**19 February 2021**

**2021 POLS8042 Pre-Course Coffee/Tea Break**

1. Welcome
   1. My name is ???
   2. What is the goal of the Coffee/Tea break
      1. Informally say hello
      2. For those who don’t know me, introduce myself
         1. Where am I from
         2. What do I do at the ANU
         3. What are my research interests
            1. Political careers
            2. Research methods (databases), political survival
            3. Starting to dabble in work on refugees, and refugee children in particular.
      3. Introduce yourselves to the course
         1. What is your name, how do you like to referred to
         2. Where did you do your undergrad/honours/MA
         3. What are your research interests?
         4. What background do you have in research methods?
            1. Research design
            2. Quants?
            3. Qual?
            4. Software
2. So what’s the course about?
   1. This course is an introduction to quantitative methods course.
   2. It will cover the basics of quantitative methods from means, modes and medians up to linear regression. In this way, it covers much of the same materials that ANU political science undergrads learn in the first year course POLS1006 and the second year POLS2044.
   3. Because this is a 12 unit course, there is more assessment than you will find in those undergraduate courses.
   4. If you have already taken an undergraduate, honours or postgraduate quantitative methods course, this is not the course for you, and I recommend that you contact the MA or HDR convenor to help you find suitable alternatives. If you are thinking, well, I’ll just take this course anyway and refresh and get an easy grade, I’ll remind you of the only thing that I remember from my grad school orientation: you don’t earn a degree in grad school, you earn a reputation. Reputations are hard to build and harder to rebuild.”
   5. Covid has forced me to rethink how I teach and how students learn. I personally think the “old” days of seminars, lectures and tutorials are over. They were actually over before I even started at the ANU six years ago. The ANU made video recording of lectures mandatory, and attendance optional. The writing was on the wall for traditional course delivery then but most universities did not want to admit it, COVID simply forced all of academia to show its hand. Not only that, but as cheap and reliable internet technology has become universal, students have voted with their feet (or their thumbs). The new metric for quality education is no longer the size of a campus, the depth of a library or even the number of Ivy or Oxbridge phds on staff – it’s accessibility. I think the legacy of COVID on higher education will be its levelling effect. The mad scramble for universities to get on board the online post graduate certification bandwagon is testimony not only to the income these courses make, but also a tacit admission that online education is here to stay.
   6. Consequently, my goal in this course, and in all my future courses, is to make them as accessible as possible. We have students, who for no fault of their own are in other parts of the world. We have students, who perhaps have very few resources. We have students who are parents, or are carers for sick or elderly parents, and for whom education is important but can’t be important every Monday to Friday, between 9am and 5pm, in a seminar room or computer lab on the ANU campus. In my perfect world, I would like my students to be able to get an HD in this course if all they have is a few hours here and there, a $25 second hand second hand chromebook tethered to free wifi in their local McDonalds.
   7. So to make this perfect world, the entire course will be offered online. My video lectures are all prerecorded and available on youtube, not wattle or ECHO360. This makes them as accessible as possible. Watch them when you can, where you can, where ever you are, whatever timezone. It also means that the lectures are available to you after you graduate.
   8. We will use an open source free software called R to do our statistical analyses. The cost to you is nothing, the cost to the university is nothing. And again, after you graduate, R will always be available for you to use regardless of whether you are an ANU student or not.
   9. I am also hosting the R software in a cloud server. This means that you don’t need to download any software on to your computer. All you need is an internet connection and at a bare minium our old chromebook. In theory, you can even do everything for this course on a mobile phone or a tablet, but I don’t recommend that. Those screens are very small, and touch screens are not very conducive to writing code.
   10. As you already know, we will use Slack to keep in touch. There’s an old expression that emails are cheap to send but expensive to respond to. Direct messaging is much easier to use, more immediate and for most students a part of their daily lives anyway. We’ll use Slack. You’ll probably continue using it (or one of Slack’s competitors) after you graduate in whatever job you get next.

Course Format:

Assessments

1 hw everyweek for 10 weeks

1 final take home exam

Make materials available on Tuesday – assessments are due on Sunday before midnight. That gives me all day Monday to correct and hand back on Tuesday morning.