POLS 4156E – Online Political Research & Analysis
Class Day/Time: Online Monday - Friday
Instructor: Jeffrey M. Glas, PhD

Contact Information:

Office Hours: By Appointment (via telephone or Zoom)
Instructor Email: jeffrey.glas@uga.edu

I. Course Description:

Whether for better or worse, the Internet has had an undeniable influence on humanity. The Internet is, indeed, a pervasive element in modern society. For the vast majority of users, the Internet is a medium of commerce, information, and entertainment. But, for a few of us, the Internet is a research tool and has opened a variety of new avenues for studying social phenomena…even birthing entirely new fields of research.

This is a research methodology course, substantive content will be covered, too, but the primary focus of this course is how the Internet can be leveraged for research purposes. The course is broken up into four units: Unit 1 is a crash course in general research methodology. Unit 2 covers classic research methods as they have migrated online. In Unit 3 we will get into "native digital" methods that have emerged as the Internet has expanded across the globe. In our fourth and final course unit we will focus on how research can be applied to a more specialized online context: social media.

II. Course Requirements and Graded Evaluation

(2.1) **Textbooks**
This class does not use textbooks. Instead, we will be using open-source material freely available on the Web. After all, this is an online class about how to use the Internet for research purposes.

(2.2) **Assessment**
As a short-session, time will feel more scarce than usual. We are cramming an entire semester into four (4) weeks. This class features four (4) major assessments and five (5) minor assessments. The four major assessments consist of two (2) exams and two (2) research projects. Major assessments are each worth 20% of your grade. The minor assessments are also research oriented, but primarily focus on specific tasks necessary to conducting professional level research. Minor assessments are each worth 4% of your grade.

(2.3) **Grading**
All grades (including final grades) will be assigned following the system depicted below. You must earn a C or higher to pass this class. Grades will not be curved.

A	=	94-100	C+	=	78	
A-	=	90	C	=	74	
B+	=	88	C-	=	70	
B	=	84	D	=	60 – 69	
B-	=	80	F	≤	59	

III. Class Policies

(3.1) **Disability Disclosure Statement**
Abled-ness should not impede your intellectual development. Please get in touch with me (Dr. Glas) about any accommodations you need in the classroom and for exams. We have some amazing resources for you here at UGA. For testing accommodations please contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) as soon as possible. For more information please check out the DRC's website (www.uga.drc.edu). The DRC is located at 825 Lumpkin Street (Clark-Howell Hall) and can be contacted by phone at 706.542.8719.

(3.2) **Makeup Exams**
If you miss an exam, you will receive a zero (and passing the class will be unlikely). If you are late to an exam, you must take it in the time that remains when you arrive. Make-up exams are only given to students with legitimate excuses.

(3.3) **Missed/Late Assignments**
Missed assignments are awarded a grade of zero. Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of ten points for each calendar day late.

(3.4) **Cheating and Academic Misconduct**
Violations of the academic dishonesty rules are grounds for receiving an "F" in the course as well as possible expulsion from the university. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism, please examine the university policy and /or ask the instructor.

(3.5) **Problems and Emergencies**
If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from completing coursework please contact me as soon as possible.

(3.6) **Withdraw Policy**
Be advised that the last day to withdraw from a course without failing is Friday, July 23rd. All students who withdraw after this date will receive a "WF".

IV. Course Schedule[1]

Week 1: Fundamentals of Research Methodology: A Crash Course

Monday, July 12th – Course Introduction

Zoom meeting @ 1pm (see email and eLC Announcement for details)

Tuesday, July 13th – Designing Empirical Research

Franco et al, Chapter 6

Last Day of Drop/Add

Wednesday, July 14th – Concepts and Measures

Franco et al, Chapter 5

Schlozman, K.L., Verba, S. and Brady, H.E., 2010. Weapon of the strong? Participatory inequality
and the Internet. *Perspectives on Politics*, *8*(2), pp.487-509.

Thursday, July 15th – Data Collection and Management

See eLC Content Folder

Friday, July 16th – Major Assessment #1 – Exam 1

Week 2: Traditional Political Research…Online

Monday, July 19th – The Internet, Part I: Some Basics

Curran, J., Fenton, N. and Freedman, D., 2016. *Misunderstanding the internet*. Routledge. (Chapter 1)

Tuesday, July 20th – Researching Institutions, Online

Content Folder on eLC

Wednesday, July 21st – "Canned Data"

Content Folder on eLC

Thursday, July 22nd – Online Survey Research

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[1] This is a general course out line, some deviations may be necessary.

Brick, J.M., 2011. The future of survey sampling. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, *75*(5), pp.872-888.

Behrend, T.S., Sharek, D.J., Meade, A.W. and Wiebe, E.N., 2011. The viability of crowdsourcing for survey research. *Behavior research methods*, *43*(3), pp.800-813.

Levay, K.E., Freese, J. and Druckman, J.N., 2016. The demographic and political composition of Mechanical Turk samples. *Sage Open*, *6*(1), p.2158244016636433.

Schuman, H. and Presser, S., 1977. Question wording as an independent variable in survey analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research*, *6*(2), pp.151-170.

Friday, July 23rd – Major Assessment #2 – Research Assignment 1

Withdrawal Deadline

Week 3: Down the Rabbit-Hole

Monday, July 26th – The Internet, Part II: Network and Website Construction

Shuler, Russ. 2002. How Does the Internet Work? (link in eLC)

Tuesday, July 27th – Big Data and Political Research

Monroe, B.L., 2013. The five Vs of big data political science introduction to the virtual issue on big data in political science political analysis. *Political Analysis*, *21*(V5), pp.1-9.

Grimmer, J., 2015. We are all social scientists now: How big data, machine learning, and causal inference work together. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *48*(1), pp.80-83.

Brady, H.E., 2019. The challenge of big data and data science. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *22*, pp.297-323.

Wednesday, July 28th – Web Activity as Data, Part I: Concepts

Park, H.W., 2003. Hyperlink network analysis: A new method for the study of social structure on the web. *Connections*, *25*(1), pp.49-61.

Nakatani, K. and Chuang, T.T., 2011. A web analytics tool selection method: an analytical hierarchy process approach. *Internet Research*.

Thursday, July 29th – Web Activity as Data, Part II: Applied

Reilly, S., Richey, S. and Taylor, J.B., 2012. Using Google search data for state politics research: an empirical validity test using roll-off data. *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, *12*(2), pp.146-159.

Stoycheff, E. and Nisbet, E.C., 2014. What's the bandwidth for democracy? Deconstructing Internet penetration and citizen attitudes about governance. *Political Communication*, *31*(4), pp.628-646.

Tandoc Jr, E.C., 2014. Journalism is twerking? How web analytics is changing the process of gatekeeping. *New media & society*, *16*(4), pp.559-575.

Friday, July 30ᵗʰ – Major Assessment #3 – Research Assignment 2

Week 4: Social Media…

Monday, August 2ⁿᵈ – …and Experimentation

Guess, A.M., 2021. Experiments Using Social Media Data. *Advances in Experimental Political Science*, *184*.

Bond, R.M., Fariss, C.J., Jones, J.J., Kramer, A.D., Marlow, C., Settle, J.E. and Fowler, J.H., 2012. A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization. *Nature*, *489*(7415), pp.295-298.

Teresi, H. and Michelson, M.R., 2015. Wired to mobilize: The effect of social networking messages on voter turnout. *The Social Science Journal*, *52*(2), pp.195-204.

Tuesday, August 3ʳᵈ – …Network Analysis

Himelboim, I., Sweetser, K.D., Tinkham, S.F., Cameron, K., Danelo, M. and West, K., 2016. Valence-based homophily on Twitter: Network analysis of emotions and political talk in the 2012 presidential election. *New media & society*, *18*(7), pp.1382-1400.

Min, S.J., 2021. Who Believes in Conspiracy Theories? Network Diversity, Political Discussion, and Conservative Conspiracy Theories on Social Media. *American Politics Research*, p.1532673X211013526.

Messing, Solomon, van Kessle, Patrick, and Hughes, Adam. 2017. Sharing the News in a Polarized Congress. *Pew Research Center*, December <

Wednesday, August 4ᵗʰ – …Behavior and Analysis, Part I

DiGrazia, J., McKelvey, K., Bollen, J. and Rojas, F., 2013. More tweets, more votes: Social media as a quantitative indicator of political behavior. *PloS one*, *8*(11), p.e79449.

Ikeda, K.I., Richey, S. and Teresi, H., 2013. Browsing alone: The differential impact of internet platforms on political participation. *Japanese Journal of Political Science*, *14*(3), pp.305-319.

Bakshy, E., Messing, S. and Adamic, L.A., 2015. Exposure to ideologically diverse news and opinion on Facebook. *Science*, *348*(6239), pp.1130-1132.

Thursday, August 5ᵗʰ – …Behavior and Analysis, Part II

Schatten, M., Ševa, J. and Okreša Đurić, B., 2015. An introduction to social semantic web mining & big data analytics for political attitudes and mentalities research. *European Quarterly of Political Attitudes and Mentalities EQPAM*, *4*(1), pp.40-62.

Xi, N., Ma, D., Liou, M., Steinert-Threlkeld, Z.C., Anastasopoulos, J. and Joo, J., 2020, May. Understanding the political ideology of legislators from social media images. In *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* (Vol. 14, pp. 726-737).

Last Day of Classes

Friday, August 6ᵗʰ – Major Assessment #4 – Exam 4