

Techniques of Political Analysis

Political Science 485

Syllabus: Autumn 2011

Instructor:	Jason W. Morgan	Class location:	0125 Derby Hall
Office:	3081 Derby Hall	Class time:	T Th, 8:30–10:18AM
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Syllabus Version 1.1 (September 22, 2011)

Course description

The purpose of this course is to expose students to the research methods used in modern social science, with an emphasis on the conceptual and analytical problems faced by political scientists. Students will learn the basics of research design, descriptive statistics, and statistical inference. The ultimate goal of the course is to provide students the basic tools needed to be effective consumers and producers of social scientific research.

Course objective (University mandated)

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

Rationale “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.”

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

Learning to use statistics

While much of this course is devoted to learning methods of statistical analysis, it is not necessary for students to have an extensive mathematical background in order to gain a thorough understanding of the material. However, the material does require extensive hands-on practice. Students should be prepared to devote a considerable (though not unreasonable) amount of time to the course. That said, students should not become needlessly frustrated if

particular concepts are not immediately clear. I am here to help you learn and I will give you precisely the same effort that you give me. If there is anything that you do not understand, it is important that you let me know as soon as possible, either in class or office hours.

Required text and materials

- [1] Levin, Jack and James Alan Fox. 2011. *Elementary Statistics in Social Research: The Essentials*. Third edition. Boston: Pearson Education. ISBN 0205638007.
- [2] Pollock, Phillip H. 2010. *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*. Second edition. Washington DC: CQ Press. ISBN 1608716716.

Course requirements

Assessment for this course will be based on four (4) homework assignments, three (3) brief in-class quizzes, a midterm examination, and a comprehensive final examination. The final course grade will be determined based on the following breakdown and grading scale:

Homework assignments (4)	30%			A	93–100%	A–	90–92%
In-class quizzes (3)	15%	B+	87–89%	B	84–86%	B–	80–83%
Midterm exam (1)	25%	C+	77–79%	C	74–76%	C–	70–73%
Final exam (1)	30%	D+	67–69%	D	64–66%	D–	60–63%
		E	< 60%				

Reading assignments

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings *prior* to the associated class period (see the schedule at the end of this syllabus). Materials covered in class will take as a working assumption that students have at least carefully reviewed the assigned reading. It's not necessary or expected that students will have a perfect understanding of all concepts covered in the readings, but coming to class prepared is critical to gaining such an understanding.

Homework assignments

Homework assignments are meant to assist students in developing the problem-solving, analytic, and computer skills necessary to perform modern social scientific research. To that end, assignments will typically include theoretical and applied (i.e., computer) components. Students will have at least one week to complete each assignment, which will be posted on Carmen and handed out in class. Note: unless otherwise instructed, *all homework assignments are to be typed*. Failure to do so will result in an immediate 10% penalty.

In-class quizzes

The quizzes are meant to test students' working knowledge of the materials presented in class, assigned readings, and through any handouts provided by the instructor. These quizzes will be brief, taking no more than 20 minutes, and will be handed out *promptly* at the beginning of class on the day of the quiz. Late arrivals will *not* receive extra time to complete the quizzes. (In other words, students should make sure they are not late.)

Midterm and final exam

The midterm exam will be held in class on October 27, 2011. It will be passed out *promptly* at the beginning of the normal class period and will last the full period. The exam will cover all content covered in class, assigned readings, and any supplementary materials provided by the instructor. Unless otherwise notified, applied computer work will not be a component of the exam.

The final exam will take place on December 7, 2011 from 7:30 AM to 9:18 AM in Derby Hall 0125. The final exam will be comprehensive, covering all materials presented or assigned during the course. That said, the focus of the final exam will be the material covered after the midterm exam.

Policies and procedures

Disability services

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

Academic misconduct

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp).

Exam absences

If a student is unable to attend an exam, they will be allowed to schedule a make-up exam only if the absence is due to a documented medical, family, or similar serious emergency, observance of religious holy days (which requires written notification to the instructor at least 14 days prior to the requested absence date), or properly documented University-sponsored planned activities. *Absences in all other cases will result in a score of zero on the exam.* If you become aware that you will not be able to attend the exam before the time of the exam, please contact the instructor and seek permission to be absent as soon as possible. If a make-up exam is granted, failure to show up will result in a score of zero on the exam.

Assignments, extensions, and make-ups

Assignments must be handed to the instructor in class on the day they are due or uploaded to Carmen *prior* to the class on the day they are due. Extensions will *not* be granted. Late assignments will suffer a penalty of 10% per day it is late. Email and Office Hours Questions of a substantive nature should only be addressed in class or in office hours. Questions of a procedural nature may be addressed through email.

Extra credit

The opportunity to earn extra credit may arise at some point throughout the quarter and this opportunity will be made available to all students. Note that this is *not* a guarantee that extra credit opportunities will arise.

Grade disputes

Grade disputes will be considered only if they adhere to this policy. Grade disputes must be made in writing (TYPED!). You must wait at least 2 full days after you receive your grade to submit a grade dispute (“cooling off period”); you may wait no more than 2 weeks after you receive your grade to submit a dispute. Your written dispute must contain a documented logic for why you believe your answer for each disputed item was incorrectly marked—you must cite specific passages in the texts and/or lectures and explain why you thought they applied to the item in question. The instructor will then review your dispute and issue a decision within one week. Failure to comply with this procedure will result in forfeiture of your ability to dispute your grade.

Class schedule

The class schedule below is tentative, and is subject to change depending on how fast we get through the material. If the schedule does change, a new syllabus will be posted to the course's Carmen website. Changes will also be announced in class.

Date	Subject	Readings	Assignments
September 22	Introduction		
September 27	Social science and statistics	LF, ch. 1	
September 29	Research design / IRB	Pollock, chs. 1–2	
October 4	Getting to know your data	LF, ch. 2 Pollock, ch. 3	
October 6	Measures of central tendency	LF, ch. 3	
October 11	Measures of dispersion	LF, ch. 4 Pollock ch. 4	Quiz 1
October 13	Probability	LF, ch. 5	Homework 1 DUE
October 18	Samples and populations	LF, ch. 6 Pollock, ch. 5	
October 20	Intro to statistical inference	LF, ch. 7	
October 25	Difference-of-means tests	Pollock, ch. 6	Homework 2 DUE
October 27	Midterm exam		
November 1	Analysis of variance	LF, ch. 8 Pollock, ch. 7	
November 3	Nonparametric significance	LF, ch. 9	
November 8	Correlation	LF, ch. 10 Pollock, ch. 8	Quiz 2
November 10	Regression analysis	LF, ch. 11	Homework 3 DUE
November 15	Regression analysis		
November 17	Applications of OLS		
November 22	Applications of OLS		Quiz 3
November 24	Thanksgiving – no class		
November 29	TBD		
December 1	Review		Homework 4 DUE
December 7	Final Exam (7:30–9:18 AM)		