

**POLI 110: INVESTIGATING POLITICS:  
AN INTRODUCTION TO SCIENTIFIC POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

2012-2013 Winter, Term 1

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30am to 11am in BUCH A102  
plus a weekly tutorial section

**Professor Anjali Thomas Bohlken**

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 11am to 1pm,  
and by appointment

**Teaching Assistants**

Beth Schwartz

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This course prepares students to engage with the field of political science by introducing them to the basic logic and tools used by political scientists to understand and explain the political world. The course will teach students how political scientists ask answerable questions; how we define key political concepts; how we formulate hypotheses and theories about political dynamics; how we measure the phenomena we want to study; how we think about and assess relationships of cause-and-effect; and how we report our findings to the world. We will consider these issues by examining how political scientists have investigated major questions in domestic and international affairs, such as why ethnic diversity sometimes leads to civil war, whether international intervention can bring about democracy and how we can determine which country has the best healthcare policies.

**Format**

While the biweekly course sessions on Tuesday and Thursdays will be lecture-based, your attendance and participation in them is mandatory. You will be asked questions in class that may require either oral participation or response using Clickers (see below). There will also be a weekly discussion section led by your teaching assistant in which your attendance and participation is also required. See the section below on “Grading and Assignments”, for further details on the grading of attendance and participation.

**Required Course Materials**

- I. Course Package, Available at UBC BookStore. The course package consists of a compilation of textbook excerpts that are required reading for the course. Unless specified otherwise, all the readings listed in the weekly schedule are available in the course package. The readings are listed with reference to the author and should appear in the order in which they are assigned.

- II. Clicker, Available at UBC Bookstore: The Clicker will be a key learning tool used in this course. It is a device that allows you to record your responses to questions posed by the instructor in the classroom and that allows the instructor to gather and display your responses. The iClicker will be used to assess your attendance and participation and is mandatory for purchase.

**In order for you to obtain attendance credit with the iClicker, you will need to register your iClicker on the Connect website.** To do this, you will need to log in to the UBC Connect webpage with your CWL ID and Password (details below). On the “Course Content” Tab, you will see a link saying “iClicker Remote Registration”. You will need to click on this link and enter in the information on the back of your device.

In order for your responses to be recorded within a class session, **you will also need to adjust the frequency settings on your device.** The frequency setting for the classroom is **AB**. To adjust the frequency, you will need to hold the On/Off key on your device till it blinks, click **A** and **B**, turn the device off and turn it on again.

- III. Readings Available Electronically: As listed below in the detailed syllabus, some required readings for the course are electronically available either *on the Course Website* (see section below on the Course Website) or through *the UBC Library Online Catalogue* or simply through a link on the web. Once you are provided information about the readings, it is your responsibility to download them from the appropriate location.

## GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

### ***A. In-Class Written Assessment:***

- 1. Quiz 1, October 11<sup>th</sup> in Class.** This quiz will assess material covered in Weeks 1 through 4 and will be worth **15% of your overall mark.**
- 2. Quiz 2, November 6<sup>th</sup> in Class.** This quiz will assess material covered in weeks upto and including Week 8 and will be worth **15% of your overall mark.**
- 3. Final Exam (Date and Time to be Set by Registrar):** The Final Exam will be cumulative and will be worth **20% of your overall grade.**

### ***B. Attendance and Participation:***

Your attendance and participation in the ***bi-weekly class sessions*** (Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9:30am and 11am) is required and will be worth a total of **12.5 % of your overall grade.** It is important that you show up to class on time. Your attendance will be assessed by recording your in-class Clicker responses. Thus, *your attendance will not be*

*registered if you do not bring your Clicker to class or fail to respond to questions using the Clicker.* For class sessions, you will be allowed **three unexcused absences** (i.e. three absences without a doctor's note or other similar evidence of an illness or emergency). After that, any unexcused absences will result in a proportionate reduction in your mark.

Your attendance and participation in the ***weekly discussion/tutorial sections*** led by your teaching assistant is also required and will be worth a total of **12.5% of your overall grade**. You will be allowed **one unexcused absence** throughout the term in a discussion section.

### ***C. Homework Assignments***

The written homework assignments required for this course are as follows. Further guidance on all these assignments will be provided in class and in the discussion sections.

a. *Written Assignment on "Types of Claims"* to be uploaded on the Course Connect Webpage **by Tuesday September 25<sup>th</sup> at 1pm**. This will be worth **5% of your overall grade**.

b. *Two-Part Written Assignment on "Measurement"*.

The first part of the assignment should be uploaded on the Course Connect Webpage **before the start of your tutorial section in Week 9** (i.e. week of October 29<sup>th</sup>).

The second part of the assignment should be uploaded on the Course Webpage **before the start of your tutorial section in Week 11** (i.e. week of November 12<sup>th</sup>). These will be **each be worth 5% of your overall grade**.

c. *Five written tutorial preps* to be uploaded on the Course Connect Webpage **before your tutorial section in Weeks 5, 6, 8, 12 and 13**. These will be assigned a Pass/Fail grade and **will each be worth 2% of your overall grade** (10% total).

<b>ASSIGNMENT KEY</b>		
<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Date/ Due Date</i>	<i>Percentage of Overall Grade</i>
Homework Assignment 1 "Types of Claims"	<b>Sept. 25<sup>th</sup></b> , 1pm	5%
Tutorial Prep 1	<b>Week of October 1<sup>st</sup></b> , before your tutorial	2% (Pass/Fail)
Tutorial Prep 2	<b>Week of October 8<sup>th</sup></b> , before your tutorial	2% (Pass/Fail)
Quiz 1	<b>October 11<sup>th</sup></b> , in class	15%
Tutorial Prep 3	<b>Week of October 22<sup>nd</sup></b> , before your tutorial	2% (Pass/Fail)
Homework Assignment 2 "Measurement"	<b>Week of October 29<sup>th</sup></b> , before your tutorial	5%
Quiz 2	<b>November 6<sup>th</sup></b> , in class	15%
Homework Assignment 3 "Measurement"	<b>Week of November 12<sup>th</sup></b> , before your tutorial	5%
Tutorial Prep 4	<b>Week of November 19<sup>th</sup></b> , before your tutorial	2% (Pass/Fail)
Tutorial Prep 5	<b>Week of November 26<sup>th</sup></b> , before your tutorial	2% (Pass/Fail)
Final Examination	<b>Exam Period, Date and Time to be Set by Registrar</b>	20%

### **Policies on Late Assignments and Missed Examinations**

Late assignments are strongly discouraged and will incur penalties except in the event of a documented serious illness or serious personal emergency. The penalty for a late assignment without a documented reason will be a deduction of 2% of the overall assignment mark for each day that the assignment is not handed in. Assignments handed in over a week late will not be graded. If the assignment is handed in on the due date, but after the specified time, the first deduction will be assessed on that date and additional deductions of 2% will be assessed for each additional day that the assignment is not handed in. Missed quizzes or examinations will result in a grade of zero except in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

If you have any prior commitments that would prevent you from carrying out any required course assignments on schedule, you should discuss these with me well in advance of the course drop date to see if your scheduling conflict can be accommodated.

Read the university calendar so that you are aware of no-penalty drop dates, requirements for medical authorization (to defer an exam, for example) and other procedures that may

affect you.

(<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,48,0,0>)

UBC's guidelines for grading will be followed. Please refer to the following link for information regarding these guidelines.

(<http://www.arts.ubc.ca/faculty-amp-staff/resources/courses-and-grading/grading-guidelines.html>)

## **Cheating and Plagiarism**

Academic dishonesty in the form of cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the presentation or submission of the work of another person, without citation or credits, as the student's own work. If you have any doubts about how and when to properly acknowledge another person's work, please discuss these with me. Punishment for cheating or plagiarism will include a grade of zero and other disciplinary action. Please refer to the University policies on cheating and plagiarism for examples of what constitutes academic misconduct and the extent of disciplinary action that could be taken.

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,0,0,0>

## **Communication with Course Instructors**

For any questions or concerns about the course as a whole, please contact me via e-mail or stop by my office hours. Any questions about the material covered in lectures should also be directed to me. Questions about the tutorial should be directed to your TAs: Beth Schwartz ([bschwar@mail.ubc.ca](mailto:bschwar@mail.ubc.ca)) or Charles Breton ([cbreton@interchange.ubc.ca](mailto:cbreton@interchange.ubc.ca)). Your TAs will also hold regular office hours and further information will be provided in tutorial.

## **Course Webpage and E-mail**

There will be a course webpage for POLI 110 on UBC's Connect System. You can log in at [www.connect.ubc.ca](http://www.connect.ubc.ca) with your CWL username and password. I will use this page to communicate important course information and to post various course documents (readings, syllabus, lecture slides etc.) throughout the term. You will also be instructed to use this system to upload some of your written homework assignments.

I will often send e-mails with course announcements, details on required readings and other important assignments. It is your responsibility to make sure that the email address you have registered with UBC is valid and to check your email at this address so that you do not miss out on these announcements.

## WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE, READINGS AND TUTORIALS

### **Part I: Introduction to Social Science**

#### **Week 1 (September 6<sup>th</sup>): Course structure, requirements, objectives**

No Tutorial

#### **Week 2 (September 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>): What is Social Science?**

##### **Reading**

Neuman, pp 2-7 in Course Package

##### **Tutorial Topic**

Introduction

### **PART II: CAUSALITY IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES**

#### **Week 3 (September 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>): Types of Questions and Claims (Prescriptive/Descriptive/Causal)**

##### **Reading**

- (1) "Distinguishing between Normative and Empirical Statements"  
<http://www.politicalscience.uncc.edu/godwink/POLS2220/2%20Normative%20and%20empirical%20statements.pdf>
- (2) For Tutorial Next Week: *Taxing Wall Street Down to Size*, New York Times, January, 2010 (UBC Library Online Catalogue)

##### **Tutorial Topic**

Types of Claims

## **Week 4 (September 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>): Types of Causal Arguments**

### **Reading**

- (1) TBD: Will be Posted by Instructor on Course Website

### **Tutorial Topic:**

Discussion Based on “*Taxing Wall Street Down to Size*” article.

## **Week 5 (October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>): Types of Causal Arguments (continued)**

### **Reading**

- (1) TBD. Will be Posted by Instructor on Course Website
- (2) For Next Week’s Tutorial - Wikipedia entry: [Causes of the French Revolution](#)
- (3) For Next Week’s Tutorial - Wikipedia entry: [Russian Revolution](#)

### **Tutorial Topic**

Discussion of Causes: Obama-Romney Election

## **Week 6 (October 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>): Causal Logics**

*October 11<sup>th</sup>: Quiz Covering Material up to and Including Week 4*

### **Reading**

- (1) TBD. Will be Posted by Instructor on Course Webpage
- (2) For next week’s tutorial: *Rwanda: How the Genocide Happened*  
(<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/1288230.stm>)

### **Tutorial Topic**

Causes of Revolutions

### **PART III: STUDYING CAUSALITY EMPIRICALLY**

#### **Week 7 (October 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>): Introduction to Measurement**

**Reading:**

- (1) Johnson and Joslyn, pp. 49-53 in Course Package
- (2) Hoover and Donovan pp. 18-24 in Course Package

**Tutorial Topic:**

Extracting Causal Logic, Questionnaire Design

#### **Week 8 (October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>): Challenges of Measurement**

**Reading:**

- (1) Manheim and Rich: pp. 91-95 in Course Package
- (2) TBD. Will be Posted by Instructor on Course Webpage

**Tutorial Topic :**

Measuring Healthcare Quality

#### **Week 9 (October 30<sup>th</sup>, November 1<sup>st</sup>): Variables and Hypotheses, Covariation as a Means of Assessing Causation**

**Reading:**

- (1) Hoover and Donovan, pp. 24-27;
- (2) Manheim and Rich, pp. 27-30;
- (3) Johnson and Jocelyn, pp. 27-30.

**Tutorial Topic**

Measuring Healthcare Quality (continued)

*First part of Measurement Assignment Due in Tutorial of this Week*



**Week 10 (November 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>):  
Covariation as a Means of Assessing Causation (cont'd), Statistical Significance**

*November 6<sup>th</sup>: Quiz Covering Materials up to and including Week 8*

**Reading:**

(1) White, pp. 61-65

**Tutorial Topic**

Developing Hypotheses

**Week 11 (November 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>): Spurious Causation (Types of Spuriousness and Solutions)**

**Reading:**

(1) Neuman, pp. 98-99

(2) For Next Week's Tutorial: Levitt and Dubner (*Freakonomics*), pp161-176

**Tutorial Topic**

Covariation

*Second Part of Measurement Assignment Due in Tutorial*

**Week 12 (November 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>): Process Tracing and Reasoning with Evidence**

**Reading**

(1) Arthur Conan Doyle's "Silver Blaze"

(2) Neuman, pp. 68-74; 78-82

(3) For Next Week's Tutorial: TBD

**Tutorial Topic:**

Spurious Correlation: Discussion of Levitt and Dubner (*Freakonomics*)

**Week 13 (November 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>): Revisiting Skepticism, Transparency and Replicability**

**Tutorial Topic:**

Reasoning with Evidence