

POLS 4150: Research Methods in Political Science

University of Georgia

Fall 2018

Tu, Th, 9:30 - 10:45 AM, Baldwin 102

Professor Jason Anastasopoulos

Office: 280E Baldwin Hall

Email: ljanastas@uga.edu

Office Hours: Tu, Th 10:45-11:45 AM and by appointment.

Course Description

This course is an introduction to statistical reasoning and thinking applied to understanding the political world. The tools that we will learn in this course will help you not foster a better understanding of problems in political science and politics more broadly, but will help clarify the way that you think and reason through problems where data is involved. The topics that we will cover include: research design, measurement, causal inference and understanding how we measure and interpret relationships between events and concepts.

Required Text and Readings

The required text 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.

There will also be additional readings available on the course webpage.

Grading

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%

Attendance is mandatory and class participation and class discussion is an essential part of this class.

Problem Sets

Your final grade will be based on a number of problem sets with assignments provided one week before the due date. These assignments will be taken from the required text. They must be turned on on time and late assignments will receive a grade of zero in the absence of a university-approved excuse.

Quizzes

We periodically have in-class quizzes. These will not be announced ahead of time. If you are not in class and have not provided with me with a valid excuse for being absent for that class, you will receive a zero for the quiz. The only exception to this is if your absence is excused by university policy.

Exams

There will be two exams for the class: an in-class midterm on **September 25th** and an in-class final on **December 4th**. The final will only cover material from the midterm on but will require that you understand and utilize concepts from earlier material.

Research Project

The research project will be a short paper assignment which requires you to develop hypotheses about a question that you are interested in and to collect, analyze and interpret data to test those hypotheses. The final paper will be due on **November 29th** and more details about the paper will be provided on the website.

Course Calendar

I reserve the right to change the calendar to ensure that we spend enough time on each topic. If changes become necessary, they will be announced in class.

Week 1 August 14 and 16:

Course introduction • K&W, ch. 1

Week 2 August 21 and 23:

Theories and hypotheses • K&W, ch. 2

Kahneman, D. and Egan, P., 2011. *Thinking, fast and slow*(Vol. 1). New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. [Introduction](#).

Week 3 August 28 and 30:

Causality • K&W, ch. 3

Gerber, A.S., Green, D.P. and Larimer, C.W., 2008. [Social pressure and voter turnout: Evidence from a large-scale field experiment](#). American Political Science Review, 102(01), pp.33-48.

Week 4 September 4 and 6:

Research design • K&W, ch. 4

Putnam, R.D., 2007. [E pluribus unum: Diversity and community in the twenty first century the 2006 Johan Skytte Prize Lecture](#) . Scandinavian political studies, 30(2), pp.137-174.

Week 5 September 11 and 13:

Measurement and descriptive statistics • K&W, ch. 5

Rasinski, K.A., 1989. [*The effect of question wording on public support for government spending*](#). Public Opinion Quarterly, 53(3), pp.388-394.

Week 6 September 18 and 20:

Probability theory and statistical inference • K&W, ch. 6

Week 7 September 25 and 27:

Midterm and Bivariate hypothesis testing • K&W, ch. 7

Week 8 October 2 and 4:

Continue bivariate hypothesis testing • K&W, ch. 7

Week 9 October 9 and 11:

The bivariate regression model • K&W, ch. 8

Week 10 October 16 and 18:

The multiple regression model • K&W, ch. 9

Week 11 October 23 and 25:

Multiple regression continued • K&W, ch. 9 (read it again)

Week 12 October 30 and November 1:

Multiple regression • K&W, ch. 10

Week 13 November 6 and 8:

Time series models • K&W, ch. 11, sections 11.3 through 11.5

Week 14 November 13 and 15: Conducting your own analyses • K&W, ch. 12 • Final papers due in class on Thursday, November 29 Final Exam: In Class, Tuesday, December 4th.

Week 15 November 20 and 22: No class. Thanksgiving break.

Week 16 November 27 and 29:

Final papers due and special topics: big data, artificial intelligence and political science.

Week 17 December 4:

In class final exam.

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

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>.