

May 18, 2016
GOVT 310 Introduction to Political Research
Professor Jan Leighley
Summer I 2016

Class: M, TH 1:00-4:10

Office Hours: M 12 to 1, Th 4 to 5
and by appointment

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Course Description. The goal of this course is to introduce basic principles and analytical skills of social science research methods as they are practiced in the discipline of political science. It is also designed to enhance students' writing and communication skills. We will focus primarily on understanding the logic and use of quantitative methods in studying theory-motivated research questions. The course also introduces students to the reading and use of published, peer-reviewed research articles from the discipline of political science as illustrations of doing good research. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *Define* an original research project dealing with a contemporary political problem, using an appropriate methodology
- *Produce* a literature review on the subject that summarizes and analyzes the state of knowledge in political science on a research question
- *Perform* tests appropriate to different types of data
- *Analyze* and *interpret* the results of the tests
- *Produce* a well-written and thorough final research paper that includes a statement of the research question, literature review, study design and analysis and conclusions
- *Present* their research orally to the class

Required Books and Readings. The required workbook for the course is *A STATA Companion to Political Analysis*, 3rd ed., (Washington, D.C.: CQ Press, 2014) by Philip H. Pollock III. The Pollock workbook includes online access to data sets that you will analyze, after you download them to a flash drive. Completion of the workbook exercises also requires access to the STATA statistical analysis package, which is available in several AU computing labs, available through the AU Virtual Computing Lab or requires purchasing the program from www.stata.com.

Also required is *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data*, by Charles Wheelan (Norton, 2013); it is available in bookstores and also on-line. In addition, several chapters from *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, by Paul Kellstedt and Guy Whitten (Cambridge, 2013) are required readings. The book is also on reserve in the library for you to consult as needed, and I will try to provide a copy for informal distribution. Because I normally use this book as a required textbook, I also recommend that you purchase it or borrow it from another student. Note: the workbook, the Wheelan text and the Kellstedt and Whitten text are all on course reserves at the AU library.

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before coming to class. For assigned reading in the workbook, this means completing the activities described in the chapter text. I may want you to complete some of the textbook or workbook exercises before coming to class, in which case I will provide details in class or by email with some advance notice.

Grades. Your grade for this class will be assigned on the basis of your performance on the following assignments:

Assignment	Points	Due Date(s)
• Research Proposal	5	May 23
• Exam #1	20	June 1
• Workbook Exercises	20	June 8-June 15

• Exam #2	20	June 15
• Research Paper	20	June 22
• Research Presentation	5	June 22
• Participation	10	Daily

Students earning 90 points or more will receive an A; 80 points or more, a B; 70 points or more a C; 60 points or more a D.

Paper Assignments and Workbook Exercises. All assignments and workbook exercises are due when I ask for them. Assignments will not be accepted after the due date except in extraordinary circumstances and as such will require an original medical or legal (or otherwise approved by AU) excuse. Assignments are not accepted by e-mail except in unusual circumstances, and only if I approve of the submission in advance.

All assignments should be clearly labeled as to the course, the assignment, the due date and the student's name. *For assignments taken from the Pollock workbook, photocopies (one-sided) of the original workbook pages must be completed, and stapled together with appropriate Stata output if requested in the workbook directions.* That means working neatly, in sharp pencil, on the original workbook pages OR photocopying a clean version of the assigned workbook pages before starting to work. Students should keep copies of their work (especially notes and draft answers) in the event that there is confusion or a dispute concerning grades.

Some of the workbook exercises may be done in conjunction with other students, while others must be completed by the individual student. I will announce these details in class. However, even if a "group" answer is allowed, the written answers should reflect your own writing and not be directly taken from (or observed in) another student's work. If I ask you to complete a problem individually, that is what I expect; doing otherwise by consulting with other students will result in point deductions.

Exams: There will be two exams, most likely consisting of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and T/F questions covering the assigned readings and lectures. Make-up exams will be given only when I am notified within 24 hours of the exam period and evidence of a serious medical or legal issue is provided. Make-up exams will be given at my discretion.

Research Paper: Students will write brief (approximately 15 pages), original research papers that follow traditional social science manuscript structure and style conventions. The substantive focus of the paper is constrained by (a) being able to identify previous literature in peer-reviewed journals that addresses or is relevant to the research question and (b) the availability of archive data to use in testing hypotheses. I strongly urge you to use the data sets provided in the Pollock workbook or other archival data sets available at <https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/>. *Students will be required to use STATA in campus labs or their own purchased STATA program to complete the research paper; plan in advance for this requirement.*

The organization of the paper must include: an introduction, a description of the relevant existing literature, the hypotheses to be tested, the data analysis and substantive conclusions. Papers should be approximately fifteen pages, excluding the title page and statistical tables. Additional writing, formatting and presentation details will be provided in class and posted on Blackboard.

Peer Review: Each student is responsible for providing written comments on one or two other students' papers. The comments should critique matters of research design and data analysis as well as writing and presentation. Peer reviews will be provided in class on June 20; the format of the comments will be provided on Blackboard the week before. Students are expected to address or incorporate the comments they receive when they complete the final paper for submission on June 23.

Technology Policy: You may think you are good at multi-tasking, but you are not. Cell phones are a distraction to everyone (and especially the professor). Turn them off. If they ring during class or you are observed texting, I will ask you to leave. I design the class to be interactive and intellectually-engaging, and being distracted by Facebook or ESPN does not serve anyone well. Laptops may be used for note-taking only, which means that search engines should be closed when the class begins. Should we have a critical need to access online resources, etc., I will ask someone or everyone to open those browsers.

On Missing Class: You are expected to attend every class. If you miss class, be sure to contact other class members for material you have missed. I do not provide copies of Powerpoint slides or lectures in these circumstances. If you miss an exam or assignment date, documentation of the reason for such an absence is required to receive full credit for that work.

Should a single class have to be cancelled due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, the material scheduled for the missed class will be covered the next time the class meets. For more extended closures, due to weather, pandemics or other events or natural disasters, it is the student's responsibility to monitor the status of classes on the AU website and contact me by email (see below).

On Succeeding in This Class. If you attend class and do the assigned work, you will do well. If you see that you are struggling with the material, please talk to me as early as possible during office hours or make an appointment to meet with me.

Assigned Readings. A schedule of assigned readings is below. Depending on the progress of the class, I may modify the readings at any time. Changes to the syllabus distributed in class on the first day or to class assignments throughout the semester will be posted on the class Blackboard site and brief announcements will be sent by email. Only under rare and exceptional circumstances will due dates for assignments be changed. *It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of such changes by regularly attending class and checking the class website and AU email for announcements and updates.*

May 16 Introduction to Class Requirements

Discussion of Papers; Literature Searches

What's the Point? Wheelan, Ch. 1 [discuss on May 23]

Science, Theory and Causality: KW, Ch. 3

Recommended: KW, Ch. 2

May 18 Research Skills

Searching for Data Sets; Reviewing Pollock's Data Sets

Identify Research Question, Data Set and Literature

Stata, Ch. 1

May 23 Paper Proposals Due

Discuss Wheelan Ch. 1

Conceptualization and Measurement

Recommended: KW, Ch. 5

May 25 Descriptive Statistics

Wheelan, Ch. 2, 3

Stata, Ch. 2, 3

May 30 NO CLASS: MEMORIAL DAY

June 1 Exam #1

Research Design: Experiments, Survey Research, Aggregate/Archival Research and Case Studies

Wheelan, Ch. 7

KW, Ch. 4

June 6 Tabular Analysis (Heuberger)

Stata, Ch. 4, 5

June 8 Statistics and Inference (Heuberger)

Wheelan, Ch. 8, 9

Stata, Ch. 6

June 13 Bivariate Hypothesis Testing (Heuberger)

KW, Ch. 7

Stata, Ch. 7, 8

June 15 Regression Models, Etc.

Wheelan, Ch. 11, 12
Recommended: KW, 8, 9
Exam #2

June 20 Writing Up Research
Recommended: KW, Ch. 12
Draft papers due; peer review in class

June 22 Last Day of Class
Research Presentations
Final paper submissions due by 9:00 PM to Leighley@american.edu

American University Policies and Support Services
Summer 2016
GOVT 310/Leighley

This class will be conducted consistent with AU policies governing academics; students are expected to be familiar with AU student policies and to comply with the requirements in the current AU student handbook.

Essential to the conduct and success of this course is each student's responsibility to perform consistent with the University's Academic Integrity Code. A common violation of this code at many universities is plagiarism. As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with this definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you have the permission of the person. You are also committing plagiarism if, regardless of citation style, you use the direct words of another author and do not put such words in quotations. I will discuss these points in class at various times during the semester. I encourage you to consult with me during office hours if you have any questions regarding proper attribution of other sources. For additional information on the AU Academic Integrity Code, see <http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/code.cfm>.

Various types of academic support, including but certainly not limited to disability policies and concerns, are provided by the Academic Support and Access Center in the Office of Campus Life (x3360, MGC 243); for more information, email asac@american.edu or see <http://www.american.edu/ocl/asac/>. If you wish to receive accommodations for a disability, please notify me with a letter from the Academic Support and Access Center. As accommodations are not retroactive, timely notification at the beginning of the semester is essential, so please contact me as early as possible in the semester.

Other important sources for academic and personal support are provided by:

- **Counseling Center MGC 214, 202-885-3500** is here to help students make the most of their university experience, both personally and academically. We offer individual and group counseling, urgent care, self-help resources, referrals to private care, as well as programming to help you gain the skills and insight needed to overcome adversity and thrive while you are in college. Contact the Counseling Center to make an appointment in person or by telephone, or visit the Counseling Center page on the AU website for additional information.
- **Center for Diversity & Inclusion MGC 201, 202-885-3651** is dedicated to enhancing LGBTQ, Multicultural, First Generation, and Women's experiences on campus and to advance AU's commitment to respecting & valuing diversity by serving as a resource and liaison to students, staff, and faculty on issues of equity through education, outreach, and advocacy.
- **OASIS: The Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence 202-885-7070** provides free and confidential advocacy services for anyone in the campus community who is impacted by sexual violence (sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, and stalking).
- **The Writing Center First floor of Bender Library** offers free, individual coaching sessions to all AU students. In your 45-minute session, a student writing consultant can help you address your assignments, understand the conventions of academic writing, and learn how to revise and edit your own work. Hours: 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Friday. Call 202-885-2991 to arrange a session. Meanwhile find handouts, information, and a weekly writer's blog at the Writing Center website and on Facebook.
- **International Student & Scholar Services**, Batelle 4th Butler Pavilion, Room 410 has resources to support academic success and participation in campus life including academic counseling, [support for second language learners](#), response to questions about visas, immigration status and employment and intercultural programs, clubs and other campus resources.

American University expressly prohibits any form of discriminatory harassment including sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. The university is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution that operated in compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), age, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, personal appearance, gender identity and expression, family responsibilities, political affiliation, source of income, veteran status, an individual's genetic information or any other bases under federal or local laws in its programs and activities.

If you experience any of the above, you have the option of filing a report with the [AU Department of Public Safety](#) 202-885-2527 or the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) 202-885-3300 dos@american.edu. Please keep in mind that all faculty and staff - with exception of counselors in the Counseling Center, victim advocates in the Wellness Center, medical providers in the Student Health Center, and ordained clergy in the Kay Spiritual Life Center - who are aware of or witness this conduct are required to report this information to the university, regardless of the location of the incident.

In an emergency, AU will use the communication tools the university has at its disposal in as timely a manner as possible using *AU Alerts*. These messages will provide information on what is happening, what to do, and links to available additional information. Should the university be required to close for a period of time, we are committed to ensuring that all aspects of our educational programs will be delivered to our students. These may include altering and extending the duration of the traditional term schedule to complete essential instruction in the traditional format and/or use of distance instructional methods. Specific strategies will vary from class to class, depending on the format of the course and the timing of the emergency. Faculty will communicate class-specific information to students via AU e-mail and Blackboard, while students must inform their faculty immediately of any absence due to illness. Students are responsible for checking their AU e-mail regularly and keeping themselves informed of emergencies. For more details, see <http://www.american.edu/emergency/>.

Students are not permitted to make visual or audio recordings, including live streaming, of classroom lectures or any class related content, using any type of recording devices (e.g., smart phone, computer, digital recorder, etc.) unless prior permission from the instructor is obtained, and there are no objections from any of the students in the class. If permission is granted, personal use and sharing of recordings and any electronic copies of course materials (e.g., PowerPoints, formulas, lecture notes and any classroom discussions online or otherwise) is limited to the personal use of students registered in the course and for educational purposes only, even after the end of the course. Exceptions will be made for students who present a signed Letter of Accommodation from the Academic Support and Access Center. Unauthorized downloading, file sharing, distribution of any part of a recorded lecture or course materials, or using information for purposes other than the student's own learning, may be deemed a violation of *American University's Student Conduct Code* and subject to disciplinary action (see Student Conduct Code VI. Prohibited Conduct).