Course Number: POS 3703-0W61

Scope and Methods of Political Science

Department of Political Science

University of Central Florida

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Course Description

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

This class is primarily focused on teaching students 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 our work.

Student Learning Outcomes

In doing so, students will

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

Enrollment Requirements

Prerequisites: POS 2041 or C.I.

Course Credits

3

The university policy on credit hours is as follows:

A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally established equivalency that ***reasonably approximates not less than:***

> *One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or*
>
> *At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (a) of this definition for academic activities as established by the institution including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.*

A typical three-credit hour class in a 15-week semester thus requires "a minimum" of three hours per week direct faculty instruction and six to nine hours outside of a classroom environment (***or its "equivalent…"***). This translates to "a minimum" of 9 hours a week during a 15-week semester. Given this is an online class, there will be less direct instruction, with video lectures typically being less than one hour per week.

It is consequently very important for students to commit to dedicating the requisite amount of time to succeed in the class. Between lectures, reading assignments, data work, and individual research, students should be fully prepared to dedicate a minimum of nine hours toward the course per week.

Required Texts and Materials

Thyne, Clayton L. *Political Analysis for the Rest of Us: An Accessible Take on the Science of Political Science*. (Van-Griner Publishing, Cincinnati, OH, 2019).

Grade Calculation

I will calculate your final grade based on the following:

Chapter Assignments (60% of total)

Assignment 1, chapter 1: 5% of total grade
Assignment 2, chapter 2: 5% of total grade
Assignment 3, chapter 3: 5% of total grade
Assignment 4, chapter 4: 5% of total grade
Assignment 5, chapter 5: 5% of total grade
Assignment 6, chapter 6: 5% of total grade
Assignment 7, chapter 7: 5% of total grade
Assignment 8, chapter 8: 5% of total grade
Assignment 9, chapter 9: 5% of total grade
Assignment 10, chapter 10: 5% of total grade
Assignment 11, chapter 11: 5% of total grade
Assignment 12, chapter 11: 5% of total grade

Exams (40% of total)

There will be two exams – a midterm and a final. Each will be a combination of identification, short answer, T/F, multiple choice, essay and file-upload questions. The exams are designed to test your familiarity with the lecture material, reading assignments, and your independent ability to apply what you have learned. Midterm exam; covers chapters 1-6; 20% of total grade Final exam; covers chapters 7-12; 20% of total grade

Grading Scale

A: 94.00-100	A-: 90.00-93.99		
B+: 87.00-89.99	B: 84.00-86.99	B-:	80.00-83.99
C+: 77.00-79.99	C: 74.00-76.99	C-:	70.00-73.99
D+: 67.00-69.99	D: 64.00-66.99	D-:	60.00-63.99
F: 0-59.99			

Grade Dissemination

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 and at time may be in error, requiring revision. If you need help accessing myUCF Grades, see the online tutorial: https://myucfgrades.ucf.edu/help/.

Late Work

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.

Given that students have options for some of the assignments, it is very important to ensure that you are keeping up with the required number of submissions throughout the semester.

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.

Rewrite Policy:

No rewrites are available in this class.

Technology and Media

Enrolling in this course requires access to a computer with the requisite technology requirements (https://cdl.ucf.edu/support/student/technology-requirements/). Failure to complete class assignments due to technical issues will only be excused when the issue can be documented to have occurred due to a problem on UCF's end. In other words, problems with your own computer or connection are not justification for extension.

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 "CPO 6938" 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.
- 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/Webcourses, I strongly recommend drafting emails to jonathan.powell@ucf.edu. Anticipate delayed responses if messaging through webcourses.
- Students should first consult the syllabus and other class materials regarding basic requirements (this will usually save you time).

Course Accessibility

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate formats upon request. Students with disabilities who need specific access in this course, such as accommodations, should contact the professor as soon as possible to discuss various access options. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (Ferrell Commons, 7F, Room 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone (407) 823-2371). Through Student Accessibility Services, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential access and accommodations that might be reasonable.

Campus Safety

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise in our class, we will all need to work together. Everyone should be aware of the surroundings and familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In case of an emergency, dial 911 for assistance.
- Every UCF classroom contains an emergency procedure guide posted on a wall near the door. Please make a note of the guide's physical location and consider reviewing the online version at http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html.
- Familiarize yourself with evacuation routes from each of your classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency. (Insert class-specific details if appropriate)
- If there is a medical emergency during class, we may need to access a first aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those items are located in this building, see http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/AEDlocations-UCF (click on link from menu on left). (insert class specific information if appropriate)
- To stay informed about emergency situations, sign up to receive UCF text alerts by going to my.ucf.edu and logging in. Click on "Student Self Service" located on the left side of the screen in the tool bar, scroll down to the blue "Personal Information" heading on your Student Center screen, click on "UCF Alert", fill out the information, including your e-mail address, cell phone number, and cell phone provider, click "Apply" to save the changes, and then click "OK."
- If you have a special need related to emergency situations, please speak with me during office hours.

- Consider viewing this video (https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk) about how to manage an active shooter situation on campus or elsewhere.

Deployed Active Duty Military Students

If you are a deployed active duty military student and feel that you may need a special accommodation due to that unique status, please contact your instructor to discuss your circumstances.

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.

Turinitin.com

In this course we may utilize turnitin.com, an automated system which instructors can use to quickly and easily compare each student's assignment with billions of web sites, as well as an enormous database of student papers that grows with each submission. Accordingly, you will be expected to submit all assignments in both hard copy and electronic format. After the assignment is processed, as instructor I receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another author's work was used in the assignment. For a more detailed look at this process visit http://www.turnitin.com. Essays are due at turnitin.com the same day as in class.

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.

Date(s)	**Topic**	**Preparation**	**Graded Assignment**	**Web Resources (optional, but highly recommended)**
Intro week, 8/26-8/30	Ch1: The Science of Political Science	Acquire textbook; read Ch1		• "What is Science?" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDQ8ggroeE4 • "Introduction to Political Science" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jQK0Xbfel-M
9/2-9/6	Ch2: Political Science and the Scientific Process	Read Ch2	Ch1 assignment due on 9/6	• "How to develop a good research topic" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXNztCLYgxc • "How to do a literature review using Google Scholar" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ydzerd9FT0 • "Theories in Political Science" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqAZZvfFVdY • "Intro to Hypothesis Testing in Statistics" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VK-rnA3-41c
9/9-9/13	Ch3: Measurement and Ch4: Operationalizing Concepts	Read Ch3 and Ch4	Ch2 assignment due on 09/13	For Chapter 3 • "The Political Spectrum Explained in 4 Minutes" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlQ5fGECmsA • "Reliability & Validity" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ltvDNAsO-I&t=51s • "Levels of Analysis" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WyggsLAGDc4 • "Types of Data: Nominal, Ordinal, Interval/Ratio – Statistics Help" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZxnzfnt5v8 For Chapter 4 • "Using Secondary Data In Your Research" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DPDTZMm911Y • "Collecting Data" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kuyt0u_tFi4 • "Research Strategy: Experiment" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fMSA48fi6yc • "Internal versus External Validity" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RNsal_KrIpo • "Selection Bias: A Real World Example" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p52Nep7CBdQ • "Sampling: Simple Random, Convenience, systematic, cluster, stratified" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=be9e-Q-jC-0

9/16-9/20	Ch5: Describing Your Data	Read Ch5	Ch3 and Ch4 assignment due 09/20	• "What is Central Tendency" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdH5vfobH5E • "Normal Distributions, Standard Deviations, Modality, Skewness and Kurtosis: Understanding concepts" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HnMGKsupF8Q • "Standard Deviation" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09kiX3p5Vek • "The Standard Deviation (and Variance) Explained in One Minute: From Concept to Definition & Formulas" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gpKEfVZlPj4 • "Parameters v Statistics" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaiMKPNS0L4 • "Understanding Confidence Intervals: Statistics Help" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tFWsuO9f74o • "Confidence intervals and margin of error" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hlM7zdf7zwU
9/23-09/27	Ch6: Describing Data Visually	Read Ch6	Ch5 assignment due on 09/27	• "Bar Graphs and Pie Charts" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YgvdxkP7aCo • "Histograms and Stem & Leaf Plots" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2uk-qRKWJj4 • "Statistics – Making a scatter plot" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcgRa0uotXs • "How to create figures in Excel" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DjDaNnlYT3s
9/30-10/04	Ch7: The Basics of Hypothesis Testing	Read Ch7; Study for Midterm Exam	Ch6 assignment due class on 10/4 Midterm exam covering Ch1-6 due on 10/4	• "Null and Alternate Hypothesis – Statistical Hypothesis Testing – Statistics Course" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Qlxt0HmuOo • "Type I error vs Type II Error" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_l991xUAOU • "Normal Distribution & Z-scores" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mai23vW8uFM • "using a z-score table" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=85G_PLBTX00
10/7-10/11	Ch8: Finding Differences in Two Means or Proportions	Read Ch8	Ch7 assignment due on 10/11	• "Testing Differences Between Means Using Excel" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TpD4hD3NeWo • "z-test vs. t-test" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsalXF5POtY • "Introduction to the t Distribution (non-technical)" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uv6nGIgZMVw • "Confidence Interval Two Population Proportions" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lu9olYXnoSQ

10/14-10/18	Ch8 continued			
10/21-10/25	Ch9: Nominal-level Relationships	Read Ch9	Ch8 assignment due on 10/25	• "Cross tabs, chi2 and hypothesis testing Part I" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i79uxRz7tLM • "Chi-squared Test" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WXPBoFDqNVk • "Cramer's V: Calculation and Interpretation" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BROyKPwsxKs • "Lambda" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6LKhn2zv7M&t=30s
10/28-11/01	Ch9 continued			
11/4-11/8	Ch10: Ordinal- and Continuous-Level Relationships	Read Ch10	Ch9 assignment due on 11/8	• "Kendall's tau – Explained Simply + Examples (part 1)" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXVxaSoY94k&list=PLjsHs5EvjqvUPsDaOyGF2_c_u2vm2LTmk • "Math Tutorial: Pearson's correlation coefficient (statistics)" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=372iaWfH-Dg • "Correlation Formula – Intro to Statistics" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RRYb-hgBRw
11/11-11/15	Ch10 continued		Ch10 assignment on 11/15	
11/18-11/22	Ch11: The Logic and Practice of Control	Read Ch11	Ch11 assignment due on 11/22	• "Lecture 6: Spurious, Additive, and Interactive Relationships" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZqTKz-Bj3c • "Complex Experiments: 3 – Main effects and interactions" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1o4CO2mBmgU • "Calling Bullshit 3.3: Spurious Correlations" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNsLcg2GQMY
11/25-11/29	Ch12: Reading Published Work	Read Ch12		• "Basic Elements of a Regression Table: Causal Inference Bootcamp" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5nNOsawCPA • "Understanding Regression Analysis" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPjW2HPTaEw

12/02-12/6	Review		Ch12 assignment due on 12/3	
FINAL EXAM	Review all prior material		Final Exam due on 12/11	