



POLS 300

Research Methods

Fall 2016

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Office Hours: Mon and Wed 12:30pm -2pm

Access Course Materials via SIU Online:

<u>Class</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Place</u>
Lecture	2:00-2:50pm	Mon/Wed	Faner Hall 2525
Discussion Section 01	1:00 pm - 1:50 pm	Fri	Faner 3135
Discussion Section 02	2:00 pm - 2:50 pm	Fri	Faner 3135
Discussion Section 03	11:00 am - 11:50am	Fri	Faner 3135

Course Description:

Political scientists explore a variety of intriguing questions. For example, some political scientists are interested in explaining why some people vote and others do not. Others are concerned with explaining the factors that predict democratization in different countries. Still others wonder how an increasingly globalized market influences the economies of developed and undeveloped nations. While political scientists grapple with a wide array of issues, what unites most of them is their use of objective evidence to address these questions.

The goal of this course is to provide students with a toolset to address different puzzles in the social sciences. In particular, students in this course will learn how to create viable research questions, to collect, analyze, and interpret data, and to connect the results from their analysis to real world problems. By the end of this course, students should be able to formulate and test a research question of their choice using survey data as evidence. Moreover, students should be able to comprehend quantitative and qualitative methods and analysis used in peer-reviewed academic journals.

Course Reading:

This course requires two textbooks: Pollock *The Essentials of Political Analysis* 5th edition and Pollock *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis* 3rd edition, both which are available in the bookstore and online. In addition to the text book, there will be several social science readings, which we will use as background

information for the analysis we conduct in class. Through these readings and class discussions, we will create research questions and use the methods learned in class to examine these questions. These required readings will be made available via D2L.

Pollock, Philips. *The Essential of Political Analysis*. 5 edition. Los Angeles: Sage/CQ Press

Pollock, Philips. *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis* 3rd edition. Los Angeles: Sage/CQ Press

Computer Software:

In this course, students will learn how to analyze data. The computer program that we will use in this course is Stata. Stata is the most widely used stats program in political science because it can perform a wide variety of statistical functions and is arguably easier to use than other statistical programs such as R and Excel. It comes in different version for rental and students need to purchase Stata/IC for \$75. The small Stata package for \$38 will not work well as the databases are too large for that version.

Course Structure: The course meets three times a week-twice in lecture and once in discussion/lab

Course requirements and Grading:

Problem Sets	25%
Midterm Exam	15%
Writing Assignment #1	10%
Writing Assignment #2	20%
Discussion/Lab Participation	10%
<u>Final Exam</u>	<u>20%</u>
Total	100%

Assessment

Problem Sets (25%): Due on assigned Fridays

The best way to learn research methods is to practice it. Thus, the problems sets in this course are designed to teach you to apply the skills we learn in class. These constitute your homework and must be **submitted in person** at the Friday labs. Emailed submissions or online submission via D2L will not be accepted. Lab attendance is mandatory. No incomplete or partial problem sets will be accepted or graded. Online submission of problem sets will not be accepted, nor problem sets simply dropped of at my mailbox or office unless already approved by the instructor.

Lab Participation (10%):

To assess student participation, students will complete weekly assignments that may be in-class starting in the second or third week. These assignments typically require the use of Stata to solve a set of problems. Late or partial submission of assignments will not be accepted.

Research Project (30%):

To assess student progress in actually applying the methods learned in class, students will be divided into groups of 2 or 3 and will be required to write a 10-15 page paper dealing with a research question of their choosing. In these papers, students will formulate hypothesis based on previous research. To test these hypotheses, students will be required to use both one qualitative methods in addition to the analysis of quantitative data gathered by students. For ease of data gathering, students are encouraged to use the databases provided by the Pollock textbook. The research project is split into two assignments.

First Writing Assignment (10%): The first assignment will be based on your group's selection of a research topic, thesis, theoretical rationale, hypothesis, data source, and preliminary research design. You are required to upload your paper to D2L and also turn in a paper copy in class Friday of Week 9. There is a strict none-free-rider policy for the paper. Students who have failed to contribute substantively to the group project will be reassigned to complete their paper solo in Week 9.

Second Writing Assignment (20%): The second assignment is the final version of your group research paper. The final version includes all of the elements from the First Writing Assignment, as well as a short literature review, data analysis, results, and conclusion. You are required to upload your paper to D2L and also turn in a paper copy in class Friday of Week 15.

Exams (35%)

Midterm Exam (15%): A midterm exam will be held in the 8th week of class and will cover all materials from the lectures, class discussions, and reading up to the day of the exam. (Please see below for the policy on missed exams and arriving late to exams).

Final Exam (20%): The final exam will be held on the day and time scheduled by the register, which is Monday 12/12/16 at 2:45pm-4:45pm at our regular lecture meeting place. It will cover all material from class, discussion/lab, and readings since the midterm. (Please see below for the policy on missed exams and arriving late to exams).

Policy on Late assignments and missed examinations:

Assignments must be uploaded to D2L and a paper copy turned into the beginning of the class period of when said assignment is due, otherwise the assignment is late. Assignments submitted via any other manner (drop off, email, etc.) will **NOT** be accepted unless explicit **prior** permission is granted by the instructor. Late assignments (those not ready to be turned in at the beginning of the class or partially completed, and/or not uploaded to D2L will not be accepted.

Missed examinations will receive a grade of zero except in the cases of demonstrated, appropriate, and verifiable emergencies or tragedies, or where the student has receive **prior** permission from the instructor. Unexcused missed exams receive a grade of zero. In cases of missed exams excused by the instructor, a makeup exam will be rescheduled at the convenience of the instructor. Students must arrive on time to exams. Students who arrive 15 minutes or more late will not be allowed to take the exam and will receive a zero.

Special Needs: Students with a disability documented by the SIU Office of Disability Support Services, will be accommodated according to university policy. For more information, please visit the Disabilities Support Services website at <http://disabilityservices.siu.edu> or call the DSS office at 618-453-5738.

Academic Misconduct: It is expected that students in this course will maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty in carrying out their academic assignments. Anyone involved in dishonesty- i.e. plagiarizing or cheating on course work inside or outside the classroom-will minimally receive a failing grade on the assignment and, at the instructor’s discretion, may possibly receive a failing grade in the course. Intellectual honesty and integrity are essential attributes of an educated person (see Student Handbook for further information on academic misconduct).

Assignment Schedule

Date	Reading	Lab
Week 1 August 22-28	Introduction: “Thinking Like a Political Scientist” reading on D2L	Intro to Stata
Week 2 Aug 29-Sept 4	Scientific Method : Riemer reading D2L Grigsby Reading D2L	
Week 3 Sept 5-11	Inference and Theory: Barakso reading #1 on D2L Barakso reading #2 on D2L No classes Monday Labor Day	
Week 4 Sept 12-18	Concepts: Reading: Polloch Ch. 1 Barasko Reading on D2L	<i>Lab #1 due</i>
Week 5 Sept 19-25	Measuring Variables Reading: Pollock Ch. 2	Lab #2 due
Week 6 Sept 26-Oct 2	Hypothesis Reading: Pollock Ch. 3	<i>Lab #3 due</i>

Week 7 Oct 3-9	Qualitative Week Mon Reading: Qualitative Research Genres on D2L Wed Reading: Qualitative Collection methods on D2L	No Lab Friday 10/7
Week 8 Oct 10- 16	Readings: Qualitative Ethical Issues Midterm Exam Wed No class Monday Fall Break 10/8-10/11	Writing Assignment #1 due Friday 10/14
Week 9 Oct 17-23	Research Design Reading: Pollock Ch. 4 Barasko Reading D2L	Lab #4 due
Week 10 Oct 24-Oct 30	Controlled Comparisons Readings: Pollock Ch. 5	Lab #5 due
Week 11 Oct 31- Nov 6	Statistical Inference Readings: Pollock Ch. 6	Lab #6 due
Week 12 Nov 7-13	Tests of Significance Readings: Pollock Ch. 7 Friday Nov 11 Veterans Day	Happy Veterans day and Thank you for your service!
Week 13 Nov 14-20	Correlation and Linear regression Pollock CH. 8	Lab 7 and 8 due
Week 14 Nov 21-22	Correlation and Linear regression cont Thanksgiving break 11/24-11/27	Happy Turkey Day!
Week 15 Nov 28-Dec 4	Logistic Regression Reading: Pollock Ch. 9 & 10	Writing Assignment #2 due Friday Dec 9
Week 16 Dec 5-11	Logistic Regression cont. Pollock Ch. 9 & 10 continued Final Exam Review	Lab 9 due
Week 17 December 12-16	Final Exam Week	Final Exam due 12/12 2:45-4:45

