POS 3703:
Scope & Methods of Political Science
(3 Credit Hours)
University of Central Florida – Spring 2024
Meeting Times: Monday, Wednesday, & Fridays: 9:30 - 10:20 AM
Meeting Location: HPH 310

Instructor Information
Salah Ben Hammou
Email: salah.benhammou@ucf.edu or through Webcourses (my preference).
Website: http://www.salahbenhammou.com
Office Hours: Tuesdays (10-11am) or by appointment.

Course Description: Welcome! This course will introduce you to the world of political science research and how political scientists conduct quantitative research. Specifically, we will focus on the logic of research design, measurement, constructing hypotheses, and data analysis. In addition to learning the logic of research, you will also gain experience in using Stata – a software for statistical analysis – to analyze data.

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

Student Learning Objectives: Students who have successfully completed this course will have obtained an understanding of:

- What political science research means
- How the scientific method is used in social science more generally
- How political scientists conduct quantitative research
- How to analyze data
- How to use statistical software like Stata

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & CORE STATEMENTS

Course Design: This course is a combination of lectures and hands-on lab work using Stata. Generally speaking – aside from the first week – each week will have Mondays dedicated to lectures over the theoretical aspects of political science research and Wednesdays will be dedicated to working in the lab with Stata. Fridays will serve as a review session for both. Students will begin lab assignments in class on Wednesdays and will have until Monday at 11:59 PM to turn in the assignment. In addition, students will have weekly quizzes that will open on Tuesday at 11 AM and will be due on Friday at 11:59 PM. There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. The class is structured as such to ensure that students understand the theoretical

foundations of research while also getting practical experience with data analysis.

Required Materials:

- *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 5th Edition. by Phillip H. Pollock III. *Sage Publishing*. 2015.
- *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*. 4th Edition. by Phillip H. Pollock III and Barry C. Edwards. *Sage Publishing*. 2018.

Grading: Students will be evaluated and graded according to the following scale: Attendance (10%)
Weekly Lab Assignments (15%)
Weekly Quizzes (15%)
Mid-Term Exam (30%)
Final Exam (30%)

A: 90.00-100.00
B+: 85.00-89.99
B: 80.00-84.99
C+: 75.00-79.99
C: 70.00-74.99
D+: 65.00-69.99
D: 60.00-64.99
F: 0-59.99

Attendance: Given the technicality of this course, students are required to attend each class session to succeed. This is especially relevant for Wednesdays as I will spend time demonstrating how to use Stata and working through examples during this time. This is also your chance to ask me questions in-person while working on your lab assignment if there's time at the end of the class to start assignments.

With that being said, I allow **up to two** absences with no penalty towards your attendance grade. Life often gets in the way and the structure of the classroom should reflect that. **You will still be responsible for the material on the days you are absent.** If you need an additional absence for emergency reasons, I highly encourage students to speak with me. **You will still be responsible for the material on the days you are absent.**

Weekly Lab Assignments: Each week, students will be responsible for completing lab assignments using Stata. The assignments will be based on selections from *The Stata Companion* workbook and will be assigned each Wednesdays in class. Students will have until Monday at 11:59 PM to turn in the assignment via Webcourses. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest lab assignment grade.

Weekly Quizzes: Students will be required to complete weekly quizzes on the theoretical aspects of political science research, accessed through Webcourses. These quizzes will open on Tuesday at 11:00 AM and will focus on the material covered during the Monday session *and* the assigned reading. **Students are expected to come to class having read the material beforehand.** Students will have until Friday at 11:59 PM to complete the assignments. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest quiz grade.

Mid-Term Exam: Students will be required to take an in-class Midterm exam covering both the theoretical and lab-based topics of the class. More information on the exam will be provided as we approach the exam date.

Final Exam: Students will be required to take an in-class Final exam covering both the theoretical and lab-based topics of the class. More information on the exam will be provided as we approach the exam date.

Late Assignments: Students are responsible for punctually turning in assignments. However, if students are facing pressing circumstances that impede upon their ability to turn in their assignments on time, I encourage them to come speak to me and I will allow an extension up to one week after the due date except for the Midterm & Final Exam **ONE TIME**. **This needs to be communicated to me** prior **to the due date and not afterwards.** For students who do not communicate with me, I allow a grace period of 24 hours to turn in the assignment after the due date with no penalty **BUT THIS WILL ONLY BE ALLOWED TO EACH STUDENT TWICE (this does not apply to Midterms, Finals, or Extra Credit)**. Anything beyond 24 hours will be marked down by 10 points for every day it is late.

Extra Credit: As a rule, I do not offer extra credit assignments for this course – especially given the leniency with dropping students' lowest assignment grades. **However, students can earn an extra five (5) points if they link their favorite song on the Webcourses assignment by Sunday, January 14 at 11:59 PM.** I'll then comply all the songs into a course playlist, which I'll make available on Webcourses via Spotify.

Additional Resources: In addition to the reading materials, I highly recommend that students visit the following website: https://edge.sagepub.com/pollock to engage with the free online material related to the *Essentials* book. This includes recorded video lectures on each chapter in the book, practice quizzes, and eFlashcards. Although not required, using this resource will absolutely sharpen your understanding of the course material and help your grade out.

Electronic Devices: I have absolutely no issue with the use of electronic devices to take notes as long as you remain engaged in the classroom. Please do not let devices distract you, your peers, or me during a class session. I ask that you keep cellphones on vibrate or silent during the duration of a class.

Academic Integrity: Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at <https://scai.sdes.ucf.edu/student-rules-of-conduct/>. 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.
8. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements

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* <https://goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth

compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Course Accessibility Statement: 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.

Campus Safety Statement: 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 <https://ehs.ucf.edu/automated-external-defibrillator-aed-locations>.
- 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 (<https://youtu.be/NIKYajEx4pk>).

Deployed 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.

Make-Up Assignments for Authorized University Events or Co-curricular Activities: 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>

Religious Observances: Students must notify their instructor in advance if they intend to miss class for a religious observance. For more information, see the UCF policy at https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter5/documents/5.020ReligiousObservancesFINALJan19.pdf.

**Syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. Any changes will be announced in class and on Webcourses.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1. Introduction Week

- **Monday, January 8** – Syllabus Overview (No readings required)
- **Wednesday, January 10 –** What is Political Analysis? (No readings required) o
- **Friday, January 12** – Weekly Review (No readings required)
    - Friday - Academic Activity quiz due at 11:59 PM.
    - Sunday, January 14 – Extra Credit assignment due at 11:59 PM.

Week 2. Concepts & Measurement

- **Monday, January 15 –** No class, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- **Wednesday, January 17 –** Lecture on Concepts & Measurement (Read *Essentials*, Ch. 1)
- **Friday, January 19** – Getting into Stata pt. 1(Read *Companion* Ch.1 & 2)
    - Sunday, January 21 – Quiz 1 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 3. Understanding Variables Pt. 1

- **Monday, January 22 –** Lecture on Understanding Variables Pt. 1 (Read *Essentials,* Ch 2)
- **Wedenesday, January 24 –** Getting into Stata pt. 2 (Review *Companion* Ch. 1 & 2)
- **Friday, January 26** – Weekly Review (Review week's readings)
    - Friday - Quiz 2 due at 11:59 PM.
    - Monday, January 29 – Lab 1 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 4. Understanding Variables Pt. 2

- **Monday, January 29 –** Lecture on Understanding Variables Pt. 2 (Review *Essentials*, Ch. 2)
- **Wednesday, January 31 –** Lecture/Lab in Stata (Read *Companion*, Ch 3)
- **Friday, February 2** – Weekly Review (Review week's readings)
    - Friday - Quiz 3 due at 11:59 PM.
    - Monday, February 5 – Lab 2 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 5. Explanations, Hypotheses, and Comparisons

- **Monday, February 5 –** Lecture on Explanations, Hypotheses, and Comparisons (Read *Essentials*, Ch. 3)
- **Wednesday, February 7–** Lecture/Lab in Stata (Read *Companion*, Ch 4)
- **Friday, February 9** - Weekly review (Review week's readings)
    - Friday – Quiz 4 due at 11:59 PM.
    - Monday, February 12 – Lab 3 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 6. Research Design

- **Monday, February 12** – Lecture on Research Design and the Logic of Control (Read *Essentials*, Ch. 4)
- **Wednesday, February 14** – Lecture/Lab in Stata (Review *Companion*, Ch 4)
- **Friday, February 16** – Weekly Review
    - Friday - Quiz 5 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 7. Midterm Week

- **Monday, February 19** – Lecture on Midterm review (Review previous lecture slides)
- **Wednesday, February 21 –** Lecture on Midterm review (Review previous slides)
- **Friday, February 23** - Midterm review (no readings)

Week 8. Making Controlled Comparisons

- **Monday, February 26** – Lecture on Controlled Comparisons (Read *Essentials*, Ch. 5)
- **Wednesday, February 28** – Lecture/Lab in Stata (Read *Companion*, Ch 5)
- **Friday, March 1** – Weekly Review (Review week's readings)
    - Friday - Quiz 6 due at 11:59 PM.
    - Monday, March 4 – Lab 4 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 9. Foundations of Statistical Inference

- **Monday, March 4 –** Lecture on Statistical Inference (Read *Essentials,* Ch. 6)
- **Wednesday, March 6 –** Lecture/Lab in Stata (Read *Companion*, Ch 6)
- **Friday, March 8** – Weekly Review (Review week's readings)

- Friday - Quiz 7 due at 11:59 PM.
- Monday, March 10 – Lab 6 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 10. Test of Significance & Measures of Association

- **Monday, March 10** – Lecture on Tests of Significance & Measures of Association (Read *Essentials*, Ch. 7)
- **Wednesday, March 12 –** Lecture/Lab in Stata (Read *Companion*, Ch 7)
- **Friday, March 14** – Weekly Review (Review week's readings)
  - Friday - Quiz 8 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 11. Spring Break (No Classes)

Week 12. Linear Regression pt. 1

- **Monday, March 24** – Lecture on Linear Regression (Read *Essentials*, Ch. 8)
- **Wednesday, March 26** – Lecture/Lab in Stata (Read *Companion*, Ch. 8)
- **Friday, March 28** – Weekly Review
  - Friday - Quiz 10 due at 11:59 PM.
  - Friday - Withdrawal deadline at 11:59PM.
  - Monday, April 1 – Lab 7 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 13. Linear Regression pt. 2 & Reading a Journal Article

- **Monday, April 1 –** Lecture on Reviewing Linear Regression (Review *Essentials*, Ch. 8)
- **Wednesday, April 3** – Lecture on Reading a Journal Article (Read article uploaded in Webcourses)
- **Friday, April 5** - Weekly Review (Review week's readings)
  - Monday, April 8 – Lab 8 due at 11:59 PM.

Week 14. Final Exam Review Pt. 1

- **Monday, April 8** – Reviewing Theoretical Foundations (Review lecture slides)
- **Wednesday, April 10** – Reviewing Stata (Review lecture slides)
- **Friday, April 12** - Optional day

Week 15. Final Exam Review Pt. 2

- **Monday, April 15** – Reviewing Theoretical Foundations (Review lecture slides)
- **Wednesday, April 17** – Reviewing Stata (Review lecture slides)
- **Friday, April 19** - Optional day

FINAL EXAM:
Friday, April 26, 2024
7:00 AM – 9:50 AM

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