Course Description

This course is required for political science majors who entered in fall 2010 or later and for any major interested in writing an honors thesis. The course provides an introduction to research design and methods. It is not designed for a student with only a general interest in politics, and the course will be rigorous, demanding, and require extensive data analysis.

The course will develop appreciation for the diverse forms of knowledge collected under the rubric of political science. It is designed to enable you to develop both analytic and critical skills for research. We will examine both qualitative and quantitative methods, but with particular emphasis on the basics of effective research design and data analysis. While no previous mathematical or statistical background is required, you should be keenly interested in learning these techniques. By the end of the course, students will be able to evaluate scientific research, frame a research question, and design a research study.

We organize our research to examine: Democracy and Democratization. We begin the review article by Welzel (2009) Theories of Democratization on blackboard. This theoretical discussion will guide our inquiry and testing of theories of democracy.

Welzel discusses the following topics:

- The Nature and Origins of Democracy
- Social Division, Distributional Equality, and Democratization
- Colonial Legacies, Religious Traditions, and Democracy
- Modernization and Democratization
- International Conflicts, Regime Alliances, and Democratization
• Elite Pack, Mass Mobilization, and Democratization
• State Repression and Democratizing Mass Pressures
• Institutional Configurations and Democracy
• The Human Empowerment Path to Democracy
• A Typology of Democratization Processes.

We will explore these topics to:

• Examine the scientific method.
• Develop a research design to test hypotheses about democracy.
• Employ quantitative methods and analysis of data.

Course Materials:

Required Books:


Salkind, Neil (2011) Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics. Sage. Fourth Edition or most recent. Available at the Book Store also available in Kindle edition. We will be using this book extensively. The book has practice exercises and data. In addition, we will analyze data specifically addressed to the theoretical focus of this course.

Scott, Gregory M. and Garrison, Steve M. (2007) The Political Science Writer’s Manual. Sixth Edition or most recent. New York: Prentice Hall. Available at the Book Store also available in Kindle edition. This is primarily a reference manual on how to write up your research. We will not spend much class time on this volume.

Software: SPSS Statistical Package, Version 16 or higher

• We will use SPSS as the software package in this course. It can be purchased on the web for both PC and MAC.
• For the first class, download a trial or demo version, usually valid for two weeks.
• For use after the demo expires, immediately purchase the student package, usually valid for one year on two computers. It may take some time for the program to arrive. The program is available from several web sites for download, but may require you to verify your student status. At last check the program is not available at the bookstore. Make sure your version has no limitations on the number of observations or variables.

Hardware: Universal Class Room Clicker: Available at the registers in the Book Store
• Publisher: Responsive Innovations
Course Requirements:

- **Preparation for class:**
  o All students are required to do the reading assignments and prepare the practice exercises in Salkind as noted below. Answers to the practice exercises are in the text. Data for the practice exercises are available from the text website. Be prepared to discuss the readings and your practice exercises in class. What did you do to answer the practice exercises? These exercises are intended for you to practice and test your knowledge; the exercises are not required, and will not be turned in as homework, but will prepare you for the quizzes and projects. Some quiz questions may be taken from the exercises; therefore, doing the exercises will help you on the quizzes.

- **Quizzes and Exams**
  o We will be having frequent quizzes in class using the clickers for the reading and practice exercises assignments of the day. Quiz days are indicated by #. Each quiz will consist of at least five multiple choice questions using your clickers.
  o Additional non-scheduled quizzes are possible
  o Immediately buy your clicker
  o Register your clicker on Black Board
  o Bring your clicker to class every day
  o If you forget your clicker, you will receive no credit on the quiz
  o Short exams are scheduled as noted below. The exam questions will largely draw on the quiz questions. Each exam will consist of at least ten multiple choice questions and data analysis problems.

- **In class data analysis**
  o We will be using a specially developed data set to test hypotheses and perform statistical analysis in class. These data are on Black Board and will be the basis for your research projects. When we get to the data analysis section, quizzes will be based on data analysis problems.

- **Research projects:** Each student will formulate a research topic on democracy and test hypotheses based on the Welzel reading using the data developed for the class. Your research paper must include the standard elements of a scientific paper.
  o Abstract
  o Research problem and question
  o Review of the literature
  o Research design
  o Hypotheses development
  o Evidence and logic
  o Data analysis techniques
Validity and general applicability of the findings

What conclusions can you draw on your original research questions?

How much confidence do you have in your conclusions?

How do your conclusions fit with your opinions or preconceived notions that do you had about the topic before doing the research?

What questions remain unanswered and how might this research be reformulated and extended to address remaining concerns and questions?

The final paper has a 15 double-spaced page maximum, not including tables and figures. Papers must be sent to ewellhof@du.edu as an MSWord attachment and titled: PLSC2901 Your Name Final Paper Fall 2014. Electronic copies only. The grade for late work is reduced by one letter grade for each late day.

- **Advanced Work Option**: This is an option instead of the project above. It is strongly advised for students wishing to excel in the course and those planning an Honors Thesis employing quantitative methods. Excellent work can receive up to 15% extra credit.
  - You must commit to this option no later than the date shown below. You can withdraw from the option without penalty by the date shown below. If you do not withdraw and do not complete the option, a penalty of 15% follows.
  - Select a research topic from those discussed in the initial readings. Proceed by the steps of a research paper as noted above.
  - The advanced research project is advanced because it must involve developing and testing multiple hypotheses using the data from the class file and the SDA and WVS sites. You must employ advanced statistical techniques which will be covered in tutorials.
  - The Advanced Work Option requires a class presentation of your research, see date below.
  - The final paper for the advanced work option should be about 25 pages, excluding tables and figures.

- Absences and late work: Absences without a written medical excuse from the Health Service or personal physician will receive a zero for the assignment. More than two unexcused absences can justify the failure of a student enrolled in this course. Late work is reduced by one letter grade for each day after the due date.

- The Department and the University have a clear and firm policy on plagiarism. If you have any questions, please ask.

- The relative weight of these toward your grade is:
  - Class preparation and quizzes 30%
  - First exam 15%
  - Second exam 15%
  - Final paper 40%
  - Advanced Work Option 15% Extra credit

**Course Schedule**

Sept 9: Introduction
#Sept 11: Studying Politics and Political Science
Noel, Hans (Noel 2010) Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don't. On Blackboard
Scott and Garrison (2007) Part One: Welcome to Political Science

#Sept 16: Basics of Research Design

#Sept 18: Salkind
Chapter 1: Why statistics? Exercise 3
Chapter 2: Descriptive statistics. Practice Exercise 3
Chapter 3: Variability. Practice Exercise 6
Chapter 4: Representing data. Practice Exercise 4

#Sept 23: Introduction to data analysis
Using SPSS with globalization and democracy data

#Sept 25: Salkind
Chapter 5: Correlations. Practice Exercise 6
Chapter 6: Validity. Practice Exercise 1

#Sept 30: Salkind
Chapter 7: Hypothesis testing. Practice Exercise 1 Chapter 8: Probability. Practice Exercise 1

#Oct 2: Salkind
Chapter 9: Significance. Practice Exercise 3
Chapter 10-13: Significance tests. Practice Exercises: C10, E1; C11, E5

#Oct 7: Salkind
Chapter 15-16: Correlation and Regression. Practice Exercises: C15, E1; C16, E1

Oct 9: First exam

Oct 14: Class discussion and tutoring in formulating your research project

Oct 16-21: Presentation and discussion of research projects
Class preparation: One page statement of the following:
- Your research topic from those discussed in the initial readings
- Proposed research problem and question
- Proposed review of the literature
- Proposed research design
• Post your discussion on Black Board for other student to review

Oct 21: Last day to choose Advanced Work Option

Oct 23: Analyzing Survey Data
  Testing Astrology. On Blackboard
  In this part of the course, we analyze survey data to examine the foundations of democracy. We will analyze the World Value Survey and the SDA sites.

Oct 28: Culture and Democracy readings:

#Oct 30- Nov 4: Exercises in Survey Analysis: Social Trust and Democracy
  Social Trust and Democracy in America: On BB
  Social Trust and Democracy in Comparative Perspective: On BB

Nov 6: Second exam

Nov 6: Last day to withdraw from Advanced Work Option without penalty

Nov 6: In class tutorials on your research projects.

Nov 11: Tutorial for Advanced Work Option. If you are not doing the Advanced Work Option, class is optional: work on your papers or come in for consulting. If you plan on the Advanced Work Option, send me one page proposal of project covering the main points above.

Nov 13: Last class day: Class presentations of Advanced Work Option
  Send a copy of your presentation materials to ewellhof@du.edu due by 4PM the day before your presentation and post a copy on BB. Those not doing the Advanced Work Option must attend the presentations and send a once page critique of each presentation.

Nov 17: Final paper due no later than 4PM. Papers must be sent to ewellhof@du.edu as an MSWord attachment and titled: PLSC2901 Your Name Fall 2014. Only electronic copies will be accepted.

Nov 20: Advanced Work Option Paper due no later than 4PM. Papers must be sent to ewellhof@du.edu as an MSWord attachment and titled: PLSC2901 Your Name Advanced Fall 2014. Only electronic copies will be accepted.