Why do political scientists call themselves scientists? What can we learn about the world of politics using the tools of scientific inquiry? This course will introduce you to the basic principles of research design, and show you how they are applied to real data by real researchers in the real world to answer really important questions.

We will explore a wide range of methods, including experiments, statistical analysis of large data sets, and qualitative case studies. The readings combine textbook explanations of the methods with examples of how they are put into practice. Through a set of homework assignments, you will be asked to conduct your own analysis of a question of your choosing, using a dataset that we will provide. In order to work with the data, you will learn how to operate a statistics program (SPSS) which is used by scholars and practitioners in both the social and natural sciences. The two primary goals of the course are:

1. To provide you with analytic tools that will help you understand how political scientists do research.
2. To improve your ability to pose and answer research questions on your own.

**Required Reading**

  
  Both books are available from our bookstore, in both new and used editions.

- In the past, I assigned many additional readings in this course, and I discuss them a bit in the podcasted lecture. In order to streamline this course for remote instruction in a very challenging summer, I will not assign them this summer.

**Course Assignments**

- 60% Four Homework Projects (15% each)
- 20% Final Exam (take home, will be due at 2:30pm on August 1)
- 20% Midterm Exam (Tuesday, July 14th)

**Lectures and Discussions**

For every scheduled class meeting, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from June 30th to July 30th, we will take a flipped classroom approach that will look like this:

1. I will post two podcasted lectures, each lasting one hour, that I delivered in a prior version of this class. Each of these includes a set of PowerPoint slides. You can download the slides and listen
to the podcasts whenever you like, but please plan to listen to them before our class discussion, starting on Thursday of Week 1.

2. I will hold a class discussion on Zoom at the address below every Tuesday and Thursday from 1-1:50pm. I will answer your questions, and we will go over the material, assignments, and the course software, giving you the chance to work through problems individually and in small groups. You can participate live, or you can watch the recorded discussions once they are posted to Canvas – synchronous attendance is not mandatory, but by participating or viewing the discussions you will learn key course concepts and keep up to date with logistics.

Poli 30 Class Discussion

Office Hours

I will hold virtual office hours on Tuesdays from 3-4pm at the same Zoom address, below, and by appointment.

Students with Disabilities

We want to be able to serve you well and welcome your communication. Students requesting accommodations for this course due to a disability must provide a current Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter issued by the Office for Students with Disabilities (https://osd.ucsd.edu/). Students are required to discuss accommodation arrangements with instructors and OSD liaisons in the department well in advance of any exams or assignments. The OSD Liaison for the Department of Political Science is Joanna Peralta; please connect with her via the Virtual Advising Center as soon as possible.

Academic Advising

Students who have questions pertaining to Political Science academic advising are asked to reach out the Department's Undergraduate Advisor, Natalie Ikker, who can be reached via the Virtual Advising Center. Academic advising questions often include (but not limited to): add/drop deadlines, course enrollment policies, planning major and minor requirements, quarter-by-quarter plans, department petitions and paperwork, and referrals to campus and student support services.

Inclusive Classroom Statement

I am fully committed to creating a learning environment that supports diversity of thought, perspectives, experiences, and identities. We urge each of you to contribute your unique perspectives to discussions of course questions, themes, and materials so that we can learn from them, and from each other. If you should ever feel excluded, or unable to fully participate in class for any reason, please let me know, or you may also submit anonymous written feedback to the Department of
Political Science's Undergraduate Advisor, Natalie Ikker Links to an external site. Natalie will bring these anonymous comments to my attention. Additional resources to support equity, diversity, and inclusion in our classroom, and beyond, may be found here: Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:
858.822.3542 | diversity@ucsd.edu

Basic Needs. Any student who has difficulty accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in this course, is encouraged to contact: foodpantry@ucsd.edu or basicneeds@ucsd.edu.

Extensions and Late Assignments: Please reach out to me at tkousser@ucsd.edu if you have an illness or documented family emergency. We will work out an extension with no penalty. If you do not have a reason, I will accept late assignments with a penalty of 5% for the next calendar day, an additional 5% for each business day after that. Students will max out at a 25% reduction. I have never seen a paper improve at a rate greater than the one at which you lose points. Stay in touch and we can work out ways to address your obstacles.

Grade Changes: All requests for grade changes must be made formally to your TA, within one week of getting back your assignment or test. Requests must be typed and double spaced, and review of a grade may result in either a higher or lower grade. Due to university policy, no grade changes may be requested on the final except in cases of our clerical error.

Assignments: Each student will be required to turn in four homework assignments at dates to be announced. The assignments will be a combination of problem sets and portions of a research project based on the analysis of a dataset. You must select one of the provided political science data sets to work on in the first assignment, and the last assignment will consist of your 3-5 page report. The report will be graded on both substance and style. Each student must do his or her own exercises alone, subject to university regulations prohibiting plagiarism and cheating.

Reading Assignments

   a. Observations and Expectations in Analysis, Chapter 1.
   b. SPSS Manual, Chapter 1
3. Tuesday, July 7th Quasi-experiments and Natural Experiments & Measurement I: We Know a Good Measure When We See It.
   a. Of Observations and Expectations, Chapter 2
   b. SPSS Manual, Chapter 2
4. Thursday, July 9th. Measurement II: Quantifying and Describing Variables & Drawing a Sample.
   a. *Of Observations and Expectations*, Chapter 4, and second half of chapter 5 (pages 146-159).

5. Tuesday, July 14th Midterm


8. Thursday, July 23rd. Linear Regression I: Scatterplots and Regression Lines & Linear Regression II: Interpreting Regression Coefficients.

9. Tuesday, July 28th Qualitative Research Design I and II

10. Thursday, July 30th Final Exam is distributed, due August 1 at 2:30pm