

Methods of Political Inquiry
POLS 3302
Fall 2010

Professor Joe Giammo
Unique Number: 61162
Room: Stabler Hall 403
Time: M, W, F, 9:00 – 9:50 a.m.

Office: Stabler 603 A
E-mail: jdgiammo@ualr.edu
Phone: 683-7220
Office Hours: M, W, and F, 10 to 10:45 a.m.
T and Th – 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.
or by appointment

Overview:

This course serves as an introduction to the methods used by political scientists to study political institutions, individual-level behavior, elite decision-making, and other political phenomena. We will spend a brief period of time on archival research, elite interviews, and experimental research, and will then spend the large majority of the semester on statistical methods. This course should help students to become informed consumers of the works that they read during their other political science coursework, as well as provide them with a set of skills useful in their own analysis of the world at large.

Additional Learning Objectives:

This course will also help you to develop the ability (1) to read and evaluate ideas, theories, and political analysis, (2) to pose and answer questions effectively, and (3) to communicate ideas clearly in writing.

Requirements:

Students are expected to arrive on time for all lectures, to participate in class discussions, and to complete all readings by the assigned dates. The textbook for the course is:

Jackson, Sherri L. *Statistics: Plain and Simple*. 2nd Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. 2010.

Students should also purchase a basic scientific calculator (capable of basic operations, exponents, square roots, and parenthetical operations). You should be able to get one for around \$10.

Grading:

The grade will be based on a weighted average of three in-class exams, an essay assignment, homework assignments, and in-class computer labs. The final course grade will be calculated as follows:

Average of the three exams: 65%
Essay: 20%
Average of the six homework assignments: 10%
Average of the five lab assignments: 5%

You will not be allowed to talk or use notes or books when taking the exams. No make-up exams will be given except in cases of serious, documented emergencies. Since I will be the sole judge of what constitutes such an emergency, your best policy would be to check with me beforehand. If that is not possible, you are responsible for contacting me as soon as possible after the exam. Students taking a make-up exam will not be given the same exam assigned to the rest of the class, and the format of the make-up exams may vary.

Letter grades will be based on the traditional scale (90-100 is an A, 80-89 is a B, 70-79 is a C, etc.).

Attendance Policy:

You will notice that attendance does not play a formal role in your grade; however, students missing class will find it very difficult to keep up with the material. The material presented in lecture will overlap with, but not be limited to the information presented in the text. In fact, several topics covered in lecture are not mentioned at all in the readings. Therefore, students who miss class will have trouble answering many of the questions on the tests, and their grades will naturally suffer accordingly. In fact, it is extremely unlikely that students who frequently miss class will be able to pass the course.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic dishonesty, which includes, but is not limited to cheating on an exam, unauthorized collaboration on an assignment, and plagiarism, is taken very seriously in this course. Students who commit such actions will be reported to the Dean of Students and may receive an F for the course. If you have any questions about whether an action is considered to be academically dishonest, please see me or read the complete description of the UALR policy on academic dishonesty, which is available in the student handbook at www.ualr.edu/www/handbook/student_rights.html.

Students with disabilities:

It is the policy and practice of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock to create inclusive learning environments. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion or to accurate assessment of achievement--such as time-limited exams, inaccessible web content, or the use of non-captioned videos--please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Students are also welcome to contact the

Disability Resource Center, telephone 501-569-3143 (v/tty). For more information, visit the DRC website at www.ualr.edu/disability.

Course Format:

Classes will consist of both lecture and class discussion. I will often ask questions of the class and may call on students at random. Student questions and observations are always encouraged. Politics is by its nature a matter of considerable disagreement and strong opinions, and students should feel free to express their own viewpoints, even when the subject is a sensitive one. I fully expect you to disagree with each other and with me on a variety of topics. In fact, class discussions are much less interesting or useful when everyone seems to agree with each other. While healthy disagreement and discussion is encouraged, it should always, however, remain on a respectful and professional level.

In addition to lectures, we will also do several computer lab exercises in class using a statistical software package. You will need to log on to the university system in order to participate. For those who have never logged on to the student system before, your log-in name will be the first initial of your first name, followed by the first initial of your middle name, followed by your last name (for John S. Smith – jssmith), and your password should be your University-issued T-number. If you have never used the system, I recommend that you go to one of the student labs and try it out before our first computer lab so that you have a chance to clear up any problems before class.

General Policies:

Students who are having difficulty with the course or who wish further clarification on a particular topic from lecture or the readings should feel free to see me during my office hours, or to schedule an appointment with me to meet at another time. You may also e-mail me, and I will try to get back in touch with you within one business day of your contact. Under no circumstances should you contact me at home.

In order to facilitate a better learning environment, distractions need to be kept to a minimum. Therefore, you should turn off all cell phones before the start of each class. Additionally, you should not bring children with you to class.

Blackboard

Additional information, documents, and course announcements will be available through the course web page. You can access the web page at <https://bb.ualr.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct>

Course Outline and Assignments:

All dates subject to change

Readings in italics are available on Blackboard

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
August 20	Introduction	
23	Studying Politics	<i>King, Keohane, and Verba, pp. 7 - 27</i>
25	Experimental Design	
27	Experimental Design	<i>Gerber and Green, pp. 75 - 85</i>
30	Experimental Design	
September 1	Qualitative Research Methods	
3	Qualitative Research Methods	
6	Labor Day – No Class	
8	An Introduction to Quantitative Methods	<i>Giammo and Brox, Module 2 (in textbook)</i>
10	Basic Descriptive Statistics	Module 3
13	Basic Descriptive Statistics	Module 4
15	Measuring Variation	Module 5
17	Measuring Variation	
20	Introduction to SPSS	
22	Catch Up and Review	
24	Exam I	
27	Probability and Standardized Results	Module 7
29	Probability and Standardized Results	Module 6
October 1	No Class	
4	Hypothesis Testing	Module 8
6	Hypothesis Testing	
8	Single Sample Tests	Module 9
11	Single Sample Tests	Module 10
13	Single Sample Tests	
15	Computer Lab	
18	Comparing Two Groups	Module 11
20	Comparing Two Groups	Module 12
22	Comparing Multiple Groups	Module 13
25	Computer Lab	
27	Catch Up and Review	
29	Exam II	
November 1	Analysis of Variance	Module 14
3	Analysis of Variance	Module 15
5	Analysis of Variance	
8	Using Multiple Variables	Module 16
10	Using Multiple Variables	
12	Two-Way ANOVA	Module 17

15	Two-Way ANOVA	
17	Two-Way ANOVA	
19	Computer Lab	
22	Correlations	Module 18
24	Correlations	Module 19
26	Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class	
29	Regression Analysis	Module 20
December 1	Regression Analysis, Papers Due	
3	Computer Lab	
6	Regression Analysis, Course Conclusions	
December 10, 8:00 – 10:00 a.m.	Final Exam	