

Syllabus

There are two versions of this file: an html and a pdf.

Introduction to Political Science Research

This course provides an introduction to political science research methods. We examine concepts, computation, and applications alongside one another.

Staff

Instructor

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Course Website

I post all the materials for this course to pos3713.github.io. I recommend bookmarking this page. The Canvas page also has links to this course website.

Office Hours

Monday, 10-11am, Zoom. I'll not be holding regular *in-person* office hours this semester. Let me know you're coming by signing up here.

Important Dates

| Date | Day | Assignment | Notes |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|--|
| September 22 | Wednesday | Exam 1 | Complete in usual class space and time. |
| October 8 | Friday | Computing Assignment 1 | Due by 5pm. |
| October 27 | Wednesday | Exam 2 | Complete in usual class space and time. |
| November 12 | Friday | Computing Assignment 2 | Due by 5pm. |
| Thursday, December 9, 3-5pm | Thursday | Final Exam | Complete from 3-5pm in usual class space. |

Outcomes

In taking this course seriously, you will:

- Acquire and/or further develop knowledge of...
 - basic statistical tools, such as the histograms, average, standard deviation, normal approximation, scatterplot, correlation, simple and multiple regression, sample survey, and hypothesis tests.

- basic concepts in probability theory, such as conditional probability, the law of averages, the expected value, and the standard error.
- Acquire and/or further develop the ability to...
 - evaluate empirical arguments.
 - use R to implement basic statistical tools.
 - clearly explain data and analysis in an honest and compelling manner.

Textbook

You need to obtain the following items for this class:

- Freedman, David, Robert Pisani, and Roger Purves. 2007. *Statistics*. 4th Edition. W. W. Norton and Company. New York. ISBN: 0393929728.
 - It is important to get the 4th Edition, and I recommend a hard copy rather than an eTextbook.
 - This book is expensive, but in past semesters, students have found good copies online for around \$20.
 - You should have the textbook by September 8.
- A pocket calculator. I bought mine at Walmart for about \$3. Here’s one on Amazon. I do not allow graphing calculators on the exams, so if you have any questions, please ask. You should have your calculator by September 8.

Grading

| Item | Weight |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Exam 1 | 25% |
| Exam 2 | 25% |
| Final Exam | 30% |
| Computing Assignment 1 | 5% |
| Computing Assignment 2 | 5% |
| Misc. Exercises (1% each) | 10% |

Above is a summary of the graded assignments in the course, their due dates, and their weights.

- **Exams.** There are three exams throughout the semester. The exams are cumulative and focus on all of the material covered up to the exam, including the readings, lectures, and computing exercises. The exam is multiple choice and the questions come from the review exercises I’ve assigned up to that point in the semester. Exams include questions about statistical computing in R.
- **Computing Assignments.** As part of the class, we’ll learn about statistical computing in R. To demonstrate your ability with R, you’ll submit two short reports. I’ll provide detailed instructions at the appropriate time.
- **Misc. Exercises.** Periodically throughout the semester, I’ll assign exercises (e.g., submit a photo of yourself with your textbook and calculator) worth 1% each.

Your points in the course will translate into a letter grade using the table below:

| Letter Grade | Points |
|--------------|-------------|
| A | at least 93 |
| A- | at least 90 |
| B+ | at least 87 |
| B | at least 83 |
| B- | at least 80 |
| C+ | at least 77 |

| Letter Grade | Points |
|--------------|-----------------|
| C | at least 73 |
| C- | at least 70 |
| D+ | at least 67 |
| D | at least 63 |
| D- | at least 60 |
| F | if less than 60 |

Workload

Federal guidelines define a single semester credit hour as “one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out of class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks.” I have made an effort to design this class following this definition. All students are different, but as a rough starting point: **you should plan to spend about 6 hours per week outside of class on course material.**

To help you with planning, here are my rough estimates for how much time to set aside for various assignments:

- **Reading and doing the exercises:** The reading and exercises after each class should take about two hours. Some will be much shorter. A few might take slightly longer. **All of the following time estimates assume you are keeping up with the review exercises.** If you don’t keep up with the review exercises, then the computing assignments, for example, will be basically impossible.
- **Reviewing for exams.** You should plan to spend about six hours reviewing for each exam.
- **Doing the misc. exercises.** Plan to spend about 15 minutes on each misc. exercise.
- **Doing the computing assignments.** The computing assignments should take about two hours to complete and submit.

Mitigation of Covid-19

In our classroom, I expect everyone to wear a proper, well-fitting mask. As our President has informed the university community, FSU expects everyone on campus to use face-coverings. In regions where virus rates are high, the CDC recommends that even vaccinated individuals wear masks in public indoor spaces, like classrooms, especially where social distancing is not possible. Florida infection and hospitalization rates are greater now than they were at the height of the 2020 surge due to the Delta variant, a more infectious and easily transmissible version of the Covid-19 virus. The best way to protect against serious illness is to be fully vaccinated, but not everyone among us can be. Because the Delta variant can infect even vaccinated individuals and can be spread by them to others, it poses a special threat to members of the community with underlying health conditions and children at home who are too young for vaccination.

For these reasons, FSU expects each member of the community to comply with the public health protocols our President set forth on August 9, 2020, including (1) wearing masks in public indoor spaces, (2) getting fully vaccinated, (3) being tested for the virus if you have symptoms, and (4) staying home and away from others if you are sick. Please remember that you should NOT attend class in person if you have tested positive for Covid-19 or are quarantining after exposure. Finally, please bear in mind that the Covid-19 situation is fast moving and that university guidance on the issue may change at any time.

In summary:

- FSU expects everyone to wear a face covering or mask at all times when inside any FSU facility, even if you are vaccinated.
- FSU expects everyone to be vaccinated against COVID-19, even if you’ve had COVID-19 in the past.
- FSU expects individuals to stay home when sick, self quarantine and get tested for COVID-19 no sooner than 24 hours after symptoms begin.
- FSU expects everyone to continue to practice good hygiene habits, such as washing your hands frequently.

I intend to make it easy for students to meet these expectations. If I can better help you do so, please let me know.

Missed Classes

In the section above, I asked you to

Please remember that you should NOT attend class in person if you have tested positive for Covid-19 or are quarantining after exposure.

To avoid punishing students for following this important guideline, **I have a policy of “flexible attendance” this semester.** This means that I do not take attendance, and I work to ensure that students who choose *NOT* to attend class have equal access to content and materials as students who choose to attend. Stated differently, **I’ll work to make sure that students who choose to not attend class are not penalized, neither by rule nor in practice.**

At the moment, the only thing I require to be done in person is exams.

University Attendance Policy The University usually has the following attendance policy. It remains in effect.

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

You missed or will miss a class (but not an exam). You do not need to notify me. Please make sure to stay up-to-date in the class using the posted resources. I’ll work to make sure you have equal access to materials and content. I welcome suggestions to help facilitate equal access.

You missed or will miss an exam. If you are going to miss an exam, notify me *before the exam* via e-mail *if possible*. Your e-mail should explain and document why you are going to miss the class. In the case of an unexpected absence, notify me in a reasonable amount of time. (I don’t want you to worry about contacting me during a medical emergency, for example.) Your e-mail should briefly why you missed the exam. I might follow up with a request for more documentation. I usually expect you to make up the assignment during my next office hours. To avoid advantaging some students over others, I might use an alternative make-up assignment.

I penalize any *unexcused* late exam by 15 percentage points per class. For example, we have an exam on Wednesday, but you forget and skip class, I simply subtract 15 percentage points from your score if you make it up before the next class, 30 percentage points if you make it up before the class after that, and so on.

While the above procedure might seem draconian, I never assume that students are taking advantage of me or the rules until they demonstrate otherwise. If I can help you have a better experience in the class, please reach out and let me know what you need.

You can’t submit an assignment on time. If you have a commitment on the day the assignment is due (e.g., you’re traveling for a wedding), I usually expect you to submit the assignment early unless you have made prior arrangements with me. I do not accept assignments submitted via email except in unusual circumstances.

In case of an unexpected circumstance (e.g., medical emergency), simply submit the assignment and notify me by e-mail as soon as reasonable. (I don’t want you to worry about submitting the assignment during a

medical emergency, for example.) Your e-mail should briefly explain and document why you submitted the assignment late, and why you could not have simply submitted it early. I might follow up with a request for more documentation. I penalized any computing assignment turned in late without an excuse 20 percentage points per class. For example, if the computing assignment is due on Friday, I will simply subtract 20 points from your score if you turn it in by the beginning of the next class (usually Monday), 40 points if you turn it in by the beginning of the class after that (usually Wednesday) and so on. I do not give any credit for misc. exercise submitted late is given a zero, unless the student has excuse.

While the above procedure might seem draconian, I never assume that students are taking advantage of me or the rules until they demonstrate otherwise. If I can help you have a better experience in the class, please reach out and let me know what you need.

Academic Honor Policy

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and... [to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>.)

Recordings in Class

Students are permitted to make recordings of class lectures for a class in which the student is enrolled for personal educational use. A class lecture is defined as an educational presentation delivered by the instructor as part of a university course intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Recording class activities other than class lectures, including but not limited to lab or recitation sessions; student presentations (whether individually or part of a group); *class discussions (except when incidental to the lecture)*; clinical practica and presentations involving patient histories and other protected health information; academic exercises involving student participation; test or examination administrations; field trips; and private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty member is prohibited. Recordings may not be used as a substitute for class participation and class attendance and recordings may not be published or shared without the written consent of the faculty member. Failure to adhere to these requirements may constitute a violation of FSU's Student Code of Conduct and possibly have legal consequences. Students who record class lectures are asked to do so in ways that do not make others feel reluctant to ask questions, explore new ideas, or otherwise participate in class. Students must monitor their recording so that they do not include participation by other students without permission. Students with disabilities will continue to have appropriate accommodations for recordings as established by the Office of Accessibility Services.

The university takes violations of the above policy quite seriously. Be sure to note that "recording... *class discussions*... is prohibited." The class usually has a lot of (not incidental) discussion, so carefully avoid recording these portions of the class.

I intend to post videos of our class meetings, so personal recordings should be unnecessary. They are, however, allowed by rule.

American's with Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

1. Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
2. Bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

Syllabus Change Policy

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

Changes

- Changed date you need to have textbook and calculator from January 21 to September 8.