

# METHODS AND STATISTICS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE POL 221

Spring 2009  
Language Resource Center  
Tuesday and Thursday 10:30

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Ext. 2282  
Chambers 2027

## Scope and Purpose

This course should help you understand why we call our discipline *Political Science*. It should also prepare you to evaluate claims made about politics which you will encounter later in life. The first section will focus on designing research so that the right questions get asked in the right places. The second section does a brief overview of basic statistical techniques.

## Texts

Michael Lewis-Beck – Applied Regression  
Barbara Geddes – Paradigms and Sand Castles  
Phillip Pollock – The Essentials of Political Analysis (and workbook), 3<sup>rd</sup> edition  
Ferris Ritchey – The Statistical Imagination, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Additional reading will be assigned from journals available electronically. You will also need a calculator capable of computing a square root.

## Class Attendance

Coming to class on a regular basis matters in most Davidson classes, but more than usual in this one. Do the reading, be in class, work on the problems, and you will be in great shape for the exams. Since the problems often depend on the material discussed in the previous class, taking good notes will help you a lot. Note that Davidson academic regulations call for failing grades to be given to any student who misses more than 25% of the scheduled classes.

## Daily Problems

Throughout the semester there will be some daily homework problems available on Blackboard. There will be about 20 such assignments. I will use the mean of the highest 15 of your grades to count as 10% of your final average. These are due at the start of the class period. I will **not** accept late homework. It is in your interest to do every assignment and turn it in the day it is due. One advantage is that you will more easily discover what you do not understand as you try to apply the ideas we talk about in class.

### Problem Sets

There will be four problem sets due during the course of the semester. These are longer assignments that will take several days to complete. All work should be typed when possible, though equations may need to be written by hand. These are also due at the beginning of the class period for which they are assigned. Late papers will be penalized at the rate of 5 points per day. These will count 5% each or 20% of your final grade.

### Final Paper

You are required to write a final paper of no more than 10 pages (tables not included). This paper will apply the techniques learned in this course to a data set I will supply. The paper will count 20% of your final grade.

### Presentations

One skill that should always be a part of liberal arts is the ability to deliver an interesting oral presentation. As part of this course, you will be required to do a five -minute presentation illustrating an example of research design. A hand-out prepared in consultation with our communication studies department will guide you in issues to consider. I will assign specific dates for your topic during the first week of class.

### Grades

There will be an in-class mid-term and a self-scheduled final. The weights of these various factors are: 4 problem sets—5% each; final paper—15%; homework – 10%; presentation --5%; mid-term – 20%; final – 30%. Note that part of the final will be in class and part will be a self-scheduled exam.

### Honor Code

The Honor Code binds all work in the course. In accordance with the Honor Code, all paper assignments must provide appropriate citations for any sources or information included in the paper; failure to provide these citations is a violation of the Honor Code. If you have questions about the appropriate format for citations, make sure that you ask before turning in the paper. You can also visit the Campus Writing Center for additional assistance. If you have any questions about how to apply the Honor Code to work in this course, please do not hesitate to ask.

Studying in groups can be of immense help in this course. I will provide some guidance in forming study groups. Discussing the first three problem sets in groups is not a violation of the Honor Code. Once you begin to write the answers, however, the work should be your own. The final problem set and the paper at the end should be entirely your own work.

### Office Hours

My tentative office hours will be: M 10-11:30; TR 9:30-10:00; W 2-4. Do not hesitate to come see me if you are having difficulty understanding problems. I will be able to arrange other hours to see you if these times do not fit your schedule. It does not help to say "I came by to see you but you weren't there." If you need to see me, arrange a time.

If you wish to contact me outside of office hours or class, emailing me is better than calling.

### Accommodations for Students With Disabilities

Full accommodations are the legal right of students with all kinds of disabilities, whether learning disabilities or physical disabilities. I am happy to provide these accommodations. If you are a student with a learning disability documented by Davidson College who might need accommodations, please identify yourself to me within the first week of class, so that I can learn from you as early as possible how best to work with your learning style. Students with other disabilities are also encouraged to self-identify if there is any way in which I can make accommodations that will enhance your learning experience. All such discussions will be fully confidential unless you stipulate otherwise.

## Major Articles

We will be referencing several articles from scholarly journals in the first part of the course. During the first class period, we will practice how to find such articles on the web and how to print them if you choose to do so.

Allison, Graham. 1969. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *American Political Science Review* 63 (3): 689-718.

Coppedge, Michael. 1999. "Research Note. Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories. Combining Large N and Small in Comparative Politics." *Comparative Politics* Vol.31 (4): 465-476.

Fenno Jr., Richard F. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 71(3): 883-916.

Hetherington, Marc C. 2001. "Resurgent Mass Partisanship: The Role of Elite Polarization," *American Political Science Review*, 95 (3): 619-631.

Hill, Kim Quaille. 2002. "The Lamentable State of Education in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* Vol 35 (1): 113-116.

Kegley, Jr., Charles W. 1994. "How Did the Cold War Die? Principles for an Autopsy." *Mershon International Studies Review* Vol. 88 (1): 11-41

Mutz, Diana and Byron Reeves. 2005. "The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust." *American Political Science Review*. 99 (1): 1-15.

Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529-533.

Ross, Michael. 2008. "Oil, Islam, and Women." *American Political Science Review* 102 (1): 107-123.

### **Daily Topics**

Reading marked as T will be posted on Blackboard.

Aug 25 – **What is Social Science?**

Aug 27 – **Why should I care about Political Research?** T (introduction); Hill

Sept 3— **Is Political Science really a science?** T 1; Mutz+Reeves

Sept 8—**Where does our knowledge come from?** T 2; Ross

Sept 10– **Theories, Concepts, and Hypotheses** T 3; Coppedge (1999); Geddes 1-88; Pollock 44-54

Sept 15 – **Measuring issues** T 4; Mutz+Reeves; Pollock 1

Sept 17– **Gathering Data:** T 5a; Posner

Sept 22 – **Types of evidence:** T 5b; Hetherington; Geddes 131-173

Sept 24 – **Cases and Causes:** T 6; Geddes 89-129; Pollock 4

Sept 29– **Why Models Matter:** Geddes 175-211; Allison

Oct 1– **Mid Term Review**

Oct 6— **Levels of Measurement, Univariate Analysis/ Distribution:** Pollock 2; Ritchey 1, 2, 4

Oct 8 – **Normal Curves:** Ritchey 118-125, T 8

Oct 13 – **Fall Break**

Oct 15– **Standard Deviation/Z Scores:** Ritchey 5

Oct 20 – **Sampling Distributions:** Pollock 6; Ritchey 7

Oct 22– **Confidence Intervals** Ritchey 8

Oct 27– **Hypothesis Testing, Control Variables:** Pollock 54-67, 5; Ritchey 9, Kegley

Oct 29– **Single Sample Means Test, Significance:** Ritchey 10

Nov 3— **Bivariate Means (Independent +Dependent Samples):** Pollock 145-154;  
Ritchey 11

Nov 5 – **Chi Square and Cross Tabs:** Ritchey 13a

Nov 10– **Correlation + ESS+RSS:** Pollock 170-184; Ritchey 14

Nov 12 — **Regression:** Beck 9-38

Nov 17 – **Dummy Variables, Multiple Regression:** Pollock 184-195; Ritchey 15;  
Beck 47-74

Nov 19— **Logit:** Pollock 9

Nov 24 – **Major Paper Previews**

Nov 26 – **Thanksgiving**

Dec 1 – **Work on Paper**

Dec 3– **Major Paper due**

Dec 8 – **Final Exam, Part I**

There will be a self-scheduled final exam in this course.