

SYLLABUS FOR PS30 POLITICAL INQUIRY

Fall 2004

Prof. Kristian Skrede Gleditsch

Office Hours: Tuesday 9:30 - 11:30 AM, or by appointment

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Lectures: Monday & Wednesday 12:00-12:50 PM

Location: York 2722

TA contact information and office hours available on class homepage

http://weber.ucsd.edu/~kgledits/ps30_f2004/ps30.html

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is intended to help you understand research in political science. Although the emphasis will be on quantitative methods, most of the principles we learn in the course apply to all types of systematic research, regardless of whether it relies on qualitative or quantitative comparisons.

The course aims at helping you understand the basic logic of research and equip you with tools to carry out your own research. Since statistics play a large role in social science research and public policy analysis, it is essential to understand how statistics can be used and to be able to evaluate how it is used in published research and controversies, even for those who do not rely on statistical methods.

Our goals are primarily practical: We will emphasize how to use quantitative methods to analyze empirical data and how to substantively interpret and use the results of such analyses rather than the formal foundations of statistics. The course assumes no prior knowledge of statistics or mathematics beyond a high school level, although some willingness to learn along the way will be essential.

Disclaimer: The syllabus is intended to provide an overview over the course. You cannot claim any rights from it. In particular, scheduling and dates may change. Although the syllabus should be a fairly reliable guide for the course, official announcements are always those made in class.

COURSE OUTLINE

1. Introduction (Monday 27 September)

Moore, pp. xix-xxiv

Shively, Chapter 1

2. Research Design (Wednesday 29 September)

Shively, Chapter 2

Section: Choosing research topics

PART I: SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA

3. Sampling (Monday 4 October)

Moore, pp. 3-35

4. Observation and Experiments (Wednesday 6 October)

Moore, Chapter 5

Shively, Chapter 6

Sections: Issues of causality

5. Measurement (Monday 11 October)

Moore, pp. 127-145

Shively, Chapter 3 and 4

PART II: TOOLS FOR ANALYZING DATA

6. Displaying Data (Wednesday 13 October)

Moore, pp. 173-215

Sections: Sampling and measurement

7. Descriptive Statistics: Mean, median, mode (Monday 18 October)

Moore, pp. 216-227

8. Descriptive Statistics: Spread and variability (Wednesday 20 October)

Moore, pp. 227-241

Sections: Introduction to SPSS and displaying data (may meet in Solis Lab)

9. What to Describe & Review Session (Monday 25 October)

10. Midterm Exam (Wednesday 27 October)

PART III: EXAMINING RELATIONSHIPS

11. Two-way Tables (Monday 1 November)

Moore, pp. 465-472

Shively, pp. 117-124

12. Scatterplots and Correlation (Wednesday 3 November)

Moore, Chapter 14

Sections: Interpreting relationships and scatterplots

13. Regression (Monday 8 November)

Moore, Chapter 15

Shively, Chapter 7

PART IV: INFERENCE

14. The Normal Distribution (Wednesday 10 November)

Moore, Chapter 13

Sections: Interpreting relationships and regression

15. Probability (Monday 15 November)

Moore, pp. 362-375

16. Confidence Intervals (Wednesday 17 November)

Moore, pp. 419-434

Sections: Probability and the normal distribution

17. Statistical Significance (Monday 22 November)

Moore, pp. 435-450, Chapter 23

Shively, Chapter 9

NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY 24 NOVEMBER

Sections: Interpreting confidence intervals

18. Use and abuse of significance (Monday 29 December)

Moore, Chapter 23

19. Review session (Wednesday 1 December)

Sections: Interpreting statistical tests

The final exam will be on Wednesday 8 December 11:30 - 2:30 PM

REQUIRED TEXTS

Moore, David S. 2001. *Statistics: Concepts and Controversies*, Fifth Edition. New York: W.H. Freeman.

Shively, Phillip W. 2002. *The Craft of Political Research*, Fifth Edition. New York: Prentice Hall

STUDENTS SHOULD BUY THE COPY OF MOORE BUNDLED WITH SPSS. This will enable you to do the projects on your home computer running MS Windows. Unfortunately the software will not work on computers running Apple Mackintosh. Students who do not purchase the student version of SPSS must do their exercises in the Solis Hall Computer Lab.

GRADING

40% Assignments

10% Section participation

20% Midterm Exam

30% Final Exam

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The course format will include two weekly lectures and one discussion section. Please do all of the assigned readings each week and be prepared to discuss them in section.

Much of the required material will be presented only in class, so regular attendance is strongly recommended.

There will be an in-class midterm exam on Wednesday 27 October (during the regular class period) and a final exam on Wednesday 8 December 11:30 - 2:30 PM. All exams will be closed book. Exam format may include true-false, multiple choice, identifications, short answers, and simple problems. The exams will not have any questions about SPSS. Make-up exams will only be given under valid, exceptional circumstances preventing students in good standing from taking the regularly scheduled exam.

Each student is also required to submit four exercises. The assignments will be a combination of problem sets and a research project based on the analysis of a real data set. You must select one of five possible political science data sets for your research project during the first week of class. The results of the research project should be reported in a final paper (approximately 1500 words). Papers will be graded on both substance and style.

Each student must do his or her own exercises, subject to the usual rules on plagiarism and cheating. In particular, each student must undertake his or her own SPSS analyses. Students must receive a passing grade on each exercise in order to pass the course.

All requests for grade changes must be made formally in writing to your TA. Requests must be typed and double-spaced with one-inch margins. Any such requests may result in either a higher or lower grade.