

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

Contact Information:

Office Hours: Thursdays from 9am to 10am and by appointment (via 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 simply a medium for communication, commerce, information, and entertainment. But, for a few of us, the Internet is a research tool that has opened a variety of new avenues for studying social phenomena and even birthing entirely new fields of research as the integration of computer and network technologies have become an increasingly pervasive element of human life.

This is a research methodology course, substantive content will be covered, too, but the primary focus of this course is to teach you 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 focuses on 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 summer course, time will feel more scarce than usual. We are cramming an entire semester into eight (8) weeks. This class features three (3) major assessments and four (4) minor assessments. Major assessments are each worth 20% of your final grade and involve applying the concepts and methods covered in the course. The minor assessments are also research oriented, but primarily focus on specific tasks necessary to conducting professional research and account for 40% of your final 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

Able-bodiedness 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) Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted with a penalty of ten points for each calendar day late.

(3.3) 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.

(3.4) Problems and Emergencies

If a problem or emergency arises that prevents you from completing coursework please contact me as soon as possible.

(3.5) Withdraw Policy

Be advised that the last day to withdraw from a course without failing is Wednesday, July 3rd. All students who withdraw after this date will receive a "WF".

IV. Course Schedule¹

Important Administrative Dates for the Summer Thru-Session

Thursday, June 6th – First Day of Classes

Wednesday, June 12th – Last Day of Drop/Add

Wednesday, June 19th – Juneteenth Observation (No Classes)

Thursday, July 4th – Independence Day (No Classes)

Wednesday, July 3rd – Withdrawal Deadline

Wednesday, July 31st – Last Day of Classes

Unit 1: Fundamentals of Research Methodology: A Crash Course

Week 1 (June 6th & 7th): Designing Empirical Research

[Franco et al, Chapters 5 & 6](#)

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.

Minor Assessment #1: Introducing Yourself

Week 2 (June 10th – 14th): Data Collection and Measurement

See eLC Content Folder

Unit 2: The Internet and Online Political Science Research

Week 3 (June 17th – June 21st): The Internet and Online Research

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

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

Content Folder on eLC

Minor Assessment #2: Working with Canned Data

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

Week 4 (June 24th – 28th): Online Survey Research

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.

Major Assessment #1: Sampling and Online Survey Assignment

Unit 3: Down the Rabbit Hole

Week 5 (July 1st – 5th): Web Activity as Data

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.

Minor Assessment #3: Web Analytics Assignment

Week 6 (July 8th – 12th): Hyperlink Network Analysis

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.

Kim, J.H., Barnett, G.A. and Park, H.W., 2010. A hyperlink and issue network analysis of the United States Senate: A rediscovery of the web as a relational and topical medium. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 61(8), pp.1598-1611.

Major Assessment #2: Hyperlink Network Analysis Assignment

Unit 4: Social Media

Week 7 (July 15th – 19th): Experimentation on Social Media

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.

Minor Assessment #4: Redesigning Social Media Research Assignment

Week 8 (July 22nd – 31st): Social Media Network Analysis

Himmelboim, 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

Major Assessment #3: Social Media Network Analysis