

POLITICAL SCIENCE 30 Summer 2021 (Draft 6.27.2021)
POLITICAL INQUIRY

'Lectures': Monday and Tuesday: posted in advance

Exception: We will meet as a class via Zoom on the first Tuesday, June 29 to go through class logistics.

'Work-Through' sessions: Wednesday, 11-12:20 (Zoom link on CANVAS)

'Office Hours': Wednesday, 12:30-1:30 (Zoom link on CANVAS)

'Lab': Thursday 11-12:20 (Zoom link on CANVAS)

Assignments due on Mondays (July 5 (or 6th because of the holiday), July 12, July 19, July 26 all by **NOON**)

Final Assignment due by Saturday, July 31, **NOON**

Note: minor changes may be made to this syllabus throughout the quarter (especially the first two weeks). You are responsible for any changes mentioned in class, even if you are absent. Changes will also be posted.

Instructor: Peter Galderisi

Grader: Micah Farver (Th 1:30 to 2:30 and by appointment))

INTRODUCTION

This class will introduce you to the fundamentals of political (actually any) research. We will first deal with the aspects of scientific research--how one can ask questions that can be logically answered--and the use of the 'scientific method' in the study of political events. We will review several common methods of acquiring the necessary data for our answers, discuss the benefits of and the problems with each, and review the basics of standard research design. Throughout the quarter, you will be introduced to the use of elementary statistics as tools sometimes necessary for the analysis of political data. As we cover statistics, you will apply what you have learned by carrying out analyses, using SPSS software, of a data set or sets that I will provide (more on this later in class).

This class will be more interactive than my regular quarter offering. I am experimenting with the 'Kousser Method' this term. It utilizes a 'flipped' classroom approach.

- In lieu of Monday and Tuesday lectures, you will have a series of my videos to review. We will, however, meet on Tuesday, June 29 to go over logistics.
- We will have an open 'Work-Through' session during class time on Wednesday. This will give you the opportunity to ask any questions about the readings and lecture material and go through some examples, as well as prep for your assignments. Consider this a discussion session run by your professor.
- We will meet in 'lab session' every Thursday during class time. I will provide a walk-through of an example for the next assignment that is due. I will then make sure that you can run it yourself.
- Both I and Michah will hold 'Zoom' office hours.
- All Zoom session (office hours, labs, etc.) links can be found by clicking on the 'Zoom LTI Pro' link on the left of your CANVAS screen.

REQUIREMENTS:

I. READINGS:

A. One book is available for purchase (through the campus bookstore or the other usual sources) or online viewing:

Galderisi *Understanding Political Science Statistics: Of Observations and Expectations*

This text is available online through the UCSD library's VPN server (I believe only a set number of pages can be printed or downloaded with the rest being readable online):

<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ucsd/detail.action?docID=1987311>

You will be able to gain access to your own temporary license for our statistical computer program SPSS if you have a Windows based PC or a MAC. Those of you with a Chromebook will need to go the online route. Full instructions will be given for either method.

B. In lieu of purchasing or accessing online my accompanying *SPSS Manual*, you will have access to drafts of my revised chapters posted online via the class CANVAS page. They might not be as neat and tidy, but they should work.

We **STRONGLY** suggest reading the material both **before and after** the appropriate 'Work-Through' or Lab section.

We **STRONGLY** suggest going through the sample questions at the end of each chapter. Answers to all odd number questions can be found at the end of the text. We will go through some of the even-numbered ones during the 'Walk-Through' sessions.

II. SOFTWARE

You will use SPSS to analyze a subset of the 2020 American National Election Study (ANES2016-2020). Instructions on acquiring that license have already been provided.

III. ATTENDANCE AND EFFORT:

A. I can't make synchronous (AKA 'live') attendance to the Wednesday or Thursday sessions mandatory, but I suggest you try to make as many as you can. These interactive sessions will be posted for 'asynchronous' viewing.

Pre-recorded class lectures will proceed in a logical, progressive fashion (much more so than in any other class). Please keep up.

'Work Through' sessions will be geared towards helping you understand the concepts provided in the text and lectures and will work through examples. These will also be recorded for those who cannot attend 'synchronously'.

Lab sections will be conducted in a manner intended to maximize your understanding and complete your class project. These will also be recorded for those who cannot attend 'synchronously'.

B. Hard work and perseverance.

Remember, research methodology and especially statistics are like a foreign language. Without constant exposure, practice, and repetition, languages are hard to master, especially in five (or fewer) weeks. The same is true here. Conclusion? Expect to work hard at the beginning of this class, harder in the middle, and harder still at the end. Payoff? You may actually understand this stuff, and we may all maintain what little sanity we have left (well, that ship may have already sailed for me).

IV. ASSIGNMENTS: To be posted, along with weekly readings, etc..

Throughout the 'quarter' you will work on one research project that will mainly require analysis of a 2020 election survey. I will provide you with the data as well as access to the required software (SPSS).

Unlike my regular quarter edition of POLI 30(D), you will not have quizzes nor assignments for which you will need to hand calculate statistics. Your analysis will all be based on the data set that I will provide. Rather than a series of associated assignments, your work will all lead up to a final 'research' paper that will cover why voters feel the way they do about candidates and why they vote for them. In addition to the data-driven analysis, you will also provide a literature review to help explain why you should expect the outcomes that your analysis provides. All this will make more sense after the first week of class (pre-recorded videos, 'work-through' and lab sessions). Here is a breakdown of the assignments. Only the final receives a formal grade, but you will be docked at least 5% of the course grade for being late on any of the earlier assignments:

- SPSS Trial Run:
 - due Monday, July 5, NOON (or July 6 Noon due to the holiday)
- Descriptive Statistics: median, mean, range, mean absolute deviation
 - due Monday, July 12, NOON
- Inferential Statistics: means (t) tests
 - due Monday, July 19, NOON
- Description and Inference with Categorical Data: chi-square test
 - due Monday, July 26, NOON
- Regression and Final Write-Up:
 - due Saturday, July 31, NOON

A NOTE ON GRADING:

Any request for a grade review must be made to your grader in writing (typed) with a full explanation of why you are requesting the review. Note that any review may result in a higher or lower grade (or no change). I recently actually had a student who requested a change just because they 'wanted it'. Guess what my response was.

FINAL GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

Understanding the difficulty of this class for many, the grade "curve," especially at the low, passing end, is rather generous. A few A+ grades may also be given to the top students in class.

Also—do NOT wait until the last minute to start your work or weekly assignments. We can only help those who first help themselves.

EXTENSIONS on DUE DATES:

We only have five weeks to get through the material. I will therefore be reluctant to grant an extension but there will be occasions when an extension is warranted. To qualify, you must demonstrate a reason for requesting an extension that conforms to university guidelines (documented illness, death or emergency in the family, unexpected military deployment, etc.).

Without such documentation, late assignments will each drop your class grade by 5%. That may seem harsh, but it is the only way I can keep you all on schedule.

The same rules apply to the due date for the final submission (Saturday, July 31, NOON).

"Going on vacation with friends the first two weeks" is not a university sanctioned excuse.

INCOMPLETES

The university grants us precious little discretion here. To qualify for an incomplete, I must demonstrate that you have been doing passable work and you must demonstrate a reason for requesting an incomplete that conforms to university guidelines (documented illness, death or emergency in the family, unexpected military deployment, etc.). Again, the university makes this decision—not me nor your grader.

"Going on an early vacation" is not a university sanctioned excuse.

CLASS WEB PAGE:

All information, announcements, lab prep materials, readings, sports scores (kidding), etc. will be posted on the class CANVAS site. Review it daily.

A NOTE ON THE USE OF STATISTICS:

I will not attempt in this class to indoctrinate you into believing that only statistically-based research is valid research. Obviously, such an undertaking would be methodologically ludicrous. One begins one's research by asking theoretically important questions. Sometimes, and only sometimes, statistics can help us to answer those questions. Statistics are merely a summary tool. They allow us to test whether what we expect is confirmed by what we observe (thus, the subtitle of the text). They help us with our research, but they are not the driving force behind it. Learning statistics yields some valuable results.

First, you will have a greater choice of research questions to ask. You will no longer need to shy away from at least some questions that require statistically-based answers.

Second, you will be better able to evaluate others' scholarly research. We sometimes tend to accept others' statistical findings as gospel, or reject them as trivial when, in fact, we make no attempt to try to understand what the researcher tried to accomplish (hear that, politicians). Ignorance may be bliss, it may even help you get elected to a state legislature or Congress, but it is not academically virtuous.

Third, you will acquire the foundation needed to do advanced work in statistical methods if you so choose. I will be more concerned with teaching you the basic how and why of statistical generalization, than in making sure that we cover every statistic available.

Last, you will acquire or refine a set of skills sets deemed valuable in the real world that can actually make you more employable. What a unique academic concept!

SCHEDULE:

Week 1 RECORDED LECTURES:

A. The Language of Scientific Research: Facts, Concepts, Hypotheses, Theories

- Accompanying Readings:

Text, Chapter 1

Martin Kelly (2015), "Predicting the presidential election with baseball."

<https://www.thoughtco.com/predicting-the-presidential-election-with-baseball-104619>

- For your review:

Complete odd numbered exercises, Text, Chapter 1 (answers in back)

- Guide:

Make sure you understand and can respond to the following:

- What is the difference between a unit of analysis/fact and a property? Between a property and a category of that property?
- E.G. If our analysis required us to measure the age of citizens legally eligible to vote in California:

Units of analysis: eligible voters in California

Total units: all eligible voters in California Property: Age

Category: dependent on how we aggregate information:

Any individual year (46 or 60 or 72)

If combined into groups--e.g., "65 and older" or, if defined elsewhere, "older"

Note: "citizens over 65" is neither a property nor a category. It represents several units of analysis (a complete universe if we are only concerned about these individuals or a subset of all citizens within a certain jurisdiction).

- The nature/format of a hypothesis:

Falsifiability (potential):

- properties are clearly defined explicit comparison
- explicit direction of relationship
- not a value judgment that is "true" based on faith

Not immediately verifiable: *general* statement--not true/false on limited investigation

- safety "test"--do you have two properties (also called variables once we get to the point of measurement) =one implied "independent" (potential cause) and one implied "dependent" (outcome)?
- If not, then you probably have a (immediately verifiable) statement -- t/f on limited investigation.

- What role does a "theory" or "theory sketch" play in hypothesis testing?
 - Theories explain WHY two properties SHOULD BE related the way our hypothesis suggests. Without a useful theory or theory sketch, we may just have an accidental or coincidental correlation. For example, is there any theoretical reason to believe that presidential victories should be influenced (as specified in the Kelly essay) by which league wins the World Series?

B. Issues with Measurement

- Accompanying Readings:

Text, Chapter 2

McDonald, Michael P., Samuel L. Popkin. 2001. "The Myth of the Vanishing Voter."
American Political Science Review. 95:4 (December) 963-74.
www.uvm.edu/~dguber/POLS234/articles/mcdonald.pdf

- For your review:

Complete odd numbered exercises, Text, Chapter 2

- Guide:

Measurement Issues:

- Generally, what is an internal validity measurement problem?
- What is the 'Bradley effect'? Is it an internal or external validity problem?
- Should we now call this a "Trump" effect?
- What is the 'Chicago effect'?
- With surveys, what are the potential problems with question wording and ordering?
- Why might Political Scientists have overestimated the decline in turnout from 1960 on (see Popkin)?
- What is the difference between the VAP and VEP?
- Why is the difference relevant over the time period in the essay?

Levels of Measurement and Frequency Distributions:

- The different assumptions of nominal/ordinal/interval data--examples of each
- The importance of standardization when looking at frequency distributions
- How nominal data can be aggregated into interval data
- How categorization can influence our interpretation of frequency distributions

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WEEK 1 WORK-THROUGH: Properties/Variables, Categories, Hypothesis Formation

- Text, Chapter 1, Exercises 6 and 8
- Text, Chapter 2, Exercises 6 and 7

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WEEK 1 LAB: Data Set and Familiarization with SPSS

—methodology, concepts, formats, weights

- Look over the ANES2016-2020 CODEBOOK
- Opening up an SPSS data file (see 'Trial Run' instructions--CANVAS)
- Running a simple SPSS instruction set
- Walk-through instructions in Lab **July 1**

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ASSIGNMENT (due Monday, July 5): SPSS TRIAL RUN

Instructions to be provided

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**Week 2 Recorded Lectures:
Variables, Measurement, and Beginning Statistics (we will only start this)**

Text, Chapters 3 and 4 (skip section on the IQV)

Central tendency:

- Differences among the mode, median and mean--which type(s) of data can each summarize?
- Skewness and what can be inferred from the difference between median and mean values.
- Why the mean of state figures in the text is not necessarily the same as national results.

Dispersion/variation :

- The meaning of the variation ratio and when it reaches 0, when it reaches 1
- *Do not worry about the IQV—skip this except for your own enlightenment*
- The Range
- The MAD
- Variance and Standard Deviation

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WEEK 2 WORK-THROUGH: Central Tendency and Dispersion

- Handout (next page): 2020 Vote for Donald Trump in the Mountain West
 - work through the items and be prepared to present in Wednesday section

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WEEK 2 LAB: SIMPLE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS and COMPARISONS
—mode, median, mean, range and standard deviation

- RECODES and FREQUENCIES/DESCRIPTIVES with SPSS
- Walk-through instructions in Lab **July 8**

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ASSIGNMENT (due Monday, July 12 by NOON): SPSS ANALYSIS 1
Instructions to be provided

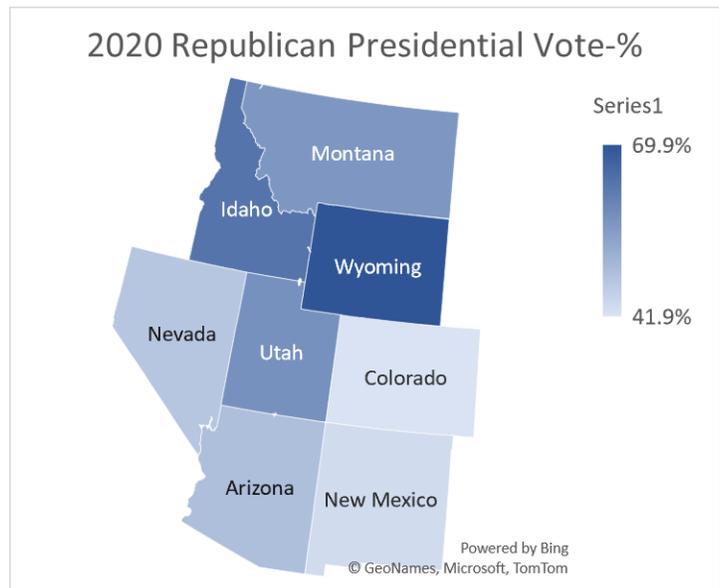
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POLI 30 WEEK 2 'Work-Through'

This is a simple one variable at a time analysis to test your ability to calculate and interpret univariate statistics.

Data: Percentage of the total vote (including votes for Democrats and third-party candidates) for Donald Trump (R). The results are only for the 8 states of the Rocky Mountain Region. I didn't think you would want to calculate 50 states + D.C.:

Arizona	1,661,686	49.1%
Colorado	1,364,607	41.9%
Idaho	554,119	63.8%
Montana	343,602	56.9%
Nevada	669,890	47.7%
New Mexico	401,894	43.5%
Utah	865,140	58.1%
Wyoming	193,559	69.9%



1. Compute the median, mean, range and MAD of these 8 Republican presidential vote percentages.
2. **Interpret** those four (4) statistics. That is, interpret each separately and be as detailed as possible. The statistical values must be part of your interpretation.
3. On the basis of your calculated median and mean, is the distribution positively or negatively skewed (or not skewed at all). Why or (why not)?
4. The percentage of the Republican presidential vote in all of the 8 states combined is 49.6% (actually greater than %Democrat as third-party votes are included). This 49.6% should be different from the mean that you calculated. Why might that be the case (statistically)?