POS 3703 Scope & Methods of Political Science
Department of Political Science
University of Central Florida

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor:	Jonathan M. Powell, Ph.D.	Term:	Spring 2015
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I. University Course Catalog Description
The scope and methodology of political analysis. Extensive examination of the discipline, research design, and methodology

II. Course Objectives
This class is primarily focused on teaching student how to answer questions of political relevance. While scholars, politicians, and pundits may squabble over *why* something should or should not be done, or why or why not political beings behave in a particular way, we can all agree on the need to be able to assess these questions as objectively as possible. This class will improve the ability of students to scientifically assess data by introducing them to the basic tools of contemporary political science. Our focus will mainly coincide with three broad themes: how to measure variables, how to assess the association between those variables, and how to make inferences based on those measurements.

In doing so, students will
1. Learn to construct testable (and falsifiable) hypotheses related to politics.
2. Identify and/or construct data that will hypotheses to be tested.
3. Utilize methodological tools to assess the association between variables.
4. Draw inferences from data.
5. Be familiar with the limitations of the tools that they, and other political scientists, utilize.

III. Course Prerequisites
POS 2041 or C.I.

IV. Course Credits
3

V. Required Texts and Materials
Pollock, Philip. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 4th Edition. Sage.
Pollock, Philip. *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*. 2nd Edition. Sage.

Students can purchase a 6-month Stata license for
$35. http://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing-nodl/

VI. Basis for Final Grade

Assessment	Percent of Final Grade
Attendance	5%
Article Critique	10%
In-Class Exercises & Discussion	15%
Problem Sets	30%
Exams (3)	40%
	100%

Attendance (5%)
Students are expected to arrive on time and remain through the duration of the class. Students are required to sign an attendance sheet prior to the start of class. Students arriving late or leaving early without prior notice to the instructor will be considered absent. Students should arrive to class having finished each of the materials listed on the syllabus for that day, including problem sets or other assignments.

Article Critiques (10%)
During the semester, students will read three different journal articles that coincide with a theme or method being discussed in class. Students are required to write a 2-3 page critique of one of these articles. One article will be relevant to American Politics, one will be relevant to Comparative Politics, and one will be relevant to International Relations.

In-Class Exercises & Discussion (15%)
Success in this class will be largely dependent on participation from the students. Though this is not a seminar, instructor-student interaction will be instrumental in illustrating aspects of the class that deserve additional attention in class. After reading (and potentially re-reading) the book, ask about any material that is unclear to you.

On *at least* 5 occasions students will be asked to directly participate in an in-class exercise. This could be an activity designed to illustrate content, it could be a group activity, or it could be similar to a pop quiz.

Problem Sets (30%)
Students will be required to complete problem sets on a near weekly schedule. Most of these will directly from the Pollock *Companion*. Others will come from data assigned by the instructor.

Exams (40%)
Students will complete three cumulative exams during the semester.

Grading Scale

This grading scale assumes students will be good classroom citizens. The instructor reserves the right to penalize students that cause classroom disruptions. In short, a disruption can be thought of as any behavior that is not appropriate to a classroom setting and distracts either the instructor or other students.

Grading Scale (%)	
94-100	A
90-93.99	A-
87-89.99	B+
84-86.99	B
80-83.99	B-
77-79.99	C+
74-76.99	C
70-73.99	C-
67-69.99	D+
64-66.99	D
60-63.99	D-
0 – 59.99	F

VII. Grade Dissemination

Graded tests and materials in this course will be returned individually only by request. Assume each component of the grade will be graded one week after submission. You can access your scores at any time using "myUCF Grades" in the portal. If the grade is not available online, assume your assignment has not been graded. Please note that scores returned mid-semester are unofficial grades. If you need help accessing myUCF Grades, see the online tutorial: https://myucfgrades.ucf.edu/help/.

VIII. Course Policies

Late Work Policy:

As a rule, late work will not be accepted and assignments not submitted on time will receive a grade of 0. Requests for extensions, regardless of the justification, will be given fair consideration when the request is made 48 hours prior to the due date. "Last minute" requests will not be viewed favorably unless a reasonable excuse can be documented.

Grades of "Incomplete":

The current university policy concerning incomplete grades will be followed in this course. Incomplete grades are given only in situations where unexpected emergencies prevent a student from completing the course and the remaining work can be completed the next semester. Your instructor is the final authority on whether you qualify for an incomplete. Incomplete work must be finished by the end of the subsequent semester or the "I" will automatically be recorded as an "F" on your transcript.

IX. Course Policies: Technology and Media

Email

The instructor will make a strong effort to respond to all emails by 5:00 p.m. the day the message is received.

- All emails should include "POS 3703" or another indicator in the subject line that identifies the message as relevant to the class. I will prioritize emails coming from students enrolled in the class. In other words, EMAILS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE AN APPROPRIATE SUBJECT LINE WILL LIKELY HAVE A DELAYED RESPONSE.
- Emails should include a salutation.
- Students, per university policy, are required to correspond with their official Knights email address. Due to prior issues with Canvas, I strongly recommend using Outlook to draft emails.
- Students should first consult the syllabus and announcements sent via Canvas/Webcourses/Email regarding basic requirements (this will usually save you

time). If a change has been made to the course schedule it will be documented in an announcement.

Laptop and Electronics Usage:
All electronics should be turned off and be out of sight for the duration of the class unless the student provides a compelling reason in advance of the class or is instructed by the professor. Using an electronic device for note taking is not sufficient, and growing evidence suggests students recording notes via an electronic device are far less likely to retain information than those who take notes by hand (e.g., Mueller and Oppenheimer 2014). Exceptions will be made only when access to an electronic device is directly relevant to the class (e.g., illustrating the use of software). Each violation of this policy will result in a 2% deduction in the cumulative grade at the end of the semester.

X. Course Policies

Disability Access
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 who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room 185, phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Attendance Policy
Attendance will be taken during each session but presence alone is not sufficient to earn points for this part of the grade. Students are expected to fully conform to class rules and expectations and are expected to fully participate in any in-class activities.

Professionalism Policy:
Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPods, *etc.* **must be silenced** during all classroom and lab lectures. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings. Students who habitually disturb the class by talking, arriving late, *etc.*, and have been warned may suffer a reduction in their final class grade of up to 2% for each offense.

Academic Conduct Policy:
Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. If you are uncertain as to what constitutes academic dishonesty, please consult The Golden Rule, the University of Central Florida's Student Handbook (http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/) for further details. As in all University courses, The Golden Rule Rules of Conduct will be applied. Violations of these rules will result in a record of the infraction being placed in your file and receiving a zero on the work in question AT A MINIMUM. At the instructor's discretion, you may also receive a failing grade for the course. Episodes of plagiarism will result in an automatic failure of the class and I will forward the case to Office of Student Conduct with a recommendation for expulsion.

University Writing Center:
The University Writing Center (UWC) is a free resource for UCF undergraduates and graduates. At the UWC, a trained writing consultant will work individually with you on anything you're writing (in or out of class), at any point in the writing process from brainstorming to editing. Appointments are

recommended, but not required. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at http://www.uwc.ucf.edu, stop by MOD 608, or call 407.823.2197.

Religious Observances
Students are expected to notify their instructor in advance if they intend to miss class to observe a holy day of their religious faith. For a current schedule of major religious holidays, see the Faculty Center's main web page under "Calendars," and for additional information, contact the Office of Diversity Initiatives at 407-823-6479.

XI. SCHEDULE (subject to change)

Week and Date	Topic	Essentials	Stata
1st Week (Jan 12-16)	Course Introduction, Concepts and measurement I	Ch1	Getting Started
2nd Week (Jan 19-23)	Concepts and measurement II	Ch1	Ch1, Ch2
3rd Week (Jan 26-30)	Measuring and describing variables	Ch2	Ch1, Ch2
4th Week (Feb 2-6)	Explanations, hypotheses, comparisons I	Ch3	Ch3, Ch4
5th Week (Feb 9-13)	Explanations, hypotheses, comparisons II	Ch3	Ch3, Ch4
6th Week (Feb 16-20)	**In-Class Exercise & Review Exam I**	**Exam Friday**	
7th Week (Feb 23-27)	Research design I	Ch4	
8th Week (Mar 2-6)	Research design II	Ch4	Codebook
9th Week (Mar 9-13)	Controlled comparisons I	Ch5	Ch5
10th Week (Mar 16-20)	Controlled comparisons II & Inference and Measures of Association I	Ch5, Ch6	Ch6
11th Week (Mar 23-27)	Inference and measures of association I	Ch6, Ch7	Ch6, Ch7
12th Week (Mar 30-Apr 3)	Inference and measures of association II	Ch6, Ch7	Ch7 Replication Assignment
13th Week (Apr 6-10)	Inference and measures of association III **In-Class Exercise & Review Exam II**	**Exam Friday**	
14th Week (Apr 13-17)	Regression analysis I	Ch8	Ch8
15th Week (Apr 20)	Regression Analysis II & Logistic Regression	Ch9	Ch9 Replication Assignment
16th Week	**In-Class Final Exam**	**May 1, 10:00 – 12:50**	