

POLITICAL SCIENCE 30D SPRING 2019
POLITICAL INQUIRY
Draft Syllabus

No In-Class Midterm or Final

Final Homework Assignment (#4) due by Wednesday, June 12, Noon through *TurnItIn* facility

Note: minor changes may be made to this syllabus throughout the quarter (especially the dates for quizzes and assignments). You are responsible for any changes mentioned in class, even if you are absent. Changes will always be posted on the CANVAS home page.

This quarter, I am moving this class from the TritonEd LMS to CANVAS. This syllabus is abbreviated as much of the information you normally see on a syllabus can be found (and changed if needed) on your class's CANVAS home page. This will be explained in class. Some highlights:

All information about office and lab hours are found on the CANVAS home page for this class.

Assignments and Quizzes are located in the weekly Modules listed for this class (link on the left of home page).

You are required to use an I-Clicker in this class. If you have one and already have registered it for another class, you need do nothing but bring it to class daily. You will be docked two final grade points if you fail to participate more than two times as that is more than 10% of the 19 class sessions (legitimate, university sanctioned reasons for absences are, of course, considered). Most participation will be coded anonymously. We will know if you participated but not the content of your answers.

If you do not yet have an I-Clicker, you can buy one at the UCSD campus store or online (used and new). To register your clicker for the first time, go to the link found on the class Home Page.

INTRODUCTION

In this class, we will learn how to pose an interesting question, how to narrow it for purposes of research, and how to analyze the information gathered. With the objective of developing these skills, we will review (in order to learn by example) the methodology, the methods, and the statistical and computer-based tools employed by political (and other) scientists to study political events and relationships.

This course is akin to what, at other institutions, is often called "Scope and Methods." "Scope and Methods" often has a sinister reputation (note the initials). We won't try to change that reputation here--the survivors of the course deserve something to tell their grandchildren about. Seriously, our intent is to get you through this class successfully. That will require work on your part and ours as well as a desire to learn the class content.

REQUIREMENTS

READ THE SYLLABUS and HOME PAGE MATERIAL!!!!

We probably spend twenty hours the first several weeks answering questions that are clearly specified in the syllabus and class Home Page. If you ask such questions, I and the other instructors will most likely answer with “read the syllabus.” We would rather spend that time answering questions about the class or, heaven forbid, enjoying life.

READINGS

Two books are available for purchase through the campus bookstore:

Galderisi *Understanding Political Science Statistics: Of Observations and Expectations*
Galderisi *Understanding Political Science Statistics Using SPSS*

These two texts are available at the Bookstore (and elsewhere). All royalty proceeds from the sale of these books to my students are placed in a student fund.

Several readings will also be required and will be listed later in MODULES with their respective URLs. A few others will be added. Some can be accessed directly through an internet link. For others, you must access them on campus through the secure internet server (not guest) or, from home, by way of a VPN connection. The section instructors will explain this in the first week of section. Guides for configuring a VPN for your operating system of choice can be found at the following URL:

<https://blink.ucsd.edu/technology/network/connections/off-campus/VPN/index.html>

We **STRONGLY** suggest reading the material both before and after the appropriate class or section. Weekly emphasis and quiz study guides will be posted within the relevant MODULE.

We **STRONGLY** suggest going through the sample questions at the end of each chapter. Answers to all odd number questions can be found at the end of the text. Along with my guides and your discussion sessions, this is the best method of review.

SOFTWARE

SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is a general program which allows people with limited or nonexistent programming skills to produce some fairly sophisticated output from computer-based data sources. You may access this software on campus (lab locations will be posted on CANVAS) or at home. Instructions for downloading a temporary, university sponsored SPSS software license will be provided.

ATTENDANCE AND EFFORT

Show up in class and the **MANDATORY** discussion sessions on a daily basis. Class lectures will proceed in a logical, progressive fashion (much more so than in any other class). One missed class (there are only 18 more after the first introductory day) can lead to a total lack of comprehension over the next series of classes. Discussion sections are mandatory and attendance and participation in them will be worth 10% of your grade. During these sections you will get back your assignments, review class materials, and, perhaps, cover additional information to that provided in class. If you don't expect your class and discussion attendance to be consistent, don't sign up—we have plenty of students on the wait list. Remember, we only have two lectures per week—each covering 5+% of the course material. You must attend all your discussion sections unless you have proper, university required, documentation— illness, family tragedy, representing UCSD as an athlete, club member, etc.

Hard work and perseverance: Remember, research methodology and especially statistics are like a foreign language. Without constant exposure, practice, and repetition, languages are hard to master, especially in ten (or fewer) weeks. The same is true here. Statistics additionally utilize an abstract and foreign alphabet. And they may require you to use the dormant half of your brain. Conclusion? Expect to work hard at the beginning of this class, harder in the middle, and harder still at the end. Payoff? You may actually understand this stuff, and we may all maintain what little sanity we have left (well, that ship has sailed for me, but as the immortal albeit still living Jimmy Buffett wrote: “If we all weren’t crazy, we’d all go insane”).

Informal ‘section preparation assignments’ will be posted. They are not to be submitted, nor will they be graded. They will, however, serve as examples for discussion at the beginning of the next class or in discussion sections. If you complete them, you will get more out of this class--and you will be better prepared for the sections, quizzes and assignments.

You will learn the most from this class if you actively participate in lecture and, especially discussions sections (again, think about learning a foreign language). I’m using I-Clickers for the first time to promote participation and avoid the ‘deer in the headlights’ look I get each time I ask the class a question, especially math-based ones. Each of you must also bring a calculator to class (this can be your phone) for the statistics-based lectures, and you must use it. As long as it can add, subtract, multiply, divide, compute squares and square roots, it will suffice.

Special lab sessions will be set up to assist you with SPSS. These are not mandatory. A schedule will be posted by the beginning of week 2.

ASSIGNMENTS

(30%) Online quizzes (4), each worth 7.5% of your total grade. These are in lieu of an in-class midterm and final. They will help you to understand the concepts needed for your assignments. Better to lose a point or two here than 5-10 on your assignment. Of course, you won't be losing any points.

These will be composed of short answers, true-false, limited math problems, and, on occasion, a short essay. You will have anywhere from 30 minutes to one hour to complete these quizzes. As mentioned, study guides will be posted (within the relevant MODULE) at least one week before the online process for each starts.

(60%) Four Take-Home Assignments, each worth 15% of your total grade.

These will be part statistical calculation, part methodologically focused, but mainly computer-based analyses. Full instructions will be given for each at least one week before they must be submitted through the TurnItIn link on the class CANVAS page. The computer-based sections of these assignments will mainly be cumulative, with each discussion section working with a different hypothesis to analyze.

(10%) Section attendance and participation. I will offer suggestions, but your section instructor has full discretion over how sections will be run and grading standards.

PLEASE NOTE: All quizzes and assignments are to be treated as in-class exams. You can help each other through correspondence or face-to-face with general concepts, but you are not allowed to copy from others, check answers with others, work together on quizzes, etc. Doing so will be considered plagiarism and will be treated as such. If you are unsure of what plagiarism or cheating are as well as their potential consequences, please review the university guidelines found at: <https://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/excel-integrity/define-cheating/index.html>

PLEASE NOTE: Due dates, unlike stop signs and turn signals for many in California, are not to be treated as suggestions. They are firm. Any late assignments will be docked 10% of the total number of allocated points if turned in any time after the specified due date and time, even if by one minute. An extra 10% will be docked for every extra day up to a maximum penalty of 30% of the full grade.

PLEASE NOTE: All assignments must be typed (keyboarded). After teaching this class for almost 40 years, I have found that typed responses tend to be better as students take them more seriously and don't wait until a few minutes before the due dates to finish them (and then send us a hardly readable camera shot of the hand-written work).

VERY STRONG SUGGESTION: DO NOT wait until the last minute to read the materials needed for the assignments (students who do poorly in this class are those who generally fall into this category). Read them well in advance, go through the examples (if applicable) at the end of each chapter, and then contact one of us with questions before an assignment is due. Just like the man (or your other view of a divine order) upstairs, we can only help those who help themselves. To reinforce this point, we will not answer any questions after 3 PM the day before an assignment is due.

TOTAL GRADE BREAKDOWN

Online Quizzes, 4 @ 7.5 points each	= 30 points
4 Take home Assignments each worth 15%	= 60 points
Section attendance/participation	= 10 points
Chronic non-participation (I-Clicker) in class	= - 2 points

A NOTE ON GRADING

Any request for a grade review must be made to your section instructor in writing (typed) with a full explanation of why you are requesting the review. Note that any review may result in a higher or lower grade (or no change). You must wait until at least one day after your assignment is graded to request the review (no impulsive actions) but you must request it no later than one week from that date.

FINAL GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Understanding the difficulty of this class for many, the grade “curve,” especially at the low, passing end, is rather generous. Also remember that these are the number of total points received out of 100 based on the distribution above. A few A+ grades will be also be given to the top students in class and sections.

A	≥94	C+	72-74
A-	90-93	C	68-71
B+	85-89	C-	65-67
B	80-84	D	60-64
B-	75-79	F	below 60

INCOMPLETES

The university grants us precious little discretion here. In order to qualify for an incomplete, we must demonstrate that you have been doing passable work and you must demonstrate a reason for requesting an incomplete that conforms to university guidelines (documented illness, death or emergency in the family, unexpected military deployment, etc.). Again, the university makes this decision—not me nor the section instructors.

WEB PAGE

You must all learn how to access this class's web page on the University's CANVAS server site. The fact that you are reading this indicates that you have already mastered this task. It won't be fancy, but it will be complete. All assignments, class notes, date changes, completion date, section topics, etc. will be listed on them, usually within weekly MODULES. Consult it on a regular (i.e., daily) basis. We will make it a point not to answer any messages that are covered in the syllabus or on this site.

DR. G's NOTE ON THE USE OF STATISTICS

I will not attempt in this class to indoctrinate you into believing that only statistically-based research is valid research. Obviously, such an undertaking would be methodologically ludicrous. One begins one's research by asking theoretically important questions. Sometimes, and only sometimes, statistics can help us to answer those questions. Statistics are merely a summary tool. They help us with our research, but they are not the driving force behind it. Learning statistics yields some valuable results. First, you will have a greater choice of research questions to ask. You will no longer need to shy away from at least some questions that require statistically-based answers. Second, you will be better able to evaluate others' scholarly research. We sometimes tend to accept others' statistical findings as gospel, or reject them as trivial when, in fact, we make no attempt to try to understand what the researcher tried to accomplish. Ignorance may be bliss, but it is not academically virtuous. Third, you will acquire the foundation needed to do advanced work in statistical methods if you so choose. I will be more concerned with teaching you the basic how and why of statistical generalization, than in making sure that we cover every statistic available. Last, you will acquire or refine a set of skills sets deemed valuable in the real world that can actually make you more employable.

This course will be neither as mathematically rigorous as some, nor as 'cookbook' and applications only oriented as others. Rather, a middle route will be taken, requiring just enough mathematical (basic algebra) understanding to prevent the misuse and abuse of statistical methods. The basic premise of this training follows sound methodological guidelines: statistics can sometimes help us to answer certain questions; therefore, we need to understand exactly which question each statistic answers. And remember, statistics can never substitute for the English (or any other) language--they only complement it by serving as summary tools. Before these tools can be employed, theoretically useful questions about the relationships between and among well-defined and measurable political and social concepts must first be asked.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS, QUIZZES and ASSIGNMENTS—found within the weekly MODULES. Due dates can also be found on your class CANVAS home page. Go to the View Course Calendar button on the right side of your class home page. Expect quiz or assignment every week after this one.

Everything is from my text or SPSS Manual unless listed with “available for free online” or a URL. Each day I'll mention which readings should be finished for the next lecture or discussion session (and post it on CANVAS). Instructional videos for some of the class material, particularly the SPSS procedures, will be posted.