



POLS 284: Political Research and Analysis Fall 2021

Professor: Jongho Lee, Ph.D. Meeting Time: T & TH 2 – 3:15 PM
Office: Morgan 412 Email: J-Lee6@wiu.edu

Meeting Place*: Morgan 316

* The class will meet in Stipes 331 from 2 to 3:15 PM on the following dates:
Oct 12, Oct 14, Oct 19, Oct 21, Oct 26, Nov 2, Nov 30, and Dec 2.

Office Hours**: T & TH 12:30 – 1:30 PM *in person*
W 9 – 11 AM *via Google Meet or Email*

** It would be best if you could let me know (via email) in advance whether you want to meet virtually or in person. I can always be reached via email.

Course Overview

This course will provide a broad introduction to the major *empirical* research methods commonly used by political scientists to study political processes, institutions, and behaviors. While we will be looking at a variety of political phenomena, our goal is not to shed light on any specific political issues, but to learn about *how* to conduct empirical research to understand and explain them.

We will discuss how to pose research questions, construct theories, formulate testable hypotheses, collect and analyze pertinent data, and make valid descriptive and causal inferences. We will review various approaches and techniques for collecting information, yet a special attention will be paid to survey research. We will also talk about how to use IBM SPSS—originally known as Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)—to organize and analyze quantitative data. No prior knowledge in statistics is expected.

Course Objectives

The course has three primary objectives: (1) to provide students with the analytical knowledge and skills to critically evaluate claims about society and politics made by politicians, pundits, ordinary citizens, and not to mention, political scientists; (2) to help students develop and undertake their own research programs; and (3) to equip students with transferrable skills they can continue to use as they build their professional career. The ultimate goal is to help students become more sophisticated consumers and producers of scientific knowledge.

Course Materials

There are two *required* texts for the course:

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, H. T. Reynolds, and Jason D. Mycoff. 2020. Political Science Research Methods (9th Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Pollock, Philip H. III and Barry C. Edwards. 2020. An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis (6th Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

There is one *recommended* text, which may be purchased on-line, or borrowed from the library.

Asher, Herbert. 2017. Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know (9th Edition). Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Occasionally, *additional readings* may be assigned. These readings should be treated as though they are required texts. Additional readings will be announced in class at least one week in advance and placed on Western Online.

The reading load for this course is relatively light because the materials often require careful consideration and, as the semester progresses, learning about statistical computing (and statistics) demands much practice. All readings should be completed by the class session for which they are assigned.

* Class information and materials will be posted and regularly updated on the class website at Western Online: Go to <https://WesternOnline.wiu.edu> and log in with your ECOM username and password.

Course Requirements and Grading

Attendance and Participation (10%)

Class attendance is *required*. Periodically, attendance will be taken at any point during the semester by way of circulating a sign-up sheet at the beginning of the class period. It is your responsibility to make sure that you have signed the attendance sheet if you are in class. You will be allowed up to three unexcused absences during the semester. Each absence beyond that will result in the deduction of one percentage point from your attendance and participation portion of grade. *Absences due to COVID-19 symptoms or other COVID-19 related issues (including quarantine) will be excused. Please be sure to notify me of your COVID-19 related absences via email.*

Exams—Exam 1 (20%), Exam 2 (20%), and Final (20%)

Over the course of the semester, there will be three in-class exams—two mid-terms and the final. The exams may include multiple choice questions, short essay questions, or a combination of both. Each exam will be based on lectures, readings, and class discussions, and worth 20% of your overall grade. The final exam will *not* be cumulative.

Homework (Data Analysis) Assignment (10%)

There will be a data analysis assignment using SPSS (which will be worth 10% of your overall grade). Details of the assignment will be discussed in class on or before November 2. It is due in class on Thursday, **November 11**.

Data Report (20%)

For this assignment, you should begin by posing *two* research questions and formulating hypotheses that correspond to the research questions. The hypotheses should be formulated in a way to be readily tested by existing data (*that are to be announced in class*). You will be asked to write a report which is about four pages long (exclusive of bibliography, if any, and a title page). The report will include your research questions, hypotheses, tables and/or figures, and discussion on the findings. It is due in class on Tuesday, **December 7**.

Grading Scale

93-100%	=	A	89-92%	=	A ⁻
86-88%	=	B ⁺	83-85%	=	B
79-82%	=	B ⁻	76-78%	=	C ⁺
73-75%	=	C	69-72%	=	C ⁻
66-68%	=	D ⁺	63-65%	=	D
59-62%	=	D ⁻	Below 59%	=	F

Course Policies

Course Rules

- All written assignments should be submitted at the beginning of class on the due date. Late submissions will be penalized two percentage points.
- As a rule, make-up exams will only be permitted in cases of *documented* medical or personal emergencies.

- Please come to class on time and stay for the entire class period. Cell phones should be turned off before arriving in class.
- Please treat your fellow students with respect.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Please visit <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php> for details.

Academic Honesty

Please visit <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php> for details.

Students with Disabilities

“In accordance with University values and disability law, students with disabilities may request academic accommodations where there are aspects of a course that result in barriers to inclusion or accurate assessment of achievement. To file an official request for disability-related accommodations, please contact the Disability Resource Center at 309-298-2512, disability@wiu.edu or in 143 Memorial Hall. Please notify the instructor as soon as possible to ensure that this course is accessible to you in a timely manner.”

Title IX Policy

“University values, Title IX, and other federal and state laws prohibit sex discrimination, including sexual assault/misconduct, dating/domestic violence, and stalking. If you, or someone you know, has been the victim of any of these offenses, we encourage you to report this to the Title IX Coordinator at 309-298-1977 or anonymously online at: http://www.wiu.edu/equal_opportunity_and_access/request_form/index.php. If you disclose an incident to a faculty member, the faculty member must notify the Title IX Coordinator. The complete Title IX policy is available at: <http://www.wiu.edu/vpas/policies/titleIX.php>.”

Course Outline

* Please note the following schedule is subject to change.

JRM: Political Science Research Methods

PE: An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis

Asher: Polling and the Public

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments
1	8/24 8/26	Course Introduction Scientific Study of Politics	JRM Ch 2
2	8/31 & 9/2	Research Design	JRM Ch 1 & 3
3	9/7 & 9	Hypothesis & Concept	JRM pp. 73-88/ Coppedge ⁱ
4	9/14 & 16	Measurement & Validity	JRM pp. 88-99
5	9/21 9/23	Catch-up Exam 1	
6	9/28 & 30	How to Collect Data	JRM Ch 6, 8, & 9/ Gerber (2000) ⁱⁱ
7	10/5 & 7	Sampling	JRM Ch 5/ Asher Ch 4
8	10/12 10/14	Introduction to Data Analysis SPSS: Transforming Variables	PE Intro to SPSS PE Ch 3
9	10/19 & 21	SPSS: Making Comparisons	PE Ch 4
10	10/26 10/28	SPSS: Making Controlled Comparisons Exam 2	PE Ch 5
11	11/2 11/4	SPSS: Making Controlled Comparisons (cont.) Survey Research	JRM Ch 10/ Asher Ch 1-3
12	11/9 & 11	Survey Research (cont.)	Asher Ch 5-9 Homework due on Nov 11
13	11/16 11/18	Survey Research (cont.) Univariate Analysis	Couper ⁱⁱⁱ JRM Ch 11
14	11/22-26	Thanksgiving Break (No Classes)	
15	11/30 12/2	SPSS: Descriptive Statistics SPSS: Making Inferences	PP Ch 2 PP Ch 6 & 8
16	12/7 12/9	Case Studies/ Small N Methods Catch-up	JRM Ch 7 Data Report due on Dec 7

* Final exam is scheduled for Tuesday, December 14, at 3 PM.

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- ⁱ Coppedge, Michael, et al. 2011. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach." Perspectives on Politics 9:247-67. *On Western Online*
- ⁱⁱ Gerber, Alan, and Donald Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." American Political Science Review 94:653-63. *On Western Online*
- ⁱⁱⁱ Couper, Mick P. 2011. "The Future of Modes of Data Collection." Public Opinion Quarterly 75:889-908. *On Western Online*