
Introduction to Political Analysis
PS372-001
Spring 2024

Course Time: TR 11 am-12.15 pm

Location: Funkhouser Building, Room B3 LEC

Instructor: Tasnia Symoom

Email: tasnia.symoom@uky.edu

Office Hours: By appointment (email me at tasnia.symoom@uky.edu for an appointment)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to the skills for interpreting, conducting, presenting, and analyzing political science statistical research. Over the course of the term, you will learn how to think like social scientists while developing various skills required by the discipline: how to choose which method to employ, how to undertake original research (complete with data collection and analysis), and how to present your findings to colleagues. At the end of this class, the goal is to help you understand and conduct quantitative political research that will be useful in academic and professional settings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe and assess the logic of political science research and scientific research in general.
- Comprehend the basic concepts, steps, and design involved in the systematic research process.
- Learn how to analyze data, communicate research findings and be an intelligent research consumer.

Course instructional methods

The course will be taught using multiple instructional methods. These methods will include lectures, group discussion/work, and time to work through problems in class. It will be critical for students to attend all sessions to ensure mastery of course content. Much material for the course, including PowerPoint slides and review lectures, is/will available on the Canvas website.

Data Gamification Activity

Throughout the semester, students will participate in a **data gamification exercise** designed to make political data analysis engaging and hands-on. Working individually or in small teams, students will use real datasets to uncover political trends, test hypotheses, and compete to interpret findings accurately and creatively. This activity helps reinforce concepts such as

measurement, variable relationships, and hypothesis testing while fostering collaboration and critical thinking about empirical research.

Course-required text and materials

Thyne, Clayton L. *Political Analysis for the Rest of Us: An Accessible Take on the Science of Political Science* (Van-Griner Publishing, Cincinnati, OH, 2018).¹

Students will need access to the internet to view course materials and their grades in Canvas. For technical assistance, contact ITS Customer Services 24/7 at 859-218-HELP (4357) for urgent needs. For non-urgent matters, choose the option that works best for you at

<https://techhelpcenter.uky.edu/gethelp>.

EARNING GRADES

You will be graded in two ways. The first is a set of quizzes that follow each of the twelve chapters. The quizzes will be taken place online. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure you are keeping up with the readings and learning the material. They are meant to be easy for those putting in the required time and effort. The second set of assessments comes from a midterm and final examination. The final is not cumulative.

Quizzes will be available on Canvas. Each quiz will be accessible each Thursday at 8 am until 11.59 pm. Depending on the chapter content, you will have a one to two-hour window to complete each quiz. Please note that once you begin a quiz, a timer will commence, and you must complete it within one/two hours of starting.

Quizzes (48% of total)

There will be a total of 12 quizzes, each of which is 4% of the total.

Data gamification (12% of total)

Exams (30% of total)

There will be two exams – a midterm and a final. Each will be a combination of true/false and multiple-choice questions. The exams test your familiarity with the lecture material, reading assignments, and your independent ability to apply what you have learned.

Midterm exam (Online): Covers chapters 1-6; 15% of the total grade. The canvas exam window opens on March 5 (Tuesday) at 8 am and Closes on March 7 (Thursday) at 11.59 pm.

Final exam (Online): Covers chapters 7-12; 15% of the total grade (Canvas exam window opens on April 30 at 8 am and closes on May 2 at 11.59.

¹ Please note that no royalties from the selling of this book to UK students are distributed directly to the author. Rather, royalties are processed directly from the publisher to a UK account that is used to support university priorities, which include research, undergraduate and graduate student learning, diversity and inclusivity, and engagement with the public.

Please note that once you begin these exams, a timer will commence, and you must complete it within two hours of starting.

Attendance and Participation (10% of the total grade)

Attendance and participation are required in this class on lecture days. The attendance grade will be calculated at the end of the semester.

Final course grades will be based on the following scale:

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

E = below 60

Academic Policy Statements and Resources

Please see the website below for Academic Policy Statements related to (1) excused absences and acceptable excuses; (2) religious observances; (3) verification of absences; (4) make-up work; (5) excused absences for military duties; (6) unexcused absences; (7) prep week and reading days; (8) accommodation due to disability; (9) non-discrimination statement and Title IX information; and (10) regular and substantive interactions (11) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion statement

<https://www.uky.edu/universitysenate/acadpolicy>

<https://www.uky.edu/universitysenate/syllabus-dei>

For resources available to students, including Counseling Center, Libraries, MLK Center, etc., please see the following website:

<https://www.uky.edu/universitysenate/student-resources>

OUTSIDE OF CLASSROOM

I highly encourage all students to contact me outside of the classroom if you have any questions about the course or the content. I can be reached at tasnia.symoom@uky.edu. While I am a responsible emailer and typically fast reply, I reserve the right to respond to an email for up to 24 hours (this policy excludes weekends and holidays). You should plan ahead and not email right before a quiz or exam is due, as there is no guarantee that I will be able to respond in time to your question. DO NOT text me in Canvas if you want a fast reply. I tend to review the CANVAS platform less frequently than my emails.

CANVAS

This course utilizes Canvas for essentially all facets of the course (quizzes, exams, readings, videos). You are expected to check Canvas regularly for all information about this course.

GENERATIVE AI

Because a major focus of this course is on developing your critical analysis skill, you **MUST** complete assignments for this course entirely on your own. You **MUST** not copy from any online sites (e.g: Course Hero or Chegg) or utilize composition technologies (e.g: ChatGPT or other GenAI software). Work submitted by students-all process work, final versions, and all submissions – will be generated by the students themselves. For the purpose of this course, any use of these sites or tools will be considered academic misconduct, and consequences will follow University policies. Please contact your instructor if you have any questions or concerns about the policy before submitting any assignments.

Please see the UKY policies on Generative AI:

https://advance.uky.edu/sites/default/files/2023-08/2023.08.11_ADVANCEfacultyguidelines.pdf

CLASS & EXAM SCHEDULE*

**Modifications to the class content, schedule, quiz arrangements, and exam timetable are subject to the sole authority of the instructor and will be communicated in Canvas as per the syllabus guidelines.*

<i>Session/dates</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Prep prior to class</i>	<i>Quizzes & Exams</i>
Jan 9-11	Discuss syllabus Ch 1: The Science of Political Science	Purchase textbook, read Ch 1	Quiz 1 Ch 1, Jan 11
Jan 16-18	No class (Inclement weather)		
Jan 23-25	Chapter 2: Political Science and Scientific Process	read Ch 2	Quiz 2 Ch 2, Jan 25
Jan 30-Feb 1	Ch 3: Measurement	read Ch 3	Quiz 3 Ch 3, Feb 1
Feb 6-8	Ch 4: Operationalizing Concepts	read Ch 4	Quiz 4 Ch 4, Feb 8
Feb 13-15	Ch 5: Describing your data	read Ch 5	Quiz 5 Ch 5, Feb 15

Feb 20-22	Ch 6: Describing Data Visuality	read Ch 6	Quiz 6 Ch 6, Feb 22
Feb 27-29	Mid-term Prep week		
Mar 5-7	Mid term		Midterm
Mar 12-14	Spring break		
Mar 19-21	Ch 7: The Basics of Hypothesis Testing	read Ch 7	Quiz 7 Ch 7, March 21
Mar 26-28	Ch 8: Finding Differences in two means or proportions	read Ch 8	Quiz 8 Ch 8, March 28
April 2-4	Ch 9: Nominal level relationships	read Ch 9	Quiz 9 Ch 9, April 4
April 9-11	Ch 10: Ordinal and Continuous level relationships	read Ch 10	Quiz 10 Ch 10, April 11
April 16-18	Ch 11: The Logic and Practice of Control	read Ch 11	Quiz 11 Ch 11, April 18
April 23-25	Ch 12: Reading Published Work	Read Ch 12	Quiz 12 Ch 12, April 25
April 30-May 2	Final Exam		