: Dr. Daniel Bowen
Department: Political Science
Office Hours: MoTh: 9:00–9:55a;
2:00–3:00p or by appointment

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1 Course Description and Purpose

Quantitative research methods are some of the most powerful tools for those wishing to understand and influence politics. The purpose of this course is to familiarize undergraduate students with common quantitative methods frequently used in the field of political science and other social sciences. In the process, this course will train students to think objectively and critically about political issues. A large portion of the course will concern basic statistics used in the social sciences and hands-on training with Stata, a statistical software package commonly used in political research. By the end of the class, students should be equipped with the basic statistical, conceptual, and technical skills necessary to effectively undertake research projects in future courses and to act efficaciously as scholars and citizens.

2 Course Goals

The course meets the following learning goals set out by the Department of Political Science:

- (5) To teach students to work independently and in teams in conducting original research using scholarly sources and the empirical research tools characteristic of the discipline.
- (6) To refine the communications skills of students so that they can present oral and written arguments that are cogent, compelling, and well-substantiated.
- (9) To engage students actively in the learning process so as to stimulate their curiosity, interest them in public life, foster openness, and increase their self-confidence.

3 Course Required Materials

Two books are required for this class and are available for purchase at the bookstore or through online sellers like Amazon:

1. Philip H. Pollock, III. 2009. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, Third Edition.
2. Philip H. Pollock, III. 2006. *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*.

The primary text for the class will be the *Essentials*. The *Stata Companion* will be very helpful while working on assignments and exercises. Please note that you will be asked to read real research from political science journals. In all cases, these journal articles are available for free using academic search engines available to you through The College.

4 Course Requirements

4.1 Overview

You will be required to participate regularly in class discussions and activities. Exercises will be assigned so you can practice methods taught in class, most of which will require you to use Stata. Several longer assignments will also be required. I may occasionally give quizzes on important concepts. There will also be midterm and final exams. Finally, each student will conduct a research project on a topic of their choosing. This research will be presented during the last two weeks of class. During this time, class will likely run into the fourth hour, so plan accordingly. More information about the research projects will be presented later in the semester. Late work will not be accepted, unless I grant you an extension prior to the assigned due date.

4.2 Assignments

Three longer assignments are assigned. More information about each assignment will be provided during the course.

Assignment 1: Research Design

Assignment 2: Replication

Assignment 3: Hypothesis Testing Using Multiple Methods

4.3 Labs

Every other Thursday during the semester, class will meet in the social sciences computer lab (SSB 021). Topics for the labs will range from practical concerns of data management in Stata to preparing professional graphics and data analysis. Please come to lab with the datasets provided in *A Stata Companion* saved to your H:\ drive.

5 Grading

The following tables denotes the weight of each course component toward the final grade and grade ranges used.

Assignment	% of Final Grade
Participation / discussion	10
Exercises and quizzes	20
Assignments	15
Exams	Midterm 20
	Final 25
Presentation	10

Table 1: Grading Weights

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
100-93	93-90	90-87	87-83	83-80	80-77	77-73	73-70	70-67	67-63	63-60	60-0

Table 2: Grading Scale

6 Course Policies

6.1 Attendance

This course will adhere to TCNJ's attendance policy [<http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/attendance.html>]. Participation in discussion is an important component to the course.

6.2 Absences

No make-up quizzes or extensions on assignments due to an absence will be given unless you speak to me *before* you miss class or you miss class due to an illness or family emergency. If the latter is the case, I need appropriate documentation.

6.3 Academic Integrity

This course will adhere to TCNJ's academic integrity policy [<http://www.tcnj.edu/~academic/policy/integrity.html>]. Cheating is bad; don't do it. The work you hand in should be your own.

6.4 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

This course will also adhere to TCNJ's Americans with Disabilities Act policy [<http://www.tcnj.edu/~affirm/ada.html>]. If you need accommodations due to a disability, please see the instructor as soon as possible.

6.5 Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus during the semester.

7 Class Schedule, Topics, and Readings

Week	Dates	Topic(s)	Monday	Thursday
1	9-02	Introduction		Research methods in poli sci
2	9-07\9-09	Measuring and describing	[Tuesday] Ch: Intro,1,2	LAB: Data management
3	9-13\9-16	Theories and hypotheses	Ch 3-4	Fowler 2008
4	9-20\9-23	Research design	Bartels 2005 Lupia et al. 2007	LAB: Description/comparison
5	9-27\9-30	Testing using data	Ch 5	
6	10-4\10-7	Statistical inference	Ch 6 Due: Assignment #1	LAB: Graphing
7	10-11\10-14	Statistical significance	Ch 7 (pp 145-158)	Exam I
8	10-18\10-21		No Class Fall Break	LAB: Measures of association and correlation
9	10-25\10-28	Measures of Association	Ch 7, 8 (pp 159-173)	
10	11-1\11-4	Bivariate Regression	Ch 8(rest) Due: Assignment #2	LAB: Regression
11	11-8\11-11	Multivariate Regression		Tufte 1975
12	11-15\11-18	Regression Assumptions		Due: Assignment #3
13	11-22\11-25	Logistic Regression	Ch 9	THANKSGIVING
14	11-29\12-2	Presentations		
15	12-6\12-9	Presentations		
16	TBD	Exam II		

Table 3: Class Schedule

References

- Bartels, Larry M. 2005. "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind." *Perspectives on Politics* 3(1):15–31.
- Fowler, James H. 2008. "The Colbert Bump in Campaign Donations: More Truthful than Truthy." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 41(3):533–539.
- Lupia, Arthur, Adam Seth Levine, Jesse O. Menning and Gisela Sin. 2007. "Were Bush Tax Cut Supporters Simply Ignorant? A Second Look at Conservatives and Liberals in Homer Gets a Tax Cut." *Perspectives on Politics* 5(4):773–784.
- Tufte, Edward R. 1975. "Determinants of the Outcomes of Midterm Congressional Elections." *The American Political Science Review* 69(3):812–826.