

POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS

POLS 2220-003, M/W/F, 9:05am - 11:00am; Denny 206.

October 17, 2022

Professor Fred Batista

(Pronouns: He/Him/His)

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Office Hours: M/W, 11m-noon, or by appointment

This syllabus is intended to give the student guidance in what may be covered during the semester. However, the policies, assignments and readings contained in this syllabus are subject to change with advance notice.

1 Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the fundamentals of social science research design and quantitative analysis. Most other political science courses examine the findings of social science research. This class examines the methods of social science research used to generate those findings. In short, it is about how to use the scientific method to study politics. A strong background in statistics or math is not required to succeed in this course. Over the course of the semester you will learn: (1) How to ask questions about political phenomena and how to evaluate and propose answers to those questions; (2) How to read and evaluate empirical research papers in the field of political science, and; (3) How to write a research paper using basic statistical techniques that are common in political science research.

2 Reading Material

Textbooks:

- Pollock, Philip. 2019. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 6th edition. Washington: CQ Press. We will use this book in the lecture. Older editions are cheaper and available, but be warned that the page numbers and chapter designs have changed.
- Pollock, Philip. 2019. *An Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 4th edition. Washington: CQ Press. We will use this book for the lab.

Other Readings:

In addition to readings from the textbooks, we will also discuss a variety of other readings from academic journals and books. Each of these readings will be available on Canvas. It is up to you to download and print the readings individually prior to each class. You are expected to do the assigned readings before the class period indicated on the syllabus.

3 Prerequisites

This course is required for all political science majors at UNC Charlotte. The prerequisite for the course is the successful completion of an introductory political science class (i.e., POLS 1110, 1130, 1131, 1150, or 1151). Successful completion of this course is a prerequisite for the political science senior seminar, POLS 4600. **Credit Hours:** 4

4 Evaluation

Labs	20%
Attendance	15%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final Exam	10%
Paper Part 1 (Research Question, Theory and Hypotheses, Bibliography)	10%
Paper Part 2 (RQ, TH, Data, Variables/Descriptives, Bib)	10%
Paper Part 3 (RQ, TH, D, V/D, Results, Conclusion, Bib)	20%
Reading Poli Sci Exercise	5%

4.1 Grading Scale

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

4.2 Lab Sessions

Aside from attending lecture, you will meet twice a week for 50 minutes in the computer lab. The sessions will be run by the Teaching Assistant. Please refer to the lab syllabus for details on how the lab grade will be calculated. Your final lab session grade will count for 20 points of your final course grade.

Teaching Assistant: Ryan Stoddard (rstoddar@uncc.edu)

Lab Sessions: MW, 8:00am - 8:50am; Fretwell 421.

4.3 Supplemental Instruction

The department is committed to your success in this course and has invested resources in supplemental instruction. A student who earned an A in this course is available every week, according to a schedule TBA, to help you learn the concepts and skills taught in this course. I strongly urge you to take full advantage of this service.

4.4 Exams

You will take one (1) midterm exam and one (1) final exam in this course. The midterm exam will cover material from lectures and readings assigned up to that point of the course. It will contain 20 multiple choice questions and will count for 10 points of your final course grade. The cumulative final exam will cover material from lectures and readings. It will be a combination of multiple choice and true/false questions. The final exam will count for 10 points of your final course grade.

4.5 Research Paper

You will complete a 20 page research paper in this course. Data for the analysis will be provided for you. You will turn in three portions of the paper over the course of the semester: (1) research question, theory and hypotheses, and bibliography; (2) Part 1 plus data, variables and descriptive statistics, and; (3) Parts 1 and 2 plus results and conclusion. Parts 1 and 2 count for 10 points each, while Part 3 counts for 20 points. You will receive feedback on Parts 1 and 2 so that you can make revisions before turning in the final paper (Part 3). The writing segment of the course therefore comprises a total of 40 points. Additional information on the research paper will be made available on Canvas.

4.6 Reading Political Science Exercise

Given that one of the goals of this course is that students must be able to read and critically assess political science research, you will also be tested on those skills. In the final week of this course (December 2), you will answer an in-class quiz about an empirical research paper in political science (assigned a week before class). The assignment will count for 5 points of your final grade.

5 Administrative Policies

5.1 Course Website and Email

The course website can be accessed through Canvas. Please check this site regularly for readings, assignments, and other updates. Announcements may be sent out via email or posted directly on Canvas. You are responsible for all information disseminated via Canvas and/or email. If you send me an email on a weekday, I will respond to you that same day. If you send me an email on a weekend or holiday, I will respond to you the following business day.

5.2 Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class and remain in class for the duration of the session. Failure to attend class or arriving late may impact your ability to achieve course objectives which could affect your course grade. An absence, excused or unexcused, does not relieve a student of any course requirement. Regular class attendance is a student's obligation, as is a responsibility for all the work of class meetings, including tests and written tasks. Any unexcused absence or excessive tardiness may result in a loss of attendance points. The instructor will take attendance every class. Students start with 15 points of attendance and lose 1 point per session missed.

Students are encouraged to work directly with their instructors regarding their absence(s). For absences related to COVID-19, please adhere to the following:

- **Complete your Niner Health Check each morning.**
- **Do not come to class if you are sick.** Please protect your health and the health of others by staying home. Contact your healthcare provider if you believe you are ill.
- **If you are sick:** If you test positive or are evaluated by a healthcare provider for symptoms of COVID-19, indicate so on your Niner Health Check to alert the University. Submit a copy of your Niner Health Check notification email to your instructors. Upon learning that you have tested positive or have been diagnosed for symptoms of COVID-19, either from your reporting or from Student Health Center testing or diagnosis, representatives from Emergency Management and/or the Student Health Center will follow up with you, and your instructors will be notified of the need for accommodations, as necessary.
- **If you have been exposed** to COVID-19 positive individuals and/or have been notified to self-quarantine due to exposure, indicate so on your Niner Health Check to alert the University. Representatives from Emergency Management and/or the Student Health Center will follow up with you as necessary. Submit a copy of your Niner Health Check notification email to your instructors. If you need any additional support verifying your absence after you have communicated with your professors, contact Student Assistance and Support Services.

To return to class after being absent due to a period of **self-quarantine**, students should submit a copy of their Niner Health Check clearance email to their instructor(s). To return to class after being absent due to a COVID-19 **diagnosis**, students should submit an online request form to Student Assistance and Support Services (SASS). Supporting documentation can be attached directly to the request form and should be from a student's health care provider or the Student Health Center, clearly indicating the dates of absences and the date the student is able to return to class. Instructors will be notified of such absences.

If you are absent from class as a result of a COVID-19 diagnosis or quarantine, as instructor I will work with you to help you continue to make progress in the course. The final decision for approval of all absences and missed work is determined by the instructor.

5.3 Absences and Late Work

Missed exams will only be rescheduled if you have received prior approval of your absence and you have documentation explaining why you cannot be in class that day. Makeups for in-class assignments will only be granted if you provide documentation explaining why you could not be in class, or under extraordinary circumstances. I reserve the right to determine what constitutes an extraordinary circumstance.

5.4 Academic Integrity

Each student in this course is expected to abide by the UNC Charlotte Code of Student Academic Integrity. In short, this means that cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students violating the Academic Honesty Policy in this course will receive a minimum penalty of a grade of zero for the assignment or test in question and may receive an F in the course and referral to Judicial Services.

5.5 Students with Disabilities

UNC Charlotte is committed to ensuring equal academic opportunities and inclusion for students with disabilities based on the principles of independent living, accessible universal design and diversity. Students with disabilities who anticipate needing an academic accommodation in this course must first consult with the Office of Disability Services and follow the instructions of that office for obtaining accommodations.

5.6 Diversity

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte is committed to equality of educational opportunity and does not discriminate against applicants, students, or employees based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or disability. In keeping with this commitment, UNC Charlotte actively seeks to promote diversity in its educational environment through its recruitment, enrollment, and hiring practices.

5.7 COVID-19 Policies

It is the current policy of UNC Charlotte that as a condition of on-campus enrollment, all students are required to engage in safe behaviors to avoid the spread of COVID-19 in the 49er community. Such behaviors specifically include the requirement that all students properly wear CDC-compliant face coverings in all indoor spaces on campus, including classrooms and labs, **regardless of vaccination status**. Failure to comply with this policy in the classroom or lab may result in dismissal from the current class session. If the student refuses to leave the classroom or lab after being dismissed, the student may be referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity for charges under the Code of Student Responsibility.

5.8 Sexual Harassment

All students are required to abide by the UNC Charlotte Title IX Grievance Policy, Sexual Harassment Policy, and the policy on Responsible Use of University Computing and Electronic Commu-

nication Resources. Sexual harassment is prohibited, even when carried out through computers or other electronic communications systems, including course-based chats, breakout rooms, or message boards.

6 Title IX Reporting Policy

UNC Charlotte is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these incidents, know that you are not alone. UNC Charlotte has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with civil protective orders, and more. Please be aware that all UNC Charlotte employees, including faculty members, are expected to relay any information or reports of sexual misconduct they receive to the Title IX Coordinator. This means that if you tell me about a situation involving sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, I am expected to report the information to the Title IX Coordinator. Although I am expected to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can contact the following on-campus resources, who are not required to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator: (1) University Counseling Center (counselingcenter.uncc.edu, 7-0311); or (2) Student Health Center (studenthealth.uncc.edu, 7-7400). Additional information about your options is also available at titleix.uncc.edu under the “Students” tab.

7 FERPA Notification

In establishing University Policy 402, Student Education Records, UNC Charlotte adheres to a policy of compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, also known as FERPA, a federal law that affords students the following rights with respect to their education records. For details, see the FERPA Annual Notification posted on the Office of Legal Affairs website. All questions concerning this FERPA Annual Notification may be directed to the attention of the Office of the Registrar.

8 Food Insecurity Statement

Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as “a lack of access to enough food for an active, healthy life.” Food insecure categories include: reduced caloric intake, reduced food quality, lack of variety in diet, disrupted eating patterns, and hunger. Research shows that college students experience food insecurity at higher rates than the American household rate, and that food insecurity can negatively impact academic performance and persistence. In recognition of this problem, UNC Charlotte offers assistance to students facing food insecurity through an on-campus food pantry. The Jamil Niner Student Pantry (JNSP) is located on the east edge of campus at 1224 John Kirk

Road. It has regular hours which may change from semester to semester; please see the website at <https://ninerpantry.uncc.edu/> for schedule and details on its services, as well as resources about hunger and food insecurity among college students.

9 Political Science Honors Program

If you earn an A in POLS 2220 Research Methods and you meet minimum GPA requirements (3.5 in Political Science, 3.25 overall), you will be eligible for admission into the Political Science Honors Program. Students in this program are invited to special events throughout the year, including lunches with guest speakers, panels on applying to graduate school, and meet the faculty sessions. In order to graduate with the honors designation affixed on the transcript, POLS Honors students must complete a two-course honors thesis sequence: one semester to write the proposal (including literature review and research design) and another semester to complete and defend the thesis. For more information about the Political Science Honors Program, please contact the Honors Director.

10 Course Schedule

This schedule is a guide for the course and is subject to change at my discretion with appropriate notice. Please read the appropriate readings before the course period for which they are listed below.

Friday, October 21

INTRODUCTION/COURSE OVERVIEW, RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Readings: Gerring (Chapter 2)

Monday, October 24

THEORIES/HYPOTHESES AND CAUSALITY

Readings: Babbie (Chapters 1, 2, and 3)

Lab Session 1: USING STATA

Wednesday, October 26

CONCEPTS + MEASURING AND DESCRIBING VARIABLES

Reading: Pollock (Chapters 1 and 2)

Lab Session 2: DESCRIPTIVES

Friday, October 28

LIBRARY SESSION

This session will be held at **Atkins 124**.

Reading: tbd

Monday, October 31

EXPLANATIONS AND COMPARISONS

Reading: Pollock (Chapter 3)

Lab Session 3: TRANSFORMING

Wednesday, November 2

RESEARCH DESIGN

Reading: Pollock (Chapter 4)

Lab Session 4: MAKING COMPARISONS

Friday, November 4

MIDTERM EXAM

Monday, November 7

CONTROLLED COMPARISONS

Reading: Pollock (Chapter 5)

Lab Session 5: CONTROLLED COMPARISONS

Wednesday, November 9

SAMPLING AND INFERENCE

Reading: Pollock (Chapter 6)

Lab Session 6: MAKING INFERENCES

Friday, November 11

NO CLASS (VETERAN'S DAY)

Due: Research Paper, Part 1: research question, theory and hypotheses, bibliography.

Monday, November 14

SIGNIFICANCE TESTS

Reading: Pollock (Chapter 7)

Lab Session 7: MEASURES OF ASSOCIATION

Wednesday, November 16

CORRELATIONS AND REGRESSION

Reading: Pollock (Chapter 8)

Lab Session 8: CORRELATIONS AND REGRESSION

Friday, November 18

FEEDBACK SESSION

No Readings

Monday, November 21

NO CLASS - WORK ON PAPER PART 2

Wednesday, November 23

NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

Friday, November 25

NO CLASS (THANKSGIVING)

Monday, November 28

MULTIPLE REGRESSION

Reading: Pollock (Chapter 8)

Lab Session 9: DUMMIES AND INTERACTIONS

Due: Research Paper, Part 2: research question, theory and hypotheses, descriptive statistics, bibliography.

Wednesday, November 30

LOGISTIC REGRESSION

Reading: Pollock (Chapter 9)

Lab Session 10: LOGISTIC REGRESSION

Friday, December 2

READING POLI SCI EXERCISE

Reading: tbd

Monday, December 5

FINAL EXAM

Wednesday, December 7

NO CLASS - WORK ON FINAL PAPER

December 14 (Wednesday), 2022: FINAL PAPER DUE ON CANVAS, From 8am to 10:30am