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## POLITICAL SCIENCE 485: TECHNIQUES IN POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Winter Quarter 2009  
Tuesdays & Thursdays  
1:30pm – 3:18pm  
Derby Hall 0125

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### Course Description

Techniques in Political Analysis will introduce students to the process of social scientific analysis. Though this course focuses on the quantitative study of politics, it also explores the greater research methods enterprise used to make claims about political phenomena. Engaged students will gain insight into theory building, research design and empirical testing that can be applied across disciplines and in various careers.

Substantial time will be allocated to the introduction of data description, probabilities, significance testing, correlation, and regression analysis. This course will mix conceptual discussions of the aforementioned topics with practical data analysis and hand computation of statistics. As such students will attain invaluable practical experience with real data manipulation and the application of statistical methods to questions of social and political interest. Note that this course is unusual in so far as it does not merely present students with theories or studies of a particular substantive focus, but rather it provides students with the basic tools necessary to evaluate previous research and test their own research questions.

This course satisfies the General Education Curriculum (GEC) quantitative and logical skills requirements. According to the University: “Courses in Quantitative and Logical Skills develop students quantitative literacy and logical reasoning, including the ability to identify valid arguments, use mathematical models, and draw conclusions and critically evaluate results based on data.” This course has the following expected outcomes:

1. Basic Computational Skills: Students demonstrate computational skills and familiarity with algebra and geometry, and apply these skills to practical problems.
2. Mathematical and Logical Analysis: Students comprehend mathematical concepts and methods adequate to construct valid arguments, understand inductive and deductive reasoning, and increase their general problem solving skills.

3. Data Analysis: Students understand basic concepts of statistics and probability, comprehend methods needed to analyze and critically evaluate statistical arguments, and recognize the importance of statistical ideas.

This course covers a broad range of material that is often abstract and unfamiliar to undergraduate students. However, there are no mathematical, statistical or computational prerequisites. Students who have difficulties with the required math should voice their discomfort to the instructor immediately. The instructor assumes that students have had exposure to basic mathematics, including summation operations and graphing in Cartesian space; however such skills will be reviewed as necessary.

## Course Materials

### Required Books

- Levin, Jack & James Allan Fox. *Elementary Statistics in Social Research: The Essentials*. 2nd Edition. 2007. Pearson Education. ISBN-10: 020548493X, ISBN-13: 978-0-20548-493-5
- Pollock, Phillip H. *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*. 3rd Edition. 2009. CQ Press. ISBN-13: 978-0-87289-607-9

All students should individually possess the required textbook and workbook for the duration of the quarter. Some assignments will be collected directly from the workbook, and therefore it cannot be shared with another student. Additional required readings will be made available on Carmen.

### Recommended Book

- Manheim, Jarol B., Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat & Craig L. Brians. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. 6th Edition. 2006. Pearson Education. ISBN-10: 0321298608

The recommended text should be used to supplement the required readings; however it is not necessary to purchase the recommended book, as it will be on hold in the library and available on Carmen. Students will only be graded on the required material from the recommended text as listed on the class schedule below; the required chapters will be made available to students via Carmen. However, students wishing further practice or different perspectives on techniques of political analysis are encouraged to turn to other chapters in this text as a supplement to the required text.

### Additional Readings on Carmen

There are some required readings in the course in addition to the texts. These will be made available to students via Carmen.

## **Software & Computing**

The assignments for this course will require the use of a computer and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). SPSS is user-friendly statistical software that is available on all lab computers (Derby 125 & 150). SPSS can also be attained for free from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) for use on ones own personal computer (available for all OSs). Merely print a copy of the SPSS License Agreement, fill it out, and return it to OIT Customer Services, Central Classrooms, to obtain the code and software (for details see <http://osusls.osu.edu/>)

The lab computers are available for students who are either unable or do not wish to do the assignments on their own computer. The open hours for the labs are extensive, and therefore excuses for late or incomplete work that involve a lack of computing resources will not be accepted. The lab open hours are posted on the door of the lab and on Carmen.

## **Assignments & Grading**

This course is naturally homework intensive. The final grade will be based on several assignments, a midterm, a final exam, and your participation in the course sessions. The homework assignments will make up 35% of the grade, the midterm exam 25%, the final exam 30%, and participation 10%.

Assignments are due at the start of the class for the day in which it is due. The instructor will provide the assignments in class or via Carmen. If a student is unable to make the class for which an assignment is due, the student must email the assignment to the instructor or place it in his department mailbox (Derby 2136) before the start of class. Late homework will be penalized in increments of 20% each day it is late.

## **Extra Credit**

Extra credit may be made available during the term. If so, it will be made available to all students. Note that this section does not guarantee that extra credit opportunities will be offered.

## **Class Conduct & Special Needs**

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to actively engage the relevant material by raising and answering questions in class. In the case of absence, students should meet with the instructor during office hours to discuss what was missed. The instructor reserves the right to assign new required readings and distribute homework assignments in class. Students are responsible for all material covered and distributed in class. Students must attend the midterm and final exams at the listed time; no alternative exam times will be accepted, barring extreme circumstances and formal documentation.

## **Religious Holidays**

If a student wishes to be excused from class to observe a religious holiday, s/he should provide written notification to the instructor at least 14 days prior to the classes scheduled on dates s/he will be absent to observe the religious holy day. If the religious holy day falls within the first two weeks of the term, students should notify the instructor on the first day of the term. You will be excused from participation; if you will miss an exam, arrangements will be made for a make-up or early exam (at the instructors discretion). If you fail to show up at the agreed upon date, time, and place of the make-up exam, you will receive a score of zero on the exam.

## **University-Sponsored Planned Activities**

Students must provide documentation from the University of their involvement in a University-sponsored planned activity such as inter-collegiate sports or University musical performances as soon as possible, but no later than one week before their planned absence from class. Some University-affiliated activities will not be considered grounds for an excuse, including, but not limited to, intramural sports activities and fraternity or sorority events.

## **Ground Rules for Class Sessions**

First and foremost, remember that this is an academic environment your contributions to class discussions should reflect that fact. This is not the place for opinions, although arguments/interpretations of events or issues backed by evidence are most welcome. We will all treat each other with respect at all times. This means we will not engage in ad homonym attacks nor use offensive language. If a student's conduct violates the University's Student Code of Conduct the student will be reported to the University judicial panel and may face disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of suspension and/or dismissal from the University. Please visit the following site for more information: [http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/pdfs/csc\\_12-31-07.pdf](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/pdfs/csc_12-31-07.pdf)

## **Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Misconduct includes violating any of the rules stated in this syllabus as well as plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation), cheating, dishonesty and speaking or behaving disrespectfully. We expect all of the work you do in this course to be your own. We will report any cases of cheating or plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct, and they will be handled according to university policy. Further information on the nature of academic misconduct can be found online at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/procedures.pdf> and at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html>

## **Disability Services**

If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, you should contact the instructor to arrange an appointment as soon as possible. At the appointment we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore potential accommodations. We rely on the Office of Disability Services for assistance in verifying the need for accommodations and developing accommodation strategies. If you have not previously contacted the Office for Disability Services, we encourage you to do so. They can be reached by web at <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu> by phone at 292-3307 or in person at 150 Pomerene Hall. Course materials are available in alternative formats upon request from Mr. Wayne DeYoung at 2140 Derby Hall and at 292-2880.

## **E-mail and Office Hours**

Questions of a substantive nature should be raised in class, on Carmen or in office hours. Questions of a procedural nature may be e-mailed to the instructor. Be sure to consult your syllabus, required readings and Carmen first to make sure you cannot answer your own question.

## **Carmen**

This syllabus and other course announcements generally will be provided to you via Carmen.

## **Graduating Students**

Due to different grading deadlines, students planning on graduating at the end of this quarter should inform the instructor of such plans immediately.

## Class Schedule & Readings

Date	Subject	Required Readings <sup>2</sup>
January 6	Introductions	
January 8	The Science of Politics & Extra Credit	Manheim et al, Chap. 1
January 13	Frequency Distributions & Measurement	Levin & Fox, Chap. 1 & 2 & Pollock, Chap. 1
January 15	Central Tendencies & Variation	Levin & Fox, Chap. 3 & 4
January 20	Introduction to Probabilities	Levin & Fox, Chap. 5
January 22	Probability Distributions	Levin & Fox, Chap. 5
January 27	Theories & Hypotheses	Manheim et al, Chap. 2
January 29	Operationalization	Manheim et al, Chap. 5
February 3	Samples & Populations	Levin & Fox, Chap. 6
February 5	Statistical Applications	Jackman, 1987 Ansolabehere et al, 1994
February 10	Midterm Exam	
February 12	Difference of Means	Levin & Fox, Chap. 7
February 17	Nonparametric Significance	Levin & Fox, Chap. 9
February 19	Research Design & Surveys	Manheim et al, Chap. 6 & 8
February 24	Analysis of Variance	Levin & Fox, Chap. 8
February 26	Correlation	Levin & Fox, Chap. 10
March 3	Regression Analysis	Levin & Fox, Chap. 11
March 5	Regression Analysis	Levin & Fox, Chap. 11
March 10	Applying Statistics	Levin & Fox, Chap. 13
March 12	Final Review	Jackman, 1987 Ansolabehere et al, 1994
March 16	Final Exam <sup>1</sup>	

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<sup>1</sup>The Final Exam is scheduled by the University Registrar for Monday, March 16th from 1:30 PM – 3:18 PM in the usual classroom. Requests for alternative examination times will not be granted, barring extreme circumstances and formal documentation.

<sup>2</sup>The schedule & readings above are subject to change and additional required readings may be assigned.