Oregon State University
Department of Political Science
Fall 2015

PS 300: Political Analysis
4 Credits
TR, 4:00-5:50
Tuesday: STAG 212
Thursday (4:00-4:50): STAG 110
Thursday (5:00-5:50): Kidder 028

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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday: 2:00-3:00

This course is designed to introduce students to the fundamental aspects of doing political science and public policy research (with an emphasis on quantitative research). We begin with a discussion of theoretical paradigms (the philosophy behind research) and then move to discussions about methods (techniques) of research. The primary focus of the course will be on research design, but attention will be paid to elementary data analysis in STATA and Excel.

1. Student Learning Outcomes:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

1. Assess the usefulness of research methods for answering a variety of empirical questions. This will be accomplished through group discussions on a class-based research project (to take place over the 10 weeks of term), and formally through the writing of an individual research proposal.
2. Construct and empirically test hypotheses. This will be accomplished through informal class exercises and formally through research-project assignments.
3. Write up the results of empirical analysis in a manner that mirrors current writing in the field of political science. This will be done through a class-based research project and formally through two laboratory computer assignments.
4. Demonstrate critical thinking when applying political science theory in informal and formal written assignments. This will be done through weekly class discussions, the 10 week class-based research project, and an individual quantitative research paper.

This course satisfies the Writing Intensive Curriculum (WIC) requirement of the Bacc Core. WIC Outcomes. In line with the Bacc Core WIC learning outcomes, at the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Develop and articulate content knowledge and critical thinking in the discipline through frequent practice of informal and formal writing. This will be done through informal writing exercises in class, the formal writing of drafts of sections for the students' final papers, as well as through the final paper itself)
2. Demonstrate knowledge/understanding of audience expectations, genres, and conventions appropriate to communicating in the discipline. This will be done via group presentations and your individual research project.
3. Demonstrate the ability to compose a document of at least 2000 words through multiple aspects of writing, including brainstorming, drafting, using sources appropriately, and revising comprehensively after receiving feedback on a draft. This will be done through formal writing for each of the "segments" of your research paper (see below), as well as through a formal final paper (this outcome will also be assisted by informal writing exercises in class).

2. Prerequisites

One 200 level political science course (PS 201, 204, 205 or 206)

3. Required Learning Resources

Babbie, Earl. (2014) *The Basics of Social Research*, 6th edition. Wadsworth Publishing. (There will be two copies on library reserve. I also have a copy in my office, if you need to use it briefly).

Halperin, Sandra and Heath, Oliver (2012) "Political Research: Methods and Practice Skills", Oxford University Press.

4. Assessment of Outcomes

-   Class research project   (30%)
    -   Literature review presentation (10%) – Due October 8th
    -   List of hypotheses, variable operationalization and measurement presentation (10%) – Due October 22nd
    -   Data collection and methods of analysis presentation (10%) – Due December 3rd
-   Individual (quantitative) research paper   (50%)
    -   Literature review (10%) – Due October 15th at 4pm
    -   List of hypotheses, variable operationalization and measurement (10%) – Due November 5th at 4pm
    -   Data collection and methods of analysis (10%) – Due November 24th at 5pm
    -   Final Paper (20%) – Due December 7th at noon (emailed in word document)
-   Two lab assignments – Due November 12th and December 3rd   (20%)

In this class you are learning how to conduct research. The best way to learn about research is to do it. You will conduct two research projects in this class – one in a group (in which you will be assessed by your group's performance), and one on your own. These research projects will be piecemeal – you will turn

sections of them in one at a time and, for your individual research paper only, you will synthesize them at the end into a comprehensive research proposal. For your individual paper, the three piecemeal submissions will serve as formal writing for which you will receive feedback on your critical thinking of each component of your research project (the literature review, operationalization of your variables, and data collection and methods of analysis), while the final paper will the formal assessment of your critical thinking skills (this final paper should incorporate revised versions of your piecemeal submissions, as well as an introduction and conclusion).

In your research projects you will engage *one* of the following research questions:

Group research questions (to which you are assigned):

1. Does bad governance lead to conflict?
2. How does civic participation influence individuals' social trust?

Individual research questions:

1. Do left-wing governments produce higher debts/deficits than right-wing governments?
2. What is the relationship between religion and individuals' attitudes towards gay marriage?
3. How do political beliefs influence individuals' engagement in political protest?

Both of your research projects are graded on the following components, in which you must fulfill their listed requirements.

I.   The literature review

You must write/present a literature review which outlines what previous research has said about your research question. You must be specific about how the literature defines terms and the phenomenon you are analyzing. For the individual research project, *your literature review may be no longer than 800 words. For the class project, presentations must be no longer than 12 minutes.* Both your class and individual project literature reviews must have:

- At least 8 references of scholarship from peer-reviewed journals or scholarly books (i.e. NO news sources)
   - o *3 of these must have been written after 2010*
- At least two data references (cite some statistics on your research question!)
- For your individual research paper: *10% of your literature review grade applies to proper citation of your sources in APA format. This is an all or nothing grade – failure to properly cite your sources in APA format will result in a 0 for your citation element*.

II.   List of hypotheses, variable operationalization and measurement

Your hypotheses and variable operationalization/measurement section provides an outline as to what you want to test and how you will go about doing so. For the individual research project, *your hypothesis and variable section may be no longer than 800 words. For the class project, presentations must be no longer than 12 minutes.* For this component, you must include the following:

- A null and alternative hypothesis to your research question. This not only involves stating the predicted relationship between your variables, but also explaining why these relationships exist (papers/presentations in the A range will cite academic literature which has highlighted the theoretical logic behind a null and alternative hypothesis)
- A definition of your dependent and independent variable (i.e. how do you conceptualize your terms).
- The means in which you intend to measure your variables.
- Your unit of analysis

For both your presentation and paper, you may address these four items in bullet point form. For your final paper, you can ONLY list your hypotheses in bullet point form.

III.   Data collection and methods of analysis

In this section, you need to indicate how you will test your hypothesis. This involves proposing how you will collect your data and what methodology you will use. Note: I am NOT asking you to compile a dataset and conduct the actual methodology you propose (you will not have time to do this for this class) – I merely want you to present a feasible means of collecting data and methodology for research analysis. For the individual research project, *your data collection and methods of analyses section must be no longer than 1200 words. For the class project, presentations must be no longer than 12 minutes.* For this component, you must include the following:

- A quantitative research design (and the data you would collect to implement it – if you are using second hand data, be specific on your data sources)
- A qualitative research design (and the data you would collect to implement it).

IV.   Final paper write-up (individual research project only)

On Monday of finals week, you must submit a research paper for your individual research project that consolidates the three research assignments above, and includes a formal introduction and conclusion. This research paper should have clearly indicated sections highlighting each component. *It must be at least 2000 words but may be no longer than 3000 words (properly cited references excluded).*

In addition to formal writing assignments, informal writing exercises in class will assist you with critical thinking required for each component of your research project. There will be four in-class informal writing exercises that will revolve around preparing students to write different sections of their final paper (these are noted in the relevant classes below).

5. Plagiarism

Academic work must be your own. It is plagiarism to claim work (such as writing, exams or projects) done by anyone other than the author(s) named. Plagiarism also includes cutting and pasting information from websites without attribution of *AND* paraphrasing someone else's ideas or writing. It is not sufficient to re-arrange or re-state someone else's writing or ideas. A zero tolerance policy will be applied towards plagiarism and any work which is plagiarized will automatically result in a *COURSE GRADE OF F*. For more information on how the university handles academic misconduct, go to http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm.

6. Disrespectful Behavior

Disrespectful behavior towards students on grounds of race, gender, economic background, age, sexual orientation, religion, or any other factors which individuals have no choice or are irrelevant to the class will not be tolerated. ***Disrespectful behavior can result in course expulsion***. For more information on the university's policy regarding academic conduct go to http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/sites/studentlife.oregonstate.edu/files/code_of_student_conduct.pdf

7. Disabilities

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities: Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at http://ds.oregonstate.edu. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

Grading Scale:

- A: 94-100%
- A-: 90-93%
- B+: 87-89%
- B: 83-86%
- B-: 80-82%
- C+: 77-79%
- C: 73-76%
- C-: 70-72%
- D+: 67-69%
- D: 63-66%
- D-: 60-62%
- F: >60%

Week 1 (September 24th): Introduction to Research in Political Science

- Babbie (2014), Chapter 1
- Nine steps to scientific inquiry (this provides a nice outline of the scientific research method that we will be using throughout the course).

Week 1 lab:

- Introduction to the class-based research project and group allocations

Week 2 (September 29th and October 1st): The Literature Review – Understanding prior theory and research

- Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's Study & Learning Centre (2005) "Literature Review". https://www.dlsweb.rmit.edu.au/lsu/content/2_assessmenttasks/assess_tuts/lit_review_LL/purpose.html
- Hegghammer, T (2013) "Should I stay or should I go? Explaining variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting", *American Political Science Review*. 107(1): pages 1-15 (READ PAGES 1 and 2 ONLY)
- Bechtel, M. and Hainmueller, J. (2011) "How Lasting is Voter Gratitude? An Analysis of the Short- and Long- Term Electoral Returns to Beneficial Policy", *American Journal of Political Science*. 55(4): 851-867 (READ PAGES 851-852 ONLY)
- University of Pittsburg's University Library System (2015) "Citation Styles". Last updated: July 14th. http://pitt.libguides.com/citationhelp
- Babbie (2014), Chapter 2 (pages 30-43, until the "Two logical systems revisited" section).

Week 2 lab:

- An introduction to Google Scholar and the OSU library system

Informal writing exercise 1:

- Spend 15 minutes in class summarizing and synthesizing the content of three articles that you could use for your individual research paper or group presentation.

Week 3 (October 6th and October 8th): Hypothesis Testing

- Babbie (2014), Chapter 2 pgs 43-58
- Babbie (2014), Chapter 4, pgs 93-99 (read until the "Necessary and Sufficient Causes" section)
- Hamann, K., Johnston A, and Kelly, J. (2013) "Unions Against Governments: Explaining General Strikes in Western Europe, 1980-2006". *Comparative Political Studies*. 46(9): 1030-1057
- Bechtel, M. and Hainmueller, J. (2011) "How Lasting is Voter Gratitude? An Analysis of the Short- and Long- Term Electoral Returns to Beneficial Policy", *American Journal of Political Science*. 55(4): 851-867 (READ PAGES 851-855 ONLY)
- Fearon, J., and Laitin, D. (2003) "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War", *American Political Science Review*. 97(1): 75-90 (READ PAGES 75-82 ONLY).

Week 3 lab:

- Group presentations

Assignments Due:

- **First group research-project presentations:** The literature review

Week 4 (October 13th and 15th): Units of analysis and variable operationalization and measurement

- Babbie (2014), Chapter 4, pgs 101-116
- Fearon, J., and Laitin, D. (2003) "Ethnicity, Insurgency and Civil War", *American Political Science Review*. 97(1): 75-90 (READ PAGES 82-88 ONLY).
- Babbie (2014), Chapter 5 – *skim this chapter*
- Babbie (2014), Chapter 6, pgs 163-190 – *skim this chapter*

Week 4 lab:

- An introduction to STATA (uploading datasets and coding/recoding variables)

Informal writing exercise 2:

- Spend 15 minutes in class devising ways in which you could operationalize and measure your dependent and independent variables for your research project. What type of data could you use as a formal measurement of your variables?

Assignments Due:

- Literature review of **individual research project** (due by e-mail in a Microsoft Word document by 4pm on the 15th).

Week 5 (October 20th and 22nd): Research Design

- Halperin and Heath (2012), Chapter 7
- Bechtel, M. and Hainmueller, J. (2011) "How Lasting is Voter Gratitude? An Analysis of the Short- and Long- Term Electoral Returns to Beneficial Policy", *American Journal of Political Science*. 55(4): 851-867 (READ PAGES 852-856 ONLY)
- Stein, R (2015) "War and Revenge: Explaining Conflict Initiation by Democracies", *American Political Science Review*. 109(3): 556-573 (READ PAGES 556-564 ONLY)

Week 5 lab:

- Variable and index construction, frequency tables, and histogram creation in STATA and Excel.

Week 6 (October 27th and 29th): The Ethics of Political Science Research

- Babbie (2014), Chapter 3
- McMurtrie, Beth. (2014) "Secrets from Belfast: How Boston College's oral history of the Troubles fell victim to an international murder investigation". *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. January 26th. http://chronicle.com/article/Secrets-from-Belfast/144059/
- Retraction Watch. (2015). "Author retracts student of changing minds on same-sex marriage after colleague admits data were faked" May 28th http://retractionwatch.com/2015/05/20/author-retracts-study-of-changing-minds-on-same-sex-marriage-after-colleague-admits-data-were-faked/
- "Slouching towards authoritarianism? Evidence from survey experiments around the 2014

Hungarian elections" (read pages 1-12, stopping at Section 3.3 – we will draft a mock-IRB application for this in the first half hour of class on the 29th)

Week 6 lab:

- Group presentations

Assignments Due:

- **Second group research-project presentations:** List of hypotheses, variable operationalization and measurement presentation

Week 7 (November 3rd and 5th): Data Collection and Survey Design

- Babbie (2014), Chapter 7
- Babbie (2014), Chapter 9
- Halperin and Heath (2012), Chapter 11, pages 253-278 only

Week 7 lab:

- Compiling time series and longitudinal graphics and descriptive statistic in STATA and Excel

Assignments Due:

- List of hypotheses, variable operationalization and measurement of the **individual final paper** (due by e-mail in a Microsoft Word document by 4pm on the 5th)

Week 8 (November 10th and 12th): Univariate and Bivariate Quantitative Research Analysis

- Halperin and Heath (2012), Chapter 14
- Halperin and Heath (2012), Chapter 15, pages 382-389
- Simpson, W. G. and Kohers, T. (2002). "The Link between Corporate Social and Financial Performance: Evidence from the Banking Industry", *Journal of Business Ethics*. Vol 35: Pg. 97-109.

Week 8 lab:

- Cross-tabs and difference-in-means

Informal writing exercise 3:

- Spend 15 minutes in class writing about how you could organize a quantitative research design for your final project, and where you could obtain the data to conduct a particular quantitative research method. What kind of quantitative research methodology would you use (descriptive statistics, cross-tabs, difference-in-means tests?)

- First lab assignment (variable construction, graphics and descriptive statistics) due in lab on the 12th

Week 9 (November 17th and 19th): Bivariate Quantitative Research Analysis and Comparative Research

- Halperin and Heath (2012), Chapter 9, pages 202-218
- Halperin and Heath (2012), Chapter 15, pages 366-381
- Lapuente, V., and Rothstein, B. (2014). "Civil War Spain versus Swedish Harmony The Quality of Government Factor", *Comparative Political Studies*, *47*(10), 1416-1441.
- Pickett, K. and Wilkenson R. (2007) "Child wellbeing and income inequality in rich societies: ecological cross sectional study", *British Medical Journal*. Volume 335: 1080-1087.

Week 9 lab:

- Tests of correlation and regression analysis

Informal writing exercise 4:

- Spend 15 minutes in class writing about how you could organize a comparative case study design to test your hypotheses. What cases would be optimal to use to explain your theory? Are these cases countries, states, events, people, etc.?

Thanksgiving Week (November 24th)

- *CLASS CANCELLED*

Assignments Due:

- Data collection and research methodologies for **individual final paper** (due by e-mail in a Microsoft Word document by 5pm on the 24th)

Week 10 (December 1st and 3rd): Writing Social Research and Presenting General Conclusions

- Babbie (2014), Chapter 15, pages 477-485

Week 10 lab:

- Group presentations

Assignments Due:

- **Third research group presentation**: Presentation of the method of data analysis for the class research project, and an evaluation of the results (December 3rd in class)
- Second lab assignment (cross-tabs, analysis of variance, correlations and regression analysis) due in lab on the 3rd