POS 3703
Scopes and Methods of Political Science
Fall 2011
Tuesday and Thursday, 9:00-10:15
Valencia West Building 11, Room 117

Instructor: Nathan Ilderton
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Office Hours: 1:00-3:00 Tuesday and Thursday or by appointment
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Course Description:

This course is an introduction to research methods used in political science. We will examine the use of the scientific method in the study of politics. This includes examining the measurement of concepts, research design, and hypothesis formation. We will also several techniques used to test hypotheses in political science. This will include a study of comparisons, significance tests, and an introduction to the OLS regression models.

Course Objectives:

The objective of this course is to teach students to apply objective scientific analysis to political problems. Students will also learn to understand and critically evaluate statistical analyses they will encounter in their future course work, research, and everyday consumption of political information.

Required Reading:

There are two books required for this class. Each is available at the University Bookstore and through the usual off campus and internet outlets.

- Phillip H. Pollock, *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 4th edition, (Sage CQ Press).
- Phillip H. Pollock, *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*, 4th edition, (Sage CQ Press).

If you purchase the text books online please insure that you are purchasing the correct editions of the required texts. This course will adhere to the listed editions; students who purchased the wrong editions are responsible for acquiring any new or changed material.

Assignments, Exams and Grading:
Students will be graded on the basis of homework and three exams (two in class exams and one during the final exam period. Final grades will be calculated using the following formula:

Homework: 25%
First Exam: 25%
Second Exam: 25%
Third Exam: 25%

Homework will be assigned periodically. Assignments will be drawn primarily from the *SPSS Companion* book. Homework assignments will be given in class and are due the following class period unless otherwise specified by the instructor. You will need SPSS and the data disk from *SPSS Companion* to complete the homework assignments. To acquire the data disk you must purchase a new copy of the *SPSS Companion* text. SPSS is available on campus lab computers. Homework assignments will be graded on the basis of ten points per question. For example if I asked you to complete Questions 1 through 3 in Chapter 2, the total point value for the assignment would be 30. Your homework grade will be computed on the basis of the percentage of points earned of the total homework points available.

Exams will cover material from their section of the reading and lecture calendar. The format of exams will be multiple choice, identification, and problem solving. Example problems will be shown in class.

The grading scale for final grades is as follows:

A: 89.5% or above
B: 79.5% to 89.4%
C: 69.5% to 79.4%
D: 59.5% to 69.4%
F: 59.4% or below

Attendance Policy:
Attendance at lectures is recommended, but not required. I will not be taking roll. However, you are reminded that you are responsible for lecture material on exams. Further, there is no substitute for attending class and engaging in the course materials for full comprehension. In the past, the students who did best in the course were the ones who regularly attended class sessions.

Makeup Work:
I will not allow missed assignments to be made up without a documented university excused absence. If you know ahead of time that you will miss a scheduled exam please inform me prior to the exam period. If you cannot inform me ahead of time, please inform me within one business day of the scheduled exam period that you need to makeup the exam either via phone or email. Date and time of makeup exams will be

determined by the instructor on a case by case basis. I reserve the right to change the format and questions of makeup exams at my discretion.

Webcourses
A webcourse section has been created for this class and will be accessible through the myUCF web portal at my.ucf.edu. This space will be used to post the syllabus, lecture notes, grades, and important class notices.

Class Topics and Reading Assignments:
Students are expected to complete the assigned reading by the beginning of each week. Please note that I reserve the right to change the lecture and readings schedule as necessary to adequately cover all topics. I also reserve the right to add or subtract readings from the course. Any changes to the schedule or assigned readings will be announced in class.

Week 1: Introduction; Thinking About Politics Scientifically. August 23, 25
Readings: Essentials, "Introduction"

Week 2: Thinking About Politics Scientifically, Defining and Measuring Concepts, August 30, September 1
Readings: Essentials Ch.1

Week 3: Measuring and Describing Variables, September 6, 8
Readings: Essentials Ch. 2
Homework: Essentials Ch. 1, Exercises 2, 4, and 5

Week 4: Hypotheses and Making Comparisons, September 13, 15
Readings: Essentials Ch. 3
Homework: SPSS Companion Ch. 2, Exercises 1, 2, and 3

Exam 1: Tuesday, September 20th

Week 5: Research Design, September, 22
Readings: Essentials Ch. 4

Week 6: Research Design Continued. September 27, 29
Readings: Essentials Ch. 4
Homework: SPSS Companion, Ch. 4, Exercises 1, 2, and 3
You will need to complete SPSS Chapter 3 to complete SPSS assignments from here forward.

Week 7: Logic of Control, Making Controlled Comparisons October 4, 6
Readings: Essentials Ch 4, pages 86-96, Ch.5

Week 8: Making Statistical Inferences. October 11, 13
Readings: Essentials Ch. 6
Homework: Essentials Ch. 4, Exercises 2, 3, 4

Week 9: Making Statistical Inferences Continued. October 18, 20
Readings: Essentials Ch. 6

Week 10: Tests of Significance. October 25, 27
Readings: Essentials Ch. 7, pages 155-169

Week 11: Tests of Significance Continued. November 1
Readings: Essentials Ch 7, pages 155-169
Homework: SPSS Companion Ch. 6, Exercises 1, 2, 3, 4

Exam 2: Thursday, November 3rd

Week 12: Correlation and Bivariate Regression. November 8, 10
Readings: Essentials Ch 8

Week 13: Bivarate Regression Continued. November 15, 17
Readings: Essentials Ch 8

Week 14: Mulitvariate Regression. November 22
Readings: Essentials Ch 8
Homework: SPSS Companion Ch. 8, Exercises 1, 2, 3, 4

No Class: Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 24th

Week 15: Multivariate Regression. November 29, December 1
Reading: Essentials Ch 8

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 6th, 7:00am-9:50am

UCF Creed and Academic Honesty

Integrity, scholarship, community, creativity, and excellence are the core values that guide our conduct, performance, and decisions.

Integrity
I will practice and defend academic and personal honesty.

Scholarship
I will cherish and honor learning as a fundamental purpose of my membership in the UCF community.

Community
I will promote an open and supportive campus environment by respecting the rights and contributions of every individual.

Creativity
I will use my talents to enrich the human experience.

Excellence
I will strive toward the highest standards of performance in any endeavor I undertake.

As reflected in the UCF creed, integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community. Plagiarism and cheating contradict these values, and so are very serious academic offenses. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the University's Rules of Conduct (see http://www.osc.sdes.ucf.edu/).

Students with Disabilities

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Unauthorized Use of Class Notes

Third parties may be selling class notes and other materials from this class without my authorization. Please be aware that such class materials may contain errors, which could affect your performance or grade. Use these materials at your own risk.