1 Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the fundamentals of social science research design and quantitative analysis. Most other political science courses examine the findings of social science research. This class examines the methods of social science research used to generate those findings. In short, it is about how to use the scientific method to study politics. A strong background in statistics or math is not required to succeed in this course.

The first part of the course focuses on research design issues: Basically, how do you conduct successful social science research? You will learn how to ask questions about political phenomena and formulate and test hypotheses to evaluate answers to those questions. The second half of the course centers on data analysis. We will discuss elementary statistical and probability concepts, as well as basic statistical data analysis. There are two components to the course: (1) a lecture component meeting Mondays and Wednesdays and (2) a lab section component meeting Wednesdays.

2 Reading Material

There are two required textbooks for this course:

Both books are available in the University bookstore, Grey's Bookstore, or via an online bookseller. Be sure to purchase the correct edition of each book. You can ensure that you have the correct edition by comparing the ISBN numbers listed above against those printed above the bar code on the back of your textbooks. In addition to readings from the textbooks, we will also discuss a variety of other readings from academic journals. Each of these readings will be available on Moodle (moodle.uncc.edu). It is up to you to download and print the readings individually prior to each class. You are expected to do the assigned readings before the class period indicated on the syllabus.

3 Prerequisites

This course is required for all political science majors at UNC Charlotte. The prerequisite for the course is the successful completion of an introductory political science class (i.e., POLS 1110, 1130, 1131, 1150, or 1151). Successful completion of this course is a prerequisite for the political science senior seminar, POLS 4600.

4 Evaluation

- Lab Sessions (100 points)
- Exams (200 points – 2 exams at 100 points each)
- Quizzes (100 points – 5 quizzes at 20 points each)
- Research Paper (180 points)

Total Points = 580

4.1 Grading Scale

A 90-100
B 80-89
C 70-79
D 60-69
F 59 and below

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4.2 Lab Sessions

Aside from attending lecture, you will meet once a week for one hour in the computer lab. The sessions will be run by the Teaching Assistant. Please refer to the lab syllabus for details on how the lab grade will be calculated. Your final lab session grade will count for 100 points of your final course grade.

4.3 Exams

You will take one (1) midterm exam and one (1) final exam in this course. The midterm exam will cover material from lectures and readings assigned during the first half of the course. It will contain predominately multiple choice and true/false questions and will count for 100 points of your final course grade. The cumulative final exam will cover material from lectures and readings. It will be a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions and calculations/interpretations of statistics. The final exam will count for 100 points of your final course grade.

4.4 Quizzes

You will take six (6) quizzes in this course. Quizzes may or may not be announced prior to the day they are given. As a result, it is important to attend class regularly to ensure that you are present for quizzes. The quizzes are not intended to trick you; they are intended to ensure that you are doing the class readings in a timely manner and that you have been paying attention to previous lectures. Your lowest quiz score will be dropped from your final grade, and you will receive credit for the remaining five (5) quizzes.

4.5 Research Paper

You will complete a 15-20 page research paper in this course. Data for the analysis will be provided for you. You may co-author the paper with another student; if you choose to do so, part of your grade will be based on your co-author’s assessment of your contribution to the paper. You will turn in four portions of the paper over the course of the semester: the bibliography, literature review, theory, and basic research design. Each of these sections counts for 20 points, and you will receive feedback on each one so that you can make revisions before turning in the final paper. The final, polished version of the complete paper, due the last week of class, counts for an additional 100 points. The writing segment of the course therefore comprises a total of 180 points. Additional information on the research paper will be made available on Moodle.
5 Administrative Policies

5.1 Course Website and Email

The course website can be accessed through Moodle (moodle.uncc.edu). Please check this site regularly for readings, assignments, and other updates. Announcements may be sent out via email or posted directly on Moodle. You are responsible for all information disseminated via Moodle and/or email. If you send me an email on a weekday, I will respond to you that same day. If you send me an email on a weekend or holiday, I will respond to you the following business day.

5.2 Attendance

I do not take attendance in this course. However, I cannot stress enough how important it is to attend class. Many students find the course challenging, and most of the readings are demanding and will require clarification. Furthermore, I will often discuss information in class that is not included in the readings. You will be responsible for that information on tests and quizzes, and I will not repeat that information to you one-on-one during my office hours. As a result, it is to your benefit to attend class regularly. In addition, missing just a couple of the in-class quizzes can dramatically harm your grade. In other words, you may miss class at your own risk.

5.3 Absences from Exams and Late Work

Missed exams will only be rescheduled if you have received prior approval of your absence and you have documentation explaining why you cannot be in class that day. Makeups for in-class assignments will only be granted if you provide documentation explaining why you could not be in class, or under extraordinary circumstances. I reserve the right to determine what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance. Makeup quizzes will not be permitted under any circumstances, but please remember that I do drop your lowest quiz grade.

5.4 Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. In short, this means that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students violating the Academic Honesty Policy in this course will receive a minimum penalty of a grade of zero for the assignment or test in question and may receive an “F” in the course and referral to Judicial Services.
5.5 Students with Disabilities

UNC Charlotte is committed to ensuring equal academic opportunities and inclusion for students with disabilities based on the principles of independent living, accessible universal design and diversity. Students with disabilities who anticipate needing an academic accommodation in this course should provide me with the proper documentation from the Disability Services Center within the first week of class.

5.6 Diversity

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate against applicants, students, or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or disability. In keeping with this commitment, UNC Charlotte actively seeks to promote diversity in its educational environment through its recruitment, enrollment, and hiring practices.

5.7 Courtesy in the Classroom

Attention to classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distraction. As such, cell phones should be turned off or silenced during class and put away. *Do not talk on your cell phone or text message during class.* You are permitted to use laptops during class, but I reserve the right to ask you to put your laptop away if you are using it for purposes unaffiliated with my course. Please be on time to class and remain in class until you are dismissed. Being late to class is a sign of disrespect towards the instructor and your fellow students. Please refrain from talking during lectures, as well as when other students are speaking. Similarly, please respect the opinions of your fellow students, even if you are in disagreement with them. Repeated disruption of class may lead to your being asked to leave the classroom and/or a reduction of your final grade.

6 Course Schedule

This schedule is a guide for the course and is subject to change at my discretion with appropriate notice. Please read the appropriate readings *before* the course period for which they are listed below.

**Week 1**

Monday, August 20, 2012: **INTRODUCTION AND COURSE OVERVIEW**

Wednesday, August 22, 2012: The Science of Politics
Reading 1: Pollock (Introduction, pp. 1-5)
Reading 2: Kellstedt & Whitten (Chapter 1)

Week 2
Monday August 27, 2012: Overview of the Research Process
Reading 1: Walsh & Piazza. 2010.

Wednesday, August 29, 2012: Research Questions, Theories, and Hypotheses
Reading 1: Kellstedt & Whitten (Chapter 2)
Reading 2: Pollock (pp. 48-58)

Week 3
Monday, September 3, 2012: Labor Day (No Class)

Wednesday, September 5, 2012: Class Attends National Security Network Panel, No Lab
Location: Cone 112, 3:30 p.m.

Week 4
Monday, September 10, 2012: Research Questions, Theories, and Hypotheses
Due: Research Paper Question and Bibliography

Wednesday, September 12, 2012: The Nature of Causal Relationships
Reading 1: Kellstedt & Whitten (Chapter 3)
Reading 2: Pollock (pp. 86-96)

Week 5
Monday, September 17, 2012: The Nature of Causal Relationships
Wednesday, September 19, 2012: THE NATURE OF CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 1)
Reading 2: Babbie (Chapter 4, pp. 94-101)

Week 6
Monday, September 24, 2012: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT
Reading 1: Economist Intelligence Unit (2007)
Reading 3: Polity IV Manual (pp. 1-3, 14-17)
Reading 4: Ill-Treatment and Torture (ITT) Codebook

Wednesday, September 26, 2012: CONCEPTUALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT
Due: Research Paper Literature Review

Week 7
Monday, October 1, 2012: RESEARCH DESIGN
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 4)
Reading 2: TBA

Wednesday, October 3, 2012: Mid-Term Exam Review
Note: Please come prepared with questions!

Week 8
Monday, October 8, 2012: FALL BREAK (NO CLASS)

Wednesday, October 10, 2012: Midterm Exam
Note: Please bring a #2 pencil to the exam.

Week 9
Monday, October 15, 2012: DESCRIBING VARIABLES AND MAKING COMPARISONS
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 2)

Wednesday, October 17, 2012: CONTROLLED COMPARISONS
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 5)

Week 10
Monday, October 22, 2012: CONTROLLED COMPARISONS
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 2)
Reading 2: Pollock (Chapter 5)

Wednesday, October 24, 2012: CONTROLLED COMPARISONS

Week 11
Monday, October 29, 2012: SURVEY RESEARCH AND SAMPLING
Reading 1: Gallup. 2008. “American Muslim Report” (pp. 10-14; 14-18)
Due: Research Paper Theory and Hypotheses

Wednesday, October 31, 2012: SAMPLING AND INERENCE
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 6)

Week 12
Monday, November 5, 2012: SAMPLING AND INERENCE
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 6)

Wednesday, November 7, 2012: TESTS OF SIGNIFICANCE & MEASURES OF ASSOCIATION
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 7)
Reading 2: Barrett & Barrington (2005)

Week 13
Monday, November 12, 2012: TESTS OF SIGNIFICANCE & MEASURES OF ASSOCIATION
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 7)
Reading 2: Barrett & Barrington (2005)
Due: Research Paper Research Design

Wednesday, November 14, 2012: NO CLASS, LAB SESSION STILL SCHEDULED

Week 14
Monday, November 19, 2012: SCATTERPLOTS, CORRELATION, & BIVARIATE REGRESSION
Reading 1: Scatterplots Handout
Reading 2: Pollock (pp. 182-199)

Wednesday, November 21, 2012: Scatterplots, Correlation, & Regression
Reading 1: Pollock (Chapter 8)
Reading 2: TBA

Week 15
Monday, November 26, 2012: Scatterplots, Correlation, & Regression
Reading 1: Bivariate SPSS Handout

Wednesday, November 28, 2012: Multiple Regression
Reading 2: SPSS workbook (Chapter 8)

Week 16
Monday, December 3, 2012: Multiple Regression

Wednesday, December 5, 2012: Multiple Regression & Case Studies & Final Exam Review
Due: Final Research Paper

FINAL EXAM
Wednesday, December 12, 2012: 2:00-4:30 p.m.

7 Syllabus Changes

The policies, assignments and readings contained in this syllabus are subject to change with advance notice.