POS 3713 Empirical Political Analysis - Section 001

Instructor: Dr. Christopher Olds
Meeting Time: Tuesday 5:00-7:45 p.m.
Credit: 3 units, letter grade (including +/- modifiers)
Classroom: SOC 128
Office Hours: Mon and Tues 1:30-4:30 p.m. and via appointment
Office: SOC 390
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Specific Goals of the Course

This course is designed to introduce students to the process of conducting academic social science research. While some of you may be entering this course with some apprehension, asking questions like, 'why would I need to learn how to do social science research' or 'what is the point of learning statistics when I'm not a math major,' your experience in this course will assist you in developing valuable skills you can apply for the rest of your lives. These skills include the following:

• the ability to explain why something in the world that interests you should matter or is relevant to others

• the ability to evaluate how others have discussed your topic of interest in the past in order to build upon this past knowledge

• the ability to establish an easily understandable proposal that you believe best explains the concept that interests you

• the ability to design an unbiased procedure by which you and others can determine whether your explanation is legitimate

• the ability to determine whether others adequately explain and provide evidence for their own claims regarding concepts

These skills are important because there are potential dangers in discussing ideas with colleagues in many lines of work (and not just in academic political research) where unfounded claims are made, limited and tangential supporting evidence of these claims is provided, and conclusions are rooted more in personal opinion than an actual observation of reality. Your experience in this course should make clear the hazards in depriving ourselves of important knowledge about the concepts we are interested in if we avoid applying these important skills.

The way in which you will attempt to cultivate the skills listed above is by becoming exposed to and conducting political science research. Political science research attempts to predict, describe, and explain political phenomena from an unbiased perspective. This course will illustrate the value of approaching politics from this perspective. You will also learn the basic tools in which you can engage in a structured and thorough approach to inquiry.

Course Objectives

As the instructor of this course, I expect that my students at the end of the course will:

1. Be able to discern the difficulties in trying to measure and evaluate social phenomena.

2. Be able to construct a hypothesis that attempts to describe and explain reality that can be evaluated through research.

3. Be able to distinguish the similarities and differences in multiple approaches to research design.

4. Be able to review, analyze, and connect preexisting research in a useful and coherent way.

5. Be able to design their own research plan that builds upon past knowledge and seeks out new/original information.

6. Be able to translate abstract concepts into measurable variables that can be evaluated empirically.

7. Be able to determine appropriate statistical tests for determining relationships between variables.

8. Be able to conduct statistical tests to evaluate hypothesized relationships between variables.

9. Be able to implement high-end technological tools to assist in research inquiry.

10. Be able to develop essays that are clear and focused for readers.

All of this will be made possible through an evaluation of the relationships that exist between formal and informal political institutions and groups. We will develop empirically testable hypotheses that predict and describe relationships between political institutions and groups, as well as collect and evaluate information systematically using statistical methods.

USF Statement on Academic Accommodations for a Disability

Students in need of academic accommodations for a disability may consult with the Office of Students with Disabilities Services (SDS) to arrange appropriate accommodations. Students are required to give reasonable notice prior to requesting an accommodation.

Note: The Americans with Disabilities Act is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact USF Student Disability Services as soon as possible.

Academic Honesty

◇ Any handouts used in this course are copyrighted. Handouts means all materials generated for this class, which include, but are not limited to: syllabi, notes, essay prompts, in-class materials, and review sheets. This includes materials that are posted on the web as well as materials distributed in class. Because these materials are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts unless the instructor expressly grants permission.
◇ Lectures cannot be recorded, unless special accommodations for disability are required.
◇ Lecture notes may not be sold.
◇ No form of academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, etc.) will be tolerated. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have permission of that person. This includes copying material from books, reports, journals, pamphlets, handouts, other publications, web sites, etc., without giving appropriate credit for those ideas and/or without identifying material as quotations when taken directly from another source.
◇ Students should complete USF's on-line plagiarism tutorial, which may be found at:
http://davon.etg.usf.edu/share/plagiarism/
◇ Violation of these rules, even if you unintentionally violate them, can result in disciplinary action including a grade penalty (an FF in the course), suspension, dismissal, and expulsion from USF. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, please consult the relevant sections of the USF student catalogs, and/or ask me for further explanation.

USF Statement on Emergencies

In the event of an emergency, it may be necessary for USF to suspend normal operations. During this time, USF may opt to continue delivery of instruction through methods that include but are not limited to: Canvas, email messaging and/or an alternate schedule. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor the Canvas site for each class for course specific communication, as well as the main USF website, emails, and MoBull messages for important general information.

Note: Examples of an emergency could be a hurricane, tornado, institution-wide power outage, etc.

Course Format

The course is focused heavily on student participation. Active learning is a major emphasis in my approach to teaching. Although there is in-class lecture, I will ask the class questions throughout lecture, and students will reply through the Top Hat response system interface. In addition, students will be asked to work on conceptual and applied statistical questions in small groups. We will all discuss as a class how each group came about their answers. Students will also perform an individual presentation in front of the class about their original research design. A positive environment is a good learning environment. Students must show respect to their peers and the instructor at all times.

Grades

Grades will be based on your performance in five assignments. Students can earn one hundred points in this course. Please note that this is a course where extra credit assignments are not made available. Your grades will reflect your performance on the five assigned tasks only. Please note that attendance is a part of your grade given that you must be **physically in class** to participate in the interactive assessments using the Top Hat response system interface. In addition to this, missing multiple sessions will make it difficult for you to follow the material and receive a passing grade in the course.

Late assignments are not accepted unless a note from an appropriate source confirms a university excused reason for the work needing to be submitted late.

Item #1: Interactive Assessments Participation (20 points)
For each class session after Week 1, students will be presented with several questions that they will respond to with the Top Hat response system interface. Questions will be presented at various points in the class session, which potentially means students will be presented with some questions at the beginning of a session, in the middle of a session, or at the end of a session.

With each question, students can be presented with several answer options, or will be asked to type in an answer. Students will use their compatible device to enter the answer option they believe to be correct. The questions can be on assigned reading, materials from a previous lecture, or material being discussed in the session on that day.

The number of points you earn will be based on your participation in the assessments and not on whether you get the correct answers. The less you attend class and participate in these interactive assessments, the lower your score will be for this course item. Although you are not graded for whether or not you get answers correct, I will potentially ask to meet with those students who appear to be consistently below the mean level of class performance. For those instances where you have a university excused absence, you can still earn participation points by completing a take-home problem assigned by me. You must ask for the take-home problem the same week of the excused absence. **You are not allowed to participate in the TopHat assessments if you are not physically present in class when a question is asked. Even if you attend class for part of the session, you are not allowed to respond to questions if they are asked at a time when you are not in class (e.g. if you leave class early). You can only respond**

to TopHat questions when you are physically in class. Failure to adhere to this rule will result in you getting a zero out of twenty for this assignment.

The purpose of these interactive assessments is twofold. First, students can track their performance on these questions and determine which concepts they may have to study again or more in-depth as the course progresses. Second, the interactive assessments can assist in efficiently and quickly determining whether course materials need to be explained in a different way to improve student understanding. The assessments are a low-stakes way for both you and I to gauge your comprehension of the materials presented in the course.

Registration information on the Top Hat response system is available at the following address online https://app.tophat.com/register/student/. It will cost $20 to register for the semester. Please note that Top Hat is compatible with multiple devices (tablet, phone, labtop, etc.), but it is recommended you use a laptop when interacting with the TopHat interface each week. Points will be allotted based on the following scale:

Participate in 95% of the questions or above- 20 points
Participate in 80 to 94.99% of the questions- 17 points
Participate in 70 to 79.99% of the questions- 14 points
Participate in 60 to 69.99% of the questions- 11 points
Participate in 50 to 59.99% of the questions- 8 points
Participate in 40 to 49.99% of the questions- 5 points
Participate in 30 to 39.99% of the questions- 2 points
Participate in less than 30% of the questions- 0 points

Item #2: Annotated Bibliography (25 points)
Students will present a thorough review of previous research that pertains to an area of political science research that interests them. The important/major works in the research area should be detailed in the annotated bibliography. This means the research that is highly cited by other scholars in the research area needs to be covered. It is the responsibility of the student to summarize these major works and determine how their findings have shaped how the area related to the research question is currently understood.

In this assignment, students will offer a summary of at minimum ten sources that all pertain to a topic in the political science literature of interest to them. The sources you select must evaluate a research question by collecting and evaluating information relevant to the question. For each source, you must summarize the following components: research question, research theory, research hypothesis, research method, and research findings. For each section, the student must provide a brief summary in their own words. All sources must be academic peer-reviewed sources (academic journal articles, books, and book chapters).

For example, acceptable scholarly research sources include the following academic journals: *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *Journal of Public Policy*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Review of Policy Research*, *Social Science Quarterly*, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *Political Behavior*, *International Organization*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Public Administration Review*, and *Political Research Quarterly*. In terms of books and book chapters, works from university presses (Cambridge University Press, Princeton University Press, Oxford University Press, University of Chicago Press, etc.) are ideal. The following are NOT ALLOWED as scholarly research sources: blogs, websites, newspaper articles, popular novels, mainstream magazine articles, think tank reports, and interest group newsletters. The intention of this assignment is to summarize scholarly research, not to summarize examples written in non-academic outlets.

An example of the style of the annotated bibliography will be posted on Canvas.

Students must type the annotated bibliography in a word-processing computer program and follow specific formatting rules (12-pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, and one inch margins on all sides). Microsoft Word .doc files are preferred. Students will be expected to avoid frequent spelling and grammatical errors

when writing their annotated bibliography. The student should cite all resources used when constructing these papers using guidelines presented in the American Political Science Association Style Manual. **Every annotated bibliography assignment must be checked for academic integrity by submitting the paper to TurnItIn's plagiarism monitor via Canvas.**

Note: If you are in another one of my courses this semester, you are not allowed to submit the same anno-tated bibliography for multiple classes

The scoring of this assignment is based on the following (out of 25 points possible)

• 8 Points: The student collects at least ten relevant academic sources about a specific area in political science of interest to them
• 8 Points: The student provides a clear and informative summary in their own words of the five key research components for each source
• 5 Points: The student provides accurate APSA style format citations for each academic source
• 4 Points: The writing is easy to follow and avoids frequent spelling and grammatical errors

Item #3: Presentation of Research Hypotheses and Design (15 points)
For this assignment, students will develop a PowerPoint presentation chronicling the steps they would take in implementing an original design in the area of research they are interested in and discussed in the annotated bibliography. Students will then present the PowerPoint to the class. In the presentation, students will discuss the research hypothesis or hypotheses emerging from the research question their project is curious about. They will also detail how they intend to go about evaluating the research hypothesis or hypotheses by describing the procedure they will use to empirically evaluate their research question. The research question must be clearly specified and needs to be understandable to a person that has no previous background or interest in the area of political science relevant to the research question. The hypothesis/hypotheses offered must show direct relevance to the research question presented. The concepts (variables) that are relevant to examining the research hypothesis/hypotheses need to be described in an accessible way.

In addition, the student should explain why the examination of their hypothesis or hypotheses should be relevant to other people. Students should attempt to answer the ever important 'so what' question - how would examining the hypothesis or hypotheses make a contribution to knowledge that others would appreciate?

Students will describe why they think the research design they intend to use is the most appropriate option to evaluate their hypothesis/hypotheses. An explanation as to why the student believes their research design is a better option than potential alternatives is required. For example, if the student wants to construct an experimental design studying how alternative styles of news coverage on illegal immigration shapes attitudes towards Latinos, the student should justify why an experimental approach is more preferable than studying data with natural variation, such as cross-sectional survey data.

A description of how the student intends to collect information to research their hypothesis is mandatory in the presentation. The procedure through which you will evaluate this information is required. For instance, if the student will perform statistical regression(s), what will the statistical model look like? If the student is studying how individual political trust impacts political participation, the student must describe where and how the student will collect data on these and any other relevant variables. Is the data used in the regression readily available, or would the student have to build their own dataset? If a dataset exists, what are the important characteristics of the sample?

For two of our class sessions (refer to the calendar at the end of the syllabus), class time will be devoted to students presenting the key aspects of their research project design. Your Powerpoint slides will be due before the presentation sessions. The date is listed at the end of the syllabus. The presentation should inform the audience what your project is about, why you think it is important, what your research hypothesis or hypotheses are, and how you intend to empirically examine your research hypothesis or hypotheses.

Presentations will be graded for clarity, professionalism, and thoroughness. Each presentation should be no more than seven minutes. Following the presentation, students will be asked questions about their project, and are expected to respond with clear and detailed answers.

The scoring of this assignment is based on the following (out of 15 points possible)

- 2 Points: The student describes their research question and hypothesis/hypotheses in a clear, understandable fashion
- 2 Points: The student describes the concepts (variables) that are relevant in examining their hypothesis/hypotheses
- 2 Points: The student describes the research design they will use and persuasively explains why it is appropriate relative to other options
- 2 Points: The student describes how they will collect the information to research their hypothesis/hypotheses with clarity
- 3 Points: The student develops PowerPoint slides that are easy to follow and avoids frequent spelling and grammatical errors
- 4 Points: The student's oral presentation in front of class is professional. The student provides detailed, specific, and informative answers to questions from the audience

Item #4: Take-home Analytical Essays One (20 points)
For this assignment, students will be presented with an essay prompt or prompts that they have several days to complete. The essays are open note and open book, but you cannot collaborate with anyone in completing the responses. All papers must be typed in a word-processing computer program and follow specific formatting rules (12-pt. Times New Roman font, double spaced, and one inch margins on all sides). Microsoft Word .doc files are preferred. Students will be expected to avoid frequent spelling and grammatical errors when writing their papers. The student should cite all resources used when constructing these papers using guidelines presented in the American Political Science Association Style Manual. **Every submission must be checked for academic integrity by submitting the paper to TurnItIn's plagiarism monitor via Canvas.**

You will have one week to complete the prompt or prompts once you receive the assignment in class. Refer to the class calendar at the end of the syllabus for distribution and due dates. Anyone who is not in class at the time of the distribution of the assignment will receive a different prompt or prompts, so they should not expect to gain an advantage over those who do come to class.

Item #5: Take-home Analytical Essays Two (20 points)
The format requirements for this assignment are essentially the same as Item #4. The analytical essays are open-book, open note, but students cannot collaborate with anyone when completing responses. Refer to the class calendar at the end of the syllabus for distribution and due dates.

Final grades are out of one hundred points possible-

Grade Score
A+= 98.6-100
A = 91.0-98.5
A-= 90.0-90.9
B+= 88.6-89.9
B = 81.0-88.5
B-= 80.0-80.9
C+= 78.6-79.9
C = 71.0-78.5
C-= 70.0-70.9
D+= 68.6-69.9
D = 61.0-68.5

D-= 60.0-60.9
F = 59.9 or less
FF= Academic dishonesty

Grade Appeals: If a student has an issue with the grade they earned for one of the assignments, the student must write a one-page explanation describing what aspect or aspects the evaluation missed. A twenty-four hour cooling off period is required, meaning you cannot submit an appeal within the first twenty-four hours after you receive an assignment grade. The written appeal can only be submitted between the second and third day after you receive an assignment back. Please note that if you submit a grade appeal, the work can potentially be scored lower than the initial grade if the second review of the assignment suggests there are additional issues or problems with the assignment. Appeals should be submitted via e-mail.

Course Materials

There is one text that is required. The book is frequently discounted on online sites like Amazon.com. It can also be rented. All other assigned readings, such as academic journal articles and book chapters, will be posted on Canvas. Students are also required to subscribe to Top Hat in order to participate in the interactive assessments, as well as a six-month license for Stata/IC 13 in order to perform the statistical analyses in class.

Pollock, Philip H. 2012. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 4th Edition. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Top Hat classroom response subscription. 2013. https://app.tophat.com/register/student/

Stata/IC 13. 2013. http://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/campus-gradplan/

Reading Schedule

Week One
No readings

Week Two
• Hoover, Kenneth and Todd Donovan. 2008. "Chapter 1 - Thinking Scientifically," and "Chapter 2 - The Elements of Science." In *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*. Boston, MA: Thomson Wadsworth.

• O'Brien, Rory. 1999. "Normative versus Empirical Theory and Method." In *Methods for Political Inquiry: The Discipline, Philosophy, and Analysis of Politics*, eds. Stella Z. Theodoulou and Rory O'Brien. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 77-90.

Week Three
• Ethridge, Marcus E. 1999. "Scientific Principles in Political Study: Some Enduring Situations." In *Methods for Political Inquiry: The Discipline, Philosophy, and Analysis of Politics*, eds. Stella Z. Theodoulou and Rory O'Brien. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 130-141.

• Theodoulou, Stella Z. 1999. "Starting from Scratch: The Research Process." In *Methods for Political Inquiry: The Discipline, Philosophy, and Analysis of Politics*, eds. Stella Z. Theodoulou and Rory O'Brien. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 142-151.

Week Four
• Pollock, Philip H. 2012. "Chapter 1 - The Definition and Measurement of Concepts." In *The Essentials of Political Analysis*.

• Pollock, Philip H. 2011. "Chapter 1 - Introduction to Stata." In *A Stata Companion to Data Analysis*.

Week Five
• Pollock, Philip H. 2012. "Chapter 2 - Measuring and Describing Variables." In *The Essentials of Political Analysis*.

• Pollock, Philip H. 2011. "Chapter 2 - Descriptive Statistics." In *A Stata Companion to Data Analysis*.

Week Six
• Pollock, Philip H. 2012. "Chapter 3 - Proposing Explanations, Framing Hypotheses, and Making Comparisons." In *The Essentials of Political Analysis*.

• Pollock, Philip H. 2011. "Chapter 3 - Transforming Variables." In *A Stata Companion to Data Analysis*.

Week Seven
• Pollock, Philip H. 2012. "Chapter 4 - Research Design and the Logic of Control." In *The Essentials of Political Analysis*.

• Pollock, Philip H. 2011. "Chapter 4 - Making Comparisons." In *A Stata Companion to Data Analysis*.

Week Eight
• Swanborn, Peter. 2010. "Chapter 1 - What is a Case Study?" In *Case Study Research: What, Why, and How?* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1-22.

• Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-693.

• Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2(1): 131-150.

Week Nine
• Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia. 2006. "The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 100(4): 627-635.

• Nelson, Thomas E, Rosalee E. Clawson, and Zoe M. Oxley. 1997. "Media Framing of a Civil Liberties Conflict and its Effect on Tolerance." *American Political Science Review* 91(3): 567-583.

• Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94(3): 653-663.

• Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawai." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545.

• Moynihan, Donald P. 2005. "What Do We Talk About When We Talk about Performance? Dialogue Theory and Performance Budgeting." *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16(2): 151-168.

Week Ten
• Pollock, Philip H. 2012. "Chapter 5 - Making Controlled Comparisons." In *The Essentials of Political Analysis*.

• Pollock, Philip H. 2011. "Chapter 5 - Making Controlled Comparisons." In *A Stata Companion to Data Analysis*.

Week Eleven
• Pollock, Philip H. 2012. "Chapter 6 - Foundations of Statistical Inference." In *The Essentials of Political*

Analysis.

Week Twelve
• Pollock, Philip H. 2011. "Chapter 6 - Making Inferences about Sample Means." In *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*.

Week Thirteen
• Pollock, Philip H. 2012. "Chapter 7 - Tests of Statistical Inference and Measures of Association." In *The Essentials of Political Analysis*.

• Pollock, Philip H. 2011. "Chapter 7 - Chi-Square and Measures of Association." In *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*.

Week Fourteen
• Pollock, Philip H. 2012. "Chapter 8 - Correlation and Linear Regression." In *The Essentials of Political Analysis*.

Week Fifteen
• Pollock, Philip H. 2011. "Chapter 8 - Correlation and Linear Regression." In *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*.

Class Calendar of Important Dates

- February 18 Item #4 Distributed in Class (Analytical Essays One)

- February 25 Item #4 Due at 5:00 p.m. on Canvas (Analytical Essays One)

- March 25 Item #2 Due at 5:00 p.m. on Canvas (Annotated Bibliography)

- April 8 Item #3 Presentation slides due at 5:00 p.m. on Canvas

- April 15 and April 22 Item #3 Presentations in class (Presentation of Research Hypotheses and Design)

- April 22 Item #5 Distributed in Class (Analytical Essays Two)

- April 29 Item #5 Due at 7:45 p.m. on Canvas (Analytical Essays Two)

Syllabus subject to change at instructor's discretion