PolS 336: POLITICAL RESEARCH METHODS AND APPROACHES II
Spring 2019

Instructor: Florian Justwan, Ph.D.
Class: Monday, Wednesday, Friday; 11:30 am - 12:20 pm (TLC 123)
Office Hours: Monday; 03:00 pm - 05:00 pm (Administration 323)
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is a project seminar. Over the course of the spring semester, we will design and implement a public opinion survey on a political topic and analyze the data using advanced statistical methods (OLS regression with multiple independent variables, and logistic regression analysis). As such, this course is divided into three different sections. In Section I, we will discuss recent research on the topic of politics and social media. This part of the class will help students generate ideas for a research question (to be answered in the context of our public opinion survey). In Section II, students will learn how to (1) compose a valid and reliable survey instrument, and (2) implement this survey on an online platform. Finally, in Section III of this class, we will discuss various advanced statistical methods used by political scientists to analyze survey data.

At the end of the semester, students should be able to (1) independently conduct an online survey, (2) perform and interpret OLS regression analysis, and (3) perform and interpret logistic regression analysis. Furthermore, course participations should be able to (4) clearly communicate results obtained from these statistical procedures. Thus, while this class will broadly contribute to all university-level learning outcomes, it will place a special emphasis on (1) Learn and integrate, (2) Think and create, and (3) Communicate.

COURSE MATERIALS

You will need to buy one book for this class:
- Pollock, Philip H. (2015). An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis. Fifth Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

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 survey project.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES
>   20%   Attendance & Participation
>   15%   Midterm Presentation
>   15%   Final Presentation
>   50%   Ten Homework Assignments

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 (20 percent)
Your participation grade will be based on the quality and quantity of your oral contributions during class (including "Workshop Days"). 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.

Homework Assignments (50 percent)
There will be 11 homework assignments over the course of the term. These assignments are generally due on Friday and they are graded on a scale from 0 to 100. Only your ten highest scores will count toward your final course grade (5 percent per homework). In other words, I will drop your lowest score. Due to the nature of this course, late assignments will not be accepted.

Midterm Presentation (15 percent)
This class is a project course. Our main goals for the semester are to (1) design and implement a public opinion survey and (2) analyze the collected data using advanced statistical methods. The survey design will be a collaborative effort. Students will be assigned to small groups, and they will work on a (mini-)survey questionnaire together. Fifteen percent of your course grade will come from a midterm presentation in which you and your group (1) identify your research question and hypothesis, (2) give a brief literature review, and (3) discuss your survey questionnaire. More information about this assignment will be provided to you in class.

Final Presentation (15 percent)
In early May, you will give a "research talk" and present your empirical findings to the rest of the class. You will use multiple regression analysis to conduct a test of your hypothesis and you will interpret your statistical results as practiced in the second half of the course. More information about this assignment will be provided to you in class.

GRADE SCALE

Note: final grades will NOT be rounded

    A = 90.00-100.00
    B = 80.00-89.999
    C = 70.00-79.999
    D = 60.00-69.999
    F = 00.00-59.999

COURSE POLICIES

Absences

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. If you know in advance that you have a conflict preventing you from fulfilling any course requirements 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

Special Assistance

If you experience difficulty in this course for any reason, please do not hesitate to consult with me. A wide range of services is available to support students in their efforts to meet the course requirements. Tutoring and College Success helps students increase their mastery of course material through course-specific tutoring and academic skills development. Check out their workshops, tutorial groups, and drop-in tutoring schedules posted on their website http://www.uidaho.edu/current-students/academic-support/asp, or sign up for services at their main office, Idaho Commons 306. Finally, Counseling & Testing Service is available to assist students who are encountering personal, social, and emotional difficulties or crises. Visit them in Mary E. Forney Hall Room 306, 885-6716, or see their website at https://www.uidaho.edu/current-students/ctc.

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 and Plan for the Semester
Week 1		**Course Introduction**
	Jan. 7 (M)	Winter Break. No class.
	Jan. 9 (W)	This syllabus.
	Jan. 11 (F)	• Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 1. • Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 6.
		Part II: A Mini-Course on Social Media and Politics
Week 2		**Mini Course Week 1**
	Jan. 14 (M)	• Social Media Reader from PEW Research Center 1. • J. Vitak et al. (2011). "It's Complicated: Facebook Users' Political Participation in the 2008 Election." In: Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking 14 (3), pp. 107–114.
	Jan. 16 (W)	H. Gil de Zuniga, N. Jung, and S. Valenzuela (2012). "Social Media Use for News and Individuals' Social Capital, Civic Engagement and Political Participation." In: Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication 17 (3), pp. 319-336.
	Jan. 18 (F)	• Social Media Reader from PEW Research Center 2. • H. Allcott and M. Gentzkow (2017). "Social Media and Fake News in the 2016 Election." In: Journal of Economic Perspectives 31 (2), pp. 211–236.
Week 3		**Mini Course Week 2**
	Jan. 21 (M)	No Class. MLK Day.
	Jan. 23 (W)	• Social Media Reader from PEW Research Center 3. • L. Bode (2016). "Pruning the news feed: Unfriending and unfollowing political content on social media." In: Research and Politics 3 (3), doi: 10.1177/2053168016661873.
	Jan. 25 (F)	F. Justwan, B. Baumgaertner, J. Carlisle, A. Clark, and M. Clark (2018). "Social media echo chambers and satisfaction with democracy among Democrats and Republicans in the aftermath of the 2016 U.S. elections." In: Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties 28 (4), pp. 424-442. Homework 1: Reading Notes for Jan 16 to 25 (1 page per day).

		Part III: Survey Design and Data Collection
Week 4		**Survey Design and Data Collection I**
	Jan. 28 (M)	Background Material for Homework 2 and 3.
	Jan. 30 (W)	Workshop Day (Discussion Dependent Variable).
	Feb. 1 (F)	Asher Chapter 4. Homework 2: Dependent Variable.
Week 5		**Survey Design and Data Collection II**
	Feb. 4 (M)	• M. Buhrmester, T. Kwang, and S. D. Gosling (2011). "Amazon's Mechanical Turk: A New Source of Inexpensive, Yet High-Quality, Data?" In: Perspectives on Psychological Science 6 (1), pp. 3-5. • C. Huff and D. Tingley (2015). "Who are these people? Evaluating the demographic characteristics and political preferences of MTurk survey respondents." In: Research and Politics 2 (3), doi: 10.1177/2053168015604648.
	Feb. 6 (W)	• Dillman et al. Chapter 4 (p. 109 – 126 only). • Dillman et al. Chapter 5 (p. 127 – 142 only).
	Feb. 8 (F)	Workshop Day (Discussion: Literature Findings).
Week 6		**Survey Design and Data Collection III**
	Feb. 11 (M)	Dillman et al. Chapter 5 (p. 142 – 168 only).
	Feb. 13 (W)	Dillman et al. Chapter 7 (p. 228 – 241 only).
	Feb. 15 (F)	Workshop Day (Discussion: Hypothesis / Survey Questions). Homework 3: Literature Findings.
		Part III: (Survey) Data Analysis
Week 7		**Recap: Bivariate Regression Analysis and SPSS I**
	Feb. 18 (M)	No Class. President's Day.
	Feb. 20 (W)	• Pollock Chapter 1. • Pollock Chapter 3.
	Feb. 22 (F)	Workshop Day (Discussion: Hypothesis / Survey Questions).

Week 8		**Recap: Bivariate Regression Analysis and SPSS II**
	Feb. 25 (M)	• Pollock Chapter 2. • Pollock Chapter 4.
	Feb. 27 (W)	Pollock Chapter 8 (pages 149 – 158).
	March 1 (F)	Workshop Day (Discussion: Hypothesis / Survey Questions).
Week 9		**Midterm Presentation Week**
	March 4 (M)	Midterm Presentations (email survey Questionnaires to: fjustwan@uidaho.edu)
	March 6 (W)	Finish up Midterm Presentations. No Readings. Work on your IRB training.
	March 8 (F)	Workshop Day / Guest Speaker. Homework 4: IRB Training.
Week 10		**Spring Break!**
	March 11 (M)	No class.
	March 13 (W)	No class.
	March 15 (F)	No class.
Week 11		**Multiple Regression I (Theory)**
	March 18 (M)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 10 (pages 215-236 only).
	March 20 (W)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 10 (pages 236-245 only).
	March 22 (F)	Background Material for Final Assignment. Homework 5: Survey Feedback (bring one copy with your name and one copy without).
Week 12		**Multiple Regression II (Practice)**
	March 25 (M)	• Re-Read: Pollock Chapter 8 (pages 149 – 158). • Pollock Chapter 8 (pages 158 – 168).
	March 27 (W)	Workshop Day (Consideration of Feedback).
	March 29 (F)	Homework 6: Data Analysis.

Week 13		**Multiple Regression III (Extensions)**
	April 1 (M)	Workshop Day (Setting up the Survey).
	April 3 (W)	• Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 11 (pages 246-256 only). • Pollock Chapter 9 (pages 169 – 175 only).
	April 5 (F)	• Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 11 (pages 256-258 only). • Pollock Chapter 9 (pages 175 – 180 only). • Homework 7: Survey Data Analysis.
Week 14		**Multiple Regression IV (Practice and Problems)**
	April 8 (M)	Workshop Day (Play around with Data)
	April 10 (W)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 11 (pages 258-263 only).
	April 12 (F)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 11 (pages 263-272 only). Homework 8: Data Analysis with Interaction Term
Week 15		**Logistic Regression I**
	April 15 (M)	Kellstedt and Whitten Chapter 12 (pages 273-282 only).
	April 17 (W)	Pollock Chapter 10 (pages 187 – 194).
	April 19 (F)	Workshop Day (Play around with data) Homework 9: Descriptive Statistics for Final Project
Week 16		**Logistic Regression II**
	April 22 (M)	Guest Lecture (details tba).
	April 24 (W)	Pollock Chapter 10 (pages 194 – 209).
	April 26 (F)	Re-Read: Pollock Chapter 10 (pages 194 – 209). Homework 10: Logistic Regression Data Analysis.
Week 17		**Conclusion**
	April 29 (M)	Workshop Day (Analyze the Data).

	May 1 (W)	Workshop Day (Analyze the Data).
	May 3 (F)	Workshop Day (Analyze the Data). Homework 11: Data Analysis for Final Project.
Week 18		**Finals Week**
	May 8 (W)	Final Presentations.