POLS 4150: Research Methods in Political Science

University of Georgia

Spring 2018

Tu Th, 3:30 - 4:45 PM, Baldwin 301

Prof. Ryan Bakker

Office location: 416 Baldwin Hall
Email: rbakker@uga.edu
Office hours: Tu and Th, 2:00 - 3:30 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 on Tuesday, February 13th, and an in-class final on Tuesday, April 24th. 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 assingment where you will be expected to develop hypotheses, collect and analyze data, and write-up the results 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 Thursday, April 19th. As with HW assignments, I do not accept late papers unless the student can provide a university-approved excuse.

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

Your course grade will be calculated as follows:

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 January 9 and 11: Course introduction

- K&W, ch. 1

Week 2 January 16 and 18: Theories and hypotheses

- K&W, ch. 2

Week 3 January 23 and 25: Causality

- K&W, ch. 3

Week 4 Januaray 29 and Feb 1: Research design

- K&W, ch. 4

Week 5 February 6 and 8: Measurement and descriptive statistics

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

Week 6 February 13 and 15: Midterm and No Class

- **February 13: Midterm**
- **No Class on Thursday, February 15**

Week 7 Feb 20 and 22: Midterm and Probability theory and statistical inference

- K&W, ch. 6

Week 8 Feb 27 and March 1: Bivariate hypothesis testing

- K&W, ch. 7

Week 9 March 6 and 8: The bivariate regression model

- K&W, ch. 8

Week 10 March 13 and 15: No class—spring break

Week 11 March 20 and 22: The multiple regression model

- K&W, ch. 9

Week 12 March 27 and 29: More multiple regression

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

Week 13 April 3 and 5: Multiple regression model specification and No Class

- K&W, ch. 10
- **No Class on April 5**

Week 14 April 10 and 12: Time series models

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

Week 15 April 17 and 19: Conducting your own analyses

- K&W, ch. 12
- Final papers due in class on Thursday, April 19

Final Exam: In Class, Tuesday, April 24

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.