

Introduction to Political Science Methods
POL 251
Fall 2022
MWF 11:00 AM-11:50 AM
Location: Turner Room 239

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Office Hours
8:30 AM - 9:30 AM Mondays
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Office Hours via Zoom
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Thursdays
or by appointment
Zoom ID: 9424 616 8563
Passcode: POL

Course Description

The ability of political science research to shed light on pressing questions in contemporary political life is only as strong as the quality of the research designs used by political scientists. Gaining and sharing insight into the behavior of human beings within the sphere of politics requires a strong understanding of the logic of causal inference underlying empirical research in the social sciences, a capacity to gather useful political data and analyze it in an informed manner, and the ability to share research with others through scientific papers and formal presentations. This course will cover all of these aspects of social science research and leave students with the basic toolkit to ask good questions and design and execute plans to answer those questions. While this course is predominantly focused on quantitative research methods, qualitative methods will be discussed to a lesser degree.

Objectives

To acquaint students with the logic of causal inference and social science research design strategies

To introduce students to the practices of obtaining political science data

To familiarize students with conducting statistical analysis using the R statistical computing environment

To equip students to present political science research through research papers and presentations

To develop students' critical thinking and analytical skills through class discussion and written assignments

To foster skills in collaboratively crafting arguments through coauthorship and providing constructive feedback to others

Required Course Materials

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, H.T. Reynolds, and Jason Mycoff. ed. 2019. (9th Edition) *Political Science Research Methods*.

Monogan III, James E. 2015. *Political Analysis Using R*.

Grading

Participation 5%; Section Quizzes 5%; 2 Exams 25% each; Research Project 30%; Short Assignments 10%

Class participation counts for 5% of your final grade. Participation will be assessed through your participation in discussions posted on Blackboard. For each section of the class, a discussion will be created on Blackboard in the Discussions section, with several provocative questions posted by Dr. Klingler. You should post a written response at least once in each section discussion which captures your critical thinking about the material and well-reasoned opinion. Your responses may be to the question itself or to another person's response. You will have until 11:59 PM on the last class day of a section to complete the participation questions. Written participation responses will be graded as a fail (0 points), a pass (1 point) or high pass (2 points) based on the thoughtfulness of the response. The lowest discussion grade will be dropped.

Section quiz questions count for 5% of your final grade. Several multiple choice questions on the readings and lecture material will be posted on Blackboard in the Content folder for each section of the class, which typically correspond to a week. The section quiz questions will be automatically graded and will be designed to reward you for paying attention. Section quizzes must be completed by 11:59 PM on the last class day of the section. The lowest section quiz grade will be dropped.

Exams constitute 50% of your final grade. Two non-cumulative exams are each worth 25% and will take place during class on February 21 and April 25. Make up exams will be administered only with prior approval.

Collaboration with others is essential to the scientific process, and you must complete the research project and short assignments discussed below with a single coauthor throughout the semester. You and your coauthor must email Prof. Klingler stating that you will be working together by January 28. Any short assignments or research project components turned in without a coauthor will receive a zero.

A research project will determine 30% of your final grade. The research project will consist of three parts. The first component is a short research proposal outlining your research topic, specific research question, the existing literature addressing this question, hypotheses derived from the literature, and your chosen data source, which is due on March 21. The second component is a longer research paper which builds upon the work of the proposal with data analysis testing these hypotheses and interpretation of the results, which is due on May 1. The final component is a scientific poster presentation as part of a research conference which will take place on our exam

day on May 2. The conference will consist of two poster sessions. During each session you and your coauthor will present your research project and its findings, or you will be able to provide feedback to others who are presenting.

Ten short assignments will be used to calculate 10% of your final grade. These short assignments are designed to help contribute to the research project either as components of the research proposal or as data analysis exercises to ensure that you are comfortable with the tools you will need for the research paper. Students will receive ample notice if preparatory work outside of class is required, as may occasionally be the case. There are 11 short assignments and your lowest short assignment grade will be automatically dropped. Missed short assignments cannot be made up and will be graded as zeros.

There are two ways to gain extra credit in this course:

Coauthors who provide **research conference comments** by ranking and commenting on the posters in the other poster session on May 2 can obtain up to an extra 4% of the final grade. Those who provide rankings and comments to all the posters in the other session will obtain 2% of their final grade. In addition to extra credit from providing comments, if both coauthors on a poster submit comments, their poster is eligible to earn an additional 2% extra credit if their poster is the highest-ranked poster in their session. If one or neither coauthor on a poster provides comments and rankings, that poster is not eligible for the additional 2% extra credit.

Completing **midsemester course evaluations** on Blackboard can provide up to an extra 2% of the final grade. If at least 90% of the class completes a midsemester course evaluation, everyone in the class will receive one extra percentage point on his or her final grade. For each additional percentage point of the class that completes a midsemester evaluation, everyone in the class will receive 1/10 of an additional bonus point. For example, if 95% of the class completes the midsemester course evaluation, then everyone will receive 1.5 bonus points from this pot. The total amount of extra credit students may receive from midsemester course evaluations is two bonus points. Note that I can see who answers the survey at any time as well as the content, but not who wrote what comment. I can see, however, the proportion of the class which completes evaluations.

Grade Scale

Below is how your final percentage grade will be mapped into a letter grade. There are opportunities for extra credit in this class so there will be no rounding. If you get an 87.99999999%, (for example) when the semester is over your final grade will be a B+. **No exceptions.**

Percentage Point Range	Letter Grade
92-100	A
88-91.99...	A-
85-87.99...	B+
81-84.99...	B
78-80.99...	B-
75-77.99...	C+
71-75.99...	C
68-70.99...	C-
65-67.99...	D+
62-64.99...	D
60-61.99...	D-
0-59.99...	F

Class Policies

Changes to the syllabus may be made in order to correct errors, adjust the schedule, fine tune course details, or address unforeseen issues. Changes will be discussed and announced in class. It is the student's responsibility to attend class to be aware of any syllabus changes. The official syllabus will always be available on Blackboard.

Policy on Readings and Assignment Expectations

Reading and any additional assignments should be completed before the official start time for class on the day assigned. This means that paper and email copies of assignments must be in the instructor/TA's possession at the official start time for class or the assignment is late. Pay careful attention to the syllabus and to any adjustments that may occur. Material in the readings is fair game for exams even if not discussed in class.

Policy on Missed Classes and Assignments

The University requires that all students have a verified attendance at least once during the first two weeks of the semester for each course. If attendance is not verified, then a student will be dropped from the course and any financial aid is adjusted accordingly by the University. Attendance is verified by scanning your Ole Miss ID card as you enter the room so you must bring your card to each class session. If you have a problem with your ID card, you may sign in with the professor *during class* as attestation of your presence in class. **Do not cheat on attendance. Do not scan anyone else in and do not allow anyone else to scan you in. If you are caught cheating with the attendance scanners you will fail the course without exception.**

Late and makeup assignments will be allowed only with a doctor's note or other equally serious documented reason for the absence. **Excused absences will only be given for dates listed in the documentation provided. Keep this in mind when requesting doctors notes or obtaining other documentation such as memorial programs in the event of a funeral.** Excused absences from mental health conditions such as depression, bereavement, or anxiety require a note from a doctor mentioning specific dates under which attendance was prevented as a result of the mental health condition. If no date is provided in the documentation, there will be no excused absence given.

You are responsible for material presented in lectures and discussed in class regardless of your attendance. Notes will not be supplied for students who have missed class, so plan to make other arrangements. Athletes and other students who will miss class due to extra- or co-curricular travel should inform me of the relevant dates early in the semester.

Policy on COVID-19

Students are expected to comply with the University's protocols when they are in effect. Currently, a mask requirement is in place for vaccinated and unvaccinated people. As a result, proper mask wearing is required indoors and in the classroom. Current protocols can be found at <https://coronavirus.olemiss.edu>. Students who have a diagnosed health concern that interferes with the wearing of face masks may contact the Student Disabilities Services (SDS) Office to seek a University-approved accommodation. Please contact SDS at <https://sds.olemiss.edu/> for more information. If students test positive for COVID-19 at any health care facility, they must contact the Student Health Center at 662-915-7274. University Health Services will coordinate contact tracing to lessen the likelihood of spread. Students with COVID-19 should seek medical attention at the Student Health Center and contact Dr. Klingler to let them know that they will be missing class due to a health-related issue. If you are exposed to someone with COVID-19, you should contact the Student Health Center to get tested three to five days following exposure and follow the guidance recommended by the Health Center. If you are not fully vaccinated, you should follow quarantine protocols found at <https://coronavirus.olemiss.edu/students>.

Currently, COVID-19 guidelines for the Spring 2022 semester include face masks for vaccinated and unvaccinated people inside University buildings; therefore, students should not be in classroom spaces when they are out of compliance with these guidelines unless they have an accommodation approved by Student Disability Services. The University's Academic Conduct and Discipline Policy states that "disorderly behavior that disrupts the academic environment violates the standard of fair access to the academic experience." Failure to adhere to health requirements during the COVID-19 emergency will be deemed as disruptive to the classroom and will be enforced following the Academic Conduct and Discipline procedures. The University of Mississippi has adopted a tiered disciplinary protocol for non-adherence to COVID-19 health requirements. This disciplinary protocol is maintained by the Office of Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct: <https://conflictresolution.olemiss.edu/covidupdates>.

Policy on Grade Appeals

All grade appeals must be made in writing to the instructor. No grade appeals will be considered within the first 24 hours of a grade being posted or an assignment/exam being returned; those that come in within the first 24 hours will be discarded. All grade appeals must be received within ten calendar days of the grade being posted or the assignment/exam being returned; those that come in after this deadline will be discarded. All appeals must contain the following information:

The name of the assignment in question

The reason why you believe your grade should be higher. Be specific and discuss this in the context of the requirements of the assignment.

Determine whether you believe it is an error of calculation (the instructor/TA incorrectly tabulated points), judgment (the grade received does not reflect the quality of the work), or both.

If the instructor/TA determines that an error of calculation is present, then the correct grade will be calculated and the correct grade will be allocated. If it is argued by the student that an error of judgment is present, then the student has the option to have the assignment graded *de novo* by the instructor. As this will be a regrade from scratch, there is the possibility that the grade given to the regraded assignment will be lower than the initial grade given. All decisions by the instructor are final.

Policy on Disabilities

Students facing disabilities or mental health concerns who are not registered should apply for accommodation with Student Disability Services (SDS). Any student who has a documented disability and has received recommendations for accommodations from SDS should speak with the instructor as soon as possible regarding accommodations.

Policy on Email

Email communication must be used to make requests to the instructor/TA (*e.g.* for meetings outside of office hours) so that everyone has a record of the request and decision. For emails sent between Monday and Thursday, inclusive, please allow the instructor/TA up to 48 hours to respond. For those sent between Friday and Sunday, inclusive, please allow the instructor/TA up to 96 hours to respond.

It is the student's responsibility to check his/her Ole Miss email daily, since Blackboard works through Ole Miss email addresses and this is how I am able to communicate with you. If you prefer another email address, set up forwarding from your Ole Miss address.

Writing a professional email is an important skill one should master before graduation. All emails to the instructor/TA should include the following: a subject line briefly explaining the topic of the email and that it pertains to POL 304; a greeting more professional than "Yo" or "Hey" (I prefer "Professor Klingler" or "Dr. Klingler."); a clear question or request; and should identify the sender by name. Emails lacking any of these criteria will not be returned. Before sending an email, please make sure you cannot easily get the answer from another source, such as the syllabus or other class documents.

Policy on Technology

With the notable exception of dedicated R workshop days, assignments requiring access to computers and the Internet should generally be done outside the classroom. Unless I grant an explicit exception, cell phones, laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices are not allowed during class as handwritten note-taking is associated with better comprehension and reduced distraction (of both the student and those around him/her). If note-taking via laptop is required due to a disability, students are encouraged to visit SDS to request accommodations.

Students are expected to silence their cell phones and refrain from talking, texting, or otherwise using their phones for the duration of the class period. I do not want to hear or see them (including holding the phone underneath your desk while sending a text message). Turn them off. If you feel you will not be able to abide by this policy, leave your electronic devices at home so you won't be tempted. I reserve the right to have you leave the class if you disrupt class, and this includes

habitually sending/checking text messages.

This course relies heavily on access to computers and the Internet for the R workshop days. At some point during the semester you will have a problem with technology. Your laptop will die, a file will become corrupted, a server will go down, or something else will occur. These are facts of life, not emergencies. Technology problems will not normally be accepted as excuses for unfinished work. Expect that "stuff" will happen and protect yourself by doing the following:

Plan ahead - start early, particularly if you'll need something hard to get.

Save work often at multiple stages - at least every ten minutes.

Make regular backups of files in a different location from the originals - there are several free cloud services that you can use to do this automatically.

When editing an image, set aside the original and work with a copy.

On your personal computer, install and use software to control viruses and malware.

When submitting any assignment electronically in this course, you are responsible for any technological problems (*e.g.* Internet connection difficulties, corrupted files, misspelled email addresses, delayed email delivery, etc.). To prevent problems along with the associated penalties for late assignments, you should submit assignments well before the deadline and take proactive steps to make sure that files were not corrupted and that assignments were received. Again, please do not trust your computer to function as expected at the last minute.

Policy on Respect and Civility

The exchange of ideas is an essential part of learning, and you are encouraged to frequently ask questions and share your thoughts during regular class. *Disagree without being disagreeable.* We will be discussing some polarizing issues in class, and conversation should remain civil and conducted in a good faith exchange. In order to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, students should use professional language in class discussions and written work and behave professionally. No offensive slang or profanity is permitted and unwanted physical contact of another student is a serious offense which will be reported for disciplinary action.

Disruptive behavior will result in a recommendation of appropriate sanction including grade reduction in minor cases and stronger action in more severe cases. If your behavior is disruptive enough to distract me, it can distract the people around you as well, and is a threat to the learning environment. The instructor reserves the right to ask all students in the vicinity of disruptive behavior or conversations to leave the class for the day.

Policy on Academic Discipline

Academic honesty is expected, and academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Examples of academic misconduct are explored in the M Book and include plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation), using someone else's work as your own, allowing someone else to represent your work as their own, gaining or attempting to gain an unfair advantages, giving false information or altering documents, harming academic support facilities, and any act that violates the principles of honesty or fairness that does not fall into these categories.

Turn in material that you have completed yourself and respect the learning environment. Acts of academic misconduct are serious offenses that will be reported for disciplinary action and appropriate sanction after discussion with the student. Please see the University's Student Academic Conduct and Discipline Policy, the University's Academic Regulations in the M Book and/or speak with Prof. Klingler if you have questions in this area.

Course Outline

Part I: Social Science Research Design

January 19

Introduction and Course Overview

January 21

Research Topic Brainstorming Workshop

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapter 1 pp. 1-24

Short Assignment 1: Research Topic Brainstorming Worksheet (Due in Class)

January 24, 26, and 28

Social Science Research and Theory Building

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapters 2-3, pp. 25-72

Short Assignment 2: Coauthorship Statement (Due January 28)

January 31, February 2 and 4

Hypotheses, Operationalization, and Measurement

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapter 4, pp. 73-100

Short Assignment 3: Introducing Your Research Question (Due February 4)

February 7

Obtaining Data

Library Day - Guest Lecturer Ms. Brooke Gross

Skim the article listed below associated with your project topic. All articles are in the "Obtaining Data" folder on Blackboard

Twitter and Political Attitudes

Osmundsen et al. 2021 "Partisan Politication is the Primary Psychological Motivation behind Political Fake News Sharing on Twitter"

COVID and International Interactions

TBD (Look in folder on Blackboard)

Determinants of Female Legislative Representation Around the World

Matland, Richard. 1998. "Women's Representation in National Legislatures"

Interest Groups and State Policy

Strickland, James. 2019. "A Paradox of Political Reform"

Immigration History and Voting Behavior

Hainmueller, Jens and Daniel Hopkins. 2014. "Public Attitudes Toward Immigration"

February 9, 11, and 14

Research Design through Causal Inference

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapters 6 and 9, pp. 121-133 and 169-192

Short Assignment 4: Literature Review (Due February 14)

February 16 and 18
Methods of Social Science Data Collection
 Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapters 7-8, pp. 135-168

February 21
Exam I

Part II: Obtaining and Analyzing Political Data

February 23, 25 and 28
Survey Research Methods
 Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapters 5 and 10, pp. 101-120; 193-210
 Short Assignment 5: Obtaining Data and Variable Selection (Due February 28)

March 2, 4, 7 and 9
The Beauty of R
 Monogan Chapter 1-2, pp. 1-32
 Short Assignment 6: Practice Problems 1.6 and 2.6 in Monogan (Due March 10)

March 11, 21, 23, and 25
Descriptive Statistics
 Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapter 11, pp. 211-238
 Monogan Chapter 4, pp. 53-62
 Research Proposal Due March 21
 Short Assignment 7: Practice Problems 4.3 in Monogan (Due March 27)

March 28 and 30, and April 1
Hypothesis Testing
 Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapter 12, pp. 239-266
 Monogan Chapter 5, pp. 63-66
 Short Assignment 8: Practice Problems 5.4, items 1 and 2 in Monogan (Due April 3)

April 4
Measures of Association
 Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapter 13, pp. 267-306
 Monogan Chapter 5, pp. 66-77

April 6 and 8
 NO CLASS

April 11 and 13
Measures of Association continued
 Short Assignment 9: Practice Problems 5.4, items 3 and 4 in Monogan (Due April 17)

April 15
 NO CLASS

April 18, 20, and 22

Bivariate Regression

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapter 14, pp. 307-330

Monogan Chapter 6, pp. 79-97

Short Assignment 10: Practice Problems 6.3 in Monogan (Due April 22)

April 25

Exam II

Part III: Presenting Political Science Research

April 27 and 29

Describing and Interpreting Research Findings

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff Chapter 15, pp. 331-344

Healy et al., "Irrelevant events affect voters' evaluations of government performance." (2010) *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*

<http://www.pnas.org/content/107/29/12804>

Social Science Research Proposal Writing Guide:

<http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchproposal>

Monogan Chapter 3, pp. 33-51

Short Assignment 11: Practice Problems 3.5 in Monogan (Due April 29)

May 2

Research Conference Session 1 (12 PM)

Research Conference Session 2 (1:30 PM)

Research Paper Due May 1 at 11:59 PM
