

POLS 205: Political Science as a Social Science

Instructor: Chris Adolph, Assistant Professor, Political Science and CSSS

Spring Quarter 2010

Class Meets

11:30–1:20 pm
Monday & Wednesday
Loew Hall 102

Office

C-14-E Padelford Hall
cadolph@uw.edu

Sections Meet

A: Friday, 11:30–12:20 pm
B: Friday, 12:30–1:20 pm
Smith Hall 220

Teaching Assistant

Amanda Clayton
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Overview and Class Goals. This course introduces the methodology of political and social research. Students should expect to leave the course with: 1.) an understanding of social science reasoning; 2.) knowledge of social science methodology; and 3.) practical research skills helpful for writing original research papers and undergraduate theses. The course contains two halves. The first half concerns ways of thinking about social science theories and reasoning, with a focus on research design for qualitative and quantitative studies. The second half concerns social science approaches to collecting and analyzing information, and gently introduces basic methods for quantitative research.

Prerequisites. Prior exposure to one or more of the social sciences is extremely helpful. No prior exposure to quantitative methods is assumed, nor is any mathematical training beyond basic high school math required. Non-majors are welcome.

Course Evaluation. Course evaluation will be based on class participation (15%), seven short homeworks assigned and collected in section (35%), an in-class midterm exam (20%), and a final exam during exam week (30%).

Office Hours. Chris Adolph: Wednesday, 1:30–3:00, and by appointment.
Amanda Clayton: TBA

Course Website. Consult <http://faculty.washington.edu/cadolph/205> for homework, lecture notes, and announcements.

Course textbooks (Available for purchase at the University Bookstore):

Required:

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2007. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press.

Recommended:

Hamilton, Lawrence. 2008. *Statistics with STATA: Version 10*. Duxbury Press.

Selections to be provided:

Brady, Henry E., and David Collier. 2004. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman & Littlefield.

Software. In the latter half of the course, we will do some basic work with quantitative analysis using the popular and easy to use package STATA (stata.com). STATA is available in the Smith 220 computer lab. Students will also find it helpful to obtain a basic spreadsheet program for collecting and processing data. Microsoft Excel is the standard, but OpenOffice provides the same functionality at no cost (visit openoffice.org).

Course outline

Students should come to class having carefully read the material assigned for that day. Optional material is marked “(opt.)”. Note that this list is tentative: example articles will be added for most days after Week 2, so budget time to read an average of two textbook chapters and two research articles per week. Additional readings may also be assigned for lab sections by your TA.

Part I: Theory and Research Design

Week 1

Monday 3/29 LECTURE: Introduction

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 1

Tuesday 3/31 LECTURE: Building Social Science Theories

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 2
King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 1

Friday 4/2 LAB: Introduction to Lab Resources

Readings: TBA

Week 2

Monday 4/5 LECTURE: Evaluating Casual Theories

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 3
King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 3 (opt.)

Wednesday 4/7 LECTURE: Examples of Theory-building in Social Science

Readings: Gourevitch
Gelman

Friday 4/9 LAB: Discussion of Theory in Political Science

Readings: TBA
Homework: Homework 1 Due

Week 3

Monday 4/12 LECTURE: Research Design: Experiment & Observation

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 4
Brady et al

Wednesday 4/14 LECTURE: Research Design: Qualitative & Quantitative, part 1

Readings: King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 4, 6

Friday 4/16 LAB: Discussion of Research Design in Political Science

Readings: TBA
Homework: Homework 2 Due

Week 4

Monday 4/19 LECTURE: Research Design: Qualitative & Quantitative, part 2

Readings: Brady & Collier, selected chapters

Wednesday 4/21 LECTURE: Concepts & Measurement

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 6

Friday 4/23 LAB: Discussion of Qualitative & Quantitative Methods

Readings: TBA
Homework: Homework 3 Due

Week 5

4/26 LECTURE: Review and Discussion

4/28: MIDTERM EXAM IN LOEW HALL 102

Friday 4/30 LAB: Introduction to STATA

Readings: TBA

Part II: Introduction to Data Analysis

Week 6

Monday 5/3 LECTURE: Describing and Exploring Data

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 6

Wednesday 5/5 LECTURE: Making Inferences from Samples

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 7

King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 2 (opt.)

Friday 5/7 LAB: Exploratory Data Analysis & Sampling Inference in STATA

Readings: TBA

Homework: Homework 4 Due

Week 7

Monday 5/10 LECTURE: Analyzing Tables of Data

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 8

Wednesday 5/12 LECTURE: Analyzing Bivariate Data

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 9

Friday 5/14 LAB: Simple Data Analysis in STATA

Readings: TBA

Homework: Homework 5 Due

Week 8

Monday 5/17 LECTURE: Analyzing Multivariate Data, part 1

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 10

Wednesday 5/19 LECTURE: Analyzing Multivariate Data, part 2

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 11

Friday 5/21 LAB: Regression Analysis in STATA, part 1

Readings: TBA

Homework: Homework 6 Due

Week 9

Monday 5/24 LECTURE: Analyzing Multivariate Data, part 3

Readings: Kellstedt & Whitten, Ch. 12
King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 5

Wednesday 5/26 LECTURE: Analyzing Multivariate Data, part 4

Readings:

Friday 6/4 LAB: Regression Analysis in STATA, part 2

Readings: TBA
Homework: Homework 7 Due

Week 10

Monday 5/31: MEMORIAL DAY—NO CLASS

Wednesday 6/2 LECTURE: Review & Wrap-up

Friday 6/4 LAB: Potential extra help session

Exam Week

Wednesday, 6/9: FINAL EXAM IN LOEW HALL 102, 2:30–4:20 PM