# POLS 4150: Research Methods in Political Science

University of Georgia

Fall 2018

MWF, 1:25 - 2:15 PM, Baldwin 301

Prof. Ryan Bakker

Office location: 416 Baldwin Hall
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Office hours: MWF, 12:00 - 1:00 PM, and by appointment

## Course Description

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the use of quantitative methods in political science. We will cover a variety of topics, including research design and concept formation, measurement, and several techniques for assessing the relationships between variables. Class time will be devoted to lecture, discussion of assigned readings, and learning to conduct your own analyses on a software package. (No previous computer experience is required for the course.)

## Required Text and Other Readings

Our textbook for the course will be:

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

In addition, there are addtional readings that will be made available via the course webpage. Please note that these readings are required, not merely optional. These readings will be central to our classroom discussions, and will be covered on the examinations.

## Assignments, Quizzes, Exams, Papers, and Grading

You will be expected to turn in specific assignments from the problem sets at the end of specific chapters—there will be quite a few of them, with assignments given at least four days in advance of the due date. You must turn these in on time, as I will not accept late assignments in the absence of a university-approved excuse. To provide you with an extra incentive to do the exercises, I may include questions from the problem sets (or questions very similar to them) on the quizzes or exams.

We will have periodic in-class quizzes. They will not be announced ahead of time. If you are not in class that day, and have not made an arrangement acceptable to me *before* class, you will receive a zero for that quiz, unless your absence is excused by university policy.

There will be two exams for the course—an in-class midterm and an in-class final (Dates TBD). The final will not be cumulative in the technical sense of the word, but it will be cumulative in the sense that material from the second half of the course builds on material learned in the first half.

In addition, there will be a research project assignment where you will be expected to develop hypotheses, collect and analyze data, and write-up the results and present them to the class in a professional manner (the assignment will be on the course webpage in a timely fashion). The final paper will be due in class on December 3. As with HW assignments, I do not accept late papers unless the student can provide a university-approved excuse.

I do expect you to participate in classroom discussion and, as such, you must attend class in order to participate.

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

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|---|---|
| Attendance/Participation | 10% |
| Homework assignments | 20% |
| In-class quizzes | 10% |
| Research paper | 20% |
| Midterm exam | 20% |
| Final exam | 20% |

## Course Calendar

*Please note that I reserve the right to change the following calendar in order to ensure that we spend adequate time on each topic. Of course, if such changes become necessary, I will make an announcement in class.*

**Week 1** Aug 13-17**: Course introduction**

- K&W, ch. 1

**Week 2** Aug 20-24**: Theories and hypotheses**

- K&W, ch. 2

**Week 3** Aug 27 (No class 29-31): **Causality**

- K&W, ch. 3

**Week 4** Sept 3-7 (No class Sept 3)**: Research design**

- K&W, ch. 4

**Week 5** Sept 10-14**: Measurement and descriptive statistics**

- K&W, ch. 5
- Sullivan et al., "An Alternative Conceptualization of Political Tolerance"

**Week 6** Sept 17-21**: Intro to Stata/R**

**Week 7** Sept 24-28**: Probability theory and statistical inference**

- K&W, ch. 6

**Week 8** Oct 1-5**: Bivariate hypothesis testing**

- K&W, ch. 7

**Week 9** Oct 8-12**: The bivariate regression model**

- K&W, ch. 8

**Week** 10 Oct 15-19**: The multiple regression model**

- K&W, ch. 9

**Week** 11 Oct 22-24 (No class Oct 26)**: More multiple regression**

- K&W, ch. 9 (read it again)

**Week** 12 Oct 29-Nov2**: Multiple regression model specification**

- K&W, ch. 10

**Week** 13 Nov 5-9**: Time series models**

- K&W, ch. 11, sections 11.3 through 11.5
- MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson, "Peasants or Bankers?"

**Week** 14 Nov 12-16**: Conducting your own analyses**

- K&W, ch. 12

**Week** 15-16 Nov 26,28,30, Dec 3: **Class Presentations**

- Final papers due in class on Monday, Dec 3.

## Statement about Students with Disabilities

Students with special needs that require accommodation should notify me and the Office for Disability Services in the first two weeks of the course so appropriate arrangements can be made. All information and documentation of special needs is confidential.

## Statement about Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance of the policy is not an acceptable defense. See also https://ovpi.uga.edu/academic-honesty.

As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated.