

PS245: POLITICAL METHODOLOGY [3 CREDITS]

University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh
Spring Semester 2017
Class meets T/TH 1:20-2:50 Clow 016C until
March 16th, then in Clow 121
Office hours: W 10-11 & 1-3, and by
appointment.

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TitanApps Chat function!

Course Description: The practice of political science requires more than a summary of state institutions, public opinion, or the history of a war. It requires practitioners to develop testable hypotheses and sound research designs to uncover the relationships that explain the behavior of an individual, group, or nations. It also requires those practitioners to develop proficiency in writing formal research papers and presenting their results to their peers. This course provides an introduction to the research methods used across the social sciences by grounding students in hypothesis formation, research design, and common forms of statistical analysis; it also serves as a forum for you to make a first attempt at writing a research design and making a scholarly presentation.

Course Objectives:

- Develop research question and hypothesis creation and testing skills
- Gain familiarity with all aspects of quantitative research design
- Gain familiarity with SPSS and common statistical tests for quantitative data
- Improve data analysis skills
- Develop and practice written and oral communication skills

Required Texts:

Philip H. Pollock, *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*, Fourth Edition, Sage/CQ Press.
Lisa Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*, Third Edition, Sage/CQ Press.

Additional course readings and data will be available on D2L.

Course Requirements:

In Class Assignments (5%): These assignments will cover research process and statistical methods topics relevant to course readings. All students are expected to do their own work. Assignments are due at the end of class time unless the deadline is changed by the instructor.

Statistical Methods Guidebook (10%): Students will create their own statistical methods guidebook to help determine which statistical test to use, how to complete the test in SPSS, and how to interpret their results. This guidebook will be worth of your total course grade. This guidebook is intended to provide students a lasting reference for your future course work in political science. The guidebook will be turned in once, and uploaded to each student's ePortfolio. *Note: students must NOT simply copy lecture slides for their guidebooks. For this assignment to be useful as a reference, students must prepare the material using their own words or visuals. Submissions which simply copy other material without any original work will receive a 0.*

Interteach Assignments (10%): students will complete 3 interteach assignments over the course of the class. For each assignment, students will be divided into two groups. Each group will read a different article (in addition to their regularly assigned readings for that class day) and then present that work to a member of the

other group. Students are evaluated based on their ability to provide an accurate and accessible summary and critique of the course reading through peer evaluation and instructor review. Further details will be provided in a separate hand out.

Research Design (40%): Each student will write one research paper, 10-12 pages in length. The design's topic may be chosen from any field of political science, but must rely on quantitative analysis. The full grade weight of the paper will be 40% of your total course grade, divided as follows: topic submission and annotated bibliography 5%, literature review 5%, theory/methods/data 5%, final paper submission 15%, design presentation 10%. Each of these submissions will contain the following:

Topic Submission and Annotated Bibliography: a statement of the topic, research question, and justification of the question or puzzle's importance. This will be followed by a collection of at least 15 articles which are relevant to your research topic, and summarized in 1-2 paragraphs each, and identifying major schools of thought, connections, findings, and other information useful to your project. Further guidance on constructing your bibliography can be found in Baglione's third chapter.

Literature Review: evidence of significant connections between your research project and prior work on the topic (see Baglione 4). This work will indicate what other scholars have found, show what questions remain to be answered on the topic, and anticipate your theory and hypotheses.

Theory/Methods/Data: What are you adding to this work? How does your explanation for your research question connect to the existing literature? After explaining your theory, you need: a testable main hypothesis that would validate or invalidate your theory you will test in support of your theory, operationalization of your concepts, a detailed description of the relationship between variables in your research design (including alternative explanations of the problem), and sources of data and the methods you would use to analyze that data (see Baglione 5 and 7). This section should also include limitations resulting from your data or method and a statement about the value of this research.

Final Paper Submission: a compilation of revised versions of all of the above into a coherent article. This submission should read like a coherent paper (minus the data analysis) and be ready for submission to an academic journal. *Uploading this paper to Google Drive and your ePortfolio is strongly encouraged so you have a copy for future use.*

Research Presentation: In preparation for the formal presentations required in some upper division political science courses and the senior capstone, students will give a short presentation of their research to their fellow students, and possibly some faculty. Presentations will be limited to 5-7 minutes. Further information on this assignment will be forthcoming.

Data Analysis Project (25%): For a final project, students will analyze an existing dataset and produce an essay presenting those results. This assignment is roughly analogous to the "findings" section of an academic research article. Students will be given a research question, a few academic articles, and two datasets. With these materials, students will produce a 5-7 page paper that includes all necessary hypotheses, tables, graphs, and written analysis to answer their research question.

Attendance and participation (10%): The final portion of your grade in this class is your attendance and participation. For attendance, you may miss one class, without an excuse, before it affects your attendance grade. For each class after the first that you miss without an excuse, you will lose 1.5% of your semester grade. You are considered absent to class **if you show up after I have finished taking the attendance for the day.**

Please note that excused absences are three things: severe (i.e. hospitalized) illness, death in the family, and required school activities. With proof of this absence (for example, an obituary), I am happy to work with you to cover missed material and make up assignments. Common illnesses (colds, sinus infections, flu), personal travel, etc. are not excused absences. Only if you think you fit into the “excused” category do you need to provide me with documentation.

For participation, I expect you to come to class prepared to work, to speak up and answer questions, and contribute substantively to class discussions. Most students come to the class with no prior experience with statistics, therefore it is important that all students ask questions and participate in problem solving. There is no specific number of times you should talk, but you should make a concerted effort to be active and involved in the class.

Late Papers: All assignments will lose 10% of their value for *each day* they are late, unless you are subject to one of the three excused absence instances above (hospitalization, death in the family, and required school activities) and can provide proof. You are welcome to turn any assignments in early if you cannot attend class when the assignment is due.

Please note that computer problems and printer problems are not an accepted excuse for late papers. You should always, always, always back up your work and allow plenty of time for printing, and so computer problems and printer problems should not be an issue in handing in your project on time.

Regrading: I will be glad to take another look at a paper you feel is not graded fairly, with the following conditions: you must wait 24 hours after the paper is handed back, you must tell me in writing why you think you deserved a higher grade, and you must speak to me about it during my office hours or by appointment. The reason for this is I would like for you to take the paper home and carefully read and think over comments before we talk. If I feel your paper was graded unfairly, I’ll change the grade in your favor, but I also reserve the right to lower your grade upon rereading the paper, if, after reevaluation, I think you received too high a grade.

Long Night Against Procrastination: This now semi-annual event brings librarians, writing center staff, reading study center staff, advisors and instructors to Polk to support students as they get a start and make progress on major research or writing projects. Faculty present at the last event reported important contact with their students during, what amounted to, extended office hours. Students can make progress on their assignments and connect with resources for research or writing and, most importantly, to the refreshments table for snacks, coffee, soda and more.

Other policies: Please turn your cell phone off or onto silent mode before you enter the classroom. If I see you using your cell phone during class time I will warn you the first time, and mark you as absent after that. The same is true of using classroom computers for non-class related work.

Please do not pack up before class is over. If this becomes a problem, pop quizzes or a similar assignment will be your new end of class activity.

I check my email often, and I am happy to answer questions via email. However, please use proper grammar, punctuation, and professional communication when emailing your professor. Also, I am not able to answer questions about grades unless you are using your Oshkosh email address. *All class announcements will be sent to your Oshkosh address.*

Academic Honesty: All graded work is to be your own. You also may use a research project for another class as a starting point for this course’s research design *with the consent of both instructors*; however, the theory and

methodology must be your own. Violations of these rules will be pursued in accordance with university academic honesty procedures.

Please visit the Political Science department website for questions relating to proper citation:
<http://politicalscience.uwosh.edu/for-students/writing-resources/>

Course Calendar:

- Week 1: T, Jan. 31st: Course Introduction
- Reading assignment: syllabus
- TH, Feb. 2nd: Building Blocks: Concepts and Variables
- Reading assignment: Shively *The Craft of Political Research* (1-11);
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/jan/19/crisis-of-statistics-big-data-democracy>
- Week 2: T, Feb. 7th: Research Questions and Theory
- Reading assignment: Shively *The Craft of Political Research* (13-19 and 73-77); Shugart and Carey “Presidents and Assemblies”;
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/12/18/the-weekly-standard-makes-a-fact-free-argument-about-political-science-here-are-some-facts/>
- TH, Feb. 9th: Introduction to Social Science Data and SPSS
- Reading assignment: Pollock, Chapter 1; Lijphart *Patterns of Democracy* 4
- Week 3: T, Feb. 14th: Descriptive Statistics and Variable Transformation
- Reading assignment: Pollock, Chapters 2 and 3
- TH, Feb. 16th: Nominal/Ordinal Comparisons and Graphing
- Reading assignment: Pollock, Chapter 4; Keller *The Tao of Statistics* 112-113
- Week 4: T, Feb. 21st: Controlled Comparisons
- Reading assignment: Pollock, Chapter 5
- TH, Feb. 23rd: T-Tests, Sample Means, and Quality Assurance
- Reading assignment: Pollock, Chapter 6
- Week 5: T, Feb. 28th: Chi-Square and Measures of Association
- Reading assignment: Pollock, Chapter 7; Segal “Supreme Court Support for the Solicitor General: The Effect of Presidential Appointments” (pgs 137-145 only)
- TH, Mar. 2nd: Statistics Exam**
- Reading assignment: Prepare for the exam
- Week 6: T, Mar. 7th: Linear Regression
- Reading assignment: Pollock, Chapter 8; LeDuc, Niemi, and Norris “Introduction”
- TH, Mar. 9th: Dummy and Interaction Variables
- Reading assignment: Pollock, Chapter 9; Barrington “Examining rival theories of

demographic influences on political support: The power of regional, ethnic, and linguistic divisions in Ukraine”

- Week 7: T, Mar. 14th: Logistic Regression
- Reading assignment: Pollock, Chapter 10; Strom, “Nonwinning Cabinets”
- TH, Mar. 16th: Presenting Quantitative Results
- Reading assignment: Kastle and Leoni
- F, Mar. 17th: Statistics Guidebooks Due**
- T, Mar. 21st: Spring Break
TH, Mar. 23rd: Spring Break
- Week 8: T, Mar. 28th: Selecting a research project: American
- Reading assignment: Baglione, Chapter 1; “Anderson and LoTempio “Winning, Losing, and Political Trust in America”
- W, Mar. 29th: Data Analysis Project Due**
- TH, Mar. 30th: Formulating a Research Question and Annotated Bibliography (AB)
- Reading assignment: Baglione, Chapters 2 and 3
- Week 9: T, Apr. 4th: Selecting a research project: IR
- Reading assignment: Gibler and Sarkees “Measuring Alliances: The Correlates of War Formal Interstate Alliance Dataset, 1816-2000”; Duren “An Evaluation of the Factors Causing Food Insecurity in Africa”
- TH, Apr. 6th: Selecting a research project: Comparative
- Reading assignment: Luedtke “European Integration, Public Opinion and Immigration Policy”
- Week 10: T, Apr. 11th: Evaluating Literature Reviews
- Reading assignment: Baglione, Chapter 4; Anderson and Guillory “Political Institutions and Satisfaction with Democracy: A Cross-National Analysis of Consensus and Majoritarian Systems” (pgs. 66-69 only)
 - **Long Night Against Procrastination – Polk – 6-9pm**
- TH, Apr. 13th: Interteach I
- Reading assignment: Owens and Corbin
- F, Apr. 14th: Research Question and Annotated Bibliography Due**
- Week 11: T, Apr. 18th: The Bridge: Your Theory, Hypotheses, and Model
- Reading assignment: Baglione, Chapter 5; Gierzynski and Eddy: Harry Potter and Politics 47-62
- TH, Apr. 20th: Creating an Effective Research Design
- Reading assignment: Baglione, Chapter 7; Shively 84-95

F, Apr. 21st: Literature Review Due

Week 12: T, Apr. 25th: Interteach 2
▪ Reading assignment: Turnbull and Phillips

TH, Apr. 27th: Revisions
▪ Reading assignment: Baglione 6, 9, Gierzynski and Eddy 78-82

F, Apr. 28th: Theory/Data/Methods Due

Week 13: T, May 2nd: Interteach 3
▪ Reading assignment: Kanthak and Woon “Why Don’t Women Run: Election Aversion and Candidate Entry”; Iyengar and Westwood “Fear and Loathing Across Party Lines: New Evidence on Group Polarization”

TH, May 4th: Checklists, Reminders, and In Class Paper and Presentation Preparation
▪ Reading assignment: Paper Final Checklist, Presentation Rubric, Sample Presentation

Week 14: **M, May 8th: Final Papers Due**

T, May 9th: Presentations
▪ Reading assignment: Prepare your presentation

TH, May 11th: Presentations
▪ Reading assignment: Prepare your presentation