Professor Nikola Mirilovic

Scope and Methods of Political Science (POS3703.0008)

Credit: 3 Units
University of Central Florida, Fall 2017
Tue/Thu 4:30 pm – 5:45 pm
Howard Phillips Hall (HPH) 310

Office	Phillips Hall 311 D
Office hours	Tue: 1:30 –2:30 PM, Thu: 1:25-4:25 PM, or by appointment
Voice	(407) 823-5082
Email	Via the course page on Webcourses
Required books	Philip Pollock, *The Essentials of Political Analysis,* 5th Edition ISBN: 9781506305837. Available at the Bookstore. Philip Pollock, *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis,* 3rd Edition ISBN: 9781452240428. Available at the Bookstore.

Course Description: This course covers the foundations of political science analysis and of statistical testing. The topics and concepts it examines include variables, hypotheses, research design, controlled comparisons and regression analysis. The students are introduced to and learn to use the data analysis software Stata.

Course Goals: Learning the foundations of research design and of statistical analysis provides a number of benefits to students. These skills can be a foundation of future independent research. They can help students assess more thoroughly debates and materials covered in their other social science classes. Finally, these skills can help students become even more informed citizens –politicians often use statistics to try to persuade voters.

Course Design: This course combines an examination of fundamental concepts and techniques of political science research with hands-on practical work applying those concepts and techniques. It is therefore essential for students to regularly attend the class and to read and carefully consider the required materials before coming to class.

Requirements: The final grade will be based on attendance (10% of the grade) a midterm exam (25% of the grade), a final exam (35% of the grade), and lab assignments (30% of the grade). The final exam will be cumulative and include a writing component. Lab assignments will be given out regularly throughout the course. When calculating the overall lab assignment grade, I will drop the lowest of your individual lab assignment grades.

Participation and Extra Credit: You may receive an additional bonus towards your final grade, up to 5%, for class participation: in particular, answering questions raised by the professor regarding class materials.

Attendance Policy: Attendance is required. As stated above, regular attendance is crucial to being successful in this course. Please arrive to class on time: it will start promptly at its assigned time. Late arrivals or early departures count as absences.

Course Correspondence: All correspondence with the instructor will be via Webcourses. I will usually respond to your message within 48 hours on business days.

Make-up Exam Policy: Make up exams will be granted only in the case of an emergency and/or a university documented absence. If exam dates conflict with a religious holiday, please notify the instructor about this at the beginning of the class. I will seek to accommodate you.

Lab Assignment Lateness Policy: the penalty for submitting a lab assignment late is 10 points (one letter grade) for each calendar day of lateness (i.e., an A lab assignment submitted a day late will receive a grade of B; if submitted two days late it will receive a grade of C, etc.). Assignments submitted after a graded assignment has been returned to the other students will not be accepted.

Stata and Computer Lab: Use of Stata is required in this class. Stata is available in the HPH 310 computer lab (our classroom). The information about the hours when the lab is available to students will be posted on Webcourses. Students should either plan to regularly visit the computer lab, or access Stata on their computer. You can request access to Stata (for free) from UCF Apps (http://apps.ucf.edu) by calling the UCF Service Desk at 407-823-5117 and requesting Stata IC 2014; inform the service desk that use of Stata is required in this class. Alternatively, you can rent (for $45) Stata IC for mid-sized datasets for six months at: https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/

Academic Activity and Financial Aid: All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the following academic activity no later than Friday, August 25 by 5:00 pm: on the course page on Webcourses, post a brief description (up to a paragraph) of why you are interested in taking this course. Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid (but this academic activity is not graded and has no impact on your final grade).

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 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 Accessibility Services (http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/), phone (407) 823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone (407) 823-2116, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

UCF Rules of Conduct: 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/).

Grading Scale:

Letter Grade	Points
A	93 – 100 points
A-	90 – 92 points
B+	87 – 89 points
B	83 – 86 points
B-	80 – 82 points
C+	77 – 79 points
C	73 – 76 points
C-	70 – 72 points
D+	67 – 69 points
D	63 – 66 points
D-	60 – 62 points
F	59 and below

Course Schedule

August 22: Introductory Session (1 class)

No readings

1) August 24-29: Defining Concepts and Introducing Stata (2 classes)

Essentials: Introduction and Chapter 1

Stata Companion: Getting Started, Chapter 1

NOTE: Thursday, August 31: no class - professor attending a conference

2) September 5-14: Variables (4 classes)

Essentials: Chapter 2

Stata Companion: Chapter 2

Stata Companion: Chapter 3

3) September 19-28: Explanations, Hypotheses, and Comparisons (4 classes)

Essentials: Chapter 3

Stata Companion: Chapter 4

October 3: Midterm review

October 5: Midterm exam

5) October 10-12: Research Design (2 classes)

Essentials: Chapter 4

6) October 17-26: Controlled Comparisons (4 classes)

Essentials: Chapter 5

Stata Companion: Chapter 5

8) October 31-November 2: Foundations of Inference (2 classes)

Essentials: Chapter 6

9) November 7-9: Statistical Significance and Inferences about Sample Means (2 classes)

Essentials: Chapter 7

Stata Companion: Chapter 6

12) November 14-28: Regression Analysis (4 classes)

Essentials: Chapter 8

Stata Companion: Chapter 8

Note: Thursday, November 23: Thanksgiving – no class

November 30: Final Review

Final Exam: Thursday, December 7, 4:00 pm – 6:50 pm. Location: HPH 310 (our classroom).

Note: This syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion if necessary, in which case an updated syllabus will be posted on Webcourses.