Scope and Methods of Political Science - POS3703
Dr. Jesse Marquette / Spring, 2012

Classroom: Philips Hall 310
Office Hours: Tuesday 4:15 to 6 pm. Other hours by appointment.
Email: Jesse.Marquette@ucf.edu Note: I will only reply to e-mails sent from your UCF e-mail, personal accounts such as gmail, hotmail, aol etc. will be ignored.

Required texts:

Pollock, The Essentials of Political Analysis, 4th Edition. Abbr: Essentials
An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis, 4th Edition. Abbr. Companion
You may wish to purchase or rent the latest SPSS Student Version, the full software is available in campus labs.

Course Goals

This course will examine how the processes of scientific research are applied to the study of politics. You will learn the meaning and use of terms such as "dependent variable", "generalization", "validity" and their significance in generating reliable knowledge about political behavior. You will learn how to turn your ideas about how politics works into testable propositions that can be verified by others, that is, you will learn how we claim to produce "knowledge". You also will learn techniques of data analysis using SPSS. SPSS is a widely used software package in business and science, so mastery of its protocols will be of use in many of your career options.

Requirements.

Your course grade will be based on five components: attendance, two project assignments and two examinations. The total points assigned will be 460.

Attendance: 60 points. Attendance is required. Do not arrive late or leave early. You will lose 5 points for each absence. There will be material covered in lecture that does not appear in the texts..

Assignments: 200 points. You will be given two projects during the term, each valued at 100 points. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date and must be turned in directly to me. You will lose 5 points for each day an assignment is late. Formal instruction sheets for each project will be provided in class. Please pay close attention to the instructions, they are provided for your benefit. Each project should result in an *approximately* 10 page report on the results of your research. I do not weigh the papers or count the pages, I actually read them.

The basic topic descriptions are:

Project 1 – Research a specific concept and its potential causes. Select/develop appropriate operational definitions, develop a testable hypothesis about the behavior and produce an appropriate hypothesis test.

Project 2 – Research a specific concept and select/develop appropriate operational definitions, develop testable hypotheses about behavior and conduct an appropriate multiple regression analysis.

Exams: 200 points. There will be two exams during the term each of which will count as 100 points. No early

exams. No make-up exams. The exam days are noted in the course schedule. The second exam is the final. Exams are mixed form and will last for one and one quarter hours. The final is cumulative. If an appropriate medical excuse is provided I may allow you to double weight the final in place of a missed mid-term.

No Incompletes will be given in this course except for documented medical reasons. This syllabus may be amended or modified in any way upon notice; most such changes will affect the Course Schedule, so be sure that you know if any due dates change.

Grading Scale

Your course grade will be based on following numeric scale, the numbers represent percentage of total points.

<=93	**90-92**	**87-89**	**83-86**	**80-82**	**77-79**	**73-76**	**70-72**	**67-69**	**63-66**	**60-62**	**>=59**
A	**A-**	**B+**	**B**	**B-**	**C+**	**C**	**C-**	**D+**	**D**	**D-**	**F**

Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Dishonesty

All work that you submit for this class must be your own, and it must be written exclusively for this course. Also, any sources consulted for your writing must be properly documented. “Rewriting,” in which a student consults a source, changes a few words, and presents the ideas as his/her own, is plagiarism. Plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment will result at least in an “F” for that assignment and may also lead to an “F” for the entire course. Plagiarism and cheating may subject a student to referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information (http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/).

Classroom Behavior

Proper classroom behavior is expected at all times. Students must follow UCF standards for personal and academic conduct as outlined in The Golden Rule. As a matter of common courtesy, please arrive on time prepared to stay for the entire class, and do not engage in conversation other than appropriate to the material at hand. Turn off cell phones and pagers before coming to class. Food and drink are discouraged in the classroom. Students who use class time to conduct IM/e-mail/Internet sessions will lose attendance credit for that class.

Disability Accommodation

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester. 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.

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

I am teaching two sections of this course: one section meets on Tuesday-Thursday from 3-4:15, and one on Tuesday from 6-8:50. The date listed for each week on the syllabus is the **Monday** of that week.

Note: The suggested exercises are all drawn from "An SPSS Companion." While the suggested exercises will not be graded, I strongly encourage you to do them as practice for the projects and exams. The exercises may be discussed in class as needed to handle any questions.

Week	Date	Topic	Essentials	Companion	Suggested Exercises
1	1/9	Elements of Research Design: Concepts and Operational Definitions	Intro	Intro	
2	1/16	Approaches to Research Design: Generalizations, Theory and Designs	Ch 1	Ch 1	
3	1/23	Measurement: Items, Scales and Indices	Ch 2		
4	1/30	Descriptive Statistics	Ch 3	Ch 2	Ch 2 – Exer 3
5	2/6	Variation, Explanation, Comparison and Control	Ch 4	Ch 4	Ch 4 – Exer 5
6	2/13	Statistical Control for Competing Explanations	Ch 5	Ch 5	Ch 5 – Exer 4
7	2/20	Sampling, Inference and Statistical Tests of Hypothesis	Ch 6		
8	2/27	Mid Term Examination – Project 1 Due – Data Transformation		Ch 3	Ch 3 – Exer 1
9	3/5	Spring Break			
10	3/12	Tests for Interval Data		Ch 6	Ch 6 – Exer 2
11	3/19	Tests for Categorical Data	Ch 7		
12	3/26	Measures of Association		Ch 7	Ch 7 – Exer 2
13	4/2	Correlation and Regression I	Ch 8	Ch 8	Ch 8 – Exer 5
14	4/9	Correlation and Regression II		Ch 9	Ch 9 – Exer 2
15	4/16	Logistic Regression	Ch 9 & 10	Ch 10 & 11	Ch 10 – Exer 3
		Final Examination as per University Schedule - April 24 to 30 Project 2 Due			

Final Exams: Tuesday-Thursday - April 26, 1-3:50
Tuesday Evening - April 24, 6-8:50