Introduction to Political Science Research

Number	POLS 209	Instructor	Carlisle Rainey	TA	Austin Johnson
Term	Spring 2017	e-mail	crainey@tamu.edu	e-mail	john31860@tamu.edu
Location	Allen 1005	Office	Allen 2051	Office	Allen ????
Day and Time	MWF 8:35-9:25 (901); MWF 9:45-10:35 (902)	Office Hours*	MW 11am-12pm; Th 10-11am	Office Hours*	DD 10am-2pm

*Please make an appointment during office hours using the link at the course webpage. This helps us be prepared.

Description

This course provides an introduction to political science research methods. We examine concepts, computation, and applications alongside one another.

Course Website

I post all materials for this course to carlislerainey.com/teaching/pols-209. I recommend bookmarking this page.

Outcomes

In taking this course seriously, you will:

1. Aquire and/or further develop knowledge of…
    a. basic statistical tools, such as the histograms, average, standard deviation, normal approximation, scatterplot, correlation, simple and multiple regression, sample survey, and hypothesis tests.
    b. basic concepts in probability theory, such as conditional probability, the law of averages, the expected value, and the standard error.
2. Aquire and/or further develop the ability to…
    a. evaluate empirical arguments.
    b. use R to implement basic statistical tools.
    c. clearly explain data and analysis in an honest and compelling manner.

Textbooks and Software

You need to buy the following to books for this class.

- Freedman, David, Robert Pisani, and Roger Purves. 2007. *Statistics.* 4th Edition. W. W. Norton and Company. New York. ISBN: 0393929728.
    - **It is important to get the 4th Edition**, and I recommend a hardcopy rather than an eTexbook.
    - Barnes and Noble prices: $149 new, $112 used, $120 new rental, and $67 used rental.
    - Amazon Prices: $145 new, $45 used, and $58 rental.

- Asimov, Isaac. 2004 [1951]. *Foundation*. Bantam Dell. New York. ISBN: 0553803719. $8 New. (Any edition/version will work fine.)

We will also read several other articles and chapters, but I will make those available to you for free, either on the course webpage or on eCampus.

You will also need to download two pieces of free software. First, download R from cran.r-project.org, then download RStudio (Desktop) from rstudio.com. If you need a little help, there are helpful videos on the web for Windows and Mac.

Grading

Below is a summary of the graded assignments in the course, their due dates, and their weights:

Category	Component	Due Date	Component Weight	Category Weight
Exams	Exam 1	Wednesday, February 22	10%	30%
	Exam 2	Wednesday, March 29	10%	
	Cumulative Final Exam	901 Thursday, May 4, 8-10am	10%	
		902 Friday, May 5, 8-10am		
Writing Assignment 1	Initial Submission	Friday, March 3	10%	20%
	Peer Review	Friday, March 10	5%	
	Final Submission	Friday, March 24	5%	
Writing Assignment 2	Initial Submission	Wednesday, April 12	10%	20%
	Peer Review	Wednesday, April 19	5%	
	Final Submission	Friday, April 28	5%	
Preparation	Attendance	Daily	10%	30%
	Participation	Daily	5%	
	Computing Exercises	Periodically	9%	
	Unannounced Reading Quizzes	Periodically	6%	
Total			100%	

- By university rule, **if you do not pass the writing portion of the class, then you do not get credit for a W course**. This means you must earn at least 28 of the 40 possible points from the two writing assignments to receive credit for a W course.
- **Exams.** There are three exams throughout the semester. The exams are cumulative and focus on all of the material covered up to the exam, including the readings, lectures, and computing exercises. The format is flexible, but you should expect the exam to include multiple choice and short answer questions.

- **Writing Assignments**. The writing process has three stages: initial submission, peer review, and final submission. Do not think of the initial submission as a "first draft." The initial submission should be a carefully-written, polished paper. After the initial submission, you will receive written comments from two of your peers. (You will also offer comments on two of your classmates' papers.) You will improve the paper in light of the comments and respond to these comments in a short memo to me.
- **Preparation.**
  - *Attendance.* I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. You have two free absences. After two absences, I will deduct one point from the 10 possible attendance points for each absence. Excused absences do not deduct from your free absences. **If you have more than 15 unexcused absences, then you will receive and F in the course.**
  - *Participation.* At the end of the semester, I will make a subjective judgment of the quality of your participation, based on the rubric below. In general, I expect students to contribute to each class. I especially value (relevant) questions.

	Excellent (5 points)	**Good (3 points)**	**Poor (0 points)**
Frequency of Participation	Asks questions and/or presents ideas in all classes.	Asks questions and/or presents ideas in some classes.	Does not ask questions or present ideas in any classes.
Quality of Participation	Always asks relevant questions and presents ideas that indicate the student is well-prepared.	Sometimes asks off-topic questions and presents ideas that indicate the student not well-prepared.	Usually asks off-topic questions and presents ideas that indicate the student not well-prepared.
Listening	Always listens attentively when others ask questions or present ideas.	Sometimes fails to listen attentively when others ask questions or present ideas.	Usually fails to listen attentively when others ask questions or present ideas.

  - *Computing exercises.* I will give nine assignments that require you to apply and review the computing skills we learn in class.
  - *Reading quizzes.* throughout the semester, I will occasionally give unannounced reading quizzes that cover the assignments for that day.
- **Final grade.** Your points in the course will translate into a letter grade using the table below:

Letter Grade	**Points**
A	[90, 100]
B	[80, 90)
C	[70, 80)
D	[60, 70)
F	[0, 60)

Missed Classes

If you are going to miss a class, notify me before the class via e-mail. Your e-mail should explain and document why you are going to miss the class. In the case of an unexpected absence, notify me within the next two working days. Your e-mail should explain and document why you missed the class and why you could not notify me beforehand. I might follow up with a request for more documentation.

If you miss an in-class, graded assignment (e.g., exam), then I usually expect you to make up the assignment during my next office hours.To avoid advantaging some students over others, I might use an alternative make-up assignment.

If you are absent on a day that an out-of-class assignment is due (e.g., writing assignment), then I usually expect you to submit the assignment early unless you have made prior arrangements with me. I do not accept assignments submitted via email except in unusual circumstances.

ADA Policy Statement

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit http://disability.tamu.edu.

Honor Code

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do." I expect that all work represented as your own throughout the semester be your own. Any work done with the help of others should clearly indicate such. The Aggie Honor Code is available at https://aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Changes to Syllabus

I reserve the right to update/modify/clarify the syllabus with advance notification. Below is a list of changes made so far:

No changes made so far.When