

Political Science 585
Techniques of Political Analysis
Spring Quarter, 2007
Instructor: Todd Makse

Class: Tuesday and Thursday 6:30-8:18 in Derby 0125
Office Hours: Tuesday 4:30-5:30 (second time TBA), and by appointment
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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 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. That having been said, this is *unlike* other courses in political science; the material is abstract and involves the introduction of many new terms and concepts. And although this course satisfies a GEC requirement for some students, this is an upper-level course in political science and the material may be more rigorous than in other courses that satisfy the GEC requirements.

This course assumes no previous college-level mathematics or statistics courses; we will briefly review some high-school level math concepts such as graphing in Cartesian space and summation operations.

Course Objectives (University Mandated Language)

This course 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.”

Textbooks and Computer Software

There are two 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. **Please make sure you have the soft-cover “Essentials” text and not the hardcover text by the same authors.**

Additional readings are available from JSTOR and on Carmen.

Hands-on experience with statistical techniques will be provided using the software package SPSS and some 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 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. We will also use Microsoft Excel for some statistical calculations. Basic instruction in Excel commands will be provided; however, if you decide to use your own calculator instead, you will be expected to be familiar with its use.

Grading:

The specific grade breakdown is as follows:

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 30%

Pop Quizzes: 10% (Five quizzes, 2% each)

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

Homework Assignments 25% (Five assignments, 5% each)

Participation and Attendance (see below)

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 may include multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and/or essay questions. A practice exam will be distributed to class the week prior to the exam.

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 statistics material from the second half of the course, but a few questions will require students to synthesize knowledge from the first half of the course with their understanding of statistical methods. Again, there will be a practice exam distributed to class before the exam.

Reaction Papers: During weeks two through four, 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 two-page (400-600 words) reaction paper to the application readings. Your reaction paper should not be a summary of the article. You should read the textbook chapter, and assess the extent to which your application article has applied the principles espoused in the textbook. Papers are due in class on the day of the assigned reading. All students are expected to do the application readings even if it is not their assigned day to write a reaction paper.

Pop Quizzes: During weeks two through four, there will be quizzes each day on the readings for that day. Because these classes will be the most participatory, it is essential that everyone do both the textbook and application readings. 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. You will be able to drop one quiz. **Late and absent students will not be able to make up quizzes.**

Homework assignments: There will be five problem sets throughout the quarter. You should expect to spend up to three to four hours on each assignment, and most assignments will require access to SPSS. They may be completed in collaboration with other students; however, each student is responsible for completing his/her own write-up, showing all work as appropriate, and for expressing prose portions of the assignments in their own words.

Late assignments: Both reaction papers and homework sets are worth five percent of your final grade. Assignments not turned in, in class, on the due date will be docked half-credit (2.5 points). Assignments not received by the next class period will receive no credit.

Participation: 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. During the second part of the course, our topics for statistical explanation will be based on your own interests and input. While there is no explicit participation component to your grade, I will revise grades upward or downward by up to one half-letter grade based on excellent or unsatisfactory participation, respectively.

Attendance: Attendance is required throughout the entire course. You are permitted two absences, no questions asked, without penalty. Absences in excess of two will lead to a reduction in your grade as follows: 1 point off your final grade for the third and fourth absences; 2 points off your final grade for absences in excess of four. 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.

Lateness: Please arrive on time. Tardy arrivals will be treated as one-half of an absence.

Extra Credit: There will be opportunities for extra credit for participating in the Political Science Department’s experiment pool. More details will be announced in the third week of the quarter.

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.

Availability: 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, Assignments, and Reading Schedule:

March 27: The scientific method; scientific progress and social science

Readings: Manheim et al, Chapter 1

March 29: Theory building; types of hypotheses

Readings: Manheim et al, Chapter 2

Levin and Fox, Chapter 1

April 3: Concepts, variables and measurement

Readings: Manheim et al, Chapter 5

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

April 5: Introduction to research design; case selection; research ethics

Readings: Manheim et al, Chapter 6

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics" *Political Analysis*, 1990, pp. 131-141 only. (CARMEN)

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

April 10: The classic experimental model and experimental design techniques

Readings: Manheim et al, Chapter 6, **reread pp. 93-99**

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)

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *The American Political Science Review* 88(4): 829-838. (JSTOR)

April 12: Survey research methods

Readings: Manheim et al, Chapter 8

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)

April 17: Comparative research

Readings: Manheim et al, Chapter 12

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

April 19: Qualitative research methods

Readings: Manheim et al, Chapter 19

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

April 24: Introduction to data analysis; introduction to SPSS

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 2

April 26: Midterm Exam

May 1: Measures of central tendency and variability

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 3 and 4

Homework #1 Due (covers Ch. 1 and 2)

May 3: Descriptive statistics in Excel and SPSS; probability theory

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 5

May 8: Introduction to inferential statistics; hypothesis testing

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 6

Manheim et al, Chapter 7

Homework #2 Due (covers Ch. 3, 4, and 5)

May 10: Difference of means tests

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 7

May 15: The Chi-Square test

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 9

Homework #3 Due (covers Ch. 6 and 7)

May 17: No class

May 22: Correlation

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 10

May 24: Regression analysis

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 11

Homework #4 Due (covers Ch. 9 and 10)

May 29: Multivariate regression

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

May 31: Nonparametric measures of association

Readings: Levin and Fox, Chapter 12

Homework #5 Due (covers Ch. 11)

June 5: Final Exam (same time, same place as class)