# POS 6746 - QUANT METHODS IN POL RESEARCH

**Section:** 0001

*College of Sciences*

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

## Course Information

**Term:** Fall 2024
**Class Meeting Days:** M
**Class Meeting Time:** 18:00 - 20:50
**Class Meeting Location:** PSY 0110
**Modality:** P
**Credit Hours:** 3.00

## Instructor Information

Dr. Alexander Jensen
**Title:** Assistant Professor
**Office Location:** Howard Phillips Hall 305E
**Office Hours:**
Mondays from 3:30-5:00pm, Tuesdays from 1:30-3:00pm
**Email:** alexander.jensen@ucf.edu

## Course Description

POS 6746 COS-POLS 3(3,0)Quantitative Methods in Political Research: PR: Admission to a graduate degree-seeking program or C.I. Methods of model building and research design, including conceptualization and measurement of political variables; techniques of data collection and quantitative analysis and computer usage. Occasional.

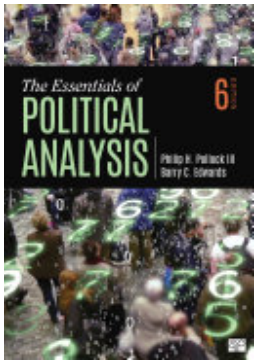
This course provides students with a graduate-level introduction to quantitative methods in social/political research. Throughout the semester, we will examine several observational and experimental designs that are commonly used in the field of political science. After exploring the principles of research design, we will survey these techniques of empirical political analysis and begin engaging in data analysis using statistical software - adding multiple quantitative methods and software competencies to your methodological toolkit, and preparing you to engage in independent research.

## Student Learning Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

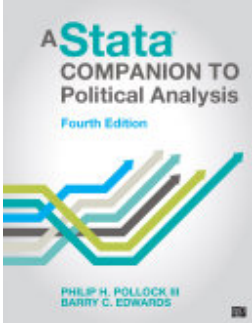
- Identify and explain commonly shared principles of research design
- Engage with and evaluate quantitative political research published in academic outlets
- Utilized newly learned methods and software to undertake original quantitative research analyzing political data
- Understand the real-world career opportunities that are available to quantitative computational social scientists

## Course Materials and Resources

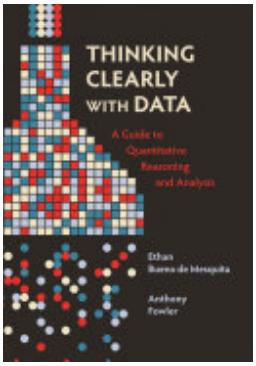



**The Essentials of Political Analysis**
**ISBN:** 9781506379586
**Authors:** Philip H. Pollock III, Barry C. Edwards
**Publisher:** CQ Press
**Publication Date:** 2019-07-18

**A Stata® Companion to Political Analysis**
**ISBN:** 9781506379715
**Authors:** Philip H. Pollock III, Barry C. Edwards




**Publisher:** CQ Press
**Publication Date:** 2018-09-20

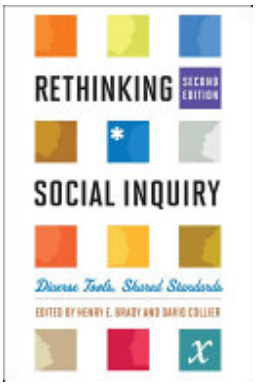


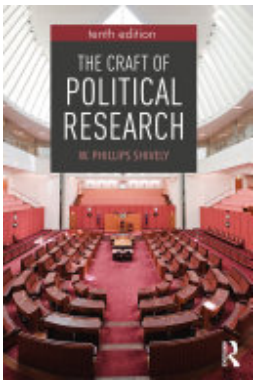

**Thinking Clearly with Data**
**ISBN:** 9780691215013
**Authors:** Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, Anthony Fowler
**Publisher:** Princeton University Press
**Publication Date:** 2021-11-16

## Recommended Course Materials

**Title: Designing Social Inquiry**
**ISBN:** 9780691224640
**Authors:** Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, Sidney Verba
**Publisher:** Princeton University Press
**Publication Date:** 2021-08-17

**Title: Rethinking Social Inquiry**
**ISBN:** 9781442203457
**Authors:** Henry E. Brady, David Collier
**Publisher:** Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
**Publication Date:** 2010-09-16




**Title: The Craft of Political Research**
**ISBN:** 9781351979412
**Authors:** W. Phillips Shively
**Publisher:** Routledge
**Publication Date:** 2017-06-14

**Title: Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences**
**ISBN:** 9780262572224
**Authors:** Alexander L. George, Andrew Bennett
**Publisher:** MIT Press
**Publication Date:** 2005-04-15

## Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

***Class Participation (10%)***

- Contributing to class discussions, asking questions, actively listening to your classmates and professor, upholding classroom standards, and showing up to office hours are all forms of participation that I will take note of throughout the semester.
    - If you have questions that were not answered in class or need further help understanding a concept, please do not hesitate to show up to my office hours (listed

on first page of this syllabus) to speak with me in-person. If you are unable to attend office hours in-person, you can schedule a virtual office hours appointment with me. I ask that you send me an email (alexander.jensen@ucf.edu) and I will reply with a private Zoom link. Showing up to office hours shows me that you are engaging with the material and allows me to get to know you better. If you are in another class during my office hours or have work responsibilities that prevent you from attending, you may request to make an appointment with me at another time during the week. I will do my best to accommodate such requests; however, if you break a scheduled office hours appointment without prior notice, this will count negatively toward your participation grade.

***Weekly Reading Questions (10%)***

- You will submit two questions about the week's readings before class on Mondays in the "Discussions" tab of the course's Canvas page. These reading questions are due by 9:00am on Monday morning prior to our class session.

***Assignments (25% - five at 5% each)***

- Throughout the course of the semester, you will complete a series of 5 assignments focused on different aspects of research design and data analysis. Prompts for each assignment will be distributed at class, with the assignment being due by the next class session.

***Research Paper and Presentation (40%)***

- Over the course of the semester, you will complete an original piece of quantitative research on a political topic of your choosing that culminates in a final research paper and in-class presentation. Due to data availability, I expect that you will all use existing data (like the General Social Survey, Cooperative Election Study, or the American National Election Study) to conduct your analyses. You will submit a brief research prospectus (details will be distributed in class) by Monday, September 30th at class time. In the following weeks, I will provide you with feedback on your designs. The final paper is due by the start of our final class on Monday, November 25th, and you will present your research during our final class that day with a brief 5-7 minute presentation. The research

prospectus is worth 5%, the final paper is worth 25%, and presentation is worth 10% of your grade.

***Final Exam (15%)***

- You will complete a final take-home exam during the University's finals period. This will be a cumulative exam that tests you on principles of research design and data analysis. The exam will be distributed at the beginning of the finals period (Monday, December 2) and due by Friday, December 6th at 5:00pm.

## Grading Scale

| Letter Grade | Percentage |
|---|---|
| A | 94-100% |
| A- | 90-93% |
| B+ | 87-89% |
| B | 84-86% |
| B- | 80-83% |
| C+ | 77-79% |
| C | 74-76% |
| C- | 70-73% |
| D+ | 67-69% |
| D | 64-66% |
| D- | 61-63% |
| F | 0-60% |

## Policies for Course Grade

### Policy on Late Assignments

Students are expected to submit their assignments and weekly reading questions by the assigned due dates. Sometimes, however, life gets in our way. I am a reasonable man

and I understand that sometimes life throws wrenches at us that prevent us from meeting the deadlines that were originally set. If you encounter a situation where you find yourself unable to turn an assignment in by the deadline, please email me as soon as possible so that we discuss an appropriate course of action. For those who communicate ahead of deadlines with legitimate extenuating circumstances, I may consider small extensions. However, if you do not communicate ahead of time or do not have a legitimate excuse as to why a deadline will be missed, your assignment is considered late and can only receive half credit. I will only accept late assignments for 4 days past the original deadline (i.e. if you miss the deadline on Monday before class, you must have the assignment submitted by Friday evening). The final paper cannot be turned in late.

## Attendance

Simply put, you cannot afford to miss a graduate seminar because of the breadth and depth of the material we will cover week-to-week. It is expected that any student enrolling in the course is committed to attending every class session and completing course tasks. Excused absences apply to when a student experiences an emergency (e.g., hospitalization, family death, religious observance, military service, emergency medical provider visit)—any students in this category should contact the instructor as soon as possible to discuss a plan of action to catch up within the week. If you miss a class, you should borrow notes from classmates and book an Office Hours appointment to ensure you can catch back up before the next class.

## A Note on Course Readings

Beyond the two texts that I've required for the course - Pollock and Edwards' *The Essentials of Political Analysis* and Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler's *Thinking Clearly with Data* - all other course readings will be posted as PDFs in our course's Webcourses (Canvas) site. Please ensure that you have read the assigned texts before class. Plan to prepare for our discussions in class by taking notes as you are reading and jotting down questions you have as they arise - posting at least 2 in the Discussions tab by Monday morning before class.

## Contacting Professor Jensen

Beyond contacting me in class or at office hours, feel free to send me your written questions anytime via email at alexander.jensen@ucf.edu I strive to reply promptly to your emails, but sometimes situations will arise where I don't have the chance to get back to you on the same day. I ask that you give me 24 hours before following up during the week and 48 hours before following up on weekends. If you do not receive a response from me during those timeframes, please send a polite follow-up - I would never intentionally ignore your messages!

### Prof. Jensen's AI Policy

Students may not use ChatGPT or any equivalent AI to generate any written part of the assignments submitted in this class - doing so is considered plagiarism. We will discuss responsible AI usage in class.

## Course Accessibility

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) (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

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Rules of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

a. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or

completion of the course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to: plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

b. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express written permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.

d. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

**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*. 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.

## Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on diversity and inclusion, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF’s complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – OIE – Office of Institutional Equity & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

## Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced abusive or discriminatory behavior by any faculty of staff member, contact the Office of Institutional Equity online or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line and can report anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

## 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.

## Campus Safety

At UCF Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF classroom has an **Emergency Procedure Guide** posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID, DENY, DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY.** When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND.** When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive

and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.

- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

## Financial Aid Accountability

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 this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.

## Class Schedule

| Week | Topic |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Monday, August 19:** Introductions and Course Overview |
| 2 | **Monday, August 26:** Concepts and Measurement Strategies<br><br>Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Chapter 1<br>Pollock and Edwards (Essentials), Chapters 1 and 2<br>Pollock and Edwards (Stata Companion), Chapter 1<br><br>*Assignment 1 to be handed out in class today and due by start of class on Monday, September 9* |

| Week | Topic |
|---|---|
| 3 | **Monday, September 2:** NO CLASS (LABOR DAY)<br><br>While we don't have class this week due to Labor Day, you should (1.) read Chapters 2 and 3 of Pollock and Edwards' Stata Companion, (2.) find a dataset with variables that fit with your research interests, and (3.) begin playing around in Stata this week - loading in your dataset, creating a .do file, and completing Assignment 1 |
| 4 | **Monday, September 9:** Comparing Observational & Experimental Research<br><br>Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Chapter 2 and 3<br>Pollock and Edwards (Essentials), Chapters 3 and 4<br>Pollock and Edwards (Stata Companion), Chapters 2 and 3<br><br>*Assignment 2 to be handed out in class today and due by start of class on Monday, September 16* |
| 5 | **Monday, September 16:** Correlation, continued<br><br>Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Chapters 4 and 5<br>Pollock and Edwards (Essentials), Chapters 5 and 6<br>Pollock and Edwards (Stata Companion), Chapters 4 and 7 |

| Week | Topic |
|---|---|
| 6 | **<u>Monday, September 23:</u>** <u>From Correlation to Regression</u><br><br>Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Chapters 6 and 7<br>Pollock and Edwards (Essentials), Chapters 7 and 8<br>Pollock and Edwards (Stata Companion), Chapters 5, 8. and 11 |
| 7 | **<u>Monday, September 30:</u>** <u>Using Regression in Practice, Conducting Original Research</u><br><br>Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Chapter 8<br>Pollock and Edwards (Essentials), Chapter 10<br>Pollock and Edwards (Stata Companion), Chapters 12, 13, and 15 (read 15 first)<br><br>*Research Prospectus due at class today*<br>*Assignment 3 to be handed out in class today and due by the start of class on Monday, October 7* |
| 8 | **<u>Monday, October 7:</u>** <u>Dichotomous DVs and Logistic Regression</u><br><br>Pollock and Edwards (Essentials), Chapter 9<br>Pollock and Edwards (Stata Companion), Chapter 14 |

| Week | Topic |
|---|---|
| 9 | **Monday, October 14:** Reinvestigating Causality<br><br>Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Chapters 9 and 10<br><br>*Assignment 4 to be mostly completed in class today, due by the start of class on Monday, October 21* |
| 10 | **Monday, October 21:** Using Experiments to Assert Causality<br><br>Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Chapters 11 and 14<br>Pollock and Edwards (Essentials), Chapter 4 (again)<br>Pollock and Edwards (Stata Companion), Chapters 6, 9, and 10 |
| 11 | **Monday, October 28:** Causality in the Absence of an Experiment: RDD and DiD<br><br>Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Chapters 12 and 13 |
| 12 | **Monday, November 4:** Project Workshop<br><br>No readings assigned for today<br><br>*Bring 3 copies of your latest paper draft to class for colleague feedback*<br>*Assignment 5 to be passed out in class today and due by the start of class on Monday, November 18* |

| Week | Topic |
| --- | --- |
| 13 | **Monday, November 11:** NO CLASS (VETERANS DAY)<br><br>*Use this week to continue making progress on your paper and begin prepping your presentation* |
| 14 | **Monday, November 18:** Next Steps: Original Surveys, IRB, Research Ethics<br><br>Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Chapters 15-17<br><br>*Final paper due by the start of next class* |
| 15 | **Monday, November 25:** Final Project Presentations |
| FINAL EXAM | **Take-home exam open between Monday, December 2 through Friday, December 6** |