Course Syllabus

University of Central Florida

College of Sciences

Department of Political Science

POS 3703.0005 - SCOPE & METHODS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE (Credit: 3 Units)

Fall 2018 (Tue/Thu 4:30 PM - 17:45 PM HPH 310)

Instructor	Zlatin Mitkov
Office	Room 313 Phillips Hall
Office hours	Tuesday and Thursday 09:00 AM – 11:00 AM, or by appointment.
Main office phone	407-823-2608
Instructor E-Mail	zlatinmitkov@knights.ucf.edu
Correspondence	The way to communicate with your instructor and TA will be via Canvas of Webcourses@UCF. Please use Inbox, which is the global communication function in Canvas. I will typically respond within two business days during weekdays. Please note that university policy prohibits the instructor from replying if an email is sent and received through Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo Mail, etc.
Textbooks	Required:Philip Pollock, The Essentials of Political Analysis, either 5th or 4th Edition. Recommended: Philip Pollock, A Stata Companion to Political Analysis, 3rd Edition.
Classroom	HPH 310 (Howards Philips Hall) - Main computer lab

IMPORTANT!!! - New Policy Regarding Your Financial Aid

All faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. To receive the earliest financial aid disbursement, you MUST complete the non-credit assignment of syllabus quiz (can be found in Quizzes on webcourse@UCF) during the first week of class. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

Course Description.

In this course, we will explore the mechanics of analytical research design and methodology in contemporary political science. Particularly, we will focus on the issues of measurement, research design and empirical analysis. We will also evaluate what are the acceptable and valid means to accumulate our findings and knowledge in the scientifically testable forms. The students will learn how to manage and perform data analysis with the STATA statistical software.

Course Goals

The course aims to introduce students to the process of working with datasets, developing testable and falsifiable theories and hypotheses, aided by statistical analysis software. The course has four goals:

1. That each student to be able to understand and ask important empirical and scientifically answerable questions in political science;
2. That each student be able to transform a statement to a question and then to a testable hypothesis;
3. That each student has basic understanding of a variety of alternative strategies for testing that hypothesis and whether one is better suited to a question than another;
4. That each student be able to use these designs with his/her statistical skills in an effective way.

Catalog Description

POS 3703 - Scope and Methods of Political Science

Class Hours: 3
Lab and Field Work Hours: 0
Contact Hours: 3
Prerequisite(s): None. Corequisite(s): None. Prerequisite(s) or Corequisite(s): POS 2041 or C.I.

The scope and methodology of political analysis. Extensive examination of the discipline, research design and methodology. *Fall, Spring*

Course Design

The techniques of analytical research methods are imparted principally through taking classes and doing problem sets, rather than independent reading. Therefore, the course materials are structured in such a way that a student who has performed well in the classes will be well-prepared for the

exams and the take-home open book assignments. The exams and assignments will consist of required questions based on the textbook and lecture notes.

The classes combine 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 that students regularly attend the class, to read, and carefully consider the required materials before the class.

The class assignments and workshops (labs) will be on STATA, a general-purpose professional statistical software package, for data analysis in this course. I will assume that you have no prior experience with this software but a basic knowledge of MS Office (Specifically Excel) is required to facilitate your implementation of the tasks required in the course. To complete the take-home assignments using STATA, you must use PCs in the HPH 310 computer lab OR purchase the software and install it on your own PC or laptop.

You can purchase Stata at:

https://www.stata.com/order/dl/

The recommended version is Stata/IC 15 (Intercooled, the base model). Please note that the price is approximately $ 200 **for a lifelong subscription**. Despite the relatively high price of STATA, it will be of use in most fields of social science.

** IMPORTANT!! Please be advised not to purchase Small Stata because it cannot handle the large datasets we will use in class.

Additionally, you can use STATA (without paying for it) through the UCF apps platform but in order to do that you need to go to https://apps.ucf.edu/ and request it access by clicking – **submit a ticket** citing the class name, instructor of the class and code of the class (see above).

Class Relevant Discussions

The Webcourses site of Canvas has a discussion board. This board provides an opportunity to post questions regarding the course material and computing on STATA. In addition to precepts and o□ce hours, please use this board on the course website when asking questions about lectures, problem sets, and other course materials. Such mode of communication will allow students to see other students' questions and learn from them. I will regularly check the board and answer the questions posted, although everyone else is also encouraged to contribute to the discussion. Do not email your questions directly to me unless they are of personal nature because you will only receive a short message telling you to post the general question into the discussion board so that the entire class can benefit from the information.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is fundamental to your success in the class. The material covered in this course is cumulative. If you do not keep up, you will quickly find yourself too far behind to catch up.

You should arrive to class on time: it will start promptly at its assigned time. Do not leave early. Late arrivals and early departures may count as absences (or at the course instructor's discretion, partial attendance may result in). For further information, please refer to UCF Academic Regulations and Procedures (http://catalog.ucf.edu/policies/academic-regulations).

Make-up Exam & Assignment Policy

Make-up exams and assignments will be granted only in the case of an emergency (only for documented reasons) and/or a university documented absence. University policy allows me to investigate the claims and make sure the documents are original. If such documentation is provided, it is up to the instructor's discretion to grant a make-up exam or to excuse the student from taking the exam without penalty.

If exam or assignment dates conflict with a religious holiday, please notify the instructor about this at the beginning of the class. I will seek to accommodate you. For further information please refer to UCF Academic Regulations and Procedures (http://catalog.ucf.edu/policies/academic-regulations).

An assignment for an extra credit for a maximum of 5 points could be given if the instructor of the course decides that to be necessary.

Requirements

Your course grade will be based on three components:

- **Attendance (frequency & quality) 10 percent.** Attendance is required. This course will move fast; you will become confused if you do not attend regularly. Late arrivals and early departures may count as absences (or at the course instructor's discretion, partial attendance may result in). The frequency and quality of participation in the classroom will be carefully recorded and reflected in the final grades. Please note that if a student is warned four or more times that he or she violates the in-class behavior rules points will be deducted from the final grade.
- **Two Take-Home Assignments 40 percent.** You will be given two regular assignments during the term. The homework assignments will include a number of theoretical questions as well as statistical computing exercises using STATA. Each student is to attempt all problems individually before the assigned date. The penalty for submitting a lab assignment late is 10 points (one letter grade approximately) for each calendar day of lateness. You may work together on all homework assignments, but your final product must be your own. I will not accept a written answer which is practically identical to another student in the class.
- **Two In-Class Exams 50 percent.** You will be given two "In-Class" midterm and final exams covering the topics discussed in class. The exams follow the homework assignments closely. On the two in-class exams you are not asked to run STATA program during the exams because I will provide the results of STATA analysis and ask you to interpret them with statistically. The final would be a unit-exam that includes only material since the midterm exam. The final exam will not require you to use STATA in class. Please note that the exams and the assignments will all be done on UCF or our personal computer. These exams will be submitted through Canvas before you leave the classroom.

UCF Accessibility services

University provides access to persons with disabilities. Please contact Student Disability Services, before contacting me. They would provide the necessary services. Kindly contact Student

Disability Services, Ferrell Commons Room 132, phone 407-823-2371. Also, the syllabus can be made available in alternate formats upon request

Academic Integrity Statement

You should be aware that the university has zero tolerance policy for plagiarism or unseemly conduct such as cheating or helping someone to cheat or complicit in cheating. If anyone found caught cheating, the letter grade of F will be given as a penalty and other possible consequences and disciplinary actions will be pursued. Kindly follow UCF's Golden Rule on Plagiarism. UCF's Golden Rule defines plagiarism as follows: whereby another's work is used or appropriated without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.

Emergency Services and Support

Kindly follow the emergency alerts from UCF Alert for any emergencies in the campus. Also, visit the UCF Emergency Guide for further information of emergency procedures. Students can use Emergency Blue Light Phones inside the campus to report any sort of emergency. Kindly follow the Emergency Guide in times of crisis.

Link: http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide/full_with_borders.pdf

To stay informed about emergency situations, students can sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to <https://my.ucf.edu> and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the toolbar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on the Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert", fill out the information, including e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."

Students with special needs related to emergency situations should speak with their instructors outside of class.

Accommodations for Active Duty Military Students

Students who may have to perform active military duty will be excused from attendance, assignments, and exams. Kindly let me know if you might miss classes or tests for active duty deployment. We can work out flexible dates for the missed assignments and tests.

Professionalism Policy

Per university policy and classroom etiquette; mobile phones, iPads, etc. must be silenced during all classroom and lab sessions. Those not heeding this rule will be asked to leave the classroom/lab immediately so as to not disrupt the learning environment. Please arrive on time for all class meetings.

University Writing Center

Feel free to drop by the office for discussion or message me in the Webcourses for any issues or doubts. 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.

Grading

Graded tests and materials in this course will be returned individually only by request. You can access your scores at any time using the Grade Book function of Webcourses. Please note that scores returned mid-semester are unofficial grades. Your course grade will be determined by the following numeric scale:

Course Points Average	**Letter Grade**	
94-100		A
90-93		A-
87-89		B+
83-86		B
80-82		B-
77-79		C+
73-76		C
70-72		C -
67-69		D+
63-66		D
60-62		D-
0 – 59		F

The grades are rounded off in case of final grade. If the total grade percentage is 89.5%, it will be rounded to 90% or in this case a letter grade of A.

Important Dates to Remember

First class meeting: Tuesday, August 21, 2018 4:30 PM

Drop/Swap Deadline: Thursday, August 23, 2018 11:59 PM

Instructor to confirm Academic Activity: Friday, August 24, 2018 5:00 PM

Withdrawal Deadline: Monday, October 26, 2018 11:59 PM

Midterm Exam: Thursday, 11th of October, 4:30 pm.

UCF football game. No class on Thursday, November 1, 2018. TBD

Thanksgiving Holiday: No class on Thursday, November 22, 2018.

Classes End: Saturday, December 1, 2018 11:59 pm.

Final Exam: Thursday, 6th of December, 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm.

Grade Due in myUCF (Faculty): Wednesday, December 12, 2018 12:00 PM

Grade Available on myUCF: Friday, December 14, 2018 9:00 AM

Tentative Course Schedule

On the following page a tentative course schedule is provided. Through the course, I plan to cover most of the text. In addition, all lecture slides will be provided to students as they will contain material that is not contained in the two textbooks. In the event that the instructor needs to cancel class, an announcement will be sent via all students' webcourse accounts (as maintained by the registrar) prior to class time.

Week	**Date**	**Topic**	**Essentials textbook (required)**	**Stata textbook (recommended)**
1st Week	(21st and, 23rd of August)	Course Introduction, Concepts and measurement I	Ch1	Getting Started
2nd Week	(28th and 30th of August)	Concepts and measurement II	Ch1	Ch1, Ch2

3rd Week	(4th and 6th of September)	Measuring and describing variables	Ch2	Ch1, Ch2
4th Week	(11th and 13th of September)	Explanations, hypotheses, comparisons I	Ch3	Ch3, Ch4
5th Week	(18th and 20th of September)	Explanations, hypotheses, comparisons II	Ch3	Ch3, Ch4
6th Week	(25th and 27th of September)	Research design I	Ch4	
7th Week	(2nd and 4th of October)	Research design II	Ch4	
8th Week	(9th and 11th of October)	Review & In-Class Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam: 11th of October	
9th Week	(16th and 18th of October)	Controlled comparisons I	Ch5	Ch5
10th Week	(23rd and 25th of October)	Controlled comparisons II	Ch5	Ch5
11th Week	(30th of October and 1st of Novembers)	Inference and measures of association I	Ch6, Ch7	Ch6, Ch7
12th Week	(6th of 8th of November)	Inference and measures of association II	Ch6, Ch7	Ch6, Ch7

13th Week	(13th and 15th of November)	Regression analysis I	Ch8	Ch8
14th Week	(20th and 22th of November) TBD	Regression analysis II	Ch8	Ch8
15th Week	(27th and 29th of November)	Regression analysis II & Class Wrap-up	Review and study for the Final exam	

*** Note: The content of syllabus and course schedule are subject to change and update at the instructor's discretion if necessary.

Changes to the syllabus, if any, will be announced in class and the updated syllabus will be posted on Webcourse.

Students are responsible for any changes in syllabus/schedule which are announced in class.