

POLI 30D Winter 2022 DRAFT (1.2.22)

INTRODUCTION

In this class, we will learn how to pose an interesting question, how to narrow it for purposes of research, how to devise creative ways of getting the information pertaining to the question, and how to analyze the information gathered. With the objective of developing these skills, we will review (in order to learn by example) the methodology, the methods, and the statistical and computer-based tools employed by political (and other) scientists to study political events and relationships.

REQUIREMENTS

I. FOLLOW the COURSE:

In addition to this syllabus, I will be posting in the course MODULES (and on the CANVAS Home Page and through ANNOUNCEMENTS) the material and questions we will cover each week.

I. READINGS

- One book is required:

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

As I am revising the SPSS Manual that accompanies the text, I will (courtesy of my publisher who owns the copyright) provide you with free edited pages of the instructions that you will need.

This text is available at the Bookstore (and elsewhere). They can be rented for a lower cost through several services, including Amazon. It should also be available online through the UCSD library server.

Note: All royalty proceeds from the sale or rental of these books to my own students are placed in a student fund.

- Several readings will also be required and are listed later in this syllabus and MODULES with their respective URLs. A few others will be added. Some can be accessed directly through an internet link. For others, you must access them by way of the VPN connection. The section instructors will assist you with this in the first week of section.

Guides for configuring a VPN for your operating system of choice can be found at the following URL. If you choose the 'all thru' option, make sure that you disconnect from that VPN once you are finished with your course work:

<https://blink.ucsd.edu/technology/network/connections/off-campus/VPN/index.html>

II. CLASS PARTICIPATION and 'ATTENDANCE'

- I never take attendance in a large lecture class and obviously won't start now. But you will do much better (because you will learn much more) if you do attend my lectures (and review the requisite materials beforehand). Class lectures will proceed in a logical, progressive fashion (much more so than in any other class). One missed class (there are only 16(?) more after the first introductory day) can lead to a total lack of comprehension over the next series of classes. Discussion sections are mandatory and 'attendance' (your TA will explain this this week) and participation in them will be worth 10% of your grade. During these sections you will get to review class materials and, perhaps, cover additional information to that provided in class. If you don't expect your class and discussion attendance to be consistent, don't sign up—we have more than 20 students on the wait list. Remember, we only have two lectures per week—each covering ~5% of the course material. You must 'attend' all your discussion sections unless you have proper, university required, documentation—illness, family emergency, etc.
- 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 ten (or fewer) weeks. The same is true here. Statistics additionally utilize an abstract and foreign alphabet. And they may require you to use the dormant half of your brain. 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 has sailed for me, but as the immortal albeit still living Jimmy Buffett wrote: "If we all weren't crazy, we'd all go insane"). Who's Jimmy Buffett?
- Informal 'preparation assignments' will be posted and mentioned in class on a regular basis. They are not to be submitted, nor will they be graded. They will, however, serve as examples for discussion at the beginning of the next class or in discussion sections. If you complete them, you will get more out of this class--and you will be better prepared for the sections, quizzes, and graded assignments.
- We are in the process of setting up special lab session times and office hours to assist you with SPSS. These are not mandatory. More on this later. Just assume that your professor will provide you with very extensive guides.
- 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. Along with my Chapter Guides and your discussion sessions, this is the best method of review.

III. SOFTWARE

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a general program which allows people with limited or nonexistent programming skills to produce some fairly sophisticated output from computer-based data sources. The university pays for all of us to have temporary licenses so that we may download our own copies of the software onto our own home computers. Instructions for downloading a temporary, university sponsored SPSS software license are as follows. DO NOT PURCHASE IT. Although we won't be using SPSS for 2-3 weeks, I suggest downloading it as soon as you have a chance. You can then let me or your TA know if you are having difficulty *before* you need to work on assignments that require it. My thanks to Maryam Sarkhoush for expediting this process:

- ❖ Download SPSS v28 here: https://software-web.ucsd.edu/spss_download.php
- ❖ Select the installation file matching your computer operating system (Windows OS or MAC OS).



- ❖ Activate SPSS v28 installation:

At the time of installation, choose the "Authorized User license" option and you will be asked to enter the Authorization Code: XXXXXXXXXX Please do not give this code to anyone other than a fellow class member. We only have enough code uses for the number of students in this class.

If you do not see this prompt, run the "License Authorization Wizard" from the IBM/SPSS folder (it may be listed as law.exe).

NOTE: SPSS will not operate in a ChromeBook environment (there is a Linux version, but CBs only contain a small kernel of that OS). If you only have access to a ChromeBook, please notify your TA. We will set up a special online service for you. Alternately, you can go to one of the campus labs that has SPSS installed on its server.

IV. ASSIGNMENTS

A (30%) Online quizzes (6), each worth 5% of your total grade. These are in lieu of an 'in-class' midterm and final. They will help you to understand the concepts needed for your assignments. Better to lose a point or two here than 5-10 on your assignment. Of course, you won't be losing any points, right?

These will be composed of short answers, true-false, limited math problems, and, on occasion, a very short essay (1-2 lines). You will have 30-45 minutes to complete each of these quizzes. Review guides will be posted one week before the online process for each starts.

B (60%) Four (4) Take-Home Assignments, each worth 15% of your total grade.

These will be part methodologically focused, some math but mainly computer-based analyses. Full instructions will be given for each at least one week before they must be submitted through the TurnItIn link on the class CANVAS page. The computer-based sections of these assignments will be cumulative, discussing the same question/hypothesis using different statistical techniques.

C (10%) Section 'attendance' and participation. After the first week (opening discussion run by your TA), your TA will review class material. I will provide each with suggestions on what to cover each week, but your section instructor has full discretion over how sections will be run.

PLEASE NOTE: All quizzes and assignments are to be treated as in-class exams. You can help each other with general concepts, but you are not allowed to copy from others, check answers with others, work together on quizzes, etc. Doing so will be considered plagiarism and will be treated as such. If you are unsure of what plagiarism or cheating are as well as their potential consequences, please review the university guidelines found at:

<https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/process/policy.html>

PLEASE NOTE: Due dates, unlike stop signs and turn signals for many in California, are not to be treated as suggestions. They are firm. Unless there are extenuating circumstances any late assignments will be docked 10% of the total number of allocated points if turned in any time after the specified due date and time (see section below on exceptions). An extra 10% will be docked for every extra day up to a maximum penalty of 30% of the full grade.

PLEASE NOTE: All assignments must be typed (keyboarded) with relevant screen shots or computer outputs/captures/exports added. After teaching this class for almost 40 years, I have found that typed responses, even with mathematical calculations, tend to be better as students take them more seriously and don't wait until a few minutes before the due dates to finish them.

VERY STRONG SUGGESTION: DO NOT wait until the last minute to read the materials needed for the assignments (students who do poorly in this class are those who generally fall into this category). Read them well in advance, go through the examples (if applicable) at the end of each chapter, and then contact one of us with questions **before** an assignment is due. We can only help those who help themselves. To reinforce this point, we will not answer any questions after 5 PM the day before an assignment is due.

TOTAL GRADE BREAKDOWN

- Online Quizzes, 6 @ 6 points each, lowest dropped = 30 points
- 4 Take home Assignments each worth 15 points = 60 points
- Section 'attendance'/participation (1 miss allowed) = 10 points

A NOTE ON GRADING

Any request for a grade review must be made to your section instructor 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). You must wait until at least one day after your assignment is graded to request the review (no impulsive actions) but you must request it no later than one week from that due date.

FINAL GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Understanding the difficulty of this class for many, the grade “curve,” especially at the low, passing end, is rather generous. Also remember that these are the number of total points received out of 100 based on the distribution above. A few A+ grades will be also be given to the top students in class and sections.

A	≥94	C+	72-74
A-	90-93	C	68-71
B+	85-89	C-	65-67 (lowest allowed for major)
B	80-84	D	60-64
B-	75-79	F	below 60

(‘TENTATIVE’) SCHEDULE of QUIZZES and ASSIGNMENTS

NOTE: If any changes are made, they will be to a later date, never earlier

	M	T	W	Th	F
Week 1 Intro	January 3	4	5	6	7
Week 2 Hypotheses	10 Introductory Survey	11	12 Quiz 1	13 Quiz 1	14 Quiz 1
Week 3 Measurement	17 MLK, Jr. Day	18	19	20	21 SPSS TRIAL RUN
Week 4 Descriptive Statistics	24	25	26 Quiz 2	27 Quiz 2	28 Quiz 2
Week 5 Inference	31	February 1 Assignment 1	2 Quiz 3	3 Quiz 3	4 Quiz 3
Week 6 Research Design	7	8	9 Quiz 4	10 Quiz 4	11 Quiz 4
Week 7 Inference-T-Test	14	15	16 Quiz 5	17 Quiz 5	18 Quiz 5
Week 8 Categorical Assoc.	21 Presidents' Day	22 Assignment 2	23	24	25
Week 9 Chisquare	28	March 1	2 Quiz 6	3 Quiz 6	4 Quiz 6
Week 10 Regression	7	8 Assignment 3	9	10	11
Finals	14 Assignment 4 (FINAL)				

INCOMPLETES and LATE ASSIGNMENTS/QUIZZES

The university grants us precious little discretion here. In order to qualify for an incomplete, we 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 the section instructors. The same rules (university guidelines) apply to late submissions/completions. We are not qualified to judge your medical conditions or other impacting situations.

WEB PAGE

You must all learn how to access this class's web page on the University's CANVAS server site. The fact that you are reading this indicates that you have already mastered this task. It won't be fancy, but it will be complete. All assignments, class notes, date changes, completion date, section topics, etc. will be listed on them. Consult it on a regular (i.e., daily) basis. We will make it a point not to answer any messages that are covered in the syllabus or on this site.

DR. G's 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 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. Ignorance may be bliss, 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.

This course will be neither as mathematically rigorous as some, nor as 'cookbook' and applications only oriented as others. Rather, a middle route will be taken, requiring just enough mathematical (basic algebra) understanding to prevent the misuse and abuse of statistical methods. The basic premise of this training follows sound methodological guidelines: statistics can sometimes help us to answer certain questions; therefore, we need to understand exactly which question each statistic answers. And remember, statistics can never substitute for the English (or any other) language--they only complement it by serving as summary tools. Before these tools can be employed, theoretically useful questions about the relationships between and among well-defined and measurable concepts must first be asked.

BRIEF SCHEDULE OF READINGS—everything is from my text unless listed with “available for free online” or a URL. Each week I’ll list which readings should be finished for the next lecture or discussion session (and post it on the class web page). I have a hard time working within a day by day structure. The ‘week’ listings are somewhat changeable.

- Reference to the SPSS Manual excerpts (new edition) will be listed on the Homework assignments.

I: Introduction to the Science of Politics (Week 1)

- A. Introduction: What is science? What is political science?
1. Week 1 Guide posted in CANVAS MODULE 1
 2. Ernest Nagel , “Introduction: Science and Common Sense,” The Structure Of Science, 2nd ed. (Hackett, 1979) available on the TritonEd website.
 3. Special Note-1: Can political science be studied as a science? (CANVAS)
- B. The language of scientific research: concepts, hypotheses, and theories
1. Text–Chapter 1
 2. Martin Kelly (2017), “Predicting the presidential election with baseball.” Available for free online at: <https://www.thoughtco.com/predicting-the-presidential-election-with-baseball-104619>

II: How Do We Observe? Measurement

- A. Methodological Issues (Week 2)
3. Week 2 Guide posted on CANVAS MODULE 2
 4. Text –Chapter 2
 5. McDonald and Popkin (2001), “The myth of the vanishing voter”_ <http://www.jstor.org/stable/pdfplus/3117725.pdf>

Introductory Survey (non-graded)—due Monday, January 10

Quiz 1-posted on CANVAS (Quizzes), (40 minutes allowed) posted Jan. 12-14

SPSS Trial Run-all instructions and data set posted in SPSS MODULE,

Due Friday January 21, **5PM**, ungraded but -2 course points deducted if not submitted

- B. Statistical Issues: Central Tendency and Variation (Week 3-4)
1. Weeks 3-4 Guide posted in CANVAS MODULE 3-4
 2. Text--Chapters 3-4 (skip pp. 81-88)

Quiz 2-posted on CANVAS (Quizzes), (50 minutes allowed) posted Jan. 26-28

Assignment 1 –posted, due Tuesday, Feb. 1, through TurnItIn drop box