

OXFORD COLLEGE OF EMORY UNIVERSITY
POLITICAL SCIENCE 208Q: POLITICAL SCIENCE METHODS
FALL 2012

"Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty and staff for the purpose of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education."

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A bad statistic is harder to kill than a vampire

- Joel Best (Author, *Stat-Spotting and Damned Lies and Statistics*)

Course Description & Objectives

POLS 208 is a required course for all students majoring in Political Science or International Studies at Emory University.

The course is designed to introduce students to:

1. *The style of analytic thinking required for research in the social sciences (the scientific method).*
2. *The concepts and procedures used in the conduct of empirical research in political science (statistics).*
3. *The use of computers to conduct individual analysis of quantitative social science data (stata software®).*

WAYS OF INQUIRY (INQ) COURSE:

Political science methods is designated as an **INQ** course. As such, it is designed to introduce you to the specific ways knowledge is pursued in political science: quantitative methods. We accomplish this by actively engaging you in quantitative methods as a tool to help answer your research questions.

INDEED, THE ENTIRE COURSE IS DESIGNED TO HAVE YOU COMPLETE A RESEARCH REPORT THAT MODELS A SHORT ARTICLE OR RESEARCH NOTE IN A PUBLISHED JOURNAL.

To accomplish this goal, I work with you from the beginning to the end of the semester to complete each section of the research report:

- (1) formulation of viable research question
- (2) writing an annotated bibliography and literature review
- (3) measurement of key concepts & construction of testable hypotheses
- (4) writing a data and methods section
- (5) testing of hypotheses using appropriate statistical tests
- (6) written analysis of your results.
- (7) report of your findings to the class.

AS YOU COMPLETE EACH SECTION, I WILL BE PLACING INCREASING RESPONSIBILITY ON YOU FOR EACH SUBSEQUENT SECTION OF THE REPORT AS WE GO ALONG. YOUR EXPERIENCE IN POLS 208Q SHOULD PREPARE YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND OTHER DISCIPLINES IN THE KINDS OF QUESTIONS WE ASK AND HOW WE GO ABOUT ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS.

COURSE SPECIFICS

Our focus will be on quantitative analysis, which depends on a dreaded area for many students: **STATISTICS**.¹ That's right, if you want to analyze data you will need to know the variety of techniques used to understand and evaluate those data: *statistics*.

We focus on a variety of statistics, from simple descriptive statistics and graphs, to tests of bivariate association, to a basic introduction to multivariate analysis

You do not need any more math background than high school algebra.

For statistical software, we will use *Stata*®, perhaps the most popular package among political scientists. We have a license agreement through Emory and Stata Corp. to run 20 stata sessions at a time (from either mac or pc) from any computer lab or (preferably KALEIDESCOPE). You can purchase a 6 month license agreement with discount for about 65.00.

To obtain the discount, go to

<http://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/gp-campus.html>. Get the stata/1C 12. Otherwise you will be relying on public computers to complete the homework and research report.

Successful completion of this course requires not only that a student learn the substance of research methods and data analysis, but also that he or she learn associated practical skills. The midterm and final examinations will each include questions demanding knowledge of details of basic Stata commands and output.

**YOU MUST TURN IN A SATISFACTORY RESEARCH REPORT
TO PASS THIS COURSE, PERIOD.**

¹ Also referred to as 'sadistics', 'the things that are 'killing me', 'torture devices' ad infinitum

GRADES

%	Graded Item	Description
20	Homework	Weekly HW—Includes portions of your report
25	Midterm exam	October 18
30	Research Report	December 11
35	Final Exam	December 13 9AM-12PM

Reading Materials

- Philip H. Pollock III, *The Essentials of Political Analysis* 4th Ed (CQ Press 2012)
- Philip H. Pollock III, *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis* 2nd Ed. (CQ Press, 2011).

All other assigned readings are stored on our BLACKBOARD conference in "course documents"

Course Outline

Aug 30	Introduction & Expectations
Sept 4	The Scientific Method and the Study of Politics Brainstorming Your Research Interests
Sept 6 & 11	Defining & Measuring Concepts Pollock Essentials Ch. 1
Sept 13 & 18	Measuring and Describing Variables Pollock Essentials Ch. 2 INTRODUCTION TO STATA Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 1 -3
Sept 20	Professor OUT for Professional Conference
Sept 25 & 27	Explanations and Hypotheses Pollock Essentials Ch. 3 (STOP PAGE 58!) Jeffrey J. Mondak, "Newspapers and Political Awareness," <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 39 (May 1995), 513-527

Oct 2 & 4	<p>Making Comparisons, Presenting Data and Data Distributions</p> <p>Pollock Essentials Ch. 3 (page 58-76)</p> <p>Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 4</p>
Oct 9 & 10	<p>Research Design & Logic of Control <i>Experimental versus Non Experimental Designs</i></p> <p><i>Making Controlled Comparisons</i></p> <p>Pollock Essentials Ch. 4 & 5</p> <p>Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 5</p> <p>Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green, "Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout? A Field Experiment," <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 65 (Spring 2001), 75-85</p>
Oct 16	OFF Midsemester Break
Oct 18	MIDTERM EXAM
Oct 23	The Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography
Oct 25 & 30	<p>Statistical Inference & Hypothesis Testing</p> <p>Pollock Essentials Ch. 6</p> <p>Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 6</p>
Nov 1 & 6 & 8	<p>Test of Significance & Measures of Association</p> <p>Pollock Essentials Ch. 7</p> <p>Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 7</p>

Nov 15 & 17	Bivariate analysis III: Correlation and Regression Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (stop p. 199) Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 8
Nov 20	Bivariate Analysis: Regression Explored Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (stop p. 199) Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 8
Nov 22	OFF Thanksgiving Holiday
Nov 27	Multivariate Analysis: Analysis of Categorical Data Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (from p. 199) Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 9
Nov 29	Multiple Regression w/Dummy Variables Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (from p. 199) Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 9
Dec 4	Multiple Regression and Interaction Effects Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (from p. 199) Pollock Companion Ch. 9
Dec 6	Multivariate Analysis: Logistic Regression Pollock Essentials Ch.9 Pollock Companion Ch. 10
Dec 11	Research Reports Due PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS IN CLASS

Dec 13

FINAL EXAM (9AM-12PM)

HOMEWORK DUE DATES

September 4	Preliminary Research Question Interest
September 11	FINAL Research Question & Data Set
September 13	ID AND Define Key Concepts of Research Pollock Ch. 1 Exercises
September 18	Statistical and written description of Dependent Variable Pollock Ch. 2 exercises
September 20	Statistical and written description of 3 Potential Independent Variables
September 25	Pollock Ch. 3 Exercises
October 4	Pollock Ch. 4 Exercises
October 10	Pollock Ch. 5 Exercises
October 30	Annotated Bibliography 8 sources
November 1	Pollock Ch. 6 Exercises
November 6	Literature Review
November 8	Pollock Ch. 7 Exercises
November 15	3 simple & 3 hypotheses w/control

November 20	Pollock Ch. 8 Exercises
November 29	Pollock Ch. 9 Exercises
December 4	Data and Analysis Section
December 6	Pollock Ch. 10 Exercises
December 11	Research Reports Due in Class