

Political Science 151:
Doing Political Science
Winter 2008

Version: January 9, 2008

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 9-10:30am, and
by appointment.

Graduate Student Instructors:

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Section: Wednesday 2:15-3:05pm
Office hours: Wednesday, 5:00-6:00pm, at
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1 Course Description

Why do citizens vote? Do Get-Out-the-Vote campaigns work to increase turnout? Does campaign spending increase the likelihood of electoral success? Why don't Southern white working-class Americans vote for Democratic presidents? How do electoral rules affect the political representation of the poor? What are the consequences of immigration for social policy in the New Europe? Is economic development necessary for democratic governance? What determines the success of ethnic insurgencies? Why do some civil wars last longer than others? Do international laws protect civilians during military conflict? Are public policies, like the abstinence-only education program or the New York City school vouchers program, effective? How we go about answering these questions— and other important questions about politics and our world — determines the quality of our answers.

This course is about evaluating the quality of answers to political and social science research questions, and introduces fundamental topics in research design, choice of method, and data analysis. Although the material introduces concepts that are relevant to both quantitative and qualitative research methods, this course emphasizes quantitative research and provides an introduction to basic statistical analysis (but should *not* be viewed as a substitute for statistical training). At the successful completion of the course, students will be well-prepared to conduct independent research, including senior honor theses.

2 Requirements and Grading

Course requirements include four assignments (representing 70% of the final grade), and a final exam (30%).

A. Assignments (70%). There are four assignments for this course:

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|---|---|-----|
| 1 | <i>Measuring Difficult Concepts</i>
Distributed January 23, due February 1. | 10% |
| 2 | <i>A Risk Analysis of the Challenger Launch</i>
Distributed February 4, due February 15 | 15% |
| 3 | <i>Is Thomas Frank Right About Kansas?</i>
Distributed February 20, due February 29 | 15% |
| 4 | <i>War Casualties and Presidential Approval</i>
Distributed March 3, due March 14. | 30% |

Policies. Assignments should be submitted through the Coursework class website.

Extensions for assignments will *not* be granted, and late assignments will be penalized by 3% for each day an assignment is late.

Although course participants are encouraged to work together, each is expected to complete and turn in their own work. Copied assignments (whether partial or complete) will not be accepted.

Requests that a graded assignment be reviewed must be made in writing, and must include a 2-3 paragraph discussion detailing the basis of the request.

B. Final Exam (30%). A final exam for this course will be held on Thursday March 20, from 8:30am to 11:30am (location TBD). Course participants will be asked to evaluate specific components of the research design and data analysis of a current political science article. The instructor will distribute three possible articles during the last meeting of our course (Wednesday March 12); the exam will be based on one of these articles.

3 Books, Required, and Recommended Reading

This course draws heavily on the following books:

- Shively, W. Phillips (2005). *The Craft of Political Research*, 7th ed.. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Pollock, Philip H. (2005). *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 2nd ed.. Washinton, D.C.: CQ Press.

Other books that contribute to lecture and section material, and/or provide support for the assignments include:

- Campbell, Donald T. and Stanley, Julian C. (1963). *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Levitt, Steven D. and Dubner, Stephen (2006). *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* (Revised and Expanded Edition). New York: Harper Collins.
- Pollock, Philip H. (2006). *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
- Van Evra, Stephen (1997). *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell UP.

All of these books are widely available, and will be put on reserve at Green Library. Other required readings are available through JSTOR, other on-line journal archives (this document includes links to these resources), or will be posted on the Courseworks website.

Please note: Reading should be completed before class, and course participants should be prepared to discuss each book, article, or chapter. Recommended readings supplement lectures and sections, and while participants are not responsible for their content, they may find these readings helpful in the preparation of assignments and for the understanding of course content.

4 Software

The second half of the course (beginning Feb 11), and Assignments 3 and 4, will require that participants use *Stata*, a software package for statistical analysis that is widely used in political science research and graduate training. *Stata* is included in the Leland software package, for use in the Sweet Hall computer clusters and is also available for purchase by Stanford students through a campus-wide licensing agreement (refer to [HTTPS://WWW.STANFORD.EDU/SERVICES/SOFTWARELIC/STATA/ORDER/INDEX.HTML](https://www.stanford.edu/services/softwarelic/stata/order/index.html)). Course participants should note that the access to the software through the licensing agreement can take a few weeks; orders should be placed early in the quarter.

5 Course Outline

Jan 9 Introduction: Asking Questions and Making Arguments

- Shively, “Chapter 1. Doing Research.” 1-12

Recommended Readings

- Levitt, Steven D. and Dubner, Stephen (2006). *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* (Revised and Expanded Edition). New York: Harper Collins.
- McRae, Jr., D. (1986). “The Science of Politics and its Limits” in H. Weisberg, ed., *Political Science: The Science of Politics*. New York: Agathon Press.
- Kramer, G. “Political Science as Science” in H. Weisberg, ed., *Political Science: The Science of Politics*. New York: Agathon Press.
- Almond, G. “Political Science: The History of the Discipline” R. E. Goodin and H. Klingemann, eds., *A New Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Jan 14 **Theory Building**

- Shively, “Chapter 2. Political Theories and Research Topics,” 13-31.
- Van Evra, “Hypotheses, Laws and Theories: A User’s Guide.” 7-48.
- Fiorina, Morris (1975). “Formal Models of Political Science.” *American Journal of Political Science* 19(1): 133-159. JSTOR
- John H. Aldrich. “Rational Choice and Turnout.” *American Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 246-78. JSTOR

Recommended Readings

- Shively, “Chapter 11. Where do Theories Come From?” 164-7.
- Pollock, “Chapter 2. Explanations and Hypotheses” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 28-47.

Jan 16 **Causal Inference**

- Hill, Austin Bradford (1965). “The Environment and Disease: Association or Causation?” *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 58: 295-300. [LINK](#)
- Levitt and Dubner, “Chapter 4. Where have all the criminals gone?” 105-32.
- Joyce, Ted (2004). “Did Legalized Abortion Lower Crime?” *Journal of Human Resources* 39(1):1-28. JSTOR

Recommended Readings

- Donohue, John J. and Levitt, Steven D. (2001). “The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime.” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116(2): 379-420.
- Donohue, John J. and Levitt, Steven D. (2004). “Further Evidence that Legalized Abortion Lowered Crime: A Response to Joyce.” *Journal of Human Resources* 39(1): 29-49.
- Foote, Christopher L. and Goetz, Christopher F. (2005). “Testing Economic Hypotheses with State-Level Data: A Comment on Donohue and Levitt.” Federal Reserve Bank of Boston Working Paper 05-15.
- Donohue, John J, and Levitt, Steven D. (2005). “Measurement Error, Legalized Abortion, the Decline in Crime: A Response to Foote and Goetz.” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. W11987.

Jan 21 **Martin Luther King Day**

Jan 23 **Concept Formation and Measurement**

Note. Read only section A in preparation for our class meeting; sections B and C provide the basis of Assignment 1 in which participants will focus on one or the other topic.

- Shively, “Chapter 3. Importance of Dimensional Thinking.” 32-40.
- Shively, “Chapter 4. Problems of Measurement: Accuracy.” 41-56.
- Shively, “Chapter 5. Problems of Measurement: Precision.” 57-73.
- McDonald and Popkin (2001). “The Myth of the Vanishing Voter.” *American Political Science Review* 95:963-74. JSTOR

A. Measuring Racial Prejudice

- Kuklinski, James H., Cobb, Michael D., and Gilens, Martin (1997). “Racial Attitudes and the ‘New South.’” *Journal of Politics* 59(2): 323-49. JSTOR
- Greenwald, Anthony G., McGhee, Debbie, and Schwartz, Jordan (1998). “Measuring Individual Differences in Implicit Cognition: The Implicit Association Test.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74(6): 1464-80.

B. Measuring Democracy

- Bollen, Kenneth (1993). “Liberal Democracy: Validity and Method Factors in Cross-National Measures.” *American Journal of Political Science* 37(4): 1207-30. JSTOR
- Alvarez, Mike, Cheibub, Jose Antonio, Limongi, Fernando, and Przeworski, Adam (1996). “Classifying Political Regimes.” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 31(2): 3-36.

C. Measuring Elite Political Ideology

- Poole, K.T. and H. Rosenthal. 1991. Patterns in Congressional Voting. *American Journal of Political Science*. 35(1):228-78. JSTOR
- Hill, Kim Quaile, Hanna, Stephen, and Shafqat, Sahar (1997). “The Liberal-Conservative Ideology of U.S. Senators: A New Measure.” *American Journal of Political Science* 41(4): 1395-1413. JSTOR

Recommended Readings

- Adcock and Collier (2001). “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research.” *American Political Science Review* 95(3):529-549.
- Pollock, “Chapter 1. The Measurement of Concepts,” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 7-25.
- Nosek, Brian and Banaji, Mahzarin (2002). “Harvesting Implicit Group Attitudes and Beliefs from a Demonstration Website.” *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research and Practice* 6(1):101-15.

Jan 28 **Experimental Methods**

- Campbell, D. and Stanley, J. (1963). *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Design*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Gerber, A. and Green, D. (2001). “Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout? A Field Experiment.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65:75-85. [LINK](#)
OR
- Hyde, Susan (2007). “Do International Observers Reduce Election Fraud? Evidence from a Natural Experiment” Yale University: Unpublished manuscript.

Recommended Readings

- McDermott, R. (2002). “Experimental Methodology in Political Science.” *Political Analysis* 10(4):325-61.
- Roberts, Seth (2004). “Self-experimentation as a source of new ideas: Ten examples about sleep, mood, health, and weight.” *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 27(2): 227-88.

Jan 30 **Observational Studies: Confounding Variables**

- Shively, “Chapter 6. Causal Thinking and Research Design.” 74-96.
- Levitt, Steven D. (1994). “Using Repeat Challengers to Estimate the Effect of Campaign Spending on Election Outcomes in the U.S. House.” *Journal of Political Economy* 102(4):777-98. JSTOR
- Bickel, P.J., Hammel, A. O’Connell, W. (1975). “Sex Bias in Graduate Admissions: Data from Berkeley.” *Science* 187(4175):398-404.

Recommended Readings

- Gerber, A. and Green, D. (2000). “The Effects of Canvassing, Direct Mail and Telephone Contact on Voter Turnout.” *American Political Science Review* 94(3): 653-63.

Feb 4 **Observational Studies: Selecting Cases, Sampling**

- Shively, “Chapter 7. Selection of Observations for Study.” 97-109.
- Geddes, B. (1991). “How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics.” *Political Analysis* 2:131-50.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet (2004). “Quality Meets Quantity: Case Studies, Conditional Probability, and Counterfactuals.” *Perspectives on Politics* 2(2): 281-93.
- Squire, P. (1988). “Why the 1936 Literary Digest Poll Failed.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52:125-33. JSTOR

Recommended Readings

- Dalal, Siddhartha R., Fowles, Edward B., and Hoadley, Bruce (1989). “Risk Analysis of the Space Shuttle.” *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 84(408): 945-57.

Feb 6 **Observational Studies: Policy Evaluation and Intervention Research**

- Campbell, D. T. and Ross, H. L. (1968). “The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time Series Data in Quasi-Experimental Analysis.” *Law and Society Review* 3:33-53. LINK
- Trenholm, Christopher, Devaney, Barbara, Fortson, Ken, Quay, Lisa, Wheeler, Justin, and Clark, Melissa (2007). “Impacts of Four Title V, Section 510 Abstinence Education Programs.” Submitted to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, by Mathematica Policy Research Inc..

Recommended Readings

- Burtless, Gary. “The Case for Randomized Field Trials in Economic and Policy Research.” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 9(2):63-84.
- Mayer, Daniel P., Peterson, Paul E., Myers, David E., Tuttle, Christina Clark, and Howell, William G. (2002). “School Choice in New York City After Three Years: An Evaluation of the School Choice Scholarships Program (Final Report).” Prepared by Mathematica Policy Research, Inc., and the Program on Education Policy and Governance, Harvard University.

Feb 11 **Approaching Data with Questions: Generating Descriptive Statistics**

- Pollock, “Chapter 3. Describing Variables and Making Comparisons,” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 51-61.

Recommended Readings

- Pollock, “Chapter 1. Introduction to Stata,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 5-18.
- Pollock, “Chapter 2. Descriptive Statistics,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 19-41.

Feb 13 **Approaching Data with Questions: Making Comparisons**

- Pollock, “Chapter 3. Describing Variables and Making Comparisons,” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 61-74.
- Pollock, “Chapter 4. The ‘How Else?’ Question: Making Controlled Comparisons,” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 77-100.
- Achen, Christopher H. and Bartels, Larry M. (2002). “Blind Retrospection: Electoral Responses to Droughts, Flu, and Shark Attacks.” Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, in Boston.

Recommended Readings

- Pollock, “Chapter 4. Making Comparisons,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 59-73.
- Pollock, “Chapter 5. Making Controlled Comparisons,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 85-19.

Feb 18 **President’s Day**

Feb 20 **Approaching Data with Questions: Effective Graphics**

- Tufte, E. (1997). “Chapter 2. Visual and Statistical Thinking: Displays of Evidence for Making Decisions” (27-53), in *Visual Explanations*. Cheshire CT: Graphics Press.

Recommended Readings

- Tufte, E. (2001). “Chapter 1. Graphical Excellence” (13-51), in *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Cheshire CT: Graphics Press.
- Bartels, Larry M. (2006). “What’s the Matter with ‘What’s the Matter with Kansas?’” *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 1:201-226.

Feb 25 **Approaching Data with Questions: Correlation and an Introduction to Regression**

- Shively, “Chapter 8. Introduction to Statistics: Measuring Relationships for Interval Data.” 110-130.
- Pollock, “Chapter 7. Correlation and Linear Regression,” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 154-165.
- Ogburn, W.F. and Goltra, I. (1919). “How Women Vote.” *Political Science Quarterly* 34(3): 413-33. JSTOR

Recommended Readings

- Levitt and Dubner, “Chapter 5. What Makes a Perfect Parent?” 133-162.
- Pollock, “Chapter 8. Correlation and Regressions,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 137-150.

Mar 3 **Approaching Data with Questions: More on Regression**

- Shively, “Chapter 9. Introduction to Statistics: Further Topics on Measurement of Relationships”
- Pollock, “Chapter 7. Correlation and Linear Regression,” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 165-175.
- Krueger, Alan B. (1993). “How Computers Have Changed the Wage Structure: Evidence from 1984-1989.” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 108(1): 33-60.

Recommended Readings

- Pollock, “Chapter 8. Logistic Regression,” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 180-201.
- Pollock, “Chapter 9. Dummy Variables and Interaction Effects,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 159-79.
- Pollock, “Chapter 10. Logistic Regression,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 181-96.

Mar 5 **Approaching Data with Questions: Inference and Generalizing Beyond Your Data**

- Shively, “Chapter 10. Introduction to Statistics: Inference, or How to Gamble on Your Research.”
- Pollock, “Chapter 5. Sampling and Inference,” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 102-128.
- Pollock, “Chapter 6. Tests of Significance and Measures of Association,” in *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 130-151.

Recommended Readings

- Pollock, “Chapter 6. Making Inferences about Sample Means,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 107-16.
- Pollock, “Chapter 7. Chi Square and Measures of Association,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 120-29.

Mar 10 **Approaching Data with Questions: Qualitative Analysis**

- Fenno, Richard (1977). “U.S. House Members in their Constituencies.” *American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883-917. JSTOR
- Venkatesh, Sudhir. TBA.
- Fearon, James D. and Laitin, David D. (1996). “Explaining Interethnic Cooperation.” *American Political Science Review* 90(4):715-35. JSTOR

Recommended Readings

- Levitt and Dubner, “Chapter 3. Why do Drug Dealers Still Live with their Moms?” 79-104.

Mar 12 **Political Science and Politics**

- Almond, G. A. and Genco, S. J.. “Clouds, Clocks and and the Study of Politics.” *World Politics*, July 1977, p.489-582. JSTOR
- Putnam, Robert D. 2003. “The Public Role of Political Science.” *Perspectives on Politics* 1(2):249-56. JSTOR