

Political Inquiry (PLSC 2910)

Autumn 2015
M & W 12:00PM-1:50PM
Sturm Hall 411

Professor: Shawn C. Fettig
Office: Sturm Hall Rm 473
Email: shawn.fettig@du.edu
Phone: 303.871.2136
Office Hours: Wednesdays 2:00PM-4:00PM

OVERVIEW

This course moves beyond facts about politics and focuses, instead, on teaching you how political scientists know what they know. What do research questions look like? How do political scientists know which methods to use to answer questions? How do they come to their conclusions? How do they learn about politics? We will focus heavily on quantitative approaches to the study of politics, including how to develop theories, how to craft and test hypotheses, and how to identify and utilize the appropriate tools to evaluate those things we study.

While statistics can seem intimidating, we will take a straightforward and practical approach in this class that is no more difficult than math you were exposed to in middle school. It may be challenging at times, however, you can do this if you commit yourself to the course. The things you learn here will help you in other classes, further education, and throughout your careers.

REQUIRED TEXTS

You are required to acquire the textbooks for this course:

The Essentials of Political Analysis, 4th ed. by Philip H. Pollock III (ISBN: 978-1-60871-686-9)

A Stata Companion to Political Analysis, 3rd ed. by Philip H. Pollock III (ISBN: 978-1-4522-4042-8)

In addition, it is strongly recommended that you purchase a six-month license to the State 14 statistical software. It can be purchased (\$38) and downloaded at <http://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/>. This is the software we will be using in the course and, while certain labs on campus have this software installed on them, the labs have limited hours and availability. You will have homework assignments that require the use of Stata, which is why I strongly recommend purchasing a version for your own computer.

CLASS CONDUCT

I encourage class discussion. The material that we will be covering in class will be more or less challenging for each of you. Some of you will grasp the concepts quicker than others; however, being a collegial setting, I expect that we will all assist in each other in a respectful manner. There is no room for disrespect and I will not tolerate it.

Additionally, you are expected to meet deadlines as they are assigned. I will not accept any late work unless you have a valid, documented reason for missing a deadline. This also applies to missing an exam. You are expected to notify me **IN ADVANCE AND PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION** if you are going to miss an exam, unless it is an emergency. In the case of emergency, you will need to provide adequate documentation the next time you are in class.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated in this class. Anyone found guilty of cheating or plagiarism or of any other violation of academic integrity will be assigned an automatic grade of F ***IN THE COURSE*** and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent through University channels. Notes on plagiarism can be found here <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>. The University of Denver policy can be found here: <http://www.du.edu/studentlife/ccs/code.html>. Be sure you know the definition and know how to avoid it. I am absolutely serious about this policy. It is indeed plagiarism to copy someone's words without citation or attribution or to copy the summary of a speech, book, article, or reading found on the web or any other source. **I will notice the plagiarism and you will fail the course. Consider this your ONLY warning.**

READINGS, PARTICIPATION, ATTENDANCE

You are expected to do the readings for each week prior to class and come prepared to talk about them. In addition, you will be expected to be working directly with Stata while in class, so be prepared to do so. It may be beneficial to come with some questions and comments to stimulate discussion. This course is designed to be equally reliant on discussion as it is on lecture. Your attendance will be taken and there will be opportunities for participation grading, as well. This means that it will not be enough to come to class and remain silent for the entire quarter.

EXAMS

There will be two exams in the course: one midterm and a final (paper project). We will discuss the format of these exams as the dates for each draw nearer.

PAPER PROJECT

You will be expected to turn in one paper project this quarter that meets the following guideline(s):

In 4-5 pages, identify a research question. Outline some theory, hypotheses, and a research design. Tell me how you would conduct analysis to address your hypotheses. Where could you get the data? What types of analysis would be appropriate, and why? How could you use descriptive statistics? We will talk more about this throughout the quarter.

These papers will be due in class Friday, Nov. 20. Please follow standard formatting for your papers: 12 point font, double spaced, Times New Roman.

GRADES

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Attendance/Participation | 10% |
| Short Assignments | 20% |
| Mid-term Exam | 35% |
| Research Paper | 35% |

GRADING SCALE

The grading scale is as follows*:

| | |
|-----------|----|
| 100 – 93 | A |
| 92.9 – 90 | A- |
| 89.9 – 88 | B+ |
| 87.9 – 83 | B |
| 82.9 – 80 | B- |
| 79.9 – 78 | C+ |
| 77.9 – 73 | C |
| 72.9 – 70 | C- |
| 69.9 – 68 | D+ |
| 67.9 – 63 | D |
| 62.9 – 60 | D- |
| 59.9 – 0 | F |

* The instructor reserves the right to curve grades, should the need present itself.

STUDENT ACCOMODATIONS

Any students with special needs due to a physical or learning disability should see me as soon as possible. Every effort will be made to accommodate your needs. See <http://www.du.edu/studentlife/disability/dsp/> for more information.

TOPIC AND READING SCHEDULE

Week One

Political Analysis: Introduction and Chapter 1

Companion: Introduction and Chapter 1

Week Two

Political Analysis: Chapter 2

Companion: Chapters 2 and 3

Week Three

Political Analysis: Chapter 3

Companion: Chapter 4

Week Four

Political Analysis: Chapter 4

Week Five

Political Analysis: Chapter 5

Companion: Chapter 5

Oct 14: MIDTERM**Week Six**

Political Analysis: Chapter 6

Companion: Chapter 6

Week Seven

Political Analysis: Chapter 7

Companion: Chapter 7

Week Eight

Political Analysis: Chapter 8

Companion: Chapters 8 and 9

Week Nine

Political Analysis: Chapter 9

Companion: Chapter 10

Week Ten

Political Analysis: Chapter 10

Companion: Chapter 11

FINAL EXAM (Due in Class): Friday, Nov. 20th at 12:00PM