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 University Readers. The price for *Of Observations* is $27.95 digital or $36.95 printed, and the *SPSS Manual* is $18.95 digital or $28.95 print. I would *strongly suggest* that you buy printed copies, but, then again, I’m *old*.

- The other reading assignments are posted on the UCSD library’s E Reserves website, at [http://reserves.ucsd.edu](http://reserves.ucsd.edu). These can be viewed from any computer connected through UCSD’s networks or through a proxy server, and are also required. In order to access them, you will need the password: tk30.

- The course webpage, located at [http://pscourses.ucsd.edu/ps30/ps30.htm](http://pscourses.ucsd.edu/ps30/ps30.htm), will contain information such as homework assignments, lecture slides, data, and course announcements.

**Course Assignments**

- 40% Four Homework Projects (10% each)
- 30% Final Exam (Wednesday, March 19th, 11:30am-2:29pm)
- 20% Midterm Exam (Monday, February 10th, 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 (Jan 29-31), your sections will meet in Sequoyah Hall 142's computer lab.**

Exams: There will be an in-class midterm on Monday, February 10th, as well as a final exam on Monday, March 14th. 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.

Reading Assignments

*Part I. Exploring Causal Hypotheses*

   a. No reading assigned.


5. Wednesday, January 22. Quasi-experiments: Good Enough for Social Science.

Part II. Describing and Collecting Data

   a. *Of Observations and Expectations*, Chapter 2

   a. *Of Observations and Expectations*, Chapter 4, and second half of chapter 5 (pages 146-159).
   b. *SPSS Manual*, 37-60


Part III. Testing Causal Hypotheses


    b. *SPSS Manual*, pages 60-70
   b. Wolfinger and Rosenstone, Chapter 2 of *Who Votes?* Yale University Press, 1980, especially Tables 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6.


17. Monday, March 10. Qualitative Research Design I.

18. Wednesday, March 12. Qualitative Research Design II.