

Research Methods in Political Science

PSCI 307

Spring 2017

Professor: Jason Jordan
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Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 – 2:00 & Friday 10:30-12:00
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Course Description

This course introduces students to political science research methods and elementary quantitative data analysis. The purpose is to help students begin to apply the social scientific research methods to empirically test hypotheses and answer important questions of theoretical and practical interest to students of political science. Students will learn how to write literature reviews, develop hypotheses, measure variables, and test hypotheses using both qualitative and statistical techniques. In the end, students should have sufficient quantitative literacy to interpret and evaluate research work in political science.

Course Objectives

This course may fulfill the University's quantitative requirement.

After completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Develop and state hypotheses derived from theory and existing research.
- Identify appropriate data and cases to test hypotheses.
- Identify the appropriate methodology for addressing a research question in political science.
- Interpret common statistical output including measurement error, confidence intervals, difference of means tests, and correlation.

Required Readings

The following textbook is required for the course:

Salkind, Neil J. (2008 or 2011) *Exploring Research* (7th or 8th Edition).

Additional required readings have been placed on Moodle.

Grading

Your grade in this course consists of the following assignments:

- Research Design Paper (40%)
- Paper Sub-Assignments (30%)
 - Literature Review Assignment (15%)
 - Preliminary Data Analysis Assignment (15%)
- Data Assignments (15%)
- Presentation (15%)

Research Design Paper: Student work in this course will center on the production of a research design proposal on a topic of the students' choosing. The paper will formulate a research question and hypothesis, evaluate the appropriate empirical and theoretical literature on the topic, present a preliminary descriptive analysis of quantitative data, and design a research proposal to gather data and test the hypothesis. A full description of the paper and requirements will be provided separately. The research design paper is due on the day of the final exam (TBD by University).

Paper Sub-Assignments: To engage students in the process of writing their paper early and to provide extensive opportunities for feedback and revision, the course includes a number of major assignments requiring students to turn in completed drafts of sections of their final paper. The two principal sub-assignments are:

- **Literature Review Assignment:** Students will write a review of the literature on their chosen topic. The literature review will identify and evaluate the relevant political science literature related to their topic. The focus of the literature review is on locating the “knowledge frontier” on the research question in order to identify theoretically meaningful hypotheses and new avenues for research.
- **Preliminary Data Analysis Assignment:** Students will identify and present statistical data appropriate to their research topic. This data will include measures of the key dependent and independent variables of the proposed study. The preliminary analysis may include tables, graphs, charts, maps, and basic statistical analysis of this data as appropriate.

Data Assignment: The course will include 6 assignments designed to familiarize students with the location, collection, manipulation, and analysis of statistical data. These assignments will be presented in class and turned in on Moodle.

Presentation: On the day of the final exam (TBD by University), students will take part in a conference-style poster presentation session of their work. The presentation session will mirror a fully professional conference session and may include the participation of faculty and students from outside of the course.

Course Schedule

23-Jan Who am I? Who are you? Why are we here?

30-Jan Variables & Measurement
Salkind - Chapter 5

6-Feb Finding the Knowledge Frontier
Salkind - Chapters 2 & 3A

13-Feb Logic of Control
Pollock - Research Design & the Logic of Control

20-Feb Experiments and Quasi-Experiments
Salkind - Chapters 11 & 12

27-Feb Case Study Methods
Salkind - Chapter 10
Literature Review Due

6-Mar Spring Break

13-Mar Data Visualization - Graphing
Moore & McCabe - Displaying Distributions with Graphs

- 20-Mar Data Visualization - Mapping**
TBD
- 27-Mar Central Tendency & Distributions**
Salkind - Chapter 7
- 3-Apr Sampling & Probability**
Salkind - Chapter 4
Preliminary Data Analysis Due
- 10-Apr Inferential Statistics**
Salkind - Chapter 8
- 17-Apr Hypothesis Testing - T-testing**
Salkind - Chapter 8
Preliminary Research Poster Due
- 24-Apr Correlation Basics**
Salkind - "Correlations" in Chapter 9
- 1-May Regression**
Moore & McCabe - Looking at Data - Relationships
Final Research Poster Due

Academic Honor Policy

All students are required to uphold the highest academic standards. Any case of academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to the guidelines and procedures outlined in Drew University's "Standards of Academic Integrity: Guidelines and Procedures," which is located in the academic policies section of the catalog.

Accommodations

Students who wish to disclose a disability for the first time are instructed to contact Accessibility Resources, Brothers College, 119B; 973-408-3962. Although disclosure may take place at any time during the semester, students are encouraged to do so early in the semester, because, in general, accommodations are not implemented retroactively. For additional information, visit: <http://www.drew.edu/academic-services/disabilityservices>

Returning Students with Approved Accommodations: Requests for previously approved accommodations for the current semester should be sent to Accessibility Resources ideally within the first two weeks of class. This allows the office sufficient lead time to process the request. Please call 973-408-3962, email disabilityserv@drew.edu, or complete the accommodations request at: <http://www.drew.edu/academic-services/disabilityservices/request-for-accommodations>.

Late Work Policy

No late work will be accepted in this course without extenuating circumstances.