**Politics 230, Research Methods in Politics v1.0  
Fifth Block, 2018-2019  
David Yamanishi**

***Overview***

Methods and research design in political science to address the causal processes that produce outcomes in politics. Course covers quantitative, experimental, qualitative, and field research methods, research design, and inference. Prerequisite: STA 201.

***Contact information***

Office hours: I’ll generally be in my office 930a (1015a Wednesdays) to 4p, except 12-1p, when I’m not with you, unless I announce otherwise due to a meeting or family engagement. I hope that you’ll meet with me as often as will help you this block. Extension 4300.

Email: [dyamanishi@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:dyamanishi@cornellcollege.edu)

Consulting librarian: Meghan Yamanishi, Cole Library 308, x4143,   
 [myamanishi@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:myamanishi@cornellcollege.edu)   
 Hours: 830a-5p

Writing consultant: Jennifer Farrell, Cole Library Writing Studio, x4812,   
 [jfarrell@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:jfarrell@cornellcollege.edu)   
 Studio hours: Monday-Thursday, 8a-11p;   
 Friday, 8a-5p; Sunday, 1-11p

Quantitative reasoning consultant: Jessica Johanningmeier, Cole Library 126, x4222,   
 [jjohanningmeier@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:jjohanningmeier@cornellcollege.edu)  
 Studio hours: Monday-Thursday, 8a-5p and 7-11p;  
 Friday, 8a-4:30p; Sunday, 3-5p and 7-11p

Academic advising: Your faculty advisor can help you with advice about class preparation as well as class selection and future plans. Additionally, Brooke Paulsen, our Coordinator of Academic Advising, can help you with adjustment to college, study skills, obtaining tutoring, and other valuable advice. Her office is on the third floor of the library.

I’m here to help, as are the folks at the library. Please take advantage of us!

***Disabilities***

Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml>.

***Feedback***

I am very interested in your suggestions for improvement of this syllabus and my teaching generally. Please share comments with me as you think of them or after the course is over.

***Book to buy***

The following book is available at the bookstore in the Commons and is required for all students in the class. (Some additional readings are on the class’s Moodle site; see below.)

Colin Robson, *Real World Research* (3rd ed.), Wiley, 2011

***Reading and assignment schedule***

Reading other than Robson are on Moodle.

All class events are in South 18.

*(Events marked like this line are optional.)*

Monday, January 14 *(9a All-College Gathering, King Chapel)*

930a Introductions, administrivia

1p Lab introduction, tech support

Tuesday, January 15 930a Robson, chs. 1-2

1p David Mayhew, “The Case of the Vanishing   
 Marginals,” *Polity* 6:3 (Spring, 1974), pp. 295-317

Wednesday, January 16 1p Mayhew lab continued

Thursday, January 17 930a Robson, chs. 3-4

*(12p Time Management Workshop, Cole 108)*

1p Mayhew lab continued

*(315p Time Management Workshop, Cole 108)*

Friday, January 18 930a Robson, chs. 5-6

1p Mayhew lab continued

**Saturday, January 19 2p Paper introduction and context due**

Monday, January 21 930a Robson, chs. 7-8

1p Steven C. Poe, C. Neal Tate, and Linda Camp Keith,   
 “Repression of the Human Rights to Personal Integrity  
 Revisited: A Global Cross-National Study Covering the  
 Years 1976-1993,” *International Studies Quarterly* 43:2 (June, 1999), pp. 291-313

Tuesday, January 22 930a Robson, ch. 11

*(1130a Socioeconomic Posing and Sensitivity, OC)*

1p Poe, Tate & Keith lab continued

Wednesday, January 23 *(11a-1230p MLK Cultural Impact Walk-Through Symposium, OC)*

**1p First test**

Thursday, January 24 930a Robson, ch. 12-13

*(1110a HAIG Talk by Jill Heinrich and Kerry Bostwick, “The   
 18th Century Salonniere, Hedges)*

1p Poe, Tate & Keith lab continued

*(630p Hilltop Chronicles: Mark Kendall and Cleo Sullivan,   
 Zamora’s)*

Friday, January 25 930a Robson, ch. 14-15

1p Poe, Tate & Keith lab continued

**Saturday, January 26 2p Paper revision plus hypothesis section due**

Monday, January 28 930a Robson, ch. 17

1p Paper lab

Tuesday, January 29 930a Robson, ch. 18

*(11a-1p On-Campus Career Expo, Smith Dining Room)*

1p Paper lab

Wednesday, January 30 1p Paper lab

Thursday, January 31 930a Robson, ch. 19

*(1110a SIG Talk by Brian Johns, “Engineering a Better Social  
 Network, Law 203)*

*(12p Note-Taking and Goal-Setting Workshop, Cole 108)*

1p Paper lab

*(315p Note-Taking and Goal-Setting Workshop, Cole 108)*

*(330p Managing Test Anxiety, Hedges)*

Friday, February 1 930a Robson, ch. 10

1p Paper lab

**Saturday, February 2 2p Paper revision plus analytic section and conclusion   
 due**

Monday, February 4 **930a Second test**

1p Presentations

Tuesday, February 5 930a Presentations

1p Presentations

**Wednesday, February 6 3p Paper rewrite due**

**Summary schedule:**

**Week Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday**

**1 930-11, 1-3 930-11, 1-3 1-3 930-11, 1-3 930-11, 1-3  
2 930-11, 1-3 930-11, 1-3 1-3 930-11, 1-3 930-11, 1-3  
3 930-11, 1-3 930-11, 1-3 1-3 930-11, 1-3 930-11, 1-3  
4 930-11, 1-3 930-11, 1-3**

***Assessment***

I will calculate course grades as follows:

25% attendance and participation in discussions and labs  
 5% journals   
 30% tests (17% for the higher test, 13% for the lower)  
 5% paper introduction and context  
 5% paper revision and hypothesis section  
 10% paper revision and analytic section and conclusion  
 10% paper rewrite  
 10% presentation

Note: failure to turn in any major assignment (tests, final paper, presentation) will result in a grade of no higher than C-, regardless of the formula above.

While the particular things I’m looking for vary to some degree by assignment, in general an A on an assignment means that your work is outstanding in terms of:

* addressing the assigned question and avoiding digression,
* having a well-structured argument,
* expressing your argument clearly and effectively,
* making appropriate and properly cited use of material on the syllabus and other well-selected sources,
* and demonstrating thoughtful integration and interpretation of the course material and discussions.

Lower grades mean that you have not done all of these things or have done one or more of them less well that you could have. The order of items on the above list should not be taken to indicate their order of importance in determining your grade on an assignment, nor should you suppose that the items will carry equal weight on an assignment or invariant weight across assignments. Moreover, I expect your work to improve during the course and across courses.

To simplify communication about grades, I grade all assignments using the same marks that appear on your academic transcripts: letter grades. When I combine assignment grades to produce your course grade, I will do so using the same numbers that the college uses to determine your GPA (A = 4.0, A- = 3.7, B+ = 3.3, etc.). I will always round-up from the midpoint between grades (for example, a 3.85 rounds to an A, while a 3.84 does not). I may raise grades from what the raw numbers indicate in deserving cases, but I will never change the rank order of students’ grades in the class in doing so.

***Instructions for assignments***

*Participation*: Participation includes oral participation and (possibly) unannounced quizzes. If you punctually attend every class, appear to me to be paying attention and never make a contribution to our common discussion, you will receive some credit for participation. To get more credit than that for oral participation, you must participate orally in our common discussion. I assess oral participation more by thoughtfulness and attentiveness to the flow of the conversation than by quantity of oral communication. I do, however, expect you to contribute regularly. Office visits will help your oral participation grade, but are not a substitute for class attendance and participation. There may also be unannounced quizzes that address basic factual points from the readings if I’m not confident that y’all are showing up to class prepared to participate. Attendance and participation for the presentations and other special events may be weighted more heavily than that on other days. (This assignment emphasizes the educational priorities of Knowledge, Reasoning, Inquiry, and Communication.)

*Journals*: Each day of the course for which we have readings, you should submit a journal entry by two hours before the start of class via Moodle. You might consider a question or issue raised by the readings, or reflect upon how the readings for the day relate to earlier material and/or political science work you’ve read in other classes. You should aim for 300 words per day. Journals will be graded according to (thoughtful) completion. That is to say: if you finish all of them and take them seriously, you will receive an A for the journal component of the course grade. (This assignment emphasizes the educational priorities of Knowledge, Reasoning, Inquiry, and Communication.)

*Tests*: The test will involve short answer interpretive questions, with many addressing data. You will not have the test questions in advance, but they will be similar to problems we work on together in class. (This assignment emphasizes the educational priorities of Knowledge, Reasoning, Inquiry, and Communication.)

*Paper*: The goal of your paper is to ask and answer a question about politics using data and the tools we will learn about in this class. I will recommend a selection of existing datasets for you to use. You should run your topic by me as soon as you come up with an idea (in part to avoid duplication with topics chosen by other students). (This assignment emphasizes the educational priorities of Knowledge, Reasoning, Inquiry, and Communication.)

Your research paper should have five parts: an introduction, a contextual section, a hypothesis section, an analytic section, and a conclusion. To wit:

* Your introduction should state your problem clearly in the first sentence, briefly describe your overall conclusion, and outline the structure of your argument. It’s also helpful to suggest why your topic should interest readers.
* Your contextual section should flesh out your question by defining the terms of your question and describing the facts that you mean to explain. You should not draw any conclusions in this section.
* Your hypothesis section should express at least one testable hypothesis about your problem, and your reasoning for believing it might be true.
* Your analytic section will explain how you test your hypothesis: methods, data, results, diagnostics.
* Your conclusion should restate your question and briefly summarize the logic of your analysis. If you would like to offer suggestions for further work or other flowery thoughts, this is the place.

Nb. Unlike the paper assignments for most of my classes, I’m not asking for a formal literature review. You will almost certainly benefit from looking at existing studies of your topic, though.

*Individual presentation*:Your presentation should address your paper project. You should present your puzzle and your analysis of it in ten to twelve minutes, focusing on the most compelling parts of your story and findings. After each presentation, others in the class will have a chance to ask questions; the quality of these questions is included as a component of the presentation grade, along with your effectiveness in presenting your argument in a clear way to the class and your facility and thoughtfulness in answering questions about your work. (This assignment emphasizes the educational priorities of Knowledge, Reasoning, Inquiry, and Communication.)

***Attendance and lateness policy***

To avoid a penalty for missing a test or paper deadline, you must ask the campus clinic (in a health emergency) or the dean of students or other relevant campus official (in other types of emergencies) to send me an excuse on your behalf.

I will lower the grade on work submitted late by 1% of the maximum grade per hour late (thus, a paper that would have earned a 3.0 (a B) will earn a 2.96 (a lower B) if one hour late, a 2.84 (a high B-) if four hours late). Work submitted late *that meets the minimum expectations of the assignment* will receive at least a D regardless of lateness, so you should submit all assignments even if you are extremely late. However, I will not accept any work after 3pm on the last day of the block.

To drop on the 15th day, you *must* complete every assignment due by the end of the 14th day of class and attend class regularly and attentively. In other words, if you are likely to sleep through class on more than one occasion, you should drop now, because you will not be able to do so later.

***Academic honesty***

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College’s requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty appear in The Catalogue, under the heading “Academic Honesty."