POS 3703 - Scope and Methods of Political Science

Section: 0W63

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Spring 2026
Class Meeting Days: ASC
Class Meeting Location: Online
Modality: WW
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Name: Drew Lanier
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Office Hours

As this is a fully online course, office hours are **by appointment only** via Zoom; contact me via Canvas email to schedule a time

Course Description

POS 3703 COS-POL SCI 3(3,0)Scope and Methods of Political Science: The scope and methodology of political analysis. Extensive examination of the discipline, research design and methodology. Fall, Spr, Sum

Requirements for a Entirely Web-Based Class/Online Learning Orientation

This is a **completely web-based class**, and, consequently, requires a much different approach in terms of requirements than a wise student would undertake in a face-to-face class. Most obviously, there will be no face-to-face meetings and no lectures. However, one should realize that a web-based class **does not** mean that you will be doing less work; indeed, a web-based class will require that a student take a **much more active role** in one's education as compared to a class offered in the face-to-face format. The web-based format will likely require approximately **three times the effort** that a student would on average expend in the face-to-face modality in the same course as it requires students to teach themselves much of the course material.

Generally, I have found that students who perform well in a web-based class are self-motivated and have usually earned good grades (B- or higher) in face-to-face classes. A web-based class does, however, provide students with some flexibility in that they are not required to be in a classroom two or three times a week at a specific time. As those who have taken a web-based course before may attest, this is one of the nice features of this type of class and can make for a very rewarding learning experience.

My general rule of thumb is that students devote **several hours per week to this class alone**. If a student does not reasonably think that he or she can honestly devote this time to class, that student likely will struggle to make a passing grade, especially in this class.

ONLINE LEARNING ORIENTATION

If you are new to or unfamiliar with online courses, I STRONGLY encourage you to complete the online learning student-orientation, available at learn.ucf.edu/orientation/index.html. It will answer many of the fundamental questions you may have about how the course will,

generally, function and how to locate answers to issues that may occur during the course of the term.

[Portions of the above section were adapted from Dr. Jonathan Knuckey's (Department of Political Science, UCF) online Scope and Methods of Political Science (POS 3703) syllabus.]

Student Learning Outcomes

Overall, there are several goals of this course:

- Students who successfully complete the course will acquire a **better knowledge of the discipline** of political science, the broad subfields of the field of study, and the ways by which political scientists go about their research;
- Students who successfully complete the course will **understand the elements of the scientific approach** and how they apply to the **systematic study of politics**. They will understand **why political science is a "science."**
- Students who successfully complete the course will have a **better understanding of research methods**, from data collection to research design to statistically analyzing data and reporting one's results, as they apply to political analysis;
- Students who successfully complete the course will be **better consumers of political information**, which will help them better grasp the concepts of other, upper-level courses in the discipline in addition to helping them understand the political world that surrounds them;
- Students who successfully complete the course will have a **good understanding of the rudiments of using statistical computing programs**, such as Stata, and **how to interpret the results** that are obtained to generalize such findings to other theoretical settings and contexts

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

This course is an **intensive examination** of the breadth of the field of political science and the methods that political scientists use to examine political phenomena. Why do two countries go to

war? Why do justices on the U.S. Supreme Court decide the way that they do? Why do voters in elections choose the candidates that they do? These, and many others, are questions involving politics and portend the explanation of political phenomena. These are explanatory questions that political scientists seek to explore.

"Politics," according to David Easton (1965), is the authoritative allocation of values and resources. Scholars of politics, then, seek to describe, explain and predict various political phenomena through customary and traditionally understood methods of theoretically-based inquiry. In this course, students will be exposed to these methods, and try their hand at formal political analysis, as it is understood in the discipline. Students will learn why political science deigns to call itself a "science" and come to understand what it means to study politics in a scientific manner. They will see how political scientists complete real research and how they communicate those findings in a transmissible and understandable way. They will learn how to analyze data and how to measure political phenomena.

Nature of the Course

NATURE OF THE COURSE

In addition to the online nature of this course, its substantive material will be unlike that of many others courses that you may have taken. It deals with new and unfamiliar terminology and ways of thinking about the political world. We focus here on the methods that political scientists laboring in many of the subfields in the discipline use to accumulate knowledge. While it will refer to substantive findings in several areas, such information acquisition will not be the focus of the course. Rather, we will examine the ways by which that substantive knowledge was acquired, tested and communicated to the scholarly community.

Accordingly, some students may enter the course with a deep sense of dread or trepidation about the nature of the course and its demands. To be sure, such respect for the course is beneficial as it sharpens your attention to the course requirements. However, merely because you may fear the course should not be sole reason to avoid it. Instead, students should confront that fear that comes with undertaking new activities, overcome it and then enjoy the new-found feeling that comes with knowing that you have conquered some new endeavor without fleeing in panic, overwhelmed with anxiety. This is a skill that will benefit students many times over during their lives, I assure you.

Moreover, students will come to realize that knowledge is empowering; that is, one does not take as given information that is provided by others without their explaining the exact nature of that information as well as how it was collected and analyzed. In addition, students will learn how to conduct their own research that can withstand the scrutiny of others who are similarly openly skeptical of reported findings. Indeed, you will have an opportunity to try your hand at designing and executing a study of some political behavior near the end of this course. This is the way of the real world as it applies to political research. It is a daunting, but fun endeavor. Consider a number of political questions now swirling in the political world that are ripe for empirical investigation.

Thus, wise students must approach this course like they have for none other:

- **read the assigned material for each assignment by the due date;**
- **follow the instructions precisely**;
- **do all of the Module exercises** (they are good practice for the exam; in this course, the more practice, the better);
- **anticipate problems** in completing the course requirements;
- and, above all, **ask questions** when one does not understand a concept or idea. *This is especially the case in Scope and Methods*, which has a significantly increased failure rate among students. The Instructor and the course GTAs are here to help you. Please use these critical resources as doing so will help your final course grade immensely!

Required Course Materials and Resources

A Stata Companion to Political Analysis
ISBN: ISBN 978-1-0718-1504-5
Authors: Pollock, Philip H., III, and Barry C. Edwards
Publisher: CQ/Sage
Publication Date: 2024
Edition: 5th
Notes: BUY ONLY NEW COPIES OF THIS TITLE. DO NOT BUY USED COPIES AS THEY WILL LIKELY HAVE SOME OF THE PAGES MISSING. The Companion provides

you detailed, step-by-step directions as how to operate and use Stata. Dr. Edwards has posted links in the Companion for videos demonstrating how to complete the Stata assignments. Use them as they are helpful. Also note that Pollock and Edwards's Companion does not contain the Stata program itself. One must either find that in one of the general access computer labs, online through UCF (at https://ucfapps.cloud.com/Citrix/StoreWeb/#/apps/all/static/All) or purchase some version of Stata. See below for "Accessing Stata." The Companion only contains the data to be loaded into Stata separately. See Pollock and Edwards's Companion for more information.
Online Access: See Leganto

Calculator
Notes: Required Materials Students will need a basic calculator that performs the following functions: addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, squaring of variables and square root. One may be purchased at Walgreens or similar store; students do not need a highly complex instrument. However, if one's phone is able to complete these functions, then one need not buy another item.

Recommended Course Materials

Title: The Essentials of Political Analysis
ISBN: ISBN 978-1-5063-7961-6.
Authors: Pollock, Philip H., III, and Barry C. Edwards
Publisher: CQ/Sage
Publication Date: 2020
Edition: 6th

How to Access Stata

Accessing Stata

There are **three ways** by which to access Stata:

- One may find that statistical program in one of the **campus general access labs**, including Phillips Hall 312. Not every UCF computer lab has Stata on its machines. You should call

and check a specific lab's offerings before you venture out there.

- One may access it through the **Citrix server** made available by UCF. UCF has now made available online access to a number of commonly-used programs, including Stata (the statistical package that we will use this semester). Navigate to this address **https://ucfapps.cloud.com/Citrix/StoreWeb/#/apps/all/static/All.** You will need to install a small installation tool (Citrix Receiver). Download it and allow it access to your device, enter your NID (network ID) and associated password, and then locate and open Stata. Then add the Stata program to your personal apps page to speed this process. This process will take a large amount of time. It is a very slow process. Please be patient as this program is installed and launched. Plan accordingly. I will post more specific directions on the course Canvas site to assist you in this regard.

- You may **purchase a temporary student license**, which will give you direct access to the program if you cannot come to campus or if you wish to work more quickly than the Citrix app, mentioned above, will allow. Stata offers students a discounted rate for temporary periods of use. You may find details about that offer here: https://www.Stata.com/order/new/edu/profplus/student-pricing/. I would **highly recommend that you invest in this option** ($48.00) that will save your enormous amounts of time and frustration. Students may wish to share a license in order to lower the associated cost.

WEB Resource - Canvas Site and Zoom Availability

WEB RESOURCE – Canvas Site

The Course has a Canvas site associated with it. It is an innovative technology that allows the students to interact with each other, post messages to a common bulletin board, take quizzes, and many other tasks that facilitate comprehension of the course material and collaborative learning among the course's students in a student-centered context. This site, however, is a password-protected domain. Spend some time learning how to navigate within the Canvas site. The first Module gives you a basic introduction to doing so. Navigate to it via your my.ucf.edu login, find the course in the Online Course Tools Tab and the Webcourses@UCF Pagelet and then enter your PID and password.

ZOOM AVAILABILITY AND OFFICE HOURS

I have a Zoom account and am able to meet with you via video by appointment to discuss course-related questions. Contact me by Canvas email to schedule an appointment.

General Expectations of You and of Me

GENERAL COURSE EXPECTATIONS

What I Expect Of You

- Familiarize yourself **early in the semester** with the technology required and utilized in the course. If you encounter trouble, seek assistance from your fellow students or me.
- Complete the assigned reading for each week **by the beginning of the relevant week** for which the material is assigned.
- Complete and submit all course assignments on time.
- Check your e-mail and Canvas **at least twice a week**; more often is better.
- Update your e-mail address in a timely manner if it changes during the semester on the class student list and notify me of such changes.
- Notify me if there are any unforeseen problems in submitting assignments within the requirements of the course.
- Actively participate in the learning process. By doing so, you will learn the material on a deeper level.
- Ask questions if you are unsure of something, whether to your fellow students or to me.
- Keep up to date with current political events by reading a good newspaper and watching politically relevant TV/Online programs.
- Follow course protocols and other requirements of the syllabus.
- Anticipate problems/delays in navigating to the various websites referenced in the modules. Plan ahead for problems.
- To learn and have fun at the same time (yes, it *is* possible!).

What You Should Expect From Me

- To be fair, honest, equitable, and consistent with grade assessment.
- To be polite and courteous in my reply to your questions.
- To return submitted coursework back to you graded in a timely fashion.
- To be reasonably available for consultation and advisement about the course or any other academic matters.
- To make your learning experience as beneficial and enjoyable as possible.
- To learn with you and have some fun at the same time.
- To respond to your e-mail messages within 24 business hours of its being sent.

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Technological Requirements

This course is a completely online course. Hence, it imposes on students the responsibility and obligation to anticipate problems that, all too often, haunt humans' use of technology. Namely, computers know when a deadline is approaching and will fail to function as the user wants at the most critical time, causing untold woe and trauma. Read and understand the technical requirements mentioned in the online learning module referenced above.

Thus, students **must**, as a course requirement, take steps to prevent any technological or other problems from obstructing their completing the course exams during the period when it is available. These steps include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Ensure that anti-virus software has been installed and is regularly updated**. If I receive any document containing a virus, I will deduct 10% from the assignment's final grade. If I receive a virus-infected assignment from the same student for a second time any time during the term, I will reduce that student's final grade by full letter grade (e.g., from A- to B-). If I receive a third virus-infected assignment, the student will fail the course automatically.

- **Enable pop-ups from the course Webcourses site**. This will allow you to have full functionality in the course. Do not disable the pop-up block entirely as you will need to be shielded from those intrusions while navigating in other sites.

- **Technical Assistance**: with an entirely online course, there are inevitable technological problems that usually occur at the last minute (**hint: don't wait to the last minute**). If such problems occur, the professor is **not** your point of contact; he possesses very limited technical knowledge. Rather, students should contact Online@UCF Support at (407) 823-0407, webcourses@ucf.edu, or submit a question via https://online.ucf.edu/support/. There are as well many self-help online course resources on the Learn Online Website. You may also wish to post a question to the many HELP! Discussion Fora within the course Canvas site itself.

Mandated Documentation of Course Attendance

As of fall 2014, all faculty members are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course in order to comply with federal regulations involving student financial aid. In order to document that you began this course, please complete the **self-introduction assignment**, on the Canvas Discussion board, by **Friday, January 16, 2026 at the very latest.** Failure to do so will result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid (adapted from a draft statement from Academic Affairs Office, UCF).

Read

Although it may sound obvious, one way to SUBSTANTIALLY increase one's understanding of the course (and, therefore, your final course grade) is to READ THE ASSIGNED MATERIAL. This course is a HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE, where much of the learning is by doing. In order to comprehend more fully the course material, one should carefully read the assigned materials. *This is especially the case in Scope and Methods*, where the course material is not self-evident much of the time. This is particularly true for a completely online course, where **you teach yourself** nearly all of the course material through self-directed work. The Canvas site has a list of suggestions from former students who have completed this course as to how to do well. One of the most common suggestions from them is to READ EARLY AND OFTEN.

Tests (45%; 3 exams @ 15% each)

Each of the four exams in the course is worth 100 points. They will be composed entirely of *very challenging* multiple choice items worked keyed to the concepts covered in the course. They are **each noncomprehensive**, although (to some extent) the material builds throughout the course. *This is especially the case in Scope and Methods*. Each is worth 15 percent of the final course grade, for a total of 45 percent drawn from performance on exams.

As this is an online course, all exams will be administered through the Assessment function of the Webcourses site associated with the course. There will be a **very narrow window** open during which students must complete the exam. Accordingly, students should anticipate any problems that they may foresee in completing the exam within that time frame. Once you open an exam, you will have a **maximum of 90 minutes to finish and submit it**. If you begin it within 90 minutes of the posted closing time for the exam window, you will have less than that amount of time to complete the test. **I will re-open the exam window only under the most extreme, Act-of-God circumstances**. Plan accordingly.

Given the time limitations of the exam window, I strongly encourage you—if at all possible—to take the exam on campus to prevent any connection problems that interrupt your completion of it. If that is not possible at all, then I strongly encourage you to take the exam while connected to a computer with broadband internet service. Otherwise, the loading of the exam's questions will be delayed, thereby costing your time.

No make-up exams will be allowed absent verifiable, documented, exigent (i.e., truly emergency, Act of God) circumstances. You MUST contact me before an exam if you know you will miss it and explain the **truly compelling situation** that prevents you from taking the exam as scheduled. My office phone has voicemail if I am away from my desk. Leave a message if you do not speak to me directly. If you do not speak to me or leave a message indicating your failure to take the exam as scheduled, I will look *very disfavorably* upon your request to take a make-up exam. There are *absolutely NO excuses* for missing an exam and not contacting me in advance. Unexcused exams will receive a failing grade (0 points).

<u>Course Content Modules and Stata Assignments</u> (35% of final grade)

Because this is a complete online class, a substantial part of students' earned final course grades will be determined by completion of specific content modules. There will be two modules due per week, on average, that ties in with that week's topics. The Modules will often provide a brief overview of the topic, list the required reading, and outline specific tasks and assignments. Most of the Modules also provide you a great deal of the substantive content for the course. These can involve researching a certain topic, discussing and debating ideas and concepts through forum postings and, sometimes, the completion of specific statistical assignments. These

assignments are designed to make you more familiar with the study of the politics from a scientific perspective.

Each of the Modules is associated with a PowerPoint presentation that contains many of the key ideas, concepts and terms for each of them. You should download and print these Presentations and take notes on them as you read and complete each of the Modules. These, too, will be of great benefit to you on the Exams.

As there are no formal face-to-face classes, it is incumbent on you to keep up with the readings, modules, assignments and the pace of the course. Getting behind the current schedule of the course is dangerous to your final course grade. The modules are listed in the Webcourses section of the course. Together, they will be averaged into 35% of your final course grade. Grades for each module will appear in the Grades section of the Webcourses site. Students may discuss the graded module assignments with me, or with the Course GTA, during Zoom appointment times or via Canvas email.

As students will discover once they enter the "real world," deadlines usually occur at 11:57 pm (23:57), and not sometime in the middle of the night when, among others, bakers are awake and active. **Some modules have multiple due dates for subparts of the module. Accordingly, it is in your best interests to work on Modules across several days, especially those requiring the use of Stata to complete data analyses.**

Many of the modules will require students to complete, in part, specific analytical and/or Stata assignments given throughout the term, the latter of which are available in Pollock and Edwards's *Companion*. The first of them is available on the Canvas site for the class. These exercises enable students to acquire hands-on experience with data analysis and how to obtain estimates of many political phenomena of interest to political researchers. Problem sets are particular important in giving students practical experience in working with difficult, opaque concepts. *This is especially the case in Scope and Methods*.

The following are rules regarding the analytical and Stata assignments that MUST be followed:

- As this is a completely online course, submit the Stata portion of the assignment (drawn from Pollock and Edwards's *Companion*) via Canvas. One may **either re-type the assignment in a WORD document and submit it via the Assignment**

tool in Webcourses. Or, one can scan it and submit the completed assignment via the Assignment tool in the Webcourses site.

- **Handwritten analytical assignments will <u>not</u> be accepted**.
- **Place your name** on each assignment. Those without student names will be **penalized** by one letter grade.
- **Work alone on each of the assignments. Do not work in groups.** The work must represent YOUR effort alone, not that of others, just as you will encounter on the course exams. Failing to abide by this rule constitutes plagiarism and will be dealt with vigorously (see statement below regarding plagiarism).

I WILL NOT accept late modules. "Late" means any time after the due date and time listed in the Module. Computers and servers always seem to know when humans are working on a last-minute deadline and they take maniacal pleasure in crashing and not allowing you access to websites when the clock is approaching the deadline. The point (again): start the module assignments early in case there are problems. If you come to me with an exotic tale of woe, I will nod relatively sympathetically but point to this warning. The following rules apply to the Weekly Content Modules:

- **Any module, or part thereof, submitted after the due date/time will not be graded. The usual deadline time is 11:57 pm (23:57).**
- **Students may not makeup late modules**, as such assignments require an ongoing, dynamic process among the students across the term that cannot be later replicated.

<u>Research Paper</u> (10% of final grade)

You are required to draft and submit a research paper (approximately 5 to 7 pages in length, double-spaced) that examines some political behavior of interest. It must contain hypotheses connecting a dependent variable with at least two independent variables and how the researcher seeks to explain the political behavior of interest. You may use the data contained in the Companion to assist you with these analyses. More on this assignment later.

<u>Surveys</u> (10% of final grade)

A portion of the Modules includes the completion of **Surveys** that require you to answer two questions about the material covered within that Module: “what is the most important issue or concept addressed?”; and, “what is the topic or concept that bears further discussion?”. Completion of the Surveys earns you the appropriate number of points announced in each of the Modules of which they comprise a part.

The following are regulations regarding the **Surveys** that must be followed:

- As the Surveys are designed to measure your learning progress and assess what concepts need to be emphasize or repeated, be honest and forthcoming in your responses as they are designed to deepen your understanding of the course content and its significance.

- After the due date for the Surveys has passed, I will collate and collect the most pertinent and relevant questions and post answers to them, in the Announcements section, for the entire class to read and consider. They are good ways to prepare for the exams, and not “busy work.” Use them for your benefit. Ignore them at your own peril as doing so will cost you points on your overall course numeric average. Many of the questions addressed there may appear on the Exams.

- Do NOT send blank responses through for the Survey. Repeated violation of this rule will result in the entire class’s being required to send survey responses to me through Course Mail. Past classes have, sadly, tested me on this requirement. Please do not make me implement this requirement.

- Failing to complete even a small number of the Surveys will negatively affect your final course grade.

Do not put the Modules off until the last minute.

- *You should do them as they are assigned, since you cannot control for the internet’s being down, or the site that you must access being temporarily unavailable. I will have little sympathy for you if this circumstance befalls you and you are unable to turn-in your assignment. Assignments do not count until they are RECEIVED, not sent. See above warning about anticipating technological problems.*

If you come to me with an exotic tale of woe about your not having turned in your assignment on time, I will nod relatively sympathetically and point to this warning. If you submit

the assignment through the Assignment Function on Webcourses AND you receive confirmation of its receipt safely there, you may rest assured that it has been properly received.

Those students who have earned an "A" (as that is defined below) immediately prior to the Final Exam are exempt from being required to complete the Final Exam PROVIDED THAT THEY HAVE COMPLETED ALL OTHER ASSIGNMENTS (I.E., YOU MAY NOT HAVE ANY 0s FC MISSED OR UNSUBMITTED ASSIGNMENTS).

COURSE POINT ALLOCATION

In calculating final course averages, the *only* rounding will be up from 0.5 below the grade required in the professor's sole professional discretion based on the student's individual learning effort and trajectory across the term. For example, those students whose file averages are 89.5 *may or may not* earn an "A-," those with a final average of 79.5 may earn a "B-," and so on. I give you opportunities to earn points *all semester long*. Do not expect that I will *give* you any more points at the end of the term. I interpret this clause very stringently.

COMPONENT	WEIGHT
Exam I	15%
Exam II	15%
Exam III (Final Exam)	15%
Content Modules	35%
Research Paper	10%
Surveys	10%

GRADING SCALE (as a Percentage of Total Points)

GRADE	PERCENTAGE
A	90-100
B+	89-87
B	80-86
C+	79-77
C	70-76
D+	69-67
D	60-66

F	59 or less

Assignment Schedule

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	HELP! - Overall/General Course Questions	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 1 - Getting Started	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 10: Inferential Statistics- Making Inferences About Sample Means	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 11: Statistical Significance and Measures of Association	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 12: Correlation and Regression	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 13: Regression and Dummy Variables	Discussion	0

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	HELP! Module 2 - Scientific Method and the Research Process	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 3 - Measurement-Conceptual and Operational Definitions	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 4 - Measurement-Types of Data	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 5 - Basic Elements of Research: Variables, Covariation, and Hypotheses	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 6 - Experiments, Quasi-Experiments, and Case Studies	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 7 - Sampling and Sample Design: Hazards and Opportunities	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 8 - Bivariate Analysis: How to Create and Interpret Cross-Tabulations	Discussion	0

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
	HELP! Module 8 Survey Research and Survey Questions: Peril and Promise	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 9 - Bivariate Analysis: Analysis of Variance	Discussion	0
	HELP! Module 9 - Using and Interpreting Descriptive Statistics	Discussion	0
	HELP! UCF Apps/Citrix Questions	Discussion	0
	Main Discussions	Discussion	0
	Reserve Readings	Discussion	0
1/12/26	Module 6 Survey	Quiz	1
1/12/26	Module 6: Experiments, Quasi-Experiments, and Case Studies	Assignment	20
1/12/26	Module 6: Experiments, Quasi-Experiments, and Case Studies	Discussion	20
1/15/26	Module 7 Survey	Quiz	1
1/15/26	Module 7: Sampling and Sample Design: Hazards and Opportunities	Assignment	60

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
1/15/26	Module 7: Sampling and Sample Design: Hazards and Opportunities	Discussion	20
1/18/26	Exam II	Quiz	100
1/18/26	Module 1 - Email	Assignment	20
1/18/26	Module 1 - Getting Started	Discussion	20
1/18/26	Module 1 Survey	Quiz	1
1/18/26	Module 1: Getting Started	Assignment	0
1/18/26	Module 8 Survey	Quiz	1
1/18/26	Module 8: Survey Research and Survey Questions: Peril and Promise	Assignment	0
1/18/26	Module 8: Survey Research and Survey Questions: Peril and Promise	Discussion	73
1/19/26	Module 10 Survey	Quiz	1
1/19/26	Module 10: Bivariate Analysis: How to Create Cross-Tabs and Interpret Variance in Them	Assignment	70
1/19/26	Module 12 Survey	Quiz	1

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
1/19/26	Module 12: Statistical Significance and Measures of Association	Assignment	60
1/19/26	Module 12: Statistical Significance and Measures of Association - Stata Exercises	Assignment	30
1/21/26	Module 9 Survey	Quiz	1
1/21/26	Module 9: Using and Interpreting Descriptive Statistics	Assignment	50
1/22/26	Module 11 Survey	Quiz	1
1/22/26	Module 11: Inferential Statistics -- Making Inferences About Sample Means	Assignment	40
1/25/26	Module 2 - Scientific Method and the Research Process	Assignment	50
1/25/26	Module 2 -The Scientific Method, the Research Process, and Why Political Science is a "Science"	Discussion	40
1/25/26	Module 2 Survey	Quiz	1

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
1/25/26	Module 2: The Scientific Method and the Research Process	Assignment	0
1/26/26	Module 13 Stata Exercises	Assignment	30
1/26/26	Module 13 Survey	Quiz	1
1/26/26	Module 13: Correlation and Regression Analysis	Assignment	0
1/26/26	Module 13: Red and Blue States Assignment	Assignment	60
1/28/26	Research Paper	Assignment	100
1/30/26	Exam III	Quiz	100
1/30/26	Final Course Letter Grade	Assignment	0
1/30/26	Final Course Numeric Average	Assignment	100
2/1/26	Module 3 Survey	Quiz	1
2/1/26	Module 3: Conceptual Foundations: Political Concepts, Theories, and Models	Assignment	0

Due Date	Assignment Name	Assignment Type	Points
2/1/26	Module 3: Conceptual Definitions and Operational Measures - Discussions	Discussion	45
2/8/26	Module 4 Survey	Quiz	1
2/8/26	Module 4: Measurement -Types of Data - Stata Exe.	Assignment	30
2/8/26	Module 4: Measurement-Types of Data - Measurement Levels Exe.	Assignment	30
2/15/26	Module 5 Survey	Quiz	1
2/15/26	Module 5: Basic Elements of Research: Variables, Covariation, and Hypotheses	Assignment	50
2/15/26	Module 5: Basic Elements of Research: Variables, Covariation, and Hypotheses	Discussion	35
2/22/26	Exam I	Quiz	100

Grading Scale

GRADE	PERCENTAGE

A	90-100
B+	89-87
B	80-86
C+	79-77
C	70-76
D+	69-67
D	60-66
F	59 or less

Policies for Course Grade

I WILL NOT accept late modules. "Late" means any time after the due date and time listed in the Module. Computers and servers always seem to know when humans are working on a last-minute deadline and they take maniacal pleasure in crashing and not allowing you access to websites when the clock is approaching the deadline. The point (again): start the module assignments early in case there are problems. If you come to me with an exotic tale of woe, I will nod relatively sympathetically but point to this warning. The following rules apply to the Weekly Content Modules:

- **Any module, or part thereof, submitted after the due date/time will not be graded. The usual deadline time is 11:57 pm (23:57).**
- **Students may not makeup late modules**, as such assignments require an ongoing, dynamic process among the students across the term that cannot be later replicated.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Do not use AI or any machine-generated program for your assignments. Doing so constitutes academic dishonesty and will be treated as such.

Class Schedule

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

H&D = Hoover and Donovan's *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking* (11th ed. – Canvas Reserves)

Essentials = Pollock and Edwards's *The Essentials of Political Analysis* (6th ed.) (Recommended Text only)

Stata = Pollock and Edwards's *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis* (5th ed.)

Reserves =Material available on Webcourses, under "Discussions: Reserve Readings"

NOTE: Due dates listed here are the final due date. See the Module instructions for specific dates. Allocate yourself plenty of time to complete the Modules. Work ahead of this schedule to prevent your missing deadlines.

Date/Week	Topics	Readings	Assignments
Jan. 12 - Jan. 18	Course requirements Brief Introduction to Stata The Scientific Method Studying Politics Scientifically A Brief History of the Scientific Study of Politics	**Syllabus** **How to Access Stata (on Canvas)** Stata, pp. xxvii-xxxiv H&D, Chapts. 1, and 2 (Reserves) Essentials, pp. xiii-xv, 1-5 (optional)	Module 1: Getting Started (*due Sunday, Jan. 18 by 23:57*)
Jan. 19 - Jan. 25	The Research Process (Deduction, Induction and Theory-Building) Concepts and Operational Definitions	H&D, Chapt. 2 (Reserves) Essentials, Chapt. 1 (optional) Stata, Chapt. 1 (exercises optional, but good to do)	Module 2: The Scientific Method, the Research Process, and Why Political Science is a "Science" (due *Sunday, Jan. 25* by 23:57)
Jan. 26 - Feb. 1	Measurement Validity	H&D, pp. 84-89 (Reserves)	Module 3: Conceptual Foundations:

	Reliability of Measures of Political Phenomena	Carlson and Hyde, Chapt. 1, "How Do We Know What's True?" (Reserves) H&D, Chapts. 3 and 4 Essentials, Chapt. 2 (optional)	Political Concepts, Theories, and Models (due by *Sunday, Feb. 1* by 23:57)
Feb. 2 - Feb. 8	Types of Data Levels of Measurement (NOIR) Introduction to Variables	Essentials, Chapts. 3 and 4 (optional) Stata, Chapt. 2 (exe. 1-5)	Module 4: Measurement: Measurement Levels and Types of Data (due *Sunday, Feb. 8* by 23:57)
Feb. 9 - Feb. 15	Forming Scientific Explanations Hypothesis Testing Null and Alternative Hypotheses The Ecological and Individual Fallacies	H&D, pp. 78-84	Module 5: Basic Elements of Research: Variables, Covariation, and Hypotheses (due *Sunday, Feb. 15* by 23:57)
Date/Week	**Topics**	**Readings**	**Assignments**
Feb. 16 - Feb. 22	***** TEST I *****	**TEST I** (to be completed by **Sunday, Feb. 22 by 23:57**)	**Window will open at noon on Sat., Feb. 21. Plan accordingly.**
Feb. 23 - Mar. 1	Types of Research Designs	Essentials, Chapt. 4 (optional)	Module 6: Experiments, Quasi-Experiments, and Case Studies (due

			Sunday, Mar. 1 by 23:57)
Mar. 2 - Mar. 8	The Theory of Sampling Testing Associations How and Why We Sample Hazards/Dangers of an Unrepresentative Sample		Module 7: Sampling and Sample Design: Hazards and Opportunities (due *Sunday, Mar. 8* by 23:57)
Mar. 9 - Mar. 15	Survey Research and Survey Questions How to Interpret Surveys Challenges to a Survey's Validity and Reliability		Module 8: Surveys Research and Survey Questions: Peril and Promise (due *Sunday, Mar. 15* by 23:57)
Mar. 16 - Mar. 22	**UCF SPRING BREAK**		
Mar. 23 - Mar. 29	Using and Interpreting Descriptive Statistics Describing Variables Frequency Distributions and Tables Measures of Central Tendency (Mean, Median, Mode) Measures of Dispersion Standardized Scores (*z*-scores)	Essentials, Chapts. 2, pp. 39-62 (optional) Essentials, pp. 168-177 (optional) Stata, Chapt. 4 (exe. 1-5)	Module 9: Using and Interpreting Descriptive Statistics (due *Mar. 29* by 23:57)
FRI., Apr. 3 20	***** WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE*****		
Mar. 30 - Apr. 5	***** TEST II *****	**TEST II** (to be completed	**Window will open at noon on Sat., Apr. 4. Plan accordingly.**

		Sunday, Apr. 5 by 23:57)	
Apr. 6 - Apr. 12	<u>Bivariate Analyses</u> Making Comparisons Cross-Tabulations and their Interpretation Graphical Analysis Making Controlled Comparisons Types of Analytical Relationships Cross-Tabulations with Three Variables Means Comparison Analysis <u>Using and Interpreting Inferential Statistics</u> Sample Size and Standard Error The Standard Normal Distribution Standard Deviation and Standard Error Inference Using the SND & *t* Distribs.	H&D, re-read Chapt. 5 (pp. 84-92) Essentials, Chapt. 5 (optional) Stata, Chapts. 5 (exe. 1-4 only) and 7 (exe. 1, 2, and 4 only) Stata, Chapt. 8 (exe. 1-4)	Module 10: Bivariate Analysis: How to Create Cross-Tabs and Interpret Variance in Them (due ***Thursday, Apr. 9*** by 23:57) Module 11: Inferential Statistics — Making Inferences About Sample Means (due ***Sunday, Apr. 12*** by 23:57)
Date/Week	**Topics**	**Readings**	**Assignments**
Apr. 13 - Apr. 19	Statistical Significance and Hypothesis Testing Comparing Two Sample Means	H&D, Chapt. 5 (pp. 92-110) Essentials, Chapts. 6 and 7 (optional)	Module 12: Statistical Significance and Measures of Association (due

	Comparing Two Sample Proportions Measures of Association and their Uses The PRE Approach Correlation (*r*), its Uses and Limitations Regression R-Squared (R^2) Dummy Variables Interaction Effects in Regression Multicollinearity	Stata, Chapt. 9 (exe. 3, 4, and 5) Essentials, Chapts. 8 and 9 (optional) Stata, Chapt. 11 (exe. 1, 2, and 4)	***Thursday, Apr. 16*** by 23:57) Module 13: Correlation and Regression Analysis (due ***Sunday, Apr. 19*** by 23:57)
Apr. 20 - Apr. 27	Review Material and Finish Research Papers Course Evaluations (my.ucf.edu)		Research Paper (due **Thursday, Apr. 23** by 23:57)
Thurs., Apr. 30 – Friday, May1	***** TEST III (Final Exam) ***** **– NO EXCEPTIONS to this date and time. Do not ask, as I cannot grant them.**	**Test III** (to be completed by **Friday, May 1 by 23:57**).	**Window will open at noon on Thursday, Apr. 30. Plan accordingly.** ****** NOTE THAT THIS IS A DIFFERENT SCHEDULE THAN THE OTHER COURSE EXAMS, WHICH OCCUR OVER SAT. and SUN. ********

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can be found on the UCF Student Accessibility Services website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; sas@ucf.edu; Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion about specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

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

1. 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 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

assessment, 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.

2. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.
3. 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 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.
4. 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 and Academic Integrity, 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" designated 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 access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & 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 discrimination by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance via the ONAC

website or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line either anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or by 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 arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF's 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 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 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.

General University Policies

General Policies of the University

Source for these policies: UCF Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning (http://fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/Syllabus/statements.php)

Academic Integrity

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:

a. 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.

b. 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.

c. Commercial Use of Academic Material: Selling of course material to another person, student, and/or uploading course material to a third-party (such as coursehero.com) 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.

d. Falsifying or misrepresenting the student's own academic work.

e. 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.

f. Multiple Submissions: Submitting the same academic work for credit more than once without the express written permission of the instructor.

g. Helping another person violate academic behavior standards.

h. Unauthorized use of computer-generated content, including – but not limited to – ChatGPT or other AI tools.

For more information about Academic Integrity, students may consult The Center for Academic Integrity <http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/assets/FVProject.pdf>.

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>.

The Golden Rule: A Handbook for Students (University of Central Florida) defines academic dishonesty as including cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is defined as "unauthorized assistance; communication to another through written, visual or oral means. The presentation of material which has not been studied/learned, but obtained through someone else's efforts and used as part of an examination, course assignment or project constitutes a violation. The unauthorized possession or use of examination or course related material may also constitute cheating" (p. 6). Plagiarism is defined as the deliberate use of another's work "without any indication of source, thereby attempting to convey the impression that such work is the student's own. Any student failing to properly credit ideas or materials taken from another is plagiarizing. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards (p.6-7)".

Normally, the penalty for a violation of this policy is an "F" in the course.

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 disability-related access in this course 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). 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. 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.

COVID-19 Safety Protocols

I recognize and understand the difficult times that we are all now face. The COVID-19 pandemic impacts us all in many ways, including physically, mentally, emotionally, financially, academically, and professionally. I will work with you on challenges you may be encountering and to provide reasonable support and resources to help you succeed. However, please keep in mind that I will hold you accountable, especially in terms of class attendance, participation, and assignments.

Statement Regarding Masks in Classrooms

UCF expects, when feasible, that all members of our campus community who are able to do so get vaccinated, and we expect all members of our campus community to wear masks indoors, in line with the latest CDC guidelines. Masks are required in approved clinical or health care settings. Social distancing is also a beneficial practice.

Notifications in Case of Changes to Course Modality

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

COVID-19 and Illness Notification

Students who believe they may have been exposed to COVID-19 or who test positive must 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 or have tested positive for COVID-19. Students should contact their instructor(s) as soon as possible if they miss class for any illness to discuss reasonable adjustments that might need to be made. When possible, students should contact their instructor(s) before missing class.

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 having appropriate medical training 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/workplacesafety.html> (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 <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

A deployed, active-duty military student who believes that he/she requires a special accommodation due to that unique status should contact the instructor to discuss the circumstances.

Religious Observances

Students may encounter conflicts between the normal class schedule and their honoring major religious observances. Students are expected to notify, in writing, the instructor at least two weeks in advance of the relevant date if they intend to miss class or miss and assignment to observe a holy day of their religious faith.

Notice of Use of Turnitin.com

In this course, I may utilize turnitin.com, an automated system that instructors may use to quickly and easily compare each student’s written assignment with billions of websites, as well an enormous database of student papers that grows with each student submission. Accordingly, student assignments may be subject to this additional check. After the assignment is processed, I

receive a report from turnitin.com that states if and how another person's work was used in the assignment. For more detailed information about this process, visit http://www.turnitin.com.

[Portions of this Notice of Use of Turnitin.com policy were adapted from "Sample Wording for Syllabus," UCF Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Patricia A. MacK