

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 585:
TECHNIQUES OF POLITICAL ANALYSIS
SPRING 2005**

TUESDAY & THURSDAY 8:30-10:18
DERBY HALL 0125

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OFFICE HOURS:

TUESDAY & THURSDAY 10:30-11:30

AND BY APPOINTMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES :

Many of you, if asked what the purpose of this course is, might respond by saying something like “to fulfill a requirement for my major.” Fair enough. In fact, however, the purpose of this course goes beyond fulfilling requirements; it is designed to introduce you to the research process, specifically in political science. (Those of you in other majors – never fear! While I will rely heavily on political science for examples in this course, you are not required to have a sophisticated knowledge/understanding of political science to pass this class). More specifically, we will look at the research process in two main parts: the design and implementation of research, and the analysis of data collected from this research using statistics.

I have two main goals for this course. First, to provide you with the tools to both identify good and bad research designs when you encounter them, and to design and carry out quality research of your own. Second, to allow you to read and understand the (basic) statistics used in any publication, and to be able to use statistics to analyze your own data. Thus, whether this is the only research methods/statistics course you ever take, or whether you go on to graduate school and take a variety of advanced statistics courses, you will still come away from this course with a variety of skills.

CLASS FORMAT:

The nature of the material in this course requires me to spend a good deal of each class period presenting information, which I will do using PowerPoint. Research design and statistics are very hands-on, however; you learn by doing. As a result, we will engage in a variety of activities in class, ranging from group work to in-class computer assignments, among other things.

- **Study Groups:** A course like this one can sometimes be a bit intimidating, some might even say “terrifying,” (see the title of one of your texts below for proof). To make you more comfortable with one another and to help put you at ease when asking questions in class I will assign you to study groups at the start of the quarter. I know there will be many of you who dislike the idea of working in groups. Your fellow group members do not have to be your best friends but they will be the people you work with when we have in-class group activities. You will also have a ready-formed study group for the exams if you so desire. If you are worried about your grade relying on your fellow group members, see the section on in-class assignments to put your mind at ease.

READINGS :

We will use two books for this course. The first, by Johnson and Reynolds, is required (as is the corresponding workbook). I have ordered the text and workbook in a package; however, if you are unable to get them packaged together, I have provided the information on each individually here. The second is listed as recommended because the cost of these books is already rather high; however, I would encourage you to pick up a copy if you can. You may be able to tell by the title that this particular text operates under the assumption that some of you, if not all, may be a bit intimidated by statistics and so approaches the subject matter in a very user-friendly manner. I include readings from both books in the reading schedule below. Please note that I expect you to have done the assigned reading **BEFORE** the class period in which we discuss it. In addition to the assigned texts, I have a number of statistics textbooks that you are welcome to consult if and when you find you would like additional information beyond the assigned readings and class lectures. All you have to do is ask!

Required:

Johnson, Janet Buttolph and H.T. Reynolds. 2004. *Political Science Research Methods*. 5th edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Johnson, Janet Buttolph and H.T. Reynolds. 2004. *Working with Political Science Research Methods Problems and Exercises*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

*There is also a companion website to the Johnson and Reynolds text that you will occasionally need to look at. The “chapter links” section provides a variety of additional sources of information, and there are a number of downloadable datasets. The companion website address is: <http://psrm.cqpress.com/>

Recommended:

Kranzler, John H. 2003. *Statistics for the Terrified*. 3rd edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

In addition to these two texts, you may periodically be asked to read information online or from handouts. Please note these readings are also *required*.

COMPUTING RESOURCES :

You will need a scientific calculator for assignments and exams. In addition, we will be using a statistical package called SPSS throughout the quarter. The computers in our classroom are all equipped with this statistical package and we will periodically use this program for in-class assignments. In addition, you may need this package for homework assignments. Our classroom has open hours every day (as listed on the schedule posted outside the door) in which you can complete your homework assignments. In addition, you can obtain a copy of this program (free for Windows users) for your own computer through the Office of Information Technology (OIT). For more information, visit the OIT website at http://www.oit.ohio-state.edu/site_license/.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and do all required reading for the course. The lectures are intended to build upon the information in the readings; however, lectures will not necessarily cover *all* material included in the readings and will often cover material not presented in the readings. Lecture slides will be posted on my webpage; however, it is in your best interest to both attend class and complete the reading assignments.

Students are further expected to complete all assignments in a timely manner. Late homework assignments will be accepted through the class period following the due date with a penalty of **one full letter grade**. Late in-class assignments will not be accepted. Make-up exams will be offered in extreme circumstances *only*. If you know you must miss an exam it is your responsibility to obtain permission from the instructor ahead of time. You must provide appropriate documentation and make arrangements as soon as possible to take a make-up exam.

Your grade in this course will be based on the following:

- **Two Exams:** Questions for each exam may be taken from assigned readings, class lectures, and homework/in-class assignments. Exams may be any combination of multiple-choice, short answer, identification, and essay questions. Review sheets will be provided to you and I will offer review sessions (outside of class) before each exam. The final exam will **not** be cumulative, that is, it will only include material covered after the mid-term. Please note, however, that knowledge in this course *is* cumulative and so you may have to draw on concepts from the early part of the course to adequately answer questions on the final exam. Please see the schedule below for the exact dates of each exam. **Each** exam will be worth **25%** of your final grade, or **250 points**.
- **5 Homework Assignments:** There will be five homework assignments throughout the course of the quarter. The homework assignments are your opportunity to apply the concepts and techniques you learn in class to problems on your own. These assignments will further be valuable in preparing you for the exams. Assignments may involve anything from the analysis of existing research designs, to calculating basic statistics by hand (using a calculator), to computer-based assignments using SPSS. I will hand out each assignment at least one week before it is due. Tentative due dates are listed below. **Each** homework assignment is worth **50 points (5%)** of your final grade (**250 points total**).
- **In-Class Assignments:** Class participation in its typical form is rather difficult in a course of this type. At the same time, however, you learn how to conduct research and analyze data by *doing*. In order to get you all learning actively, we will engage in one or more in-class activities each class period (or most class periods). Some of these activities will be conducted on your own, others in groups. These in-class assignments, in addition to those completed at home, will be useful to you in better understanding the material. Your hard work will not go unrewarded, however. In order to give you credit for these assignments, you will receive a completion grade in the form of a check, check plus, or check minus, depending on the level of completion and quality of the work (more on this in class). Recall from above that no late in-class assignments will be accepted. All in-class assignments will combine for **20%** of your final grade, or **200 points**.

- **Attendance:** As mentioned previously, knowledge of research methods and statistics is cumulative. If you miss class periods it is likely you will fall behind. In addition, if you miss class you will not be permitted to make up any in-class assignment from that day. Since we meet at 8:30, you may need additional motivation to attend class, so I am making attendance worth **5%** of your final grade, or **50 points**. I will take attendance every day and at the end of the quarter will tally these up. If you attended class 80% of the time, for example, you will earn 80% of the 50 points available, or 40 points. Because I know that things come up, we oversleep, etc., each of you gets **1** free pass. That is, you can miss class **ONCE** in the quarter, no questions asked, **WITHOUT** penalty. Excused absences (medical emergencies, for example) will be given (**UP TO THREE TOTAL**) with appropriate documentation only. Missing class for routine doctors' appointments, for example, will not be considered excused.
- **Extra Credit:** Finally, you have the opportunity to earn **20 points** in extra credit by participating in an experiment being conducted in the Political Science Department. Details and a sign-up sheet will be available at a later date.

GRADING SUMMARY

MID-TERM EXAM	250 POINTS
FINAL EXAM	250 POINTS
5 HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (50 POINTS EACH)	250 POINTS
IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS	200 POINTS
<u>ATTENDANCE</u>	<u>50 POINTS</u>
TOTAL:	1,000 POINTS

Grades are calculated according to the university grading scale. The following will help you in calculating your final letter grade from your total points. A = 930-1000 points; A- = 900-930 points; B+ = 870-900 points; B = 830-870 points; B- = 800-830 points; C+ = 770-800 points; C = 730-770 points; C- = 700-730 points; D+ = 670-700 points; D = 630-670 points; E = 620 points and below.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:

All the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university committee on academic misconduct and handled according to university policy. If you have any questions at all about this policy, please consult the instructor.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

Students with disabilities are responsible for making their needs known to the instructor, and for seeking available assistance, in the first week of the quarter. Course materials are available in alternative formats upon request. For such materials please contact Mr. Wayne DeYoung, 2140 Derby Hall, 292-2880.

CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE*

I. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY POLITICAL “SCIENCE”?

- TUES 03/29 INTRODUCTION
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 1
 - Kranzler, Chapter 1

- THURS 03/31 STUDYING POLITICS SCIENTIFICALLY
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 2

II. THE FUNDAMENTALS

- TUES 04/05 “BUILDING BLOCKS” – PART I
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 4

- THURS 04/07 NO CLASS (INSTRUCTOR AT CONFERENCE)

- TUES 04/12 “BUILDING BLOCKS” – PART II
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 6

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

- THURS 04/14 EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH DESIGN
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 3 (pp. 49-74)
 - ✓ **HOMEWORK #1 DUE**

- TUES 04/19 NON-EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH DESIGN
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 3 (pp. 74-102)

IV. DATA COLLECTION

- THURS 04/21 EMPIRICAL OBSERVATION,
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 7

- TUES 04/26 THE WRITTEN RECORD & INTERVIEWS AND SURVEY RESEARCH
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapters 8 & 10
 - ✓ **HOMEWORK #2 DUE**

- THURS 04/28 **MID-TERM EXAM**

V. STATISTICS!!!

- TUES 05/03 FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTIONS
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 11 (pp. 305-321)
 - Kranzler, Chapter 4 (Chapter 3 to brush up your math skills)
- THURS 05/05 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 11 (pp. 321-329)
 - Kranzler, Chapter 5
- TUES 05/10 THE NORMAL CURVE
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 11 (pp. 329-338)
 - Kranzler, Chapter 6
- THURS 05/12 SAMPLING AND PROBABILITY
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 9
 - Kranzler, Chapter 10
 - ✓ **HOMEWORK #3 DUE**

VI. DATA ANALYSIS

- TUES 05/17 BIVARIATE DATA ANALYSIS – PART I
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 12 (pp. 339-366)
 - Kranzler, Chapter 13
- THURS 05/19 BIVARIATE DATA ANALYSIS – PART II
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 12 (pp. 366-402)
 - Kranzler, Chapters 11 & 12
- TUES 05/24 BIVARIATE DATA ANALYSIS – PART II CONTINUED
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 12 (pp. 366-402)
 - Kranzler, Chapters 8 & 9
 - ✓ **HOMEWORK #4 DUE**
- THURS 05/26 MULTIVARIATE DATA ANALYSIS
- Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 13 (pp. 403-429)
- TUES 05/31 MULTIVARIATE DATA ANALYSIS CONTINUED
- THURS 06/02 COURSE WRAP-UP
- ✓ **HOMEWORK #5 DUE**
- TUES 06/07 **FINAL EXAM**
7:30-9:18 (YEP – A.M.!)

***THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MODIFY THE SCHEDULE AND/OR ASSIGN ADDITIONAL READINGS**