84-265 Political Science Research Methods – Spring 2018 Syllabus

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Course: Tuesday and Thursday 10:30–11:50am, GHC 4102

Office Hours: Wednesday 10:30am –12:30pm, Baker 327N

Course Description:

In this course, students will learn how to read, to evaluate, and to begin the process of producing research in political science (as well as other related disciplines). The course is broadly split into two core parts. The first part introduces students to the central challenges of developing research questions, drawing valid causal inferences, engaging with existing literature, measuring political and social reality, and choosing cases or observations. The second part builds on this foundation and explores a number of the leading methods or techniques of conducting research in the social sciences today including case studies, interviews, surveys, multivariate regressions, experiments of various kinds, and natural experiments.

Throughout the course, the focus will be twofold. First, students will build their research toolkits, accumulating an understanding of both general principles of research design and causal inference and specific research strategies and their relative strengths and weaknesses. Second, students will apply their skills toward the development of an original research paper by the end of the semester which will include: a research question they want to investigate, a literature review that situates it within the discipline, a theory, argument, or set of hypotheses about what they think is going on, a research design that describes how they will test it, and some preliminary results. In this sense, students will gain both a thorough conceptual *and* applied knowledge of key issues in the design and execution of social scientific research.

Course Materials:

In an effort to provide you with both a structured foundation and a diverse range of perspectives, the course relies on both a textbook that is required for purchase plus a variety of journal articles and book chapters that will be provided for you. The required textbook is listed below (available on Amazon in either hard copy or digital versions):

> -*The Fundamentals of Political Science Research, 2nd Ed*, by Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, 2013 (henceforth FPSR)

In addition, students must purchase a six-month student copy of the statistical software program Stata for use during the course. This will be done via a link I will provide to you so that you can purchase it at a discounted, educational rate.

Course Evaluation:

Research Memos:
This is both a course on research design as well as a chance to begin gaining research experience. One of the key assignments is a series of <u>four short research memos,</u> in which you apply what we learn in class toward developing a component of your research project. Each memo is worth 10% of your final grade for a total of 40% – you should approach them with care.

Research Paper:
The purpose of these memos is to work toward the development of your <u>research paper, the final paper in the class.</u> This paper is due on Sunday, May 13th by 6pm and will be worth 25% of your final grade. It must be a minimum of 10 pages double-spaced (12-point font and 1-inch margins) with Chicago-style citations. The paper should contain the following elements: title and abstract, research question, literature review, theory/hypotheses, research design, and preliminary results. In essence, your research paper should build on all of your memos and the feedback you receive on them to produce a coherent whole.

Problem Sets:
The ability to interpret and analyze data is an increasingly vital part of the social sciences today. Accordingly, you will be assigned <u>two problem sets</u> in order to help you better understand some of the basic statistical methods used in the field. The first will focus on descriptive statistics and the second will focus on regression analysis. Like the research memos, each problem set will be worth 10% of your final grade. You may discuss these assignments with other students, but you must write and submit your own work.

Presentations:
The course also includes a <u>group presentation</u> component. Specifically, during "database week," groups of 4-5 students each will present a prominent database within the field to the entire class. The presentations will each last around 20 minutes (plus a short Q&A) and will comprise 5% of your final grade. Full instructions are detailed below. These presentations are meant to give you practice sharing research in a group setting, while also becoming familiar with crucial resources in the discipline. They should use some type of visual aids (handouts, PPTs).

Course Participation:
<u>Active and thoughtful participation</u> is essential to your (and to our general) success this semester. Accordingly, all students should carefully read assigned readings before each course meeting and come prepared to discuss and to examine them. The course will be very interactive and hands-on. Participation and attendance comprise 10% of your final grade.

Research memos	40% (10% each)
Problem sets	20% (10% each)
Database presentation	5%
Research paper	25%
Attendance/Participation	10%

Proper documentation of a medical or personal emergency is needed for late work to be excused, otherwise it will be penalized at a rate of 10% per day. Barring exceptional conditions, late work that is excused must be submitted within one week of the original deadline. Any grievances with a grade must be submitted in writing to the instructor within one week of the grading as well, and will lead if appropriate to a re-grading of your assignment. Do note that your grade may be raised or lowered in this process. Final grades will be based on the following grade scale, with rounding at instructor discretion:

Grading Scale:
A = 90-100   B = 80-89.9   C = 70-79.9
D = 60-69.9   R = <60

Inappropriate Technology Use:

Cellphones should be silenced and stowed during class. Laptops may be used for class purposes. Inappropriate or disruptive technology use may affect your participation grade.

Academic Integrity/Misconduct:

All work you do in this course is expected to be your own. Absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (use of someone else's words or ideas without properly citing them) will be tolerated. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the university according to the University Policy on Academic Integrity. For questions about this policy, see http://www.cmu.edu/policies/student-and-student-life/academic-integrity.html

Accommodations for Disabilities:

If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, please discuss your accommodations or needs with me as early in the semester as possible. I will work with you to ensure appropriate accommodations are provided. If you suspect you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, I encourage you to contact them at access@andrew.cmu.edu.

Maintaining Personal Wellness:

Take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources on campus, and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful. If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings of anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support. Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS) is here to help. Call 412-268-2922 and visit their website at http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/. Consider reaching out to a friend, faculty, or a family member you trust for help in getting connected to support services.

Part 1 – Research Foundation

Tuesday 1/16 & Thursday 1/18. <u>Research and research questions.</u>
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press: <u>Ch. 1.</u>
- Shapiro, Ian. 2002. "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do about It." *Political Theory* 30(4): 596-619.
- Musgrave, Paul. 2017. "The Starbucks Curse: A Research Design Thought Experiment."

Tuesday 1/23 & Thursday 1/25. <u>Causality and causal inference.</u>
- FPSR, Chs. 3-4
- Intro to Stata (basics)

Memo #1: Research Question – **due on Sunday, 1/28**
Choose some puzzling variation or phenomenon that you think is (1) important and (2) poorly understood by existing research. Identify at least one working hypothesis that you think might shed more light on what is driving it. Based on this, write a two-page memo that outlines your chosen research question, being sure to explain both its theoretical and real-world significance (the "so-what?") in addition to your hypothesis about what explains it. Remember to make the question a "why?" (not a "what?) question and to phrase it in general terms (no proper nouns). Submit by 6pm on Sunday.

Tuesday 1/30 & Thursday 2/1. <u>Introductions and literature reviews.</u>
- Booth, Wayne, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams. 2016. *The Craft of Research, 4th Ed*. University of Chicago Press: <u>Ch. 16.</u>
- Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS, Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 127-32.

Tuesday 2/6 & Thursday 2/8. <u>Conceptualization and measurement.</u>
- FPSR, Ch. 5
- CPOST vs. GTD debate in *The Monkey Cage*
- Hayes, Danny, and Matt Guardino. 2010. "Whose Views Made the News? Media Coverage and the March to War in Iraq." *Political Communication* 27(1): 59-87.
- Stata Module #2 (description)

Memo #2: Annotated Bibliography – **due on Sunday, 2/11**
First, write one to two paragraphs summarizing your question and its significance.
Then, create an annotated bibliography (a list of sources and notes on them) on your question. To do so, choose eight sources related to your research. At least six of these must be scholarly in nature (research articles or books). For each one, provide a complete citation (following the Chicago Manual of Style), with brief notes on (1) the argument, (2) the evidence, and (3) how it relates to your question. Submit by 6pm on Sunday.

Tuesday 2/13 & Thursday 2/15. Case selection.
- Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." In *Political Analysis*, vol. 2, ed. James A. Stimson, 131-50. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Pape, Robert. 2003. "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism." *American Political Science Review* 97(3): 343-61.
- Gerring, John, and Lee Cojocaru. 2015. "Case-Selection: A Diversity of Methods and Criteria." *Working Paper.*

Part 2 – Research Strategies and Methods

Tuesday 2/20 & Thursday 2/22. Case studies.
- Mahoney, James. 2000. "Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis." Sociological Methods & Research." *Sociological Methods & Research* 28(4): 387-424.
- Bellin, Eva. 2004. "The Robustness of Authoritarianism in the Middle East: Exceptionalism in Comparative Perspective." *Comparative Politics* 36(2): 139-57.
- Fravel, Taylor. 2010. "The Limits of Diversion: Rethinking Internal and External Conflict." *Security Studies* 19: 307-41.
- Carson, Austin. 2015. "Facing Off and Saving Face: Covert Intervention and Escalation Management in the Korean War." *International Organization* 70(1): 103-31.

Memo #3: Literature Review – **due on Sunday, 2/25**
Identify at least eight studies on your research question, summarize them, and synthesize them into natural perspectives, camps, or schools of thought. In other words, outline what we know about your specific topic. Then, identify at least one flaw or "gap" in this literature – what we do not know – that might be amenable to further study. Based on this, write a two-page memo reviewing and evaluating the literature on your question. Submit by 6pm on Sunday.

Tuesday 2/27 & Thursday 3/1. Interviews.
- Leech, Beth, et al. 2002. "Symposium: Interview Methods in Political Science." *PS, Political Science & Politics* 35(4): 663-88.
- Pinderhughes, Howard. 1993. "The Anatomy of Racially Motivated Violence in New York City: A Case Study of Youth in Southern Brooklyn." *Social Problems* 40: 478-92.
- Parkinson, Sarah Elizabeth. 2013. "Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War." *American Political Science Review* 107(3): 418-32.

Tuesday 3/6 & Thursday 3/8. Surveys.
- Keeter, Scott. 2005. "Survey Research." In *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis,* ed. Daniel Druckman. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Krosnick, Jon A. and Stanley Presser. 2010. "Question and Questionnaire Design." In *Handbook of Survey Research*, eds. Peter V. Marsden and James D. Wright. Bingley, UK: Emerald.

- Miller, Joanne M., Kyle L. Saunders, and Christina E. Farhart. 2016. "Conspiracy Endorsement as Motivated Reasoning: The Moderating Roles of Political Knowledge and Trust." *American Journal of Political Science* 60(4): 824-44.
- Berinsky, Adam, Kai Quek, and Michael Sances. 2012. "Conducting Online Experiments on Mechanical Turk." *Newsletter of the APSA Experimental Section* 3(1): 2-6.

Problem Set #1: Descriptive Statistics – **due on Friday, 3/9 by 6pm**

Tuesday 3/13 & Thursday 3/15 – Spring break!

Tuesday 3/20 & Thursday 3/22. Regressions/Large-n.
- FPSR Chs. 8-9, Ch. 11.1-2
- Nyhan, Brendan, and Jason Reifler. 2010. "When Corrections Fail: The Persistence of Political Misperceptions." *Political Behavior* 32(2): 303-30.
- Stata Module #3 (regression)

Tuesday 3/27 & Thursday 3/29. Database week.
- No readings, presentation week!

Database Presentations:
Give a 20 minute presentation in which you present the key features, applications, strengths, and weaknesses of a major database in the field of political science. This presentation should include two visual elements that help show how the database can be useful to scholars (e.g., histograms, cross-tabs, scatter plots, etc.). A list of potential databases you can use is below, but you can ask me if there is another one you would like to invest your time in:

Public Opinion: World Values Survey, Global Barometer Surveys (pick one region), Pew Global Attitudes Project, PIPA Muslim Opinion Surveys, American National Election Survey, European Social Survey, General Social Survey

War, Conflict, and Violence: UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Database, Correlates of War, Global Terrorism Database, Armed Conflict Location and Event Database, Minorities at Risk

Regime Type & Regime Change: POLITY, Freedom House, Penn State Autocratic Regime Data, University of Kentucky Global Instances of Coups Database, Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO)

Other Datasets: Leader Experiences and Attributes Database (state leaders), Archigos Database (state leaders), Social Conflict Analysis Database (civil unrest), Comparative Manifestos Project (political party ideology)

Tuesday 4/3. Experiments 1 (survey and lab).
- Masoud, Tarek, Amaney Jamal, and Elizabeth Nugent. "Using the Qur'an to Empower Arab Women? Theory and Experimental Evidence from Egypt." *Comparative Political Studies* 49(12): 1555-98.

- Isani, Mujtaba, and Daniel Silverman. 2016. "Foreign Policy Attitudes Toward Islamic Actors: An Experimental Approach." *Political Research Quarterly* 69(3): 571-82.
- Silverman, Daniel, and Mujtaba Isani. 2017. "Designing and Conducting an Effective Survey Experiment in IR." *SAGE Online Research Methods, Forthcoming.*
- Recommnded: Sears, David O. 1986. "College Sophomores in the Laboratory: Influences of a Narrow Data Base on Social Psychology's View of Human Nature." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 51(3): 515-30.

Note – guest lecture on Thursday 4/5.

Thursday 4/10 & Thursday 4/12. Experiments 2 (lab-in-the-field and field).
- Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin." *World Politics* 55(3): 399-422.
- Loewen, Peter John, Daniel Rubenson, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2010. "Help Me Help You: Conducting Field Experiments with Political Elites." *ANNALS of the American Academic of Political and Social Science* 628(1): 165-75.
- Henrich, Joseph et al. 2005. "'Economic Man in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Behavioral Experiments in 15 Small-Scale Societies." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28: 795-855.
- Robinson, Amanda. 2016. "Nationalism and Ethnic-Based Trust: Evidence from an African Border Region." *Comparative Political Studies* 49(14): 1819-54.

Problem Set #2: Regression Analysis **– due on Sunday, 4/15 by 6pm**

Note – no classes on Thursday 4/19.

Tuesday 4/17. Eliciting sensitive attitudes.
- Corstange, Daniel. 2012. "Vote Trafficking in Lebanon." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 44(3): 483-505.
- Lyall, Jason, Graeme Blair, and Kosuke Imai. 2013. "Explaining Support for Combatants in Wartime: A Survey Experiment in Afghanistan." *American Political Science Review* 107(4): 1-27.

Tuesday 4/24 & Thursday 4/26. Natural experiments.
- Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press: Ch. 1.
- Bertoli, Andrew D. 2017. "Nationalism and Conflict: Lessons from International Sports." *International Studies Quarterly* 61(4): 835-49.
- Dube, Arindrajit, Oeindrila Dube, and Omar Garcia-Ponce. "Cross-Border Spillover: U.S. Gun Laws and Violence in Mexico." *American Political Science Review* 107(3): 397-417.

Tuesday 5/1 & Thursday 5/3. Social media and text as data.

- Zeitzoff, Thomas. 2009. "Using Social Media to Measure Conflict Dynamics: An Application to the 2008-09 Gaza Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55(6): 938-69.
- King, Gary, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts. 2013. "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression." *American Political Science Review* 107(2): 326-43.
- Munger, Kevin. 2017. "Tweetment Effects on the Tweeted: Experimentally Reducing Racist Harassment." *Political Behavior* 39(3): 629-49.
- Lucas, Christopher, et al. 2015. "Computer-Assisted Text Analysis for Comparative Analysis." *Political Analysis* 23(2): 254-77.

Final research papers due by Sunday, May 13th at 6pm