PS0700
RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Fall Semester 2022: 1500 WW Posvar Hall
Monday-Wednesday 2:00-2:50

Professor Steven Finkel
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and by appt.
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Teaching Assistant:
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Office Hours: W 3:00 – 4:30
F 3:00 – 4:30 and by appt.

Course Description

This course serves as an introduction to the methodology of political science research. The course will begin with the logic of social scientific inquiry and the basics of research design, and then introduce students to the quantitative and qualitative methods that are commonly used by political scientists to investigate important questions about the political world. The goals of the course are 1) for the student to become both an intelligent consumer of quantitative and qualitative research, with the ability to see the strengths and flaws of social scientific studies in academic journals and books, newspapers, web sites and other outlets; and 2) to give students the skills necessary to begin conducting original political science research studies of their own.

By the end of the class, students will have developed a critical understanding of issues related to scientific inquiry, measurement, causal inference, experimental, quasi-experimental and observational research, formal modeling, comparative research, sampling and survey research, focus groups, in-depth interviewing, case studies and other qualitative methods of data collection. Students will also learn fundamental concepts in descriptive and inferential statistics, and in data analytic techniques such as crosstabulation, correlation and regression analysis, and will develop the skills to apply these methods using the R statistical package.

Requirements

Grades will be based on three exams, one research exercise, and participation in class discussion and the recitation section. The first two exams will be held in-class on **October 3** and **October 31**, and the last exam will be held at the normal scheduled time during finals week. The research exercise will be an approximately seven-page paper in which you a) specify hypothesized relationships between political variables, b) use R to test the hypotheses with quantitative methods on data that will be made available for you, and c) interpret the results of the analyses. We will have much more to say about this exercise in class. The paper will be due on **Sunday, December 11**.

Grading

Exam 1	21%
Exam 2	22%
Research Exercise	20%
Exam 3	22%
Class and Recitation Participation	15%

Text

Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3th Edition. Cambrdige: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Students will be using R for learning the various statistical techniques and for conducting the research exercise. We'll provide step-by-step instructions in using R as the course progresses; you can find general introductions in chapter 1 of Imai, *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction* (Princeton University Press, 2017), or from the R for Data Science web site https://r4ds.had.co.nz/index.html.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at the weekly recitation sections is **mandatory**. I strongly recommend that you make every effort to attend the lectures as well, as they provide the core ideas that we will explore in the class, and they are the source of the recitation discussion material and many of the questions on the exams as well. A significant part of your grade (15%) will be based on recitation performance and on participation in class discussions.

Quantitative and Formal Reasoning General Education Requirement

This course fulfills the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences Quantitative Reasoning General Education Requirement (GER) as described for the GERs starting Fall 2018 (term 2191). That GER reads as follows: All students are required to take and pass with a grade of C- or better at least one course in university-level mathematics (other than trigonometry) for which algebra is a prerequisite, or an approved course in statistics or mathematical or formal logic.

Academic Integrity

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity. Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed. For the full Academic Integrity Policy, go to www.as.pitt.edu/fac/policies/academic-integrity.

Disabilities

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact your instructor and Disability Resources and Services (DRS),140 William Pitt Union, (412) 648-7890, drsrecep@pitt.edu, (412) 228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term. DRS will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/.

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The University of Pittsburgh does not tolerate any form of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation based on disability, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, genetic information, marital status, familial status, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status or gender identity or other factors as stated in the University's Title IX policy. The University is committed to taking prompt action to end a hostile environment that interferes with the University's mission. For more information about policies, procedures, and practices, visit the Civil Rights & Title IX Compliance web page: https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/civil-rights-title-ix-compliance.

I ask that everyone in the class to strive to help ensure that other members of this class can learn in a supportive and respectful environment. If there are instances of the aforementioned issues, please contact the Title IX Coordinator by calling 412-648-7860, or via titleixcoordinator@pitt.edu, or filing online at https://www.diversity.pitt.edu/ civil-rights-title-ix-compliance/make-report/report-form. You may also report this to a faculty/staff member; they are required to communicate this to the University's Office of Diversity and Inclusion. If you wish to maintain complete confidentiality, you may also contact the University Counseling Center (412-648-7930).

Course Outline

Weeks 1-3: The Nuts and Bolts of Political 'Science'

August 29: Introduction to the Course
August 31: Political Science as a "Science"
September 7: Theories, Hypotheses, Variables

Readings:
- Kellstedt and Whitten, chs. 1-2, 5.
- Easton, "Political Science in the United States: Past and Present", in David Easton and Corinne Schelling, editors, *Divided Knowledge: Across Disciplines, Across Cultures*. Sage Publications, 1991.
- Kasza, "Perestroika: For an Ecumenical Science of Politics," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34, 3, (September 2001), 597-599.
- Bennett, "Perestroika Lost: Why the Latest "Reform" Movement in Political Science Should Fail," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35, 2, (June 2002), 177-179.
- Weber, "On Laws of Politics and How to Establish Them", *PS: Political Science and Politics* (July 2022), 457-461.

Sept. 12: Measurement

Readings:
- Kellstedt and Whitten, chs. 3.
- Sullivan, Pierson, and Marcus, "An Alternative Conceptualization of Political Tolerance: Illusory Increases: 1950s – 1970s," *American Political Science Review* 73, 3 (September 1979), 781 – 794.
- Lührmann, *et al*., "Regimes of the World (RoW): Opening New Avenues for the Comparative Study of Political Regimes", *Politics and Governance* 6, 1 (2018), 60-77.

Weeks 3-5: Research Designs in Political Science

Sept. 14: Causality
Sept. 19: Experimental Designs I
Sept. 21: Experiments II
Sept. 26: Quasi-Experiments
Sept. 28: Observational Designs and Review

Readings:
- Kellstedt and Whitten, ch. 4.
- Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, "Causation: What Is It and What Is It Good For", and "Randomized Experiments", Chapters 3 and 11 in *Thinking Clearly With Data"*, Princeton University Press, 2021.

Examples of Different Kinds of Research Designs
- Iyengar, Peters, and Kinder, "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs", *American Political Science Review* 76, 4: 848-858 (1982**) [Lab Experiment]**
- Gerber and Green, "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment," *American Political Science Review* 94, 3 (September 2000), 653-663. **[Field Experiment]**
- Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi", *American Political Science Review* 98, 3 (November 2004), 529-545. **[Natural Experiment]**

- Hopkins and McCabe, "After It's Too Late: Estimating the Policy Impacts of Black Mayoralities in U.S. Cities," *American Politics Research* 40, 4: 665-700 (2012). **[Regression Discontinuity]**
- Sønderskov *et al*., "Crime Victimization Increases Turnout: Evidence from Individual-Level Administrative Panel Data", *British Journal of Political Science*, 2020. **Difference-in-Differences]**
- Finkel, "Reciprocal Effects of Political Participation and Political Efficacy: A Panel Analysis," *American Journal of Political Science* 29, 4 (November 1985), 891-913. **[Panel Analysis]**
- MacKuen, Erikson and Stimson, "Macropartisanship", *American Political Science Review* 83, 4: 1127-1142 (1989) **[Time Series Analysis]**
- Dalton, Sickle, and Van Weldon, "The Individual-Institutional Nexus of Protest Behavior*, British Journal of Political Science* 40: 51-73 (2009). **[Multilevel Analysis]**

Weeks 6-7: Research Designs II: Formal, Comparative and Qualitative Research

October 3: **EXAM 1**
October 5: Rational Choice and Formal Modeling I
October 10: Rational Choice and Formal Modeling II

Readings:
- Johnson and Reynolds, "Formal Modeling and Simulation" (2012), 7th Edition of *Political Science Research Methods*, pp. 207-213**.**
- Riker, "Political Science and Rational Choice," in James Alt and Kenneth Shepsle (eds.), *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy*. Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Stewart, *Analyzing Congress*, Chapter 1, pp.3 – 22.

October 12: Comparative and Qualitative Research

Readings:
- Johnson and Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods*, chapter 10.
- Peters, "The Logic of Comparison," in *Comparative Politics: Theory and Method*. New York University Press, 1998.
- Bennett and Elfman, "Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield," *Comparative Political Studies* (2007).
- Davies, "Qualitative Research and Evaluation: How Do You Know Why (and How) Something Works?" Chapter 8 in *The Magenta Book: Guidance Notes for Policy Evaluation and Analysis*. Government Chief Social Researcher's Office (UK), 2004.

Week 8: Data Collection Strategies

October 17: Survey Research
October 19: Content Analysis and "Big Data"

Readings:
- Johnson and Reynolds, *Political Science Research Methods*, chapter 10.
- Blair, Fair, Malhotra and Shapiro*,* "Poverty and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from Pakistan", *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 30-48 (2013).
- Telephone Sampling in the 2021 AmericasBarometer" (2022)
- Jungherr and Theocharis, "The Empiricist's Challenge: Asking Meaningful Questions in Political Science in The Age of Big Data". *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 14: 97-109 (2017).
- Nagler and Tucker, "Drawing Inferences and Testing Theories with Big Data", *PS: Political Science and Politics* 48: 84-88 (2015).

Weeks 9-15: Basic Statistical Methods

October 24: Descriptive Statistics I
October 26: Descriptive Statistics II and Introduction to Inference

October 31: **Exam 2**

November 2: Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing
November 7: Cross-Tabulation

Readings:
- Kellstedt and Whitten, chs. 6-8.
- "How to Lie with Data Visualization", *Gizmodo*, 4-6-14.

November 9: Correlation and Regression
November 14: Regression II
November 16: Multivariate Analysis I
November 28: Multivariate Analysis II
November 30: Paper Workshop
December 5: Advanced Topics in Quantitative Methods
December 7: Advanced Topics and Review for Exam 3

Readings:
- Kellstedt and Whitten, chs. 9-11, and pp. 273-281.
- Lewis-Beck, *Applied Regression*, pp. 9-46.

RESEARCH EXERCISE DUE SUNDAY DECEMBER 11, 11:59:59 PM

EXAM 3, Time and Location TBA

RECITATION SESSIONS
(Articles with hyperlinks also available on Canvass)

Sept. 2: Organizational Meeting

Sept. 9: Is Political Science a Science?

Readings:
- "Just How Relevant is Political Science", *New York Times*, Oct. 9, 2009.
- "Is "Social Science" an Oxymoron? Will That Ever Change?" *Scientific American* 4-4-13.
- "Justice Roberts said political science is 'sociological gobbledygook.' Here's why he said it, and why he's mistaken", *Washington Post*, 10-4-2017.

Sept. 16: Theory, Variables, and Measurement in Political Science

Readings:

Required
- "Is Everyone a Little Bit Racist?" *New York Times* 8-28-2014.
- "The Bogus 'Science' of Second Hand Smoke", *Washington Post* 1-30-2007.
- "Millions of South Koreans Could Soon Get Younger (On Paper)", *New York Times*, 4-29-22.

Recommended
- "More Than Half of Police Killings Are Mislabeled, New Study Says", *New York Times*, 9-30-21.
- "Bias Is a Big Problem. But So is 'Noise'", *New York Times* 5-15-2021.

Sept. 23: Causality and Experimentation in Political Science

Readings:

Required

- "Random Acts: What Happens When You Approach Global Poverty as a Science Experiment", *Slate*, 3-26-2014
- "Facebook's Unethical Experiment", *Slate*, 6-28-2014.
- "Professors' Research Project Stirs Political Outrage in Montana", New York Times, 10-18-2014.

Recommended

- "What Would Happen if We Randomly Gave $1,000 to Poor Families? Now We Know.", *Washington Post*, 3-12-2019.
- "The Experiments Are Fascinating. But Nobody Can Repeat Them", *New York Times,* 11-19-2018.

Sept. 30: Quasi-Experiments and Observational Research in Political Science
Review for Exam 1

Readings:

Required

- "Why Demonstrating Is Good for Kids", *New York Times*, 3-12-2018.
- "Do 'Fast and Furious' Movies Cause a Rise in Speeding?", *New York Times,* 1-30-2018.
- "Coronavirus Vaccines Work. But This Statistical Illusion Makes People Think They Don't", *Washington Post*, 8-31-2021

Recommended

- "What Happens to Women Who Are Denied Abortions", *New York Times* 6-12-2013, referencing "The Turnaway Study."
- "A New Study Reveals That Not Prosecuting People for Nonviolent Misdemeanors May Actually Reduce Crime", *Time* 5-4-2021.

October 7: Rational Choice Models in Political Science

Readings:

Required

- "The 10 Cunning Ways Public Radio Stations Convince You to Give Them Money", *Slate* 3-2-2009.
- "How Game Theory Explains the Leaks in the Trump White House", *The New Yorker*, 5-15-2018.
- "The Pandemic is a Prisoner's Dilemma Game", *New York Times* 12-20-2020.

Recommended

- "Why Politics Is Stuck in the Middle", *New York Times,* 2-6-2010
- "How Ranked Choice Voting Could Change the Way Democracy Works", *Washington Post*, 6-21-2021

October 14: **FALL BREAK**

October 21**:** Comparative and Qualitative Analysis

Readings:

Required

- "Why Was Tunisia the Only Arab Spring Country That Turned Out Well?", *Slate* 1-28-2015
- "These Eight Conservative Men Are Making No Apologies", *New York Times* 4-12-2022
- "What Explains U.S. Mass Shootings? International Comparisons Suggest an Answer", *New York Times*, 11-7-2017.

Recommended

- "How Australia Saved Thousands of Lives While Covid Killed a Million Americans", *New York Times*, 5-15-2022

October 28: Survey Research and "Big Data" in Political Science
Review for Exam 2

Readings:

Required

- "2020 Presidential Polls Suffered Worst Performance in Decades", *New York Times* 7-18-21.
- "Why It's So Difficult to Poll Americans' Feelings About Abortion", *Washington Post* 5-7-22.
- "The Battle to Prevent Another January 6 Features a New Weapon: The Algorithm", *Washington Post*, 1-6-2022.

Recommended

- "Eight (No, Nine!) Problems with Big Data", *New York Times*, 4-6-2014.
- "The tyranny of algorithms is part of our lives: soon they could rate everything we do", *The Guardian*, 3-5-2018.

November 4: Descriptive Statistics and Introduction to Inference
R readings and applications for November 4-December 9 sessions TBA
November 11: T-Tests and Crosstabulation
November 18: Regression
November 25: **Thanksgiving Break**
December 2: Multivariate Analysis
December 9 Statistics Review for Research Exercise and Exam 3

RESEARCH EXERCISE DUE DECEMBER 11

EXAM 3, Time and Location TBA