

Course Syllabus
Political Science 3001 (Spring 2008)
Political Analysis
PAB 103 (computer lab in OSH 273)

Instructor: Adam Luedtke
Office: OSH 210 (hours: Tuesdays 3-5)
Phone: 581- 6223
e-mail: adam.luedtke@poli-sci.utah.edu

Course description: This course covers methodological perspectives of the various social science disciplines, including commonalities and differences in assumptions, values, and paradigms. You may have read a lot of research articles in your political science courses. But have you ever wondered what all those strange numbers in those tables mean? Do you feel as if you have no basis on which to judge the accuracy of the research presented? Would you like to someday do your own original research, perhaps a senior thesis? Maybe you are interested in graduate or law school, and feel that a background in research methodology would be helpful. Do you think that statistics courses are boring by definition? If you answer yes to any of these questions, then POLS 3001 is for you. We will study how to design a research project, measure various social and political trends, and analyze and interpret statistical data. This course will be intensely participation-focused and hands-on.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy: Attendance will be very important in this course, as the cumulative nature of the material makes it very difficult to catch up if you fall behind. Additionally, there will be important class activities such as discussions, presentations and announcements that cannot be missed if you hope to succeed in the course. Your course grade is broken down into the following components: final research project (30%), final exam (20%), quizzes (20%), oral presentation (10%), and homework assignments (20%).

Course required readings:
Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*

Class and University Policies: Late submissions of course assignments will be penalized. Plagiarism involves claiming another person's work as your own and will result in failing the course. While students are encouraged to discuss the course material in small groups, you must submit work that is your own. The paper must use citation to document all direct quotations and paraphrases, and the work of other authors.

University policy is as follows: "All students are expected to maintain professional behavior in the classroom setting, according to the Student Code, spelled out in the Student Handbook. Students have specific rights in the classroom as detailed in Article III of the Code. The Code also specifies proscribed conduct (Article XI) that involves cheating on tests, plagiarism, and/or collusion, as well as fraud, theft, etc. Students should read the Code carefully and know they are responsible for the content. Definitions of these terms as well as information regarding your rights and responsibilities are available in the university's policies and procedures manual: <http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>

Students with Special Needs

If you will need accommodations in the class, prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services (<http://disability.utah.edu>), 162 Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD).

Class Schedule

1/8: Lecture #1 (introduction to political analysis).

1/10: Lecture #2 (variables). Have Shively Chapters 1, 2 and 11 read.

1/15: LAB (OSH 273) – learn SPSS, explore World Bank data, select dependent variable (problem to be explained in your research)

1/17: Lecture #3 (theorizing). Small-group exercise on modeling and thinking creatively.

1/22: Lecture #4 (concepts and measurement). Have Shively Chapter 5 read.

1/24: HOMEWORK 1 DUE. ORAL PRESENTATIONS ON DEPENDENT VARIABLE.

1/29: LAB (OSH 273) – select independent variable (indicator for the “causer” in your theory)

1/31: QUIZ #1 (covers lectures 1-4, Shively Chapters 1, 2 and 5). Lecture #5 (research design).

2/5: Lecture #6 (case selection). Have Shively Chapters 3 and 4 read.

2/7: HOMEWORK 2 DUE. ORAL PRESENTATIONS ON INDEPENDENT VARIABLE.

2/12: LAB (OSH 273) – select control variables (3 alternative explanations of your DV)

2/14: QUIZ #2 (covers lectures 1-4, Shively Chapters 1-5). Lecture #7 (distributions and sampling)

2/19: HOMEWORK 3 DUE. ORAL PRESENTATIONS ON CONTROL VARIABLES.

2/21: NO CLASS (free lab time to work on your projects)

2/26: HOMEWORK 4 DUE. Lecture #8 (normal curve to standard error). Have Shively Chapters 6 and 7 read.

2/28: HOMEWORK 5 DUE. QUIZ #3 (covers lectures 1-8, Shively Chapters 1-7).

3/4: HOMEWORK 6 DUE. Lecture #9 (confidence intervals).

3/6: LAB (OSH 273) – statistical exercises. Have Shively Chapter 10 read.

3/11: QUIZ #4 (Covers lectures 1-9, Shively Chapters 1-7, 10 and 11). HOMEWORK 7 DUE. Lecture #10 (statistical significance).

3/13: LAB (OSH 273) – statistical exercises

3/25: NO CLASS (free lab time to work on your projects)

3/27: NO CLASS (free lab time to work on your projects)

4/1: HOMEWORK 8 DUE. Lecture #11 (statistical sig. part 2). Have Shively Chapters 8-9 read.

4/3: NO CLASS (free lab time to work on your projects)

4/8: QUIZ #5 (covers Lectures 1-11, entire Shively book.). Lecture #12 (chi square, f and correlation).

4/10: LAB (OSH 273) – run regression analysis to get your final results!

4/15: HOMEWORK 9 DUE. Lectures #13-14 (intro to regression, more about regression).

4/17: ORAL PRESENTATIONS OF REGRESSION RESULTS.

4/22: FINAL EXAM. RESEARCH PAPERS DUE.