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. You can, and should, also buy them bundled together for $96.

- The other reading assignments are posted on the UCSD library's E Reserves website, at https://reserves.ucsd.edu/. These can be viewed from any computer connected through UCSD’s networks or through a proxy server, and are also required.

- The course webpage, located at http://pscourses.ucsd.edu/ps30/index.htm, contains information such as homework assignments, lecture slides, data, and course announcements.

**Course Assignments**

- 40% Four Homework Projects (10% each)
30% Final Exam (Monday, June 6th, 8-11am, location TBD)
20% Midterm Exam (Wednesday, April 27th, in class)
10% Section Attendance and Participation

**Sections**: The course will include two weekly lectures and one discussion section. Please complete all readings and be prepared to discuss them in section each week. Students are responsible for both the information presented in class and in the readings, so please attend regularly. **In Week 4 (April 18-22)**, your sections will meet in Sequoyah Hall 142’s computer lab.

**Exams**: There will be an in-class midterm on Wednesday, April 27th, as well as a final exam on Monday, June 6th. The final will be comprehensive, but will feature topics from the second half of the course more prominently. All exams will be closed book, and composed of short answers, identifications, true-false, math problems, and essays. Since the emphasis of statistical questions will be on understanding and interpretation, calculators will not be permitted (or needed).

**Grade Changes and Extensions**: 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. Extensions on assignments and make-up exams will only be granted in cases of documented illness or family medical emergencies. Please contact your teaching assistant as soon as possible if you need to request one. We will return your assignments in a timely fashion in section, and you are responsible for picking them up in section to confirm that we did in fact receive and grade them. Due to university policy, no grade changes may be requested on the final except in cases of our clerical error. (Note: We will not grant any extensions because stolen or damaged computers. This does happen, so you should be in the habit of using the Dropbox or another free cloud service to back up all of your work automatically whenever you save it so that you never lose it).

**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.

**Teaching Assistant Office Hours**: You are free to meet with any and all of the teaching assistants, and here is a list of their office hours:
- Mona Vakilifathi: Mondays from 11:30-1:30, SSB 448.
- Yunkyu Sohn: Tuesdays, 1-3pm in SSB 345.
- Heidi McNamara: Wednesdays from 11-1, SSB 343.
- Will Hobbs: Thursdays from 2-4, SSB 345.

**Peer Teaching Assistant**: We are also very lucky to have an experience peer teaching assistant, Hannah Yim, who will hold office hours in the Sequoyah 142 computer lab on Tuesdays from 12:30-1:45, in order to help teach you how to use SPSS. The earlier in the quarter you visit her, the more one-on-one time you will get!
Reading Assignments

Part I. Exploring Causal Hypotheses

   a. No reading assigned.

   a. Observations and Expectations in Analysis, Chapter 1.


Part II. Describing and Collecting Data

   a. Observations and Expectations in Analysis, Chapter 2
   b. SPSS Manual, Chapters 1 and 2

   a. Observations and Expectations in Analysis Chapter 4, SPSS Manual, 49-62

8. Wednesday, April 20. Drawing a Sample.


10. Wednesday, April 27. Midterm, in class.

Part III. Testing Causal Hypotheses


   a. Observations and Expectations in Analysis, Chapter 8.

   a. Observations and Expectations in Analysis, Chapters 11-12.


17. Monday, May 23. Qualitative Research Design I.

18. Wednesday, May 25. Qualitative Research Design II.