

Teaching Portfolio

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Teaching Statement

In my approach to teaching, I challenge students to evaluate the way they think about the world around them. My teaching style couples active learning with discussions anchored in current events. This teaching methodology encourages critical thinking on the causes and effects of day-to-day political phenomena, producing students who can tackle challenging questions and provide thoughtful solutions. Inside and outside the classroom, I also prioritize experiential learning. I encourage students to “learn by doing” through the semester-long quantitative projects I assign in my courses and by pursuing collaborations with students in my own research.

I have honed my teaching style and skills over the span of seven semesters at UNC. During this time, I have designed two of my own courses, worked with students in small-class settings, and directed my own teaching assistants. For my work as an instructor, I was recognized by the UNC Political Science Department with the Earle Wallace Award for Graduate Student Teaching.

Teaching Philosophy

American Politics

My undergraduate classes are designed to produce informed citizens who are effective participants in the political process. To me, this means not only understanding the fundamentals of American politics but also appreciating how and why political outcomes occur. To achieve this aim, I start every class session with a review of the week’s political news and pose a “big” question. For example, during my *Introduction to American Government* class in Spring of 2019, I asked my students to discuss in small groups why it was important to members of Congress that the government’s then twenty-two day shutdown ended. Coming back together as a class, students shared their thoughts on the nature of representation and politicians’ self-interest. Moving to a lecture, I tied this piece of political news to our examination of Mayhew’s *Electoral Connection*. Commenting on my teaching style in their evaluation, one student wrote: “[Rachel] presented all of the material very clearly and really engaged the class with thoughtful questions.” By placing abstract concepts in a real-world context, I find that students are more likely to approach politics analytically and leave their political leanings at the door. In my evaluations, multiple students pointed out the “politically neutral” and “sensitive” learning environment that I cultivate.

In a PhD program, students begin to learn that the world is more complicated than a simple X-Y relationship. Answering political questions can be tough and complex, requiring strong theory building and, sometimes, more advanced methodological techniques. I am eager to work closely with graduate students, equipping them with the substantive understanding and methodological skills necessary to answer important research questions about American politics.

Political Methodology

As a female methodologist, I am deeply invested in ensuring that my students—particularly those students traditionally underrepresented in STEM—feel invited, welcomed, and encouraged to pursue data science and applied statistics. I find that students sometimes struggle in their methods-driven coursework to make connections between abstract statistical concepts and real-world application. Therefore, I try to introduce methodological concepts to my students by way of accessible, academic research and political examples. For instance, when teaching concepts associated with measurement and estimation, I walk students through notable examples of polling misfires, such as “Dewey Defeats Truman” and the 2016 Trump-Clinton election.

For three semesters I have served as the primary instructor for *Data in Politics*—a course in my department’s methods sequence for undergrads. This class covers topics like causality, linear

regression, and research design. The syllabus for this course and other teaching materials can be found on my website. I also teach students the programming language R as a way to actively learn about quantitative methods. Students apply their new coding skills to a semester-long group project that answers a current political question. I meet with these groups bi-weekly to help them overcome methodological hurdles and to discuss research design improvements. In lieu of a group project this semester, due to the nature of online classes, my students will complete a final assignment where they independently fit and interpret a linear regression model in R that evaluates racial disparities in voting wait times during the 2018 election. Commenting on my teaching style in quantitative courses, one student wrote: “[Rachel] makes a largely humanities audience think about math and statistics in a way that makes us care.” Another student noted: “The idea of learning R was daunting to me, but Rachel made it attainable and accessible.”

This spring, I will be teaching a three-day seminar on collecting and analyzing text-as-data in R for a fifth time through UNC’s Odum Institute for Research in Social Science. Short courses like mine are designed as a means of continued education for professionals, faculty members, and graduate students. When teaching this short-course, I weave running examples through my lectures to ground participants’ learning in tangible application. Further, in each iteration of this class, I have tailored my instruction to aide participants’ own research. I believe methodology classes are most successful when treated as an open dialogue, where students’ goals can help inform the content of class. I plan to carry this approach forward into my future course designs.

Hands-On, Experiential Learning

Learning about research through experiential opportunities has been instrumental to my growth as a political scientist. As an undergraduate, I was first introduced to academic research in a special topics class where students gained insight into congressional procedure by coding and analyzing amendments to House and Senate bills. Actively participating in the research process helped motivate my decision to pursue graduate school and cemented my belief in “learning by doing.”

To implement this philosophy in my own teaching, I make a concerted effort to extend learning beyond the classroom. In my courses, I educate students on the numerous ways they can participate in and pursue academic research. A student from my *Data in Politics* class commented that, “there were ample opportunities for success within the classroom while also learning about how to become involved outside the class.” Furthermore, as the point-person for two data-collection projects, I recruit and train undergraduate and graduate students to serve as research assistants on these projects. I spend significant time discussing research design with these RAs to give them a sense of how their work helps to implement our larger vision for each project. Currently, I manage a team of fifteen students who collect and clean campaign website text—the majority of whom are female. As a woman working in a male-dominated sub-discipline, I believe that it is important for me to encourage and support other women who show an interest in data and methods.

Teaching Experience & Interests

During my time at University of North Carolina, I have had the opportunity to teach two of my own classes and serve as a teaching assistant for several different courses. In Spring 2019, I taught my own section of *Introduction to American Government* after having twice served as a teaching assistant for this course. I designed an original syllabus centered on readings from outlets like the New York Times and Politico. Example writing prompts and my syllabus for this course can be on pages 17-24. This semester is my third time teaching *Data in Politics*—a course in our department’s methods sequence for undergraduates. This course covers topics like causality, linear regression, and research design. The syllabus for this course can be found on pages 8-14. I hope to continue teaching courses on American politics and research methods.

Teaching Evaluations

This document provides a synopsis of numerical evaluations and open-ended feedback that I received during my tenure as an instructor and teaching assistant at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Complete, official teaching evaluations can be found on my website via the linked text below. I have served as the instructor-of-record for two different undergraduate courses. Additionally, I was a teaching assistant for large lecture-style classes where I led three weekly discussions sections (“recitations”) for about sixty students per semester. Please find more information about these courses below (links to my syllabi included):

Instructor-of-Record

- [Data in Politics I \(POLI 281\)](#) — Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020
- [Introduction to American Politics \(POLI 100\)](#) — Spring 2019

Teaching Assistant

- Introduction to Comparative Politics (POLI 100) — Fall 2018
- Introduction to American Politics (POLI 100) — Fall 2017, Spring 2018

Summary of Numerical Evaluations

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill administers course evaluations with an online survey that prompts students to answer questions on their class experience. Each question is answered on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale. Presented teaching assistant evaluations have been averaged across the three discussion (“recitation”) sections taught each semester. A selection of questions are presented in the tables below.

<i>Instructor-of-Record</i>	Average Score	Data in Politics I Spring 2020	Data in Politics I Fall 2019	Intro to American Spring 2019
Shows an enthusiasm for teaching	4.62	4.70	4.63	4.54
Promotes a climate of mutual respect	4.66	4.70	4.75	4.54
Encourages student questions	4.72	4.80	4.75	4.62
Encourages critical thinking	4.63	4.80	4.63	4.46
Promotes active student involvement	4.40	4.60	4.13	4.46
Is available when needed	4.70	4.90	4.50	4.69
Is well-prepared for instruction	4.64	4.67	4.63	4.62
Learned a great deal from this course	4.51	4.60	4.38	4.54
Overall, this instructor was excellent	4.51	4.70	4.38	4.46
Total Number of Students		30	31	30
% Reporting		33%	27%	42%

<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	Average Score	Intro to Comparative Fall 2018	Intro to American Spring 2018	Intro to American Fall 2017
Did a good job leading discussions	4.72	4.80	4.82	4.55
Was well-prepared for class	4.78	4.83	4.80	4.71
Displayed a mastery of material	4.74	4.76	4.89	4.58
Valued diversity & other perspectives	4.46	4.56	4.53	4.30
Learned a great deal from this course	4.51	4.52	4.40	4.46
Overall, this TA did an effective job	4.64	4.80	4.64	4.47
Overall, this TA was excellent	4.66	4.70	4.68	4.60
Total Number of Students		54	48	53
N by Recitation Section		(18, 18, 18)	(20, 8, 20)	(18, 17, 18)
% Reporting		35%	39%	42%

Summary of Open Responses

An open-ended response section asks students to offer feedback, suggestions for change, and any other comments on my performance as an instructor. A selection of responses are presented below:

Data in Politics I (POLI 281) — Instructor

Spring 2020

- I cannot speak more highly of Rachel. She is passionate, intelligent, and understanding. Her lectures are interesting and informative. She is available to answer any and all questions and she does so in a manner that is always helpful and never condescending. I felt very comfortable asking her for guidance throughout online learning and believe she is one of the best instructors I have had at UNC. She provided us with feedback, graded in a timely manner, and always made sure the course load was manageable for all students.
- Rachel is full of energy in class. This energized me as a student, she was a joy to learn from. She gives so much time to students in office hours and genuinely cares about our understanding of the material. I felt like I got a lot of individualized help when I needed it which incredibly increased the benefit I got from this course. I did not expect to like this course as much as I did, but Rachel made it great.
- Rachel was an excellent teacher. She taught the class by giving ample examples that made the material easy to digest and understand. She would step through confusing topics and ask for collaboration from the class to make sure we were learning the topics correctly. She held extensive office hours and would spend a lot of effort to make sure I understood the topics she was showing me. She never let an assignment go by without being explained, in full, after the due date. This made me feel comfortable that I was not missing topics.
- Rachel was by far the most effective professor I had during this semester. She upheld our schedule with classes and office hours but created a slightly more manageable course load for us. She taught us during live sessions but recorded them so we could view them later. She also was very available to zoom us individually with questions.

- Rachel was extremely helpful in the transition to online instruction. She remained very accessible for office hours both before and after the transition to online classes. She gave constant updates on the class, office hours, and assignments. There was never a moment where I did not understand the expectations for the course, and I always felt like I could reach out and get assistance from Rachel.

Fall 2019

- Rachel is really great at being approachable and giving reasonable and helpful feedback. She reminds us often to not get discouraged, which is super important in a difficult and challenging class like this one. I think she does a great job at knowing what pace to teach at, when a student is confused and doesn't want to show it, and is really great at being patient with those who need more explanation.
- This course was informative on the processes involved in data analytics within the political sphere. There were ample opportunities for success within the classroom while also learning about how to become involved outside the class.
- Rachel is clearly very knowledgeable about the subject of Data in Politics and she used helpful examples in class to help explain difficult topics.
- This course was well-designed to facilitate my learning R, through in-class assignments, working as a class, individual assignments, and PowerPoints. The idea of learning R was daunting to me, but Rachel made it attainable and accessible.

Introduction to American Politics (POLI 100; Spring 2019) — Instructor

- She did a phenomenal job of teaching a highly polarized political atmosphere from a neutral standpoint with a neutral agenda of topics to cover.
- Very engaging, highly interesting and motivated teacher. Made coming to class in the evening worth it because it was always interesting.
- Rachel is what made the course so much fun and actually worth coming to a late class.
- She is very enthusiastic about the topics she teaches in class. She also makes learning the material easy and enjoyable.
- Great professor who is engaging, enthusiastic, and accepting of her students and questions.

Intro. to Comparative Politics (POLI 130; Fall 2018) — Teaching Assistant

- Rachel was AMAZING! Best TA I have had at Carolina. She presented all of the material very clearly and really engaged the class with thoughtful questions. This class was great in terms of the lecture but was made complete through the recitations led by Rachel.
- I think Rachel is wonderful. She is helpful, bright, and she relates well to the students and goes over concepts in ways which are helpful to me. She really does want each student to succeed. No negative comments at all!
- Rachel was one of the best instructors I have had at UNC, better than many professors. She made a topic I honestly have a hard time getting into very interesting and presented all information very clearly. She wanted us to understand the concepts and offered tons of knowledge on the topics.

Introduction to American Politics (POLI 100) — Teaching Assistant

Spring 2018

- Honestly Rachel is one of my favorite TAs at UNC. Not only is she funny and engaging but she is more than willing to help. She relates very well to students and I really appreciate that. I always looked forward to attending recitation because I always learned something new.
- Enthusiasm for material and clarity were present. Very prepared and guided discussion very well. Honestly one of the best TAs I have had at Carolina even though I didn't enjoy the lecture. Keep doing you Rachel!
- Rachel was extremely passionate and knowledgeable about American government and it showed. Her excitement for the subject made the students more engaged in learning and more willing to contribute to the discussion. I thought that she presented the material in a way that captured students' interests and made them curious about the subject. I feel like I genuinely learned a great deal from this class. The paper topics were unique and easy to write about, and more interesting than a regular academic essay.

Fall 2017

- I love Rachel! I have so greatly been inspired by her expertise in the field of political science and the help she has offered me in office hours, both inside and out. I will miss her greatly and wish her the best of luck in her future.
- I thought that Rachel did a great job as the TA for this course, handling class discussions skillfully, even when the students did not want to participate. She was engaging, knowledgeable, helpful, and approachable. One of the best TA's I've had at Carolina, I would say.
- I loved having Rachel as my TA, she made the recitation interesting and her lectures were always well prepared.

POLI 281: Data in Politics I

Sample Syllabus — Fall 2019

Instructor: Rachel Porter
Email: rachsur@live.unc.edu
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 10:00 - 11:30
Office Location: Hamilton 303
Classroom: Gardner, 307

Course Description

This course is designed to achieve three objectives: (1) introduce you to research and quantitative analysis in political science, (2) help you become critical consumers of quantitative analysis used in political and policy-oriented reporting, and (3) give you the ability to answer questions of social scientific importance using data. Throughout the course, we'll discuss the complexities of generating good research designs, starting with how to ask interesting questions and how to measure concepts of interest to social scientists. We'll discuss the challenges and limitations of gathering good data to test these theories as well as various statistical tools that can be used to evaluate our theories. Throughout the course, we'll use what we've learned to think critically about the use and abuse of data by analysts, reporters, politicians, and policy advocates. As such, not only will you be learning to do your own analysis this semester, but also learning to evaluate such information when it's presented in the media.

The target audience for this course is undergraduate students with interest in the social sciences (not only Political Science), who want to use quantitative approaches to solve important problems, develop marketable analytical skills. This course fulfills the Quantitative Intensive (QI) requirement and counts as a research methods course for completing the Political Science major. It is a prerequisite for Poli 381: Data in Politics II which will be offered in future semesters.

Required Text

There is one required book for this course, available in the UNC Bookstore. We rely heavily on this textbook so it is essential that you buy it.

- Imai, Kosuke. 2017. *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Software

Much of the hands-on work we will do in this class requires us to use computers, so I ask that you bring your laptops to class each day. Specifically, we will make use of the R statistical computing environment to analyze data and create graphics over the course of the semester. RStudio is a popular editor that allows you to open, edit, and save R text files, making it much easier to work with R. I will use RStudio to demonstrate in class, and I recommend you download and use it as well. To access these programs:

- **R:** Download precompiled binary distributions at <http://cran.us.r-project.org>
- **RStudio:** Download RStudio Desktop at <http://www.rstudio.com/products/rstudio>

Suggested Materials & Additional Resources

The textbook has extensive online materials for learning to use R. There are also a number of free supplemental resources available through UNC that offer assistance:

- <http://qss.princeton.press/student-resources-for-quantitative-social-science>
- R Open Labs: <http://ropenlabs.web.unc.edu>

Additional help may be found with the Odum Institutes statistical consultants at the Research Hub on the second floor of Davis Library from 9am to 6pm, Monday through Friday.

Changes to the Syllabus

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. If changes are made, students will be informed through email and verbally in class.

Grading & Course Requirements

Your grade for the course will be determined by performance in five areas: class participation, problem sets, DataCamp exercises, exams, and a critical analysis project.

Grading

Final grades for the course will be based on the following scale. I reserve the right to make adjustments to individual grades based on overall performance in the course and/or extenuating circumstances. There will be no extra credit provided.

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| • A: 93-100 | • B: 83-86 | • C: 73-76 | • D+: 67-69 |
| • A-: 90-92 | • B-: 80-82 | • C: 73-76 | • D-: 60-62 |
| • B+: 87-89 | • C+: 77-79 | • C-: 70-72 | • F: 59 or below |

Course Grade Breakdown

The proportion of each assignment as part of your overall grade is as follows:

- | | |
|--|----------------------------------|
| • Participation and Assigned Work: 15% | • Critical Analysis Project: 30% |
| • Problem Sets: 25% | – Proposal: 5% |
| • Exams: 30% | – Preliminary Analysis: 5% |
| – Exam One: 10% | – Presentation: 5% |
| – Exam Two: 20% | – Paper: 15% |

In Class Participation & Assigned Work

Class time will be divided between lecture and in-class activities. The way you are going to learn best, especially when it comes to working with statistical software, is through practice. Active involvement in activities is absolutely crucial to success in this class not to mention, an easy way to boost your participation grade (and thus your overall grade). We will be doing a lot of in-class work, both individually and in groups. While attendance is not graded directly, absences will hurt your grade as you cannot earn participation points if you are not in class. If you know you are going to be absent for an excused reason, email me before class and give me any documentation I need to excuse you (i.e. doctor's notes, University's notes, etc.). When your absence is excused, you

can make up the in-class work for credit. When your absence is unexcused, you cannot make the in-class work up and you will receive a zero.

Problem Sets

Homework assignments will be assigned throughout the semester. The problem sets will be posted to Sakai, and due electronically on Sakai before the start of class on the due date. Late homework will be subject to a 10% penalty each additional day it is late. Late homework will no longer be accepted after the answer key is posted to Sakai.

Critical Analysis Project

The research project is a primary focus of this course and, as such, makes up just under a third of the overall grade. This project will allow you to directly apply the lessons from this course to a political issue or question that you care about. For the project, you will be assigned to a group of 4-6 students (depending on class size). Your group will work together to select a relevant political issue or question, theorize about some factors that might explain that issue or help answer the question, choose a (provided) data set appropriate for the question, and analyze the data to see whether your expectations were supported. Each member of the group will receive *approximately* the same grade on all parts of the research project; I expect each member, in turn, to make an equal contribution throughout the process. You will be asked to evaluate your group members and yourself at each stage of the process and the evaluations provided will have an impact on your grade. The project and overall distribution of points are divided into four parts:

- **Project Proposal (5%):** Each group must turn in a two-page, double-spaced paper proposal by October 9th. This proposal should include a brief description of the issue or question about public opinion you plan to examine. Make sure to address why this topic is interesting to you and/or important within political science. This proposal should include an initial description of your research question, theory, and hypotheses.
- **Preliminary Analysis (5%):** Each group must turn in a preliminary data analysis, which includes the key statistics used to test your hypotheses, by November 11th. This assignment, totaling approximately two or three double-spaced pages, requires a brief description of the data used, a brief explanation of the statistical methods you used, the relevant statistical outputs you computed, and an indication of whether and why the outputs support or oppose your paper's hypotheses.
- **Presentation (5%):** At the end of the semester, each group will give a PowerPoint presentation about its research on December 7th. Each presentation should be approximately 12-15 minutes, and time will be left for questions and answers after each group presents.
- **Paper (15%):** The final research paper is due on December 7th before presentations begin. This paper should be approximately 10 pages, double-spaced, not counting any tables, figures, or the bibliography.

Exams (30%)

There will be two exams; the first worth 10% and the second worth 20% of your final grade. The first will be on October 11th and the second will be on November 25th. Note that this is not the final exam slot. We will be using the final exam slot for group presentations. The format of each exam will be discussed in class before the exam.

Unexcused Absences and Exams

You are required to be present for all scheduled exams. The only allowable exception to this policy is a documented emergency. If at all possible you should contact the instructor before the exam to discuss the emergency, provide documentation, and schedule the make-up.

Expectations

Communication

I am very happy to meet with students outside of class time. Whether it be to discuss concerns about the course, remediation with the material, or simply to engage further with the topic, please feel free to stop by Hamilton 303 during my office hours. If you are unable to meet during my office hours, which are listed at the top of this syllabus, please email me to set up a time to talk. Email is the best mode of communication with which to reach me. While I do my best to respond to emails as quickly and thoroughly as possible, please expect a response within 24 hours and plan accordingly.

Office hours are an important resource that should be utilized to improve understanding of materials or ask more personalized questions. Office hours before an exam will be held at regular times and, unless noted by me, no additional office hours will be held - so plan accordingly. University Policy stipulates that no grades can be sent over email. *After I have graded and returned your assignments, there is a twenty-four hour moratorium before I will answer questions about that assignment.*

Technology Use

The use of cell phones or other mobile communication devices is prohibited during this class, without exception. Laptops, on the other hand, are required. We are going to be doing a lot of work on the computer, especially with statistical programming software. Please email or come talk to me if you do not have access to a laptop and we will find a solution. Please bring your laptop to every class.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should (1) contact the office of Learning Disabilities at UNC: <http://www.unc.edu/depts/lds/index.html> and (2) bring a letter to me indicating the need for accommodation and what type during the first week of class.

Academic Integrity

According to UNC's Instrument of Student Judicial Governance, It shall be the responsibility of every student enrolled at the University of North Carolina to support the principles of academic integrity and to refrain from all forms of academic dishonesty. Failure to abide by this policy may result in punitive action taken against the offending students. Consult the UNC Writing Centers handout on plagiarism (<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/>) to learn more on how to avoid academic dishonesty.

Programming is a skill that takes time and practice to develop. Whenever you encounter a new problem, you will have to grapple with it and reach an understanding of what it is asking before you can reach a solution. Discussing the problem with other people is permitted and even encouraged. When it comes time to actually write your code to solve the problem, all work must be your own. Do not copy anyone else's code, and do not share your code with others. Identifying plagiarized code is surprisingly easy, even after renaming variables or rearranging individual pieces of code.

Some in-class work and the critical analysis project is collaborative, and collaborative writing of code is permitted. **All collaborative assignments will be clearly identified.**

Honor Code

All students participating in the class are assumed to be familiar with and adhering to the UNC Honor Code. I treat violations of the Honor Code seriously. More information is available at <http://instrument.unc.edu>.

Collaborative Group Membership

As explained above, students will work on the research project, including the presentation and final paper, as a group. Though time will be given in class for group members to work together on the various sections of the research project, you will still need to devote a substantial amount of time to the group project outside of class. I expect all members of the group to contribute equally to the project, and each component of the project should reflect contributions from each group member. In other words, do not simply divide up the components of the project among the members of the group. While collaborative work poses some challenges, the benefits you will gain from learning how to work together successfully as a team will serve you well in all facets of your life, from the classes you take in the future to the career you pursue after graduation.

When it comes to group work, two problems often occur: (1) one member of the group dominates the project, or (2) some members of the group “free ride” by relying on other group members to do their work for them. I will try my best to prevent both, by regularly checking in with groups about the status of their projects. If problems within the group do arise, I encourage you first to discuss them openly and honestly among yourselves to see if some resolution can be found. If problems persist, please see me.

Schedule

Readings and assignments are due the date of class listed.

Date	Class Topic	Readings & Assignments
08/21	Introduction & Syllabus Day	Download R & R Studio
08/23	Working with R: The Basics	Data Camp Introduction to R: Chapters 1-3
08/26	Working with R: The Basics	In-Class Exercise
08/28	Working with Data in R	Data Camp Introduction to R: Chapters 4-6
08/30	Working with Data in R	In-Class Exercise
09/04	Analyzing Data in R	In-Class Assignment Problem Set #1 Released
09/06	Analyzing Data in R	
09/09	Intermediate R: Loops	Data Camp Intermediate R: Chapters 1-2 Problem Set #1 Due Problem Set #2 Released
09/11	Intermediate R: Functions	Data Camp Intermediate R: Chapters 3-4
09/13	Intermediate R: Review	In-Class Exercise
09/16	Introduction to Causality I	Bertrand & Mullainathan pgs. 991-997 Imai pg. 32-48 Problem Set #2 Due Problem Set #3 Released
09/18	Introduction to Causality II	Imai pgs. 49-63 Yeh et al. 2018 and NPR parachute article
09/20	Group Projects	
09/23	Data Visualization & Descriptive Statistics	Imai pgs. 63-88 Problem Set #3 Due
09/25	Visualizing Data in R	In-Class Exercise
09/27	Cleaning Data in R	Data Camp Cleaning Data in R: Chapters 1-4
09/30	Measurement: Surveys and Sampling	Imai pgs. 88-116 Cohn 2016 NYT article
10/02	Research Ethics	Denizet-Lewis 2016 (LaCour/Green/Brookman/Kalla NYT article)
10/04	Applying Concepts	In-Class Exercise Problem Set #4 Released
10/07	Group Project Work Day	
10/09	Review & Catch-Up	Turn in Project Proposals

Continued on next page

Calendar – continued from previous page

Date	Class Topic	Readings & Assignments
10/11	Exam # 1	
10/14	Prediction	Imai pp. 123-160
10/16	Applying Concepts	In-Class Exercise Problem Set #4 Due
10/21	Linear Regression I	DataCamp Corr. and Regression: Chapters 1-5
10/23	Linear Regression II	Imai pgs. 161-170
10/25	Multiple Regression	Reingold & Smith 2012 In-Class Exercise Problem Set # 5 Released
10/28	Multiple Regression	Carnes & Lupu 2014 In-Class Exercise
10/30	Catch-Up & Finish Multiple Regression	
11/01	Bringing It All Together	In-Class Assignment
11/04	Interaction Effects	Imai pgs. 171-182 Hansen & Treul 2015
11/06	Introduction to Probability I	Imai pp. 242-265
11/08	Introduction to Probability II	Imai pp. 277-306
11/11	Applying Concepts	In-Class Exercise Preliminary Analysis Due
11/13	Uncertainty I	Imai pp. 314-369
11/15	Uncertainty II	Preliminary Analysis Returned
11/18	Group Work Day	
11/20	Group Work Day	
11/22	Review	
11/25	Exam #2	
12/02	Group Work Day	
12/04	Group Work Day	
Final Paper & Presentation Due Saturday December 7th at 8:00 A.M.		

Critical Analysis Project

Final Project Abstracts — Fall 2019

For their Critical Analysis Project, groups were expected to employ data from the American National Election Survey (ANES) to answer a salient political question. Students first prepared and presented a group project proposal; this draft was revised with comments from their classmates and myself. Next, groups conducted a preliminary analysis, which included key statistics used to test their hypothesis and a series of linear regressions. I provided feedback on their R scripts and, implementing these changes, groups prepared a final analysis and paper for presentation. A sample of abstracts from students' final projects are presented below. On page 16, I have included my assignment expectations for their preliminary analysis completed in R.

- **Example Group A:** In most concepts of patriotism, a notion of duty to one's country is included. The United States especially focuses on a concept of duty to one's nation, but the interpretation of what that duty is varies greatly from person to person. Our research project focuses on the idea that voting could be considered a duty. We will attempt to identify variables that predict a person's support for the idea of voting as a duty as opposed to a choice. We will be using a linear probability model to examine a binary outcome. For each independent variable we will identify how it will affect the likelihood of viewing voting as a duty. We will also include a more descriptive portion where we talk about how viewing voting as a duty or choice affects the likelihood of a voter supporting Democrats or Republicans in the 2016 general election. We believe that research into this question could be useful for political campaigns messaging, as well as understanding what motivates people to vote and how different mobilization tactics might be more effective for different populations.
- **Example Group B:** In discussions about the 2016 presidential election, one controversial issue has been the influence of media on an individual's perception of the presidential race. The reality is that Americans are consuming more media than ever before. For instance, Pew Research shows a steady increase in Americans' use of social media every year since 2014 (Social Media Fact Sheet). Increasing usage of social media and other media sources has inevitably altered the political landscape. Media defines how Americans take in information in our complex world, and therefore how they learn about and interpret politics. Politics and the media have become undoubtedly intertwined. Our research attempts to test our hypothesis that increased media consumption leads to increased confidence in desired election results by analyzing the presidential election of 2016. We studied this election through the American National Election Survey, a reputable national election survey conducted before and after every presidential election. Our hypothesis was tested by comparing respondents' reported usage of media to their "confidence" that their preferred candidate would win.
- **Example Group C:** Satisfaction with democracy in the United States is currently at an all-time low. According to the 2018 American Institutional Confidence Poll, only 40 percent of Americans reported being satisfied with the state of democracy following the 2016 election (Kates, 2018). Our research project focuses on the analysis of how people voted in the 2016 presidential election and their satisfaction with the US democracy following the outcome. We suspect that a relationship exists between a voter's presidential candidate choice and their satisfaction with democratic processes given the results of the election. Recognizing this relationship could help with an understanding of what kinds of political environments voters in the US consider democracy. It can also help political scientists better understand democratic backsliding.

Critical Analysis Project: Preliminary Analysis

DUE: November 11th

1 THE ASSIGNMENT

Each group must turn in a preliminary data analysis, which includes the key statistics used to test your hypotheses, by November 11th. This assignment, totaling approximately two or four double-spaced pages, requires a brief description of the data used, a brief explanation of the statistical methods you used, the relevant statistical outputs you computed, and an indication of whether and why the outputs support or oppose your paper's hypotheses. Specifically, this proposal should outline an initial description of your:

- Description of the data used
 - Describe your dataset
 - Include a description of how you cleaned your data (i.e. the variables that may have had codes for “Don’t know” or “No answer” that you have converted to NA)
 - Include any descriptions of other cleaning or coding decisions you made (i.e. reverse coded a variable; changed a variable to binary (0,1) indicator, etc.)
- Explanation of the statistical methods used
 - Write out, mathematically, the model you ran (including all control variables as well)
 - *For example:* $\text{income} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{age} + \beta_2 \text{gender} + e$
 - Describe the statistical method you used to estimate your model and justify that choice
 - This is especially important for people who are treating a 5 or 7 ordinal variable as continuous so you can run OLS. This is a good and fine decision – but I want you to note it in your paper.
- Relevant statistical outputs you computed
 - Make a table of the regression output that you get from R. Ideally, you should copy and paste the output into an excel or word table and format it properly.
 - Describe the findings
 - Talk about your betas/coefficients (mathematically)
 - *For example:* a one unit increase in age leads to a 0.5 increase in income, on average, all else constant
 - Discuss the statistical significance of your findings. Are they significant? And if so, at what level?
- Indication of whether and why the outputs support or oppose your paper’s hypotheses
 - This is where you should substantively interpret your findings – what do your findings tell us about your theory and hypotheses?
 - *For example:* we find evidence that increases in age tend to lead to increases in income, on average. This confirms our hypothesis that as individuals get older, their incomes increase.
 - If your findings do not confirm your hypotheses, discuss why and discuss avenues for possible future research (or things *you* may change for the final paper).
- Include your R Script that includes all coding, cleaning, and statistical analyses you ran.

POLI 100: Introduction to American Politics

Sample Syllabus — Spring 2019

Instructor: Rachel Porter

Email: rachsur@live.unc.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:15-4:45 and Thursday 3:15-4:45

Office Location: Hamilton 303

Classroom: Murphy, Room 104

Course Description

In order to fully understand our complicated and contentious political climate and events, it is necessary to understand how the American political system works. We will work toward that understanding together by exploring the system from two angles: *institutions*, or the structure of the United States government; and *behavior*, or the actions and motivations of political actors, both politicians and the general public. We will discuss what problems the government and political system seek to solve and why they sometimes succeed and sometimes fail to solve those problems.

Required Text

- Kollman, Ken. 2017. *The American Political System*. 3rd Edition. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

General Expectations

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. Class discussions are expected to be civil, rational, and respectful of the opinions of others. Although class attendance is not mandatory, you will be held responsible for all material in the textbooks and in lectures, even if you miss a class. Moreover, I expect all students to attend class prepared to participate in any class discussion and to show up on time. I reserve the right to hold “pop” quizzes if no one is participating in class discussion. Laptops, tablets, and other forms of electronic media are not to be used in this class. If you need an exception to this rule, please see me. I am willing to make accommodations.

Course Requirements

Exams (2) The first exam will be taken in class on March 5th. The last exam will be taken during the final exam period, which is scheduled for May 7th. The first exam will be worth 20% and the second exam will be worth 30%. The final exam will be cumulative.

Writing Assignments (2) Each paper will be five to six pages in length. The due dates are February 19th and April 18th. The papers are to be handed in in class. Each paper will be worth 20% of your grade for this class. Papers must be printed and handed in at the beginning of class on the date due, otherwise considered late. A 10% reduction will be taken off the final paper grade for every day late. Information regarding the writing assignments will be distributed in class.

General Participation Your general class participation will be evaluated, constituting 10% of your final grade. I strongly encourage all students to actively participate in discussion. Class attendance is part of your participation grade, as is participation in discussion. If you attend every

class, but never say a word you can do no better than a B- for participation; though a B- is not guaranteed, as you must show evidence of active listening (i.e. sleeping, being on Facebook/Twitter, etc., and emailing do not demonstrate active listening).

If you are uncomfortable speaking up in class, please consider this section an opportunity to grow and push yourself to contribute to the discussion — and come chat with me in office hours if you are having trouble participating.

Research Participation All students who enroll in Political Science 100 are required to participate in research studies conducted in the Political Science Department should they be conducted during the semester you are enrolled in the course. The total time commitment to such studies will not exceed 3 hours. Failure to satisfy the research participation requirement will result in an incomplete for the course. This requirement does not substitute for other course requirements, nor does it generate extra credit. You will be alerted to studies via Sakai. The subject pool and the research studies are currently administered by Professor Anna Bassi. Should you have any questions please email her. It is important to note that if studies are made available they must be completed in a timely manner, as the studies are not always available throughout the semester. In the event that you would rather not actively participate in an actual study, you have the option of satisfying the research participation requirement in a different way. This alternative assignment consists of writing a 4-page research paper.

Grading

A final grade of “incomplete” will only be given in this course under exceptional circumstances and is solely at the discretion of the instructor. In addition, written assignments that do not follow the guidelines of the assignment and/or have poor grammar and spelling will be severely penalized. As a general rule, make-ups for exams will not be given. Students who must miss exams because of scheduled activities of an official University student organization, a religious holiday, or a verifiable illness should contact the instructor *in advance* of missing an exam so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Grading Scale

A 94-100, A- 90-93, B+ 87-89, B 84-86, B- 80-83, C+ 77-79, C 74-76, C- 70-73, D+ 67-69

Assignments & Tests

You are responsible for keeping a copy of all written assignments for the course. This ensures that we will not run into problems with lost assignments. You are also responsible for keeping copies of the assignments once they are handed back. Sometimes errors do happen, and a grade may not be recorded for you. If this happens you must be able to produce the graded paper to verify that the assignment was completed and that the grade is correct.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is broadly defined as submitting work that is not your own without attribution, and is not acceptable in this or any other academic course. Any academic dishonesty found on an assignment results in a failing grade for that assignment and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent permissible under University of North Carolina guidelines, which can be accessed at: <http://honor.unc.edu>.

Communication

I am very happy to meet with students outside of class time. Whether it be to discuss concerns about the course, remediation with the material, or simply to engage further with the topic, please feel free to stop by Hamilton 303 during my office hours. If you are unable to meet during my office hours, which are listed at the top of this syllabus, please email me to set up a time to talk. Email is the best mode of communication with which to reach me. While I do my best to respond to emails as quickly and thoroughly as possible, please expect a response within 24 hours and plan accordingly.

Office hours are an important resource that should be utilized to improve understanding of materials or ask more personalized questions. Office hours before an exam will be held at regular times and, unless noted by me, no additional office hours will be held - so plan accordingly. Prior to writing assignments due dates I will be available during office hours to read over paper outlines provide feedback. Please do not bring completed papers and, be advised, office hours before paper deadlines may be busy.

Electronics Policy

In class, our aim is to engage deeply with the subject matter as well as with each other. This means that we must actively listen to each other and formulate thoughtful responses. As a result, electronic devices (e.g. laptops, tablets, and cell phones) will not be needed, so you should keep them muted or turned off to avoid distracting yourself or your classmates. To come prepared for class, you may either bring a printed copy of the readings, notes on the readings, or both.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who need academic accommodation should contact UNC's Office of Accessibility, Resources, and Services or the Learning Center. Further, please either set up a time to meet with me *or* write me an email about the accommodations you will require. This should be done during the first week of class.

Schedule

I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule at any time. If changes are made, students will be informed through email and verbally in class and online. Adjustments will be made based on how quickly we work through material. Please see the following page for a schedule of assigned readings and assignments.

Date	Class Topic	Readings & Assignments
1/10	Introductions, Syllabus, Course Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Readings
1/15	The State of American Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mara Liasson, <i>NPR</i>, The State Of Our Politics Is Divided, Mis-trustful And Engaged
1/17	Why is Politics Ineffective?: Questions & Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman, Chapter 1
1/22	Articles of Confederation & Constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman, Chapter 2 Richard Stengel, <i>TIME</i>, One Document, Under Siege
1/24	Federalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman Chapter 3 Libby Nelson, <i>Vox</i>, Everything You Need to Know about Com-mon Core
1/29	Congress I: Districts & Getting Elected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman Chapter 5, pp.147-164 David R. Mayhew, The Electoral Connection
1/31	Congress II: The Institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman Chapter 5, pp.165-180
2/5	Congress III: Polarization & Dysfunction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ezra Klein, <i>Vox</i>, What is Congressional Dysfunction? Frances Lee, <i>Washington Post</i>, American politics is more com-petitive than ever... Sean Theriault, <i>Washington Post</i>, Polarization we can live with. Partisan warfare is the problem.
2/7	Presidency I: Historical Perspective & Today	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman Chapter 6, pp 199-224 Ezra Klein, <i>Vox</i>, The Green Lantern Theory of the Presidency” David Graham, <i>The Atlantic</i>, The Strangest Thing About Trump’s Approach to Presidential Power
2/12	Judiciary I: The Federal Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman Chapter 8, pp. 285-311
2/14	Judiciary II: SCOTUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman Chapter 8, pp. 311-324
2/19	Civil Rights & Civil Liberties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman Chapter 8, pp. 109-132 Roger Parlo, <i>The New Yorker</i>, Christian Bakers, Gay Weddings, and a Question for the Supreme Court
		Continued on next page

2/21	Gerrymandering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Gerrymandering, <i>Vox</i>, see Sakai for link • Black Representation in North Carolina, <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>, see Sakai for link
2/26	Gerrymandering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Gerrymandering, <i>Vox</i>, see Sakai for link • Black Representation in North Carolina, <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>, see Sakai for link
2/28	Bureaucracy	• Kollman Chapter 7
3/5	Catch-Up and Review (First Paper Due)	• No Readings
3/7	Midterm Exam	• No Readings
3/19	Public Opinion I: Measuring Public Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman, Chapter 9, pp. 330-340 • Vann R. Newkirk II, <i>The Atlantic</i>, What Went Wrong With the 2016 Polls? • Nate Silver, <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>, The Polls Are All Right • Kollman, Chapter 9, pp. 341-361 • Johnathan Weiler and Marc Hetherington, Prius Or Pickup? How the Answers to Four Simple Questions Explain America's Great Divide (Chapter 1)
3/21	Public Opinion II: Forming Political Attitudes	• Kollman, Chapter 9, pp. 341-361
3/26	Public Opinion III: Are Americans Divided?	• Johnathan Weiler and Marc Hetherington, Prius Or Pickup? How the Answers to Four Simple Questions Explain America's Great Divide (Chapter 1)
3/28	Elections I: Mechanics	• Kollman, Chapter 13
4/2	Elections II: The Electoral College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garrett Epps, <i>The Atlantic</i>, The Electoral College Wasn't Meant to Overtake Elections • Tim Alberta, <i>Politico</i>, Is the Electoral College Doomed?
4/4	Elections III: Political Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kollman Chapter 10, pp. 380-397 • Dylan Matthews, <i>Vox</i>, Obama suggested making it illegal not to vote. Heres how thats worked in Australia
4/9	Elections IV: Candidate Nomination & Selection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brookings Institute, The 2018 Primaries Project: The ideology of primary voters • Adam Nagourney, <i>New York Times</i>, Heres How Californias Jun- gle Primary System Works • Dan Balz, <i>New York Times</i>, Californias open primaries are a cautionary tale about political reform
4/11	Political Parties I	• Kollman Chapter 12
		Continued on next page

4/16	Political Parties II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonathan Rauch, <i>The Atlantic</i>, How American Politics Went Insane
4/18	Politics & The Media (Second Paper Due)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kollman Chapter 12, pp. 542-566 Jonathan Rothwell, <i>New York Times</i>, Biased News Media or Biased Readers? An Experiment on Trust
4/23	Money in Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maggie Koerth-Baker, <i>FiveThirtyEight</i>, How Money Affects... Andrew Prokop, <i>Vox</i>, The Citizens United era of money in politics, explained Michelle Ye Hee Lee, <i>Washington Post</i>, Eleven donors have plowed \$1 billion into super PACs since they were created
4/25	The 2020 Presidential Election	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Readings
4/29	Catch-Up and Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Readings
4/7	Final Exam	

Paper Assignment POLI 100

Paper Due Date: February 28th, 2019

Papers must be submitted in class on the due date or considered late

This assignment is about institutions in American government. The paper is due Thursday, February 28th *in class* at the beginning of class.

Assignment Goal: The goal of this assignment is to apply political science theories and concepts to the overarching class theme of institutions. Throughout our discussions of Congress, the Judiciary, and the Presidency, we have reviewed how institutions shape outcomes. Sometimes institutions can have unintended consequences that shape outcomes in an unintended way.

For this assignment, you should (1) choose a branch of government (judiciary, executive, or legislature) and propose a reform to fix an ongoing political problem within that branch; (2) put forward why this reform should occur, outline the intended outcomes of this reform, and discuss potential unintended consequences of this reform.

Assignment Specifics: In the paper, you should address the following points:

- Properly diagnose an ongoing political problem and correctly identify the rule, procedure, or institution that is the source (or in part the source) of that political problem. Be sure to discuss *why* this particular rule, procedure, or institution is contributing or causing the political problem you diagnose.
- Fully and completely outline the components of your reform. Discuss why you proposed your chosen reform and what the intended goals of the reform are. How is it going to fix your political problem? Provide evidence. You can rely on outside research for this portion of the assignment. However, be sure to cite all sources used in the bibliography.
- Reflect on your chosen reform. All rules, procedures, and institutions have unintended consequences. What unintended negative (or positive) consequences may your reform cause? Again, you can rely on outside research for this portion of the assignment. However, be sure to cite all sources used in the bibliography. Be sure to address this part of the prompt; do not skip over it by simply saying there will be no unintended consequences.

Be sure to do the following in your assignment: 1) organize your paper around a simple argument, do not choose too large or too complex of a reform; 2) answer each question directly; 3) draw on class readings or outside research to provide evidence; 4) minimize typos and grammatical errors.

Papers should be submitted in 12-point font, Times New Romans, double-spaced and stapled. Papers should be five pages in length with an additional page for citations (totaling to six pages). Please use APA format for citations and be sure to include a works cited page.

Paper Assignment POLI 100

Paper Due Date: April 18th, 2019

Papers must be submitted in class on the due date or considered late

This assignment is about institutions in American government. The paper is due Thursday, April 18th *in class* at the beginning of class.

Assignment Goal: The goal of this assignment is to apply political science theories and concepts to elections. Throughout our discussions of public opinion and campaigns, we have reviewed how political elites manipulate their campaign messaging to appeal to certain voters or elicit certain thoughts/feelings.

For this assignment, you will evaluate presidential campaign announcements for the 2016 or 2018 election posted under the “Paper_Assignment_2” folder on Sakai. You will compare and contrast two campaign announcements, first evaluating what types of appeals each used in order to win over voters and then assessing the broader implications of these tactics on the American electorate.

Assignment Specifics: In the paper, you should address the following points:

- Evaluate the use of elements like priming and framing, emotions, group attachments, or elite cues in each of your two chosen presidential campaign announcements. You may also rely on information covered in Chapter 13 of the Kollman textbook.
- Fully and completely compare and contrast these two approaches. Discuss what was similar and what was different. Speculate why these candidates chose to take different approaches. You may choose to rely on public opinion data or other polling information to support your argument.
- Reflect on these candidate’s tactics. What might be some of the unintended consequences of these strategies? Do they work to unite voters or divide the electorate? Again, you may rely on your own research to supplement this portion of the answer. Pew Research Center (<https://www.people-press.org/>) may provide some helpful data on growing polarization, diverging policy expectations, and fissures between the parties. The *Prius or Pickup* reading by Marc Hetherington may also be helpful.

Be sure to do the following in your assignment: 1) do not spend the majority of your paper simply describing the two campaign announcements; 2) answer each question directly; 3) draw on class readings or outside research to provide evidence; 4) minimize typos and grammatical errors.

Papers should be submitted in 12-point font, Times New Romans, double-spaced and stapled. Papers should be five pages in length with an additional page for citations (totaling to six pages). Please use APA format for citations and be sure to include a works cited page.