

Political Science 585
Techniques of Political Analysis
Autumn Quarter, 2006
Instructor: Todd Makse

Class: Monday and Wednesday 4:30-6:18 in Derby 0125
Office Hours: Monday 3:30-4:30 and Wednesday 6:30-7:30
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Course Description:

This course will give students an introduction to the techniques that political scientists use to understand political phenomena. The emphasis in this course is on issues in research design and conceptual understanding and application of statistical and non-statistical techniques of political analysis. Achieving basic competence in probability and statistics *is* a primary goal of this course, and central to student evaluation in the course. However, this will be primarily achieved through application, rather than memorization, of mathematical formulae and proofs. This course assumes no previous college-level mathematics or statistics courses.

Course Objectives (University Mandated Language):

This course also satisfies the GEC quantitative and logical skills requirement, described by the University as follows:

“Courses in quantitative and logical skills develop logical reasoning, including the ability to identify valid arguments, use mathematical models, and draw conclusions based on quantitative language.

Data Analysis. Students understand statistics and probability, comprehend mathematical methods needed to analyze statistical arguments, and recognize the importance of statistical ideas.”

Textbook and Computer Software

There are two main texts for this class:

Empirical Political Analysis by Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat and Craig Leonard Brians.

Elementary Statistics in Social Research: The Essentials, by Jack Levin and James Alan Fox.

In addition, some of the homework assignments for the class will be taken from *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis* by Philip Pollock III. This book will also be invaluable in familiarizing you with SPSS. All three books will be available at SBX. Additional readings will be available from JSTOR and on the library's electronic reserve. (<http://library.ohio-state.edu/search/r>).

Hands-on experience with statistical techniques will be provided through two class sessions using SPSS, and two of the homework assignments will also be completed using SPSS. All the computers in our classroom are installed with SPSS, and you are free to use the lab when the room is available. If you have a personal computer, you may obtain a free copy of the software from the Office of Information Technology, either by downloading a copy from this website (<http://osusls.osu.edu/upgrades/stg2wnx.html#anchorspss13>) or by bringing a blank CD-R to the OIT office in Baker Systems 512. Finally, you are encouraged to bring a calculator to class and you may use one on the final exam.

Grading:

The specific grade breakdown is as follows:

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Pop Quizzes: 10% (Four quizzes, 2.5% each)

Reaction papers: 10% (Two papers, 5% each)

Homework Assignments 15% (Three assignments, 5% each)

Participation and Attendance (including leading class discussions) 15%

The grading scale will be no more difficult than the following:

93-100 A

90-92 A-

87-89 B+

83-86 B

80-82 B-

77-79 C+

73-76 C

70-72 C-

67-69 D+

60-66 D

59 and below E

More about grading criteria:

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will cover material from the first four weeks of the course. It will be a closed-book, in-class exam, and will draw heavily from lecture material. The format of the exam will include multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and an essay question.

Final Exam: The final will be held during finals week, and will be an open-book, open-notes exam. The exam will focus primarily on the probability and statistics material from the second half of the course, but some questions will require students to synthesize knowledge from the first half of the course with their understanding of statistical methods.

Pop Quizzes: There will be five quizzes throughout the quarter; you can drop one grade. These quizzes will be graded pass/fail: you will either pass, and receive the full credit, or fail and receive no credit. These quizzes will consist of five short questions which will be easy if you have done the reading, and will be conducted during the first ten minutes of class. Late and absent students will not be able to make up quizzes; thus, consider this an additional inducement to arrive on time.

Reaction Papers: During the first eight classes, there will be textbook and “application” readings each day. On the first day of class, you will choose two of these sessions to write a 1-2 page (minimum 300 words) reaction paper to the “application” readings. Your reaction paper should not be a summary of the article; it should address the conceptual issues and/or research design in the article and relate them to the textbook readings.

Homework Assignments: There will be three homework assignments during the second half of the quarter. They may be completed in collaboration with other students; however, each student is responsible for completing his/her own write-up, and for expressing prose portions of the assignments in their own words.

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS (Reaction papers or Homework) WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Participation and Attendance: The first part of the course will encourage you to develop your own perspectives on social science research, and thus class discussion will be a major component of each session. Your participation grade will be based mostly on the first four weeks of class, during which time the topic matter will be more suitable for discussion. In particular, during the two sessions for which you have written reaction papers, you will be expected to be conversant and engaged with the readings. For example, you should have *prepared* answers to questions such as, “What is the main point of the article?”; “What do you think of the research design?” and so forth.

The second part of the course is much more lecture-oriented, and you will not be evaluated based on participation during this part of the course, although you are certainly encouraged to ask questions and engage the material as appropriate.

Attendance is required throughout the entire course, and your participation grade will be weighted by your attendance. You are permitted two absences, no questions asked, without penalty. To avoid subjective judgments, I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Thus, it is not necessary to bring in notes for absences. If extreme circumstances arise which will force you to miss multiple classes, please let me know, and I will try to make fair accommodations.

Miscellaneous:

Makeup Exams: I am highly disinclined to offer makeup exams, except in **emergency** situations. If you have non-emergency reasons for missing an exam, please notify me at least one week ahead of time, preferably as soon as possible. If you have a genuine emergency (family or medical), please inform me as soon as you can. Please do not test my goodwill: I will hold class with a minor cold or a headache, and I expect you to take exams under such conditions as well. Also please note that the format of makeup exams may differ from the format of the regularly administered exam.

Communication: Students should feel free to contact me by email with any concerns about the class or course material. I will make every effort to respond to all messages within 24 hours. In addition, if my office hours are inconvenient for your schedule, email me and I will be happy to set up an appointment to the extent that my schedule allows.

Academic Misconduct:

Academic misconduct is defined by Ohio State University Rules as “any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution, or subvert the educational process. (Rule 3335-31-02).” Examples include violation of program or course rules stated in the syllabus, cheating on tests, plagiarism, dishonesty in reporting research results, and alteration of grades or forms.

Disability Services:

Students with disabilities who feel they may need special assistance should inform me of their needs in a timely manner. These discussions will remain confidential. Course materials are available in alternative formats upon request. For such materials, please contact Mr. Wayne DeYoung, 2140 Derby Hall, 154 North Oval Mall, 292-2880.

Class Topics and Reading Schedule:

September 20: Introduction to the course; the scientific method

Readings:

Manheim et al, Chapter 1

September 25: Scientific progress and social science; Theory building and hypotheses

Readings:

Manheim et al, Chapter 2

Fiorina, Morris and Ian Shapiro. 2000. "Political Scientists Debate Rational Choice." *New York Times*, February 26, 2000.

<http://phoenix.liu.edu/~uroy/eco54/histlist/pol-sci-rational.htm>

September 27: Game theory and social choice theory

Readings:

Morrow, James D. 1994. *Game Theory for Political Scientists*. Chapters 2-4 (pp. 17-81) (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Geddes, Barbara. 1991. "A Game Theoretic Model of Reform in Latin American Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 85 (2): 371-392. (JSTOR)

October 2: Variables and Measurement; Reliability and validity

Readings:

Manheim et al, Chapter 5

Levin and Fox, Chapter 1

Krasno, Jonathan S. and Donald P. Green. 1988. "Preempting Quality Challengers in House Elections." *Journal of Politics* 50(4): 920-936. (JSTOR)

October 4: The experimental model and experimental design techniques

Readings:

Manheim et al, Chapter 6

Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effect of a Nonpartisan Get-Out-the-Vote Drive: An Experimental Study of Leafletting." *The Journal of Politics* 62(3): pp. 846-857. (JSTOR)

Lodge, Milton, Marco R. Steenbergen, and Shawn Brau. 1995. "The Responsive Voter: Campaign Information and the Dynamics of Candidate Evaluation." *American Political Science Review* 89(2): 309-326. (JSTOR)

October 9: Survey research methods; Large-N research

Readings:

Manheim et al, Chapters 7, 8 and 11

Kuklinski, James H., Paul M. Sniderman et al. 1997. "Racial Prejudice and Attitudes Toward Affirmative Action." *American Journal of Political Science*, pp. 402-419. (JSTOR)

October 11: Comparative research; Case selection

Manheim et al, Chapter 12

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics" *Political Analysis*, 1990, pp. 131-150. (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Lijphart, Arend. 1999. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*. Chapters 1 and 5, pp. 1-8, 62-89. (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Hamm, Keith and Peverill Squire. 2005. *101 Chambers: Congress, State Legislatures and the Future of Legislative Studies*. Introduction, Chapters 3 and 6, pp. 67-98, 146-153 (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

October 16: Qualitative research methods; research ethics; midterm review

Readings:

Manheim et al, Chapter 19 and 21.

Crano, William D, and Marilynn B. Brewer. 2002. *Principles and Methods of Social Research*. Chapter 19, "Social Responsibility and Ethics in Social Research," pp. 344-357. (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

Fenno, Richard. 1986. "Observation, Context, and Sequence." *The American Political Science Review*, pp. 3-15. (JSTOR)

Fenno, Richard. 1978. *Home Style: House Members in their Districts*. Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-30. (ELECTRONIC RESERVE)

October 18: Midterm Exam

October 23: Introduction to probability and statistics; measures of central tendency

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapters 2 and 3; Pollock, Chapter 1

October 25: Measures of variability; introduction to probability theory

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 4; Pollock, Chapter 2

October 30: Probability theory, continued; samples and populations

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapters 5 and 6; Pollock, Chapter 3 and 4

November 1: Hypothesis testing; Difference of means tests

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 7; Pollock, Chapter 5 and 6

November 6: SPSS Session #1

Readings: Review Pollock, Chapters 1-6

November 8: Non-parametric tests of significance

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 9

Homework #1 Due: (to be distributed to class on October 25)

November 13: Correlation

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 10

November 15: Regression analysis

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 11

Homework #2 Due: (to be distributed to class on November 6)

November 20: Multivariate regression

Readings: Pollock, Chapter 8

November 22: No class

November 27: Nonparametric measures of association

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 12; Pollock, Chapter 7

November 29: SPSS Session #2 and Final Exam Review

Readings: Review Pollock, Chapters 7-9

Homework #3 Due: (to be distributed to class on November 15)

December 6, 3:30 pm: Final Exam