

OXFORD COLLEGE OF EMORY UNIVERSITY  
POLITICAL SCIENCE 208: POLITICAL SCIENCE METHODS  
FALL 2011

PROFESSOR: DR. KATIE VIGILANTE  
OFFICE: 214C SENEY HALL  
DROP IN HOURS: TU & TH (10-12NOON & 4-5PM) WED (12-4PM)  
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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®).*

Our objective is to give you a foundation in research design and empirical methods so you can become an informed student of public affairs and specifically, of research reported in major journals in political science. Additionally, we want to provide you practice in data analysis skills as a means of introduction to political science methods for your own research.

Our focus will be on quantitative analysis, which depends on a dreaded area for many students: **STATISTICS**.<sup>1</sup> 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) the library. You can purchase a 6 month license agreement with discount for 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.

### *Requirements*

Grades in the course will be based on the following items:

%	Graded Item	Description
20	Homework	Weekly HW—Includes portions of your report
25	Midterm exam	October 25

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

30	Research Report	December 6
35	Final Exam	December 14 2-5PM

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 the course, period.

### *Reading Materials*

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

These books are available in the bookstore and on Amazon.

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

## *Course Outline*

Aug 25                      Introduction & Expectations  
                                  Political Science?  
                                  Discussion of Research Interests  
                                  Assigned HW: 3 Research Questions with corresponding

data set

Aug 30

The scientific method and the study of politics  
 JJR Ch. 2 in BB Conference/Handout from Class 1  
 Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 1

Assigned HW: Pollock Stata Companion Exer. Ch. 1

Sept 1

Defining & Measuring Concepts  
 Pollock Essentials Ch. 1

HW DUE: Pollock Stata Companion Ch. 1

HW DUE: 3 Research Questions with corresponding data

set

Assigned HW: Pollock Stata Companion Exer. Ch.2 & 3

Sept 6

Measuring and Describing Variables  
 Pollock Essentials Ch. 2  
 Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 2

Assigned HW: Dependent and 3 Independent Variables with  
 corresponding data set; identify level of measurement of  
 each variable

Sept 8

Measuring and Describing Variables Continued  
 Pollock Essentials Ch. 2  
 Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 2 & 3

HW DUE: Pollock Stata Companion Exer. Ch. 2 & 3

HW DUE: FINAL RESEARCH QUESTION AND  
 CORRESPONDING DATA SET IDENTIFIED

Sept 13

Measurement and Hypotheses  
 Pollock Essentials Ch. 3 (STOP PAGE 58!)  
 Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 4

Jeffrey J. Mondak, "Newspapers and Political Awareness,"  
*American Journal of Political Science* 39 (May 1995), 513-527

AND 3

HW DUE: IDENTIFICATION OF YOUR DEPENDENT

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES, DATA SET AND LEVEL  
 OF MEASUREMENT OF EACH VARIABLE IDENTIFIED

Assigned HW: INTRODUCTION

Sept 15

Research Design & Logic of Control *Experimental versus Non  
 Experimental Designs*

Pollock Essentials Ch. 4 (STOP P. 86)

AND

Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green, "Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout? A Field Experiment," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65 (Spring 2001), 75-85

### Assigned HW: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sept 20      The Literature Review: What is it? Why do it? Where do research topics come from? How do I begin?

### HW DUE: INTRODUCTION

Sept 22      Library Visit and Information Session for Source Collection for your topics

Meet at Library-ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY

### ASSIGNED HW: LITERATURE REVIEW

Sept 27      Presenting Data and Data Distributions; Measures of Central Tendency

### HW DUE: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sept 29      Data Transformations, Graphing and Mean Comparisons  
Pollock Essentials Ch. 3 pp. 58-77  
Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 4

Assigned HW: Pollock Stata Companion Ch. 4 Exercises

Oct 4                      Controlled Comparisons  
                              Pollock Essentials Ch. 4 pp. 86-101  
                              Pollock Essentials Ch. 5  
                              Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 5

HW DUE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Oct 6                      Controlled Comparisons  
                              Pollock Essentials Ch. 4 pp. 86-101  
                              Pollock Essentials Ch. 5  
                              Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 5

HW DUE: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION CH. 4  
 EXERCISES

ASSIGNED HW: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION EXER.  
 CH. 5

Oct 11                    FALL BREAK

Oct 13                    Making Statistical Inference & Hypothesis Testing  
                              Pollock Essentials Ch. 6  
                              Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 6

HW DUE: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION CH. 5  
 EXERCISES

HW DUE: REVISED LITERATURE REVIEW

Oct 20                    Statistical Inference & Hypothesis Testing  
                              Pollock Essentials Ch. 6  
                              Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 6

ASSIGNED HW: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION  
EXER. CH. 6

ASSIGNED HW: 3 TESTABLE HYPOTHESES

Oct 25                      MIDTERM EXAM

Oct 27                      HYPOTHESIS WORKSHOP (Attendance Mandatory)

Nov 1                      Measures of Association Bivariate analysis I: Comparing  
Means with t-tests  
Pollock Essentials Ch. 6  
Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 6

HW DUE: 3 TESTABLE HYPOTHESES

HW DUE: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION CH. 6  
EXERCISES

ASSIGNED HW: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION  
EXER. CH. 7

ASSIGNED HW: DATA & METHODS SECTION OF  
REPORT

Nov 3                      Bivariate analysis II: Crosstabs and the Chi-squared  
Test

Pollock Essentials Ch. 7  
Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 7



Nov 8                      Bivariate analysis II: Crosstabs and the Chi-squared Test  
                                 Pollock Essentials Ch. 7  
                                 Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 7

HW DUE: DATA & METHODS SECTION OF REPORT  
ASSIGNED HW: DATA AND ANALYSIS SECTION

Nov 10                      Bivariate analysis III: Correlation and Regression  
                                 Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (stop p. 199)  
                                 Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 8

HW DUE: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION CH. 7  
EXERCISES  
ASSIGNED HW: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION  
EXER. CH. 8

Nov 10                      Bivariate Analysis: Regression Explored  
                                 Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (stop p. 199)  
                                 Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 8

Nov 15                      Multivariate Analysis: Analysis of Categorical Data  
                                 Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (from p. 199)  
                                 Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 9

HW DUE: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION CH. 8  
EXERCISES  
ASSIGNED HW: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION  
EXER. CH. 9

Nov 17                      Multivariate Analysis: Multiple Regression with Dummy  
Variables

Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (from p. 199)  
Pollock STATA Companion Ch. 9

Nov 22                      Multivariate Analysis: Multiple Regression and Interaction  
Effects  
Pollock Essentials Ch. 8 (from p. 199)  
Pollock Companion Ch. 9

ASSIGNED HW: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION  
EXER. CH. 10

HW DUE: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION CH. 9

EXERCISES

Nov 24                      OFF TG BREAK

Nov 29                      Multivariate Analysis: Logistic Regression  
Pollock Essentials Ch.9  
Pollock Companion Ch. 10

HW DUE: DATA AND ANALYSIS SECTION  
INCLUDING TABLES AND GRAPHS

Dec 1                        Multivariate Analysis: Logistic Regression Continued  
Pollock Essentials Ch.9  
Pollock Companion Ch. 10

HW DUE: POLLOCK STATA COMPANION CH. 10

EXERCISES

Dec 6                      Research Reports Due  
PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS IN CLASS

Dec 14                      FINAL EXAM (2-5PM)