

Dr. Sara McLaughlin Mitchell
544 Bellamy
Office Hours: Friday, 1:00-2:30pm
or by appointment.

Spring 2000
334 RBB
MW 3:35-4:50pm

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Research Methods in Political Science POS 3713

Course Description

This course is designed to acquaint students with research methods used by social scientists. Students will study terms and concepts used in research (e.g., theories, null and alternative hypotheses, independent and dependent variables, validity, reliability, generalizability), and research design (including experimental and quasi-experimental designs, survey design, and sampling). Students will be introduced to basic statistical techniques for analyzing data and the interpretation of coefficients and statistical tests (frequency distributions, measures of central tendency, measures of association, spurious correlation, regression, confidence intervals and tests of significance).

Course Requirements

The best way to learn this material is to have read the assigned readings **BEFORE** the class date in which they are discussed. This will enable you to be familiar with new concepts as I discuss them in lecture and for you to ask questions. I expect this class to be quite relaxed, so jump in and ask questions or make remarks at anytime. There is **NO** such thing as a stupid question.

Your course grade is based on your performance on 2 exams and several homework assignments. The distribution of your final grade in the class is as follows:

Midterm Exam #1	30%
Midterm Exam #2	30%
Homework	40%

1. Homework (40%): There are a total of 8 homework assignments (see class schedule). Seven of these homework assignments will be computer lab assignments that utilize SPSS (a statistical program) to analyze a dataset. You can access SPSS in the College of Social Sciences Computing Laboratory located on the ground level of the Bellamy Building. You will be provided with datasets and detailed instructions for each assignment. The assignments will be handed out in class on Monday of the relevant week and will be due in class the following Monday. In other words, you have one week to complete each assignment. On Thursday of the week of the assignment, there will be a tutorial session from **9am-10:45am** in the computer lab where you can ask specific questions. The tutorial session will be proctored either by Professor Mark Lubell or myself. If your academic schedule conflicts with the tutorial session, we will be happy to address questions during office hours or by appointment. The assignment with the lowest grade will be dropped. Assignments turned in late will **not** be accepted under any circumstances. I will automatically count a late or missing homework as your lowest grade.

2. Midterm Exam #1 (30%): The first midterm exam is scheduled on Monday, March 13th. The problems on both exams will include problem solving, short answer, and multiple choice.

3. Midterm Exam #2 (30%): The second midterm exam is on Wednesday, April 19th.

The grading scale is as follows:

93-100	A	73-76	C
90-92	A-	70-72	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
83-86	B	63-66	D
80-82	B-	60-62	D-
77-79	C+	59 or below	F

Textbooks and Required Materials

Manheim, Jarol B. and Richard C. Rich. 1995. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science (4th Edition)*. New York: Longman Publishing Group.

Healey, Joseph F. 1999. *Statistics: A Tool for Social Research (5th Edition)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

<u>Class Schedule</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Required Reading</u>
Wednesday, January 5 th	Introduction: The Scientific Method	M&R, Chapter 1
Monday, January 10 th	Theory Building	M&R, Chapter 2
Wednesday, January 12 th	Building a Bibliography	M&R, Chapter 3
Monday, January 17 th	No Class, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	
Wednesday, January 19 th	Research Designs: Experiments	M&R, Chapter 5
Monday, January 24 th	Sampling Assignment 1: Research Design (Due 1/31)	M&R, Chapter 6
Wednesday, January 26 th	Research Designs: Survey Research	M&R, Chapter 7
Monday, January 31 st	Operationalization & Measurement Lab Assignment 1: Data Processing (Due 2/7)	M&R, Chapters 4 & 12
Wednesday, February 2 nd	Operationalization & Measurement	M&R, Chapter 14 Healey, Chapter 1

<u>Class Schedule</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Required Reading</u>
Monday, February 7 th	Basic Descriptive Statistics	Healey, Chapter 2 M&R, Chapter 15
	Lab Assignment 2: Descriptive Statistics and Central Tendency (Due 2/14)	
Wednesday, February 9 th	Measures of Central Tendency	Healey, Chapter 3
Monday, February 14 th	Measures of Dispersion	Healey, Chapter 4
Wednesday, February 16 th	Normal Curve	Healey, Chapter 5
Monday, February 21 st	Sampling	Healey, Chapter 6
	Lab Assignment 3: Dispersion and Confidence Intervals (Due 2/28)	
Wednesday, February 23 rd	Confidence Intervals	Healey, Chapter 7
Monday, February 28 th	Hypothesis Testing: The One Sample Case	Healey, Chapter 8
	Lab Assignment 4: Hypothesis Tests (Due 3/15)	
Wednesday, March 1 st	Hypothesis Testing: The One Sample Case	Healey, Chapter 9
Monday, March 6 th	No Class, Spring Break	
Wednesday, March 8 th	No Class, Spring Break	
Monday, March 13 th	Midterm Exam #1	
Wednesday, March 15 th	Analysis of Variance	Healey, Chapter 10
Monday, March 20 th	Chi-Square	Healey, Chapter 12
	Lab Assignment 5: Contingency Tables and ANOVA (Due 3/27)	
Wednesday, March 22 nd	ANOVA and Chi-Square (continued)	
Monday, March 27 th	Statistics for nominal and ordinal data	M&R, Chapter 17 Healey, Chapter 13
Wednesday, March 29 th	Statistics for nominal and ordinal data	Healey, Chapters 14 & 15
Monday, April 3 rd	Measures of association: interval variables	Healey, Chapter 16
	Lab Assignment 6: Measures of Association (Due 4/10)	
Wednesday, April 5 th	Regression	Healey, Chapter 18

<u>Class Schedule</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Required Reading</u>
Monday, April 10 th	Regression Lab Assignment 7: Regression (Due 4/17)	Healey, Chapter 18 (continued)
Wednesday, April 12 th	Multivariate Regression	
Monday, April 17 th	Review for Midterm Exam #2	
Wednesday, April 19 th	Midterm Exam #2	