

POLS3310-006 Introduction to Political Analysis (WI), Fall 2013

Department of Political Science, Texas Tech University

MWF 2:00-2:50 PM in Holden Hall 105

1 Instructor Information

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2 Course Overview and Objectives

This course is designed to provide an introduction to research design and the basic methods of data analysis used by political scientists. The primary goal of political science is to make causal inference about how the political world works; examining cause and effect relationships. This course will introduce students to the practice of political science by providing students with experience in devising and testing hypotheses, collecting and analyzing data, and writing research reports.

This course will make use of mathematical and computer skills. Although some of you may have advanced mathematical and/or computing skills, I will assume that students have a mathematical background reaching to high school algebra and no experience using computers for data analysis.

2.1 Course Learning Objectives

After completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Formulate research questions and testable hypotheses.
- Design research projects with attention to causal inference.
- Understand and explain basic descriptive statistics.
- Execute and interpret regression models.
- Effectively critique political science research.

2.2 Guidelines for Success

- Read and understand the syllabus.
- Attend class.
- Do reading assignments carefully and take notes.
- Turn in your work on time.

- Do your own work — do not plagiarize or cheat.
- Be willing to ask questions and seek help.

The last page of this syllabus is a quiz intended to ensure students have read and understood the syllabus. The quiz will replace your lowest pop quiz score. Detach the last page, read the syllabus thoroughly, answer the quiz questions, and return the quiz to Dr. Steele at the beginning of class on September 4th.

3 Course Format

This course will be conducted as both a lecture and a lab. To facilitate this, the class will be held in Holden Hall 105. This is an upper division course. Be prepared to read up to 100 pages a week. I expect you to have completed reading assignments prior to class, and that you will be prepared to ask questions during class. In addition, this course is also an introduction to statistical analysis. You will be learning to use Microsoft Excel and a statistical package called R. Because statistical analysis and the use of R is likely new to you, you should expect to spend a considerable amount of time outside of class mastering these skills. Lab assignments using R will likely take longer than expected to complete.

Political science requires strong reading, writing, critical thinking and mathematical skills. Although this course is an introduction to statistical analysis, this is also a writing intensive course. The purpose of such courses is to give students experience not only in writing, but in revision as well. As a result, there will be several writing assignments. These assignments are structured to assist students in completing small, manageable writing assignments, receiving feedback, and then revising as necessary.

4 Required Readings

- Kellstedt, Paul and Guy Whitten. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. First edition
- Kaplan, Daniel. *Statistical Modeling: A Fresh Approach*. First edition

Additional reading may be drawn from a variety of sources, including book chapters, journal articles and other source material. Additional readings will be provided in electronic form on the course Blackboard site. Students are responsible for checking the course Blackboard site regularly for any announcements, readings, or related information.

5 Course Requirements

Your grade for the course will reflect your mastery of the concepts and methods covered throughout the semester.

5.1 Attendance

Attendance is required. I will not take daily attendance, however a portion of your grade will be comprised of pop quizzes. Failure to attend class will have a negative impact on your grade. The very nature of a pop quiz means that there will be no warning as to when a quiz will take place and they **cannot be made up**. To ensure that you do not miss quizzes, you will need to attend every class.

A *modified* version of the lecture slides for this course will be available online after each class. This is both a blessing and a curse. Some might feel that access to these slides means that you do not need to attend class or take notes — IT DOES NOT. You will have access to some of the material covered in lecture, but not all. To succeed in this class, you will need to attend class and take notes. Failure to do so may jeopardize your ability to complete assignments or master necessary skills. Also, the complexity of the material covered and the necessity of mastering new software requires opportunities to ask questions and receive instruction. If you do not attend class, you will not be able to ask questions of the instructor while working with the software.

5.2 Grade Composition

Pop Quizzes: 10%

Pop quizzes will be given throughout the semester. Each quiz will be worth 10 possible points. Taking the quiz will earn you 5 of these points — so you basically get half of the points just for showing up.

By their very nature, there will be no warning before a pop quiz. **You must be in class in order to take these quizzes. No makeup quizzes will be offered.** Missing quizzes for unexcused absences will result in a 0 for that quiz. If a student has an excused absence for a class during which a pop quiz is administered, they will not be penalized. Rather, the total number of possible points will be reduced by 10. For example, if 10 pop quizzes are given during the semester the total number of possible points would be 100. If you were to miss one of these quizzes for an excused absence, then your pop quiz grade would be the total number of points you earned on quizzes out of 90 possible points. So, you could still earn 100% of the points, there would just be fewer possible points. This ensures that the student is not penalized while also ensuring that students with excused absences do not have an advantage over students who attended class.

There are some instances where a student may have multiple excused absences throughout the semester that correspond with pop quizzes. In these cases I will use the policy stated above. However, in order to meet course objectives and out of fairness to the other students, there are limitations on how many quizzes can be dropped due to excused absences. **You must have grades for at least 3 pop quizzes. If, due to excused absences, you are present for fewer than 3 pop quizzes, the pop quiz grade component of your grade will be replaced by an additional paper assignment that will be due at the end of the semester.** Students registered for this course have a responsibility to prioritize class attendance. If your health, family obligations, or extra-curricular activities will prevent you from attending class on a regular basis, it is perhaps best to reconsider whether this is an appropriate time to take this class.

Weekly Assignments: 45%

There will be an assignment due every Friday. These assignments will include lab exercises and

critical thought writing assignments. Each will be graded out of 20 points. Labs are exercises designed to improve your data analysis and computing skills. They will generally require the use of Excel or RStudio and will be turned in via Blackboard. Critical thought assignments are writing assignments that pose a question to the students and require a well-reasoned answer, or ask students to critique another's work. All written assignments will be turned in through Turnitin.com.

Research Note 45%

The primary output for this course will be a research note. The topic of the research note will be determined by the instructor and will be the same for all students. Data for the project will also be provided by the instructor. The final product will be approximately 10-15 double-spaced pages in length, not including tables and citations. The purpose of a writing intensive course is to provide students with opportunities to engage in the writing process — this is not just about the volume you write, but the process of writing and revising. In order to keep students working on their final report throughout the course of the semester, and to provide numerous opportunities for students to get feedback and revise their writing assignments, the research note is broken down into three components: the introduction, theory, and testable hypotheses; the research design and data description; and the research methods and findings. For descriptions of each component please check Blackboard. You will have the opportunity to receive feedback from your fellow students and to revise before turning in each component. You will also have the opportunity to receive feedback from the instructor on each component and to revise before turning in the final report.

The due dates for drafts of each of these components is listed in the syllabus. Each student will be assigned to a writing group on Blackboard with two or three other students. For each component of the research note, you will submit your first draft to your Blackboard writing group before class on the date noted on the syllabus. You will read the papers for the other members of your writing group and write up notes. During the next class meeting — Writing Group Fridays — you will provide each person with feedback and then turn in your written notes to the instructor. You will then have the weekend to revise your paper. Your second draft of each component will be submitted via Turnitin.com the following Monday. The instructor will then grade the assignment and release it to you with additional feedback. Each component will be worth 15% of the final Research Note grade, for a total of 45%. The final draft of your complete Research Note will make up 50% of your total Research Note grade. The remaining 5% will be earned by turning in your written feedback for your writing group members.

If you take this opportunity seriously, the results should be evident in your final paper. In addition, the final product should be a simple matter of working the three components together into a single report and adding a conclusion. PLEASE NOTE: This does not mean just to copy and paste them together into a single document. The final product will require some additional writing.

NO FINAL EXAM

Grading

Final grades will be based on the following weights:

Pop Quizzes:	10%
Weekly Assignments:	45%
Research Paper:	45%

The grading scale used for this course is:

A+	100-97	C	76.9-73
A	96.9-93	C-	72.9-70
A-	92.9-90	D+	69.9-67
B+	89.9-87	D	66.9-63
B	86.9-83	D-	62.9-60
B-	82.9-80	F	Below 60
C+	79.9-77		

6 Course Policies

This section of the syllabus details the policies for this class. Please read it carefully as these are the policies that you will be subject to throughout the semester.

6.1 Seeking Help

If you are having difficulty with any part of this course — whether it is difficulty understanding the readings or poor performance on assignments — **SEEK HELP IMMEDIATELY**. Ask questions in class, meet with the TA, come to office hours, or send me an email. I am happy to help you learn the course material, however I can't help if I don't know there is a problem. Additionally, **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE SEMESTER**. I will not provide extra credit opportunities, nor will I negotiate on final grades.

If you are having difficulty with class or with your writing, you should consider taking advantage of the numerous resources Texas Tech has available for you. The TecNiques Center offers tutoring <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/techniques/tutoring.asp> and the writing center can provide invaluable help with writing assignments <http://uwc.ttu.edu/aboutus.asp>.

6.2 Excused Absences

Absences are excused under the following circumstances only: death in the family (parent, spouse, sibling, child or grandparent), participation in an official TTU sponsored academic or sporting event, observation of a religious holy day, unforeseeable medical emergency affecting yourself, your spouse, or your child. In cases involving the death of a family member, you must give me notice via email at least 24 hours prior to the absence. In cases involving university sponsored activities and observance of religious holy days, you must give me notice via email at least 2 weeks prior to the event. In all cases I may require supporting documentation. Whether missing class for an excused or unexcused reason, you are responsible for the material covered during your absences.

6.3 Late Work

Please note: **late work will not be accepted**. Excused absences do not excuse you from turning your assignments in on time. If you will miss class for an excused absence, you are still responsible for turning in your assignment before your absence. The instructor will deal with cases of medical emergency on a case-by-case basis. **IMPORTANT**: Students are encouraged to discuss any circumstances that might affect their performance in class with the instructor **BEFORE** it becomes an issue. This includes physical or intellectual challenges, illnesses, emergencies, or any event of which the instructor should be aware. Specific needs will be addressed on a case-by-case basis between the student and the instructor.

6.4 Blackboard

This course will make use of Blackboard. On the course site you will be able to access an electronic copy of this syllabus, instructions for assignments, information about the use of R, and course announcements. In addition, there is a discussion board to enable students to ask questions and work together to solve shared problems. Although this should not be viewed as a replacement for contacting the instructors with questions, this may be a useful alternative if you have questions outside of normal hours (e.g. working late on an assignment).

6.5 Turnitin

The University has a license agreement with Turnitin, an educational tool that helps prevent or identify plagiarism. This course will use the service by requiring you to submit assignments electronically to Turnitin. The Turnitin Originality Report will indicate the amount of original text in your work and whether all material that you quoted, paraphrased, summarized, or used from another source is appropriately referenced. This service checks students' work for originality against both internet sources as well as other work submitted to Turnitin.

You will be using Turnitin to submit your assignments. Using this tool requires you to sign into the class. In order to ensure that everyone has signed in before having to turn in the first written assignment, we will walk through the sign in on the first day of class. If you miss the first day of class, you are responsible for following the instructions below to sign into the class.

6.5.1 Using Turnitin:

On the TTU Libraries website use the left-hand navigation bar. Go to Library Instruction — Plagiarism Prevention — Turnitin. Click the Sign In Using eRaider button. Enter your eRaider credentials when prompted to do so. To sign-up for a class for the first time enter the class ID: 6679971 and the password: POLS3310 (be aware that the password is case sensitive). Once you have signed in, you will see a list of your classes. Click on POLS3310—Introduction to Political Analysis to see the list of assignments associated with it. To turn in an assignment, look for the title of your assignment in the assignment list. To the right of the title, click the Submit icon. Where you see choose a paper submission method, leave the default setting single file upload. Enter submission title. To upload a file, click on the Browse button, find the paper on your disk or computer, then click Upload. Be sure it is the paper you want to send, then click submit. If you have additional questions or issues, first consult the Turnitin.com help page at http://turnitin.com/en_us/training/student-training. If you cannot find the information you need, then contact the TA or professor.

6.6 University Policy Regarding Students with Disabilities

Any student who, because of a disabling condition, may require some special arrangements in order to meet course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make the necessary accommodations. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Services, Dean of Students Office.

6.7 Academic Dishonesty Policy:

According to the Texas Tech Student Handbook: “Academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any

act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor) or the attempt to commit such an act.

Any such act will not be tolerated in this class. Any student caught plagiarizing their work will be given a failing grade for the course and reported to University officials for possible expulsion from the University. Additional information on TTU's policy concerning academic dishonesty can be found at <http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentjudicialprograms/AcademicIntegrity.htm>

7 Course Outline and Assignments

Date	Topic and Assignment
August 26	<i>Course Introduction</i> Review Syllabus, Sign in to Turnitin.com
August 28	<i>Political Science as Science</i> Kellstedt — Chapter 1 Kaplan — Chapter 1
August 30	<i>Lab Day</i> Assignment 1 Due
September 2	<i>No Class — Labor Day</i>
September 4	<i>Research Questions and Theory</i> Kellstedt — Chapters 2 Syllabus Quiz Due
September 6	<i>Causality</i> Kellstedt — Chapter 3 Assignment 2 Due
September 9	<i>Hypothesis Testing and Research Design</i> Kellstedt — Chapter 4 Kaplan — Chapter 13-13.3
September 11	<i>Measurement</i> Kellstedt — Chapters 5
September 13	<i>Lab Day</i> Assignment 3 Due
September 16	<i>Data, Cases and Variables</i> Kaplan — Chapter 2
September 18	<i>Describing Variation</i> Kellstedt — Chapter 6 Kaplan — Chapter 3
September 20	<i>Lab Day</i> Assignment 4 Due
September 23	<i>Groupwise Models</i> Kaplan — Chapter 4
September 25	<i>Statistical Inference and Confidence Intervals</i>

	Kaplan — Chapter 5 Kellstedt — Chapter 7 Introduction, Theory and Hypotheses Draft Due
September 27	<i>Writing Group</i> Feedback Due
September 30	<i>Confidence Intervals</i> Kellstedt — Chapter 8 Introduction, Theory and Hypothesis Due
October 2	<i>Confidence Intervals</i>
October 4	<i>Lab Day</i> Assignment 5 Due
October 7	<i>Model Fundamentals</i> Kaplan — Chapter 6
October 9	<i>Model Fundamentals</i>
October 11	<i>Lab Day</i> Assignment 6 Due
October 14	<i>Linear Models</i> Kaplan — Chapter 7
October 16	<i>Linear Models</i>
October 18	<i>Lab Day</i> Assignment 7 Due
October 21	<i>Fitting Linear Models</i> Kaplan — Chapter 8
October 23	<i>Correlation and Partitioning Variation</i> Kaplan — Chapter 9 Research Design and Data Description Draft Due
October 25	<i>Writing Group</i> Feedback Due
October 28	<i>Total and Partial Relationships</i> Kaplan — Chapter 10 Research Design and Data Description Due
October 30	<i>Modeling Randomness</i> Kaplan — Chapter 11

November 1	<i>Lab Day</i> Assignment 8 Due
November 4	<i>Confidence in Models</i> Kaplan — Chapter 12
November 6	<i>Logic of Hypothesis Testing</i> Kaplan — Chapter 13
November 8	<i>Lab Day</i> Assignment 9 Due
November 11	<i>Hypothesis Testing on Whole Models</i> Kaplan — Chapter 14
November 13	<i>Hypothesis Testing on Parts of Models</i> Kaplan — Chapter 15
November 15	<i>Lab Day</i> Assignment 10 Due
November 18	<i>Return to Causation</i> Kaplan — Chapter 17
November 20	<i>Return to Research Design</i> Research Methods and Findings Draft Due
November 22	<i>Writing Group</i> Feedback Due
November 25	<i>Lab Day</i> Research Methods and Findings Due
November 27	<i>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</i>
November 29	<i>No Class — Thanksgiving Break</i>
December 2	<i>Open Lab Day</i>
December 4	<i>Open Lab Day</i>
DECEMBER 6	at FINAL RESEARCH NOTE DUE
5:00PM	

8 Syllabus Quiz

Name:

Instructions: Read the syllabus carefully and answer the following questions. Turn in this quiz at the beginning of class on September 4th.

1. What is the TA's email address?
2. If you have a question about the course, where is the first place you should turn to find information?
3. What types of events constitute excused absences?
4. When must you notify the instructor of an excused absence due to university sponsored activities or religious holy days?
5. What happens if, as a result of excused absences, you are only present for 2 of the pop quizzes?
6. When is the final exam?
7. What is the name of the statistical package that will be used for this course?
8. How will you turn in your written assignments and final paper?
9. In what room does this class meet?
10. What do you hope to get out of this class?