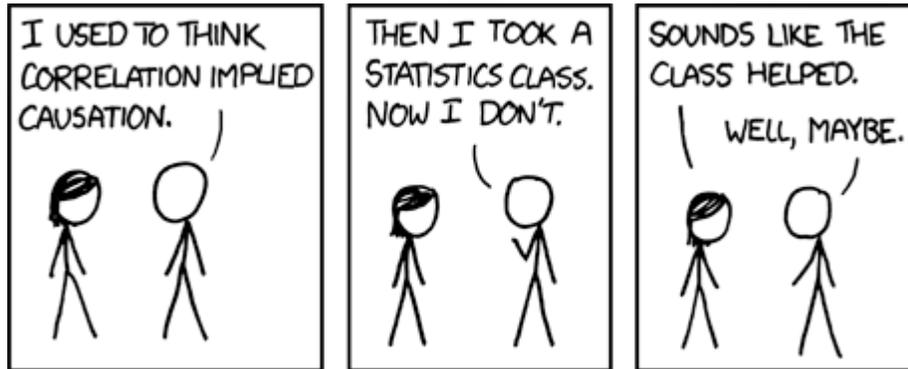


POIS 235: POLITICAL RESEARCH METHODS AND APPROACHES

Fall 2019



Source: xkcd (<http://xkcd.com/552/>).

Instructor: Florian Justwan, Ph.D.

Class: Tuesday, Thursday; 09:30 am - 10:45 am (T: TLC 51; Thur: MCCL 214A)
Tuesday, Thursday; 03:30 pm - 04:45 pm (T: TLC 50; Thur: MCCL 214A)

Office Hours: Wednesday 12:00pm - 2:00pm (Administration 323)

Email: fjustwan@uidaho.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course has three main goals. *First*, students should become familiar with the scientific study of politics (including but not limited to: hypothesis formulation, variable measurement, and bivariate hypothesis tests). *Second*, course participants are expected to gain “statistical literacy.” *Third*, students should become proficient with the statistical software package SPSS.

The course is organized as follows: after a short introduction which covers the essentials of scientific inquiry, the first part of the course is devoted to the issue of causal inference in the social sciences. We will explore the problems that researchers face when they attempt to identify causes of phenomena in the social world. In the second part of the class, we will take a closer look at the building blocks of quantitative research methods. We will spend a lot of time on matters related to measurement, operationalization, and descriptive statistics. Finally, in the last part of the course, we will begin to turn our attention to the tools that enable researchers to test their hypotheses about the social world and to make causal inferences about political phenomena.

COURSE MATERIALS

You will need to buy two books for this class:

- Kellstedt, Paul, and Guy Whitten (2018). *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Third Edition. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press (buy this edition – older editions have different page and chapter numbers!).
- Pollock, Philip H, and Barry C. Edwards. (2019). *An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*. Sixth Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Most of our weekly readings will come from these books. All other readings will be provided to you online. It is absolutely essential that you carefully read all of the required material prior to each class session. I expect that you take your responsibilities seriously. Failing to do so will both significantly impact your grade and the quality of our in-class activities.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

- 10% Attendance & Participation
- 20% Four Homework Assignments
- 20% Midterm Exam (October 17)
- 25% Take-home Final Exam (Due Date: December 20).
- 25% Research Paper

Part I: Research Question and Literature Review (5%)

Part II: Theory and Hypothesis (5%)

Part III: Descriptive Statistics (5%)

Final Version: polished parts I – III + bivariate data analysis & conclusion (10%)

Attendance

Each unexcused absence will lower your final participation grade (calculated on a scale from 0 – 100) by 5 percent. I will take attendance every day. Therefore, it is essential that you show up on time. If you do come in late, it is your responsibility to approach me *directly after class* (as long as I am still in the classroom) and make sure that I checked your name on the class roll.

Participation (10 percent)

Your participation grade will be based on the quality and quantity of your oral contributions during class. As stated above, I expect you to read and think about the assigned material prior to our meetings. In class, you should be able to discuss the main ideas and demonstrate that you are able to apply them to political research. Please note that your participation grade is only affected by *active* participation. If you don't talk, your final participation grade will be a 60 (minus 5 x *number of unexcused absences*). If you have any concerns about your participation grade, contact me as soon as possible.

Four Homework Assignments (20 percent)

There will be 4 homework assignments over the course of the term. Each assignment is graded on a scale from 0 to 100 and counts towards 5 percent of your final grade. The due dates can be found in the course schedule below. Late assignments receive an automatic 50 percent grade penalty.

Exams

There are 2 exams in this class – 1 midterm (20 percent) and 1 final exam (25 percent). Exam material will be drawn from the following: lecture notes, assigned required readings, class discussion, lab meetings, and any other supplementary materials. **All exams are cumulative.** One piece of advice: Do the required readings, attend class, participate and you will be very well prepared for both exams.

Paper (25 percent)

As part of your final grade you will also have to write a research paper in which you apply the tools introduced in this class. The paper will be divided into four parts. More information will be provided in class.

GRADE SCALE

Note: final grades will NOT be rounded

- A = 90.00-100.00
- B = 80.00-89.99
- C = 70.00-79.99
- D = 60.00-69.99
- F = 00.00-59.99

COURSE POLICIES

Absences & Make-Up Exams

As stated above, attendance is absolutely essential if you want to succeed in this class. You are permitted TWO unexcused absences. Every other absence will lower your participation grade by 5 percent, unless you have a valid excuse (medical, academic, etc.) AND proper documentation. Make-up exams are ONLY offered for documented absences. If you know in advance that you have a conflict preventing you from taking one of the exams at the scheduled date, please contact me as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

It is the policy of our department to refer instances of suspected academic dishonesty to the Student Judicial Council. For the Dean of Students' Academic Integrity site which includes UI Policies and Student Academic Dishonesty Resources, see <https://www.uidaho.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/student-conduct/academic-integrity>.

Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have documented temporary or permanent disabilities. All accommodations must be approved through the Center for Disability Access and Resources located in the Bruce M. Pitman Center, Suite 127 in order to notify your instructor(s) as soon as possible regarding accommodation(s) needed for the course.

- Phone: 208-885-6307
- Email: cdar@uidaho.edu
- Website: www.uidaho.edu/current-students/cdar

Tutoring and College Success (TCS)

TCS offers three distinct services dedicated to student success: tutoring, SI-PASS, and Academic Coaching. Vandal Tutoring provides drop-in style tutoring in person at the Library or online through uidaho.edu/tutoringonline at no cost to undergraduates. SI-PASS provides peer assisted study sessions for difficult courses. You can find the schedule of currently supported courses at uidaho.edu/si. Academic Coaching offers students an opportunity to work with a coach, one on one, to improve their academic skills such as: effective studying, test taking, time management, and note taking. Visit uidaho.edu/academic-coaching to schedule an appointment.

Electronic Device Policy

The use of cell phones, iPods, iPads, or any other electronic device will not be permitted during class meetings. I will permit you a laptop ONLY to take notes and review online readings. Please note that I reserve the right to reverse this policy at any time.

Assignment and Grade Record-Keeping

Students are responsible for saving all graded work until final grades are recorded with the registrar and checked by the student.

Classroom Learning Civility

In any environment in which people gather to learn, it is essential that all members feel as free and safe as possible in their participation. To this end, it is expected that everyone in this course will be treated with mutual respect and civility, with an understanding that all of us (students, instructors, professors, guests, and teaching assistants) will be respectful and civil to one another in discussion, in action, in teaching, and in learning. Should you feel our classroom interactions do not reflect an environment of civility and respect, you are encouraged to meet with your instructor during office hours to discuss your concern. Additional resources for expression of concern or requesting support include the Dean of Students office and staff (5-6757), the UI Counseling & Testing Center's confidential services (5-6716), or the UI Office of Human Rights, Access, & Inclusion (5-4285).

Grade Appeals

If you believe your exams or assignments have been graded unfairly, you can appeal your grade in written form. You have to hand in your appeal on the day after the assignment or exam was returned. Comparisons to other students' graded assignments will not be accepted for a complaint. Hand in the original copy of the graded assignment/exam together with the written appeal. I will reevaluate your grade in light of the argument that you made. However, the new grade may be the same, higher, or lower than the original grade and it will be final.

COURSE SCHEDULE (This is only a tentative schedule for this course. Content may change)

PART I: Introduction – Theories in Political Science		
Week 1		Course Introduction
	August 27 (T)	This syllabus.
	August 29 (R)	No readings.
Week 2		Research Questions, Theories and Hypotheses
	Sept. 3 (T)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 1.
	Sept. 5 (R)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 2.
Week 3		Paper Writing Basics and Literature Reviews
	Sept. 10 (T)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • M. Fuhrmann (2009). “Spreading Temptation: Proliferation and Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreements.” In: International Security 34 (1), pp. 7-41 (read 7-23 only; focus on the questions on bblearn). • Paper Writing Workshop.
	Sept. 12 (R)	Baglione Chapters 3 and 4. Homework 1 Due Today!
PART II: Causality and the Logic of Control		
Week 4		Causality and Introduction to SPSS
	Sept. 17 (T)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 3.
LAB A	Sept. 19 (R)	Pollock Chapter 1 and 11.
Week 5		Research Design I (Qualitative Methods)
	Sept. 24 (T)	N. Tannenwald (1999). “The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use.” In: International Organization 53 (3), pp. 433-468. Homework 2 due today.
	Sept. 26 (R)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K. He (2013). “Case Study and the Comparative Method.” • D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson (2012). Why Nations Fail. Crown Publishers: New York, Chapter 1 (“So Close and Yet So Different”).

Week 6		Research Design II (Experiments and Quantitative Methods)
	Oct. 1 (T)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 4 (pp. 77 – 92). • S. Piston et al. (2018). “Clear as Black and White: The Effects of Ambiguous Rhetoric Depend on Candidate Race.” In: Journal of Politics 80 (2), 662-674 (pp. 662 – 669 only!)
LAB B	Oct. 3 (R)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 4 (pp. 92 – 103). Part I of Term Paper (“Research Question and Literature Review”) Due Today!
		PART III: Building Blocks of Quantitative Methods
Week 7		Measurement and Operationalization I
	Oct. 8 (T)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 5.
	Oct. 10 (R)	Wheelan Chapter 3.
Week 8		Midterm Exam Week
	Oct. 15 (T)	Review for Midterm Exam
	Oct. 17 (R)	MIDTERM EXAM
Week 9		Measurement and Operationalization II & Descriptive Statistics I
	Oct. 22 (T)	J. B. Johnson & H.T. Reynolds (2012). Political Science Research Methods. Sage: Los Angeles, Chapter 9.
	Oct. 24 (R)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 6.
Week 10		Descriptive Statistics II
	Oct. 29 (T)	Part II of Term Paper (Theory and Hypothesis) Due Today!
LAB C	Oct. 31 (R)	Pollock Chapters 2 and 3.
		PART IV: Quantitative Hypothesis Testing
Week 11		Probability and Statistical Inference
	Nov. 5 (T)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 7.
	Nov. 7 (R)	Wheelan Chapter 10. Homework 3 Due Today!

Week 12		Bivariate Hypothesis Testing I (Crosstabs)
	Nov. 12 (T)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 8 (pages 161 – 173 only).
LAB D	Nov. 14 (R)	Part III of Term Paper (Descriptive Statistics) Due Today! Pollock Chapters 4 and 5.
Week 13		Bivariate Hypothesis Testing II (Difference of means and Correlation Coefficients)
	Nov. 19 (T)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 8 (pages 173 – 185).
LAB E	Nov. 21 (R)	Pollock Chapter 6 and 7.
Week 14		Thanksgiving Break
	Nov. 26 (T)	No class.
	Nov. 28 (R)	No class.
Week 15		Regression Analysis
	Dec. 3 (T)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 9.
LAB F	Dec. 5 (R)	Pollock Chapter 8. Homework 4 due today.
Week 16		Catch-up and Review Week
	Dec. 10 (T)	No readings.
LAB G	Dec. 12 (R)	Review and Catch-up day.
Week 17		Final Exam Week
	Dec. 16 (M) at 11:59 pm	Due date for Final Version of Term Paper (polished versions of sections I – III plus bivariate data analysis and conclusion)
	Dec. 17 (T) at 8:00 am	Take-home final exam emailed to all course participants.
	Dec. 20 (F) at noon!	Due date for take-home Final Exam (email: fjustwan@uidaho.edu)