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 2020 (Monday/Wednesday/Friday)

Instructor	Zlatin Mitkov
Office	Room 302 Phillips Hall/The course is fully online
Office hours	Wednesday 2:00 PM - 4: 00 PM and Friday 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM or by appointment. (Note that the office hours will be virtual via Zoom)
Main office phone	407-823-2608
Instructor E-Mail	zlatin.mitkov@ucf.edu
Correspondence	The way to communicate with your instructor is 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 requires all students to use their knights email or to communicate through webcourses email.
Textbooks	Required: Philip Pollock, The Essentials of Political Analysis, either 5th Edition. Recommended: Philip Pollock, A Stata Companion to Political Analysis, 3rd Edition. Recommended: Phillip Pollock and Barry Edwards, An R Companion to Political Analysis 2nd Edition
Classroom	Online Class. All weekly lectures and lab materials will be made available before 9:30 am on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. The lab sessions will be virtual with live questions and feedback.

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 and/or R 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 the 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 understands 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. You can find both the required textbook/s and the recommended STATA or R textbook in the university bookstore under the course code in the storage section. Alternatively, you can use other private sellers if the edition is the correct one.

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 or/and R, both of which are general-purpose professional statistical software package, for data analysis in this course. I will assume that you have no prior experience with either of the software. My only assumption is that you posses a basic statistical knowledge and a working knowledge of MS Office (Specifically Excel) as they are required to facilitate your implementation of the tasks part of the course. To complete the take-home assignments using STATA or R, you must use PCs in the HPH 310 computer lab, the small computer lab in HPH 312 from 8 am to 5 pm during weekdays, purchase the software and install it on your own PC or laptop, OR use STATA on the UCF Apps platform. Please note that in the current circumstances and the online format of the course you need to specifically contact the department's advisor to ask for permission to visit the labs.

You can purchase Stata at:

https://www.stata.com/order/dl/ (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

The recommended version is Stata/IC 16 (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.

You can download and install R and its main GUI - R studio (which we are going to use) on your Windows or Mac. R is open source and free. Follow this helpful installation instructions: https://mirror.las.iastate.edu/CRAN/

**Installing R studio on Windows: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLWaED9jTiA

**Installing R studio on MAC: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EmZqlcKkJMM

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

** You can use STATA (without paying for it) and R 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). Please note that after the first class I will ensure you have access to STATA on the UCF apps platform.

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 and R. In addition to precepts and office hours, please use this board on the course website when asking questions about lectures, problem sets, and other course materials. Such a 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.

Make-up Exam & Assignment Policy

Students who represent the university in an authorized event or activity (for example, student-athletes) and who are unable to meet a course deadline due to a conflict with that event must provide the instructor with documentation in advance to arrange a make-up. No penalty will be applied. For more information, see the UCF policy at <https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/4-401.pdf>

An assignment for an extra credit for a maximum of 10 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:

- **Ten Lab Reports 20 percent.** Participating in the lab work every week is required as for every correctly submitted lab report, you will receive up to two (2) points. The class includes an overall of 10 labs through the course. You can choose to use STATA or R. The penalty for submitting a partially completed lab is half a point. Please note that I will not accept a written answer, which is practically identical to another student in the class working on the same lab session. Your lab reports will be graded if they have been submitted no later than five-seven days after the official lab session has ended.
- **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 or R. Each student is to attempt all problems individually before the assigned date. The penalty for submitting the assignment late is 1 point per hour of lateness. You may work together and collaborate on your 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 Take-Home Exams 40 percent.** You will be given two exams - midterm and a final exam covering the topics discussed in class. The exams follow the homework assignments closely. The two exams will include a number of theoretical questions as well as statistical computing exercises using STATA or R. Each student is to attempt all problems individually before the assigned date. The penalty for submitting the exam late is 1 point

per hour of lateness. Please note that the exams and the assignments will all be done on UCF or your personal computer.

UCF Accessibility services

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need access to course content due to course design limitations should contact the professor as soon as possible. Students should also connect with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) <http://sas.sdes.ucf.edu/> (Ferrell Commons 185, sas@ucf.edu, phone 407-823-2371). For students connected with SAS, a Course Accessibility Letter may be created and sent to professors, which informs faculty of potential course access and accommodations that might be necessary and reasonable. Determining reasonable access and accommodations requires consideration of the course design, course learning objectives and the individual academic and course barriers experienced by the student. Further conversation with SAS, faculty and the student may be warranted to ensure an accessible course experience.

Academic Integrity Statement

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at <http://osc.sdes.ucf.edu/process/roc>. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in

1. Unauthorized assistance: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise unless specifically authorized by the instructor of record. The unauthorized possession of examination or course-related material also constitutes cheating.
2. Communication to another through written, visual, electronic, or oral means: The presentation of material which has not been studied or learned, but rather was obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment, or project.
3. Commercial Use of Academic Material: Selling of course material to another person, student, and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the university and the instructor. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, Instructor's PowerPoints, course syllabi, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, handouts, etc.
4. Falsifying or misrepresenting the student's own academic work.
5. Plagiarism: Using or appropriating another's work without any indication of the source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own.
6. Multiple Submissions: Submitting the same academic work for credit more than once without the express written permission of the instructor.
7. Helping another violate academic behavior standards.

For more information about Academic Integrity, consult the International Center for Academic Integrity
<http://academicintegrity.org>.

For more information about plagiarism and misuse of sources, see "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices" <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9>.

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating
Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, *The Golden Rule* <http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/docs/goldenrule.pdf>. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and when necessary respond to academic misconduct. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, suspension or expulsion from the university, and/or a "Z Designation" on a student's official transcript indicating academic dishonesty, where the final grade for this course will be preceded by the letter Z. For more information about the Z Designation, see <http://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/zgrade>.

Emergency Services and Support

Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise during class, everyone needs to work together. Students should be aware of their 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. Students should make a note of the guide's physical location and review the online version at <http://emergency.ucf.edu/emergency_guide.html>.
- Students should know the evacuation routes from each of their classrooms and have a plan for finding safety in case of an emergency.
- If there is a medical emergency during class, students may need to access a first-aid kit or AED (Automated External Defibrillator). To learn where those are located, see <http://www.ehs.ucf.edu/AEDlocations-UCF> (click on link from menu on left).
- 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.
- To learn about how to manage an active-shooter situation on campus or elsewhere, consider viewing this video (<You CAN Survive an Active Shooter>).

University-Wide Face Covering Policy for Common Spaces and Face-to-Face Classes

To protect members of our community, everyone is required to wear a facial covering inside all common spaces including classrooms (https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/PolicyEmergencyCOVIDReturnPolicy.pdf. Students who choose not to wear facial coverings will be asked to leave the classroom by the instructor. If they refuse to leave the classroom or put on a facial covering, they may be considered disruptive (please

see the Golden Rule for student behavior expectations). Faculty have the right to cancel class if the safety and well-being of class members are in jeopardy. Students will be responsible for the material that would have been covered in class as provided by the instructor.

Notifications in Case of Changes to Course Modality

Depending on the course of the pandemic during the semester, the university may make changes to the way classes are offered. If that happens, please look for announcements or messages in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email about changes specific to this course.

COVID-19 and Illness Notification

Students who believe they may have a COVID-19 diagnosis should contact UCF Student Health Services (407-823-2509) so proper contact tracing procedures can take place.

Students should not come to campus if they are ill, are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, have tested positive for COVID, or if anyone living in their residence has tested positive or is sick with COVID-19 symptoms. CDC guidance for COVID-19 symptoms is located here: (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html)

Students should contact their instructor(s) as soon as possible if they miss class for any illness reason to discuss reasonable adjustments that might need to be made. When possible, students should contact their instructor(s) before missing class.

In Case of Faculty Illness

If the instructor falls ill during the semester, there may be changes to this course, including having a backup instructor take over the course. Please look for announcements or mail in Webcourses@UCF or Knights email for any alterations to this course.

Course Accessibility and Disability COVID-19 Supplemental Statement

Accommodations may need to be added or adjusted should this course shift from an on-campus to a remote format. Students with disabilities should speak with their instructor and should contact sas@ucf.edu to discuss specific accommodations for this or other courses.

Accommodations for Active Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

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. The grades are rounded off in case of the 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. 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

Important Dates to Remember

Class introduction-First week of lectures and instructions concerning the course mode: Monday, January 06, 2020, 9:30 am

Drop/Swap Deadline: Friday, August 28, 2020, 11:59 pm

Instructor to confirm Academic Activity: Friday, August 28, 2020, 5:00 pm

First take-home assignment starts on Monday, September 14th, 2020, 9:00 am.

First take-home assignment: Due date Friday, September 21, 2020, 11:59 pm.

Midterm Exam: Monday, October 5th 2020, starts at 9:00 am.

Midterm Exam: Sunday, October 11th, 2020, 11:59 pm.

Second take-home assignment: Starts on Monday November 2nd, 2020, 9:00 am.

Second take-home assignment: Due date Saturday November 7th, 2020, 11:59 pm.

Thanksgiving Wednesday, November 25th, 2020

Extra Credit Exam: Starts on Tuesday December 1st, 2020, 9: 00 am.

Extra Credit Exam: Due date Saturday December 5th, 2020 11:59 pm.

Final Take Home Exam: Tuesday, December 8th, 2020, starts at 7 am.

Final Take Home Exam: Deadline for submission: Saturday, December 12th, 2020, at 11:59 pm.

Grade Due in myUCF (Faculty): Wednesday, December 16th, 2020, 12:00 pm

Grade Available on myUCF: Friday, December 18th, 2020, 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**	**Substantive** Topic	**Essentials textbook (required)**	**Stata and R textbook (recommended)**	
1st Week		Course Introduction, Concepts and measurement I	Ch1	Getting Started	TBD

2nd Week	Concepts and measurement II	Ch1	Ch1, Ch2	Lab 1
3rd Week	Measuring and describing variables	Ch2	Ch3	Lab 2
4th Week	Proposing explanations, hypotheses, comparisons	Ch3	Ch3, Ch4	TBD
5th Week	Research Design	Ch4	Ch4	TBD
6th Week	Making Controlled Comparisons	Ch5	Ch5	TBD
7th Week	Foundations of Statistical Inference	Ch6	Review Ch1, Ch2, Ch3, Ch4, and Ch5	
8th Week	Review & In-Class Midterm Exam			
9th Week	Test of Significance and Measures of Association I	Ch7	Ch6	Measures of association II. Lab on mean comparisons.
10th Week	Test of Significance and Measures of Association II; Correlation and Linear Regression	Ch7; Ch8	Ch7	Lab on Chi-Square and Measures of Association. Correlation and Linear Regression
11th Week	Correlation and Linear Regression I	Ch8	Ch8	Lab Correlation and Linear regression

12th Week	Logistic regression	Ch9	Ch8, Ch9	Lab Correlation and Linear regression (Dummy variables and interaction effects) Logistic Regression
13th Week	Logistic regression	Ch9	Ch8, Ch10	Lab on Correlation and Logistic regression
14th Week	**Review** Foundations of Statistical Inference; Tests of Significance, Measures of Associations, Correlation, and Linear Regression	Ch6, Ch7, Ch8, Ch9	Ch 5, Ch6, Ch7, Ch8, Ch9, Ch10	Review and in class Work on Take Home assignment II
15th Week	Regression analysis II & Class Wrap-up	Review and study for the Final exam.		Review of Logistic and Multivariate Regression: and research presentation by a PhD Candidate Exam Starts 9 am on.

**** Note: The content of the 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 Webcourses.

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