

**POLITICAL SCIENCE 585
TECHNIQUES OF POLITICAL ANALYSIS
WINTER QUARTER 2007**

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Office Hours:
Mon. 9:30 am - 11:30 am
and by appointment
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Lecture is on Monday and Wednesday, 11:30 am - 1:18 pm in DB (Derby Hall) Room 125.

NOTE(s): **1) No food or drinks are allowed in this classroom.**
 2) No cursing allowed in this classroom.

COURSE INTRODUCTION

I would like to welcome everyone to Political Science 585! This course provides an introduction to the tools and methods of research design and data analysis in political science. Therefore, this course will present statistical concepts, their applications to social science problems, and an illustration of how to interpret the results. Topics covered include probability, sampling, measurement, description of data, and statistical inference. Computer usage in aiding research will be emphasized throughout the course.

Prerequisites:

There are no mathematical, statistical, or computer prerequisites for this course.

Goals/Rationale:

Courses in quantitative and logical skills develop logical reasoning, including the ability to identify valid arguments, use mathematical models, and draw conclusions based on quantitative data.

Learning Objectives:

Data Analysis. Students understand statistics and probability, comprehend mathematical methods needed to analyze statistical arguments, and recognize the importance of statistical ideas.

This course will meet these learning objectives by offering an introductory survey of the different research designs that are employed to obtain raw data. From that point, the student will learn how to use the appropriate statistics to manipulate that raw data so that he or she will become an educated consumer of statistical information. These statistical skills will allow the student to make informed decisions about the statistical information presented in other social science classes and in everyday life.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

GRADING

The items described below will contribute to your final grade.

Midterm Exam: 100 points

Final Exam: 100 points

Homework: 160 points total

Attendance/Participation: 40 points

Grades in this class will be based solely on the work that you do. **There will be NO end of the quarter extra credit assignments made on an individual-student basis.**

Exams

Two exams will be given throughout the quarter. The first midterm exam will cover all of the material that has been reached to that point. The final is **comprehensive** and will cover all of the material taught in this course.

Attendance/Participation

It is expected that students will attend class on a regular basis therefore **attendance** will be taken during every class session. The main reason for this expectation is that data analysis and statistical techniques are highly cumulative, so it is very hard to follow later material without understanding earlier material and it is hard to catch up when behind. Therefore, points will be docked off for each class you miss. However, since I understand that students may have to miss a class here or there, you will receive one “free” absence for which you will not be penalized. Lastly, I will require written documentation for excused absences.

In regards to the **participation** portion of the grade, my expectation is that you pay attention and participate during class. This is a very important requirement because you will receive computer and internet access during class time and the temptation to use those resources at an inappropriate time and for inappropriate reasons is sometimes very great. Therefore, a portion of this grade is dependent upon the student making wise choices about their computer and internet usage. **If you come to class and inappropriately use the computers, you will not receive any points for coming to that particular class session.**

Homework

There will be four homework assignments worth a total of 160 points. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day stated on the syllabus. If you are not able to make it to class you must find a way to get it to me before class begins that day. **Late homework assignments will be penalized by 10% per day late.** So, if an assignment is due on Tuesday and you hand it in to me on Thursday the highest grade that you can receive on that assignment is 80%.

Computer Use

As part of the course, we will be using SPSS for Windows.

If a student is unable to perform the assignments on a personal computer then they can use the computers within this classroom (Derby 125) during the labs open hours. Since these computers have the required software installed all students are expected to meet the software and computing resources requirement. **EXCUSES FOR INCOMPLETE OR LATE WORK THAT INVOLVE A LACK OF COMPUTING RESOURCES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

COURSE MATERIAL

Required Text

Jack Levin and James Alan Fox. *Elementary Statistics in Social Research: the Essentials*. 2nd edition. Allyn and Bacon Publishing. 2007

The required text is available at Long's, and may also be available from other campus bookstores as well.

COURSE POLICIES

Missed Exams

All students are expected to take the exams at the scheduled times. If you must miss an exam for a justifiable reason, you must inform me **as soon as possible PRIOR** to the scheduled test and present documentation of the exceptional circumstance. When prior approval for missing an exam has been given, the make-up exam will be given without penalty; however, make-up exams are generally harder than the regular exams so it is definitely in one's best interest to take the exams at the regularly scheduled times. Others who miss exams without prior approval will most often not be allowed to retake the exam, resulting in a grade of zero for that particular exam; however, in extraordinary circumstances, you will be allowed to retake the exam with a penalty of one letter grade for each day after the exam, including the day of the exam.

Students with Disabilities

If you have any condition, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as outlined in this syllabus, please notify both the instructor and Wayne DeYoung in the Political Science Department *during the first week of the quarter* so that the appropriate arrangements can be made.

Academic Honesty: My expectation is that all of the work you do in this course will be your own. Consequently, I will tolerate absolutely no cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper citation). I will report any cases of cheating or plagiarism in any form to the university committee on academic misconduct, and they will be handled according to university policy.

Miscellaneous

If students want their exams and their homework assignments after the quarter has ended, they must notify the Instructor within two weeks of the beginning of the following quarter. Otherwise, their exams, homework assignments, etc... will be disposed of after the 2nd week of the following quarter.

Assistance

I want to help you do well in this course, and I hope that you will feel free to talk to me if you have any questions about the readings, concerns about the course, or need suggestions about studying and understanding the material. My scheduled office hours are listed at the beginning of the syllabus, but I would be happy to arrange an alternative time to meet if the office hours are inconvenient. Also, class time affords a perfect opportunity to ask questions, and you are encouraged to take advantage of it. I am also available for assistance after class and at any other mutually agreeable time. This syllabus is also intended to be helpful to you. Please read it carefully because it includes material that you will need to have about the class and about your responsibilities.

COURSE SCHEDULE, TOPICS AND READINGS:

All dates are tentative; the schedule may be modified as needed.

Week 1 Weds 1/3: Course Introduction

Part 1 – Description of Data

Week 2 Mon 1/8: Chapter 1 – Why the Social Researcher Uses Statistics
 Weds 1/10: Chapter 2 – Organizing the Data

Week 3 Mon 1/15: **NO CLASS – MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY**
 Weds 1/17: Chapter 3 – Measures of Central Tendency

Part 2 – From Description to Decision Making

Week 4 Mon 1/22: Chapter 4 – Measures of Variability
 Weds 1/24: Chapter 5 – Probability and the Normal Curve

Week 5 Mon 1/29: Chapter 5 – **Homework 1 due**
 Weds 1/31: **Midterm Exam**

Week 6 Mon 2/5: Chapter 6 – Samples and Populations
 Weds 2/7: Chapter 6 – Samples and Populations

Part 3 – Decision Making

Week 7 Mon 2/12: Chapter 6 – Samples and Populations
 Weds 2/14: Chapter 7 – Testing Differences between Means

Part 4 – From Decision Making to Association

Week 8 Mon 2/19: Chapter 7 – **Homework 2 due**
 Weds 2/21: Chapter 10 – Correlation

Week 9 Mon 2/26: Chapter 11 – Regression Analysis – **Homework 3 due**
 Weds 2/28: Chapter 11 – Regression Analysis

Week 10 Mon 3/5: Research Design
 Weds 3/7: Research Design – **Homework 4 due**

Final Exam: 11:30 am – 1:18 pm on Thursday, March 15th 2006