POLS-Y205
Analyzing Politics

Course Overview

This course focuses on the question of how political science is done. We will walk through the frameworks guiding our thinking about politics and review descriptive, experimental, and observational approaches to research. Students will learn how to evaluate normative and empirical claims and practice constructing research questions and hypotheses. We will also consider the challenges of interpreting data and making inferences about politics.

Instructor

Jason Wu
Woodburn Hall 323
jywu@indiana.edu
Office Hours: Please sign up at https://calendly.com/jasonywu/meeting

Associate Instructors

Jonathan Aker
akerj@iu.edu
Woodburn Hall 408
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:30-2:45 PM

Scott Boyce
scoboyce@iu.edu
Woodburn Hall 307
Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:30 PM

Allen Kang
kk40@iu.edu
Woodburn Hall 307
Office Hours: Thursdays 11:30 AM - 2:00 PM

Requirements and Grading

Students are expected to regularly attend class, contribute to class discussions, complete the reading assignments, and participate during in-class activities. There will be a research design proposal (1 page summary due February 16th, 8 page final draft due April 22nd, a midterm exam (February 23rd), and a final exam (May 2nd). The research design proposal can be done either individually or in groups of up to three.

- Participation and Engagement: 15%

- Midterm: 25%

- Research Proposal: 30%

- Final Exam: 30%

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

You are expected to abide by the guidelines of the IU Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct (http://studentcode.iu.edu/responsibilities/academic-misconduct.html) regarding cheating and plagiarism. Any ideas or materials taken from another source must be fully acknowledged and cited.

Disability Accommodation

Please contact me if you require assistance or academic accommodations for a disability. You should establish your eligibility for disability support services through the Office of Disability Services for Students in Wells Library W302, 812-855-7578.

Late Policy

Late papers will be penalized by one grade (e.g. A- to B+) every twenty-four hours, with a maximum penalty of 20 %.

Course Outline and Readings

No books are required for this course, but the following books are recommended references:

☐ Trochim, William, James P. Donnelly, and Kanika Arora. 2015. *The Research Methods Database (3rd ed.)* Mason, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing.

☐ Barakso, Maryann, Daniel M. Sabet, and Brian Schaffner. 2014. *Understanding Political Science Research Methods.* New York: Routledge.

Week 1: Winning Arguments

January 10 - Course Overview

- Excerpt from Pirsig, Robert. 1974. *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values.* New York: Morrow.

January 12 - Development of Political Science

- Kuhn, Thomas. 1970. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2.

Week 2: Political Theory

January 17 - Political Philosophy

- Rawls, John. 1999. *A Theory of Justice.* Revised ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Chapters 3,4, 11.
- Nozick, Robert. 1974. *Anarchy, State, and Utopia.* Oxford: Blackwell. Chapter 7 Excerpt.

January 19 - Evaluating Normative Claims

- List, Christian and Valentini, Laura. 2016. "The Methodology of Political Theory" in Cappelen, Herman, Gendler, Tamar Szabó and Hawthorne, John, (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Methodology: Oxford Handbooks in Philosophy.* Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

Week 3: Game Theory and Positive Political Science

January 24 - Positivist Underpinnings

- Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy.* New York: Harper & Row. Chapter 3.

January 26 - Game Theory

- Axelrod, Robert. 1984. *The Evolution of Cooperation.* New York: Basic Books. Chapter 1.

Week 4: Empirical Research

January 31 - Introduction to Empirical Research

- Wasow, Omar. 2020. "Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion and Voting." *American Political Science Review* 114(3): 638-659.

- Suggested: North, Douglass C., and Barry Weingast. 1989. "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England." *Journal of Economic History* 49(4): 803-832.

February 2 - Concepts and Questions

- Fukuyama, Francis. 2013. "What is Governance?" *Governance* 26(3): 347-368.

Week 5: Research Ideas

February 7 - Literature Review

- Powner, Leanne C. 2014. *Empirical Research and Writing: A Political Science Student's Practical Guide.* New York: CQ Press, Chapter 3.

February 9 - Theories and Hypotheses

- Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press. Chapter 1 Excerpt.
- Suggested: Fearon, James. 1995. "Rationalist Explanations for War." *International Organization* 49(3): 379-414.

Week 6: Organizing Our Thinking

February 14 - Measurement

- Shively, W. Phillips. 2017. *The Craft of Political Research.* 10th ed. New York: Routledge. Chapters 4-5.

February 16 - Tabulation and Data Visualization

- **Research Design Proposal Summary Due (1 page)**.
- Tufte, Edward R. 1997. *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative.* New York: Graphics Press. Chapter 2.
- "Mistakes, We've Drawn a Few." *The Economist.* 17 March 2019. Available at https://medium.economist.com/mistakes-weve-drawn-a-few-8cdd8a42d368

Week 7: Being There

February 21 - Ethnography and Interpretive Methods

- Geertz, Clifford. 1972. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." *Daedalus* 101(1): 1-37.

February 23 - **Midterm Exam**

Week 8: What People Say

February 28 - Text as Data

- Wilkerson, John, and Andreu Casas. 2017. "Large-Scale Computerized Text Analysis in Political Science: Opportunities and Challenges." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 529-544.

March 2 - Interviews

- Fenno, Richard F. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." *The American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883-917.

Week 9: Surveys and Network Data

March 7 - Sampling

- Trochim, William, James P. Donnelly, and Kanika Arora. 2015. *The Research Methods Database (3rd ed.)* Mason, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing. Chapter 2.

March 9 - Networks

- Bond, Robert M., Christopher J. Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam D.I. Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Jaime E. Settle, and James H. Fowler. 2012. "A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization." *Nature* 489: 295-298.

Week 10: Spring Break

March 14 - No Class

March 16 - No Class

Week 11: Causal Inference

March 21 - Threats to Inference

- Campbell, Donald T. and H. Laurence Ross. 1968. "The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time-series Data in Quasi-Experimental Analysis." *Law & Society Review* 3(1): 33-54.

March 23 - Causality: Explanation vs. Prediction

- Silver, Nate. 2012. *The Signal and the Noise*. New York: Penguin. Chapter 1.
- Suggested: Holland, Paul W. 1986. "Statistics and Causal Inference." *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 81(396): 945-960.

Week 12: Small N

March 28 - Designing Small-N Research: Case Studies

- Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2: 131-150.

March 30 - Process Tracing

- Collier, David. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44(4): 823-830.

Week 13: Large N

April 4 - Introduction to Large N Observational Studies

- Barakso, Maryann, Daniel M. Sabet, and Brian Schaffner. 2014. *Understanding Political Science Research Methods.* New York: Routledge. Chapter 6.

April 6 - Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing

- Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 8.

Week 14: Regression Analysis

April 11 - Regression

- Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 9.
- Suggested: James, Gareth, Daniela Witten, Trevor Hastie, and Robert Tibshirani. 2017. *An Introduction to Statistical Learning (7th ed).* New York: Springer. p. 59-71.

April 13 - Common Problems with Regression

- Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 10.
- Suggested: Jacobsmeier, Matthew L., and Daniel C. Lewis. 2013. "Barking Up the Wrong Tree: Why Bo Didn't Fetch Many Votes for Barack Obama in 2012." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46(1): 49-59.
- Suggested: Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 11.

Week 15: Controls and Treatments

April 18 - Experiments

- Trochim, William, James P. Donnelly, and Kanika Arora. 2015. *The Research Methods Database (3rd ed.)* Mason, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing. Chapter 7.

- Suggested: Trochim, William, James P. Donnelly, and Kanika Arora. 2015. *The Research Methods Database (3rd ed.)* Mason, OH: Atomic Dog Publishing. Chapter 6.
- Suggested: Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 33-48.

April 20 - Quasi-Experiments

- Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach.* New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.
- Diamond, Jared. 1999. *Guns, Germs, and Steel.* New York: Norton. p. 53-66.

Research Design Proposal Due at Midnight, Saturday April 22nd.

Week 16: Reflections

April 25 - Ethics and Research Integrity

- "When the Revolution Came for Amy Cuddy." *The New York Times Magazine*, 18 October 2017. Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/18/magazine/when-the-revolution-came-for-amy-cuddy.html

April 27 - Conclusions

- Weber, Max. 1917. "Science as a Vocation."
- Suggested: Owen, David, and Tracy Strong. 2004. "Introduction" in *The Vocation Lectures.* Indianapolis: Hackett.

Final Exam - May 2, 3:00-5:00PM.