OVERVIEW: This course focuses on how to do original empirical research in political science and on how to understand and critique the work of others.

Readings are from the following books:

Required:

Readings from these books are listed below, as are other required readings. Unless indicated otherwise, these additional readings are available on JSTOR on the library website.

Strongly recommended:

Grades will be based on three in-class exams, three data analysis exercises, five brief homework assignments, and a final data analysis/paper. Each assignment is due one week from the day we finish discussing the topic, and none should use articles assigned in the course. Each of the homework assignments should be no more than two double-spaced pages of text in length, excluding any tables or other supplementary material you provide. The data analysis exercises should be no more than five double-spaced pages of text in length, excluding any tables or other supplementary material you provide. Grades will be weighted as follows: exams 15% each, data analyses 10% each, class assignments 2% each, final data analysis/paper 15%.

The readings are shown below. Please be sure to read them before class and be prepared to discuss them in class. Exact dates are not shown on the syllabus; students will be responsible for attending class and being aware of when we move on to a new section. Be sure to do the review problems at the end of each chapter in Pollock – some of these problems will appear on the class exams. We also recommend that you solve the practice problems in the Schaum’s outline.
COURSE SCHEDULE:

1. Introduction

Recommended
  • Schaum: Ch. 1.

2. Concepts and Measurement

Readings:
  • Essentials, Ch.1

HW 1: Find a political science article that defines and measures a concept. Discuss possible problems of validity. What is the level of measurement? (Give the full citation for the article. Attach relevant pages from it that define and measure the concept.)

3. Descriptive Statistics

Readings:
  • SPSS, Introduction, Ch.1, 2

Recommended:
  • Schaum: Ch. 2-4.

1st Data Analysis. This assignment will be described in detail in class. Use SPSS to provide descriptive statistics of supplied dataset. Discuss your results. Do not just present a table. Paper should be no more than four double-spaced pages, in addition to any tables.

4. Constructing Variables

Readings:
  • SPSS, Ch. 4

HW 2: Find a political science article that either constructs an additive index or similar variable or uses contextual data to construct a count or similar variable. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the...
construction? What is the level of measurement of the variable? (Give the full citation for the article. Attach relevant pages from it that define the construction.)

5. Research Design

Readings:
- Essentials, Ch.2

HW 3: Find a political science article that uses a true experimental design as described by Pollock. Explain the design. In what ways is the design adequate or inadequate? (Give the full citation for the article. Attach relevant pages.)

6. Surveys and Sampling

Readings:

Exam 1

7. Assessing Hypotheses: Crosstabs

Readings:
- SPSS, Ch. 3, pp. 28-30
- Essentials, Ch. 3, pp. 48-62
- Weisberg, Herbert F., Bruce D. Bowen. *An Introduction to Survey Research and Data Analysis*. Ch. 11. pp.147-167.

2nd Data Analysis: This assignment will be described in detail in class. Using one of the provided data sets, formulate a hypothesis; provide a rationale for the hypotheses; discuss how you will operationalize the hypothesis and the strengths and weaknesses of your measures; provide a crosstab, properly percentaged to examine your hypothesis; and discuss the meaning of the crosstabs. This is due at the beginning of class one week after we finish this topic.

8. Assessing Hypotheses: Means and Graphs

Readings:
- SPSS, Ch. 3, pp.33-50
- Essentials, Ch. 3, pp.62-72

9. Controlling for a Third Variable

Readings:
• SPSS, Ch. 5
• Essentials, Ch. 4.

HW 4: Find a political science article that examines a spurious relationship, an enhancement relationship or a specification relationship. Explain and draw a diagram as shown in Figure 4-1, 4-3 or 4-5.

10. Random Sampling and Statistical Inference

Readings:
• SPSS, Ch. 6
• Essentials, Ch. 5

Recommended
• Schaum: Ch. 7-8.

11. Assessing Hypotheses: Tests of Significance

Readings:
• Essentials, Ch. 6, pp.121-135.

Recommended
• Schaum: Ch. 9-12.

Exam 2


Readings:
• SPSS, Ch. 7
• Essentials, Ch. 6, pp.135-143
• Review the use of Chi-square in the Miller and Robyn article (Ethridge Ch.1 – Excerpt 1) Topic 5 above.

HW 5: Find a political science article that uses a measure of association. What is the hypothesis? Provide a copy of the table and statistics. Interpret the statistic. Was the use appropriate?

13. Correlation and Simple Regression

Readings:
• SPSS, Ch. 8, pp.110-124
• Essentials, Ch. 7, pp.144-158

Recommended
• Schaum: Ch. 13-14.

3rd Data Analysis: In this paper you will look at bivariate relationships. The details of the assignment will be handed out in class.

14. Multiple Regression

Readings:
• SPSS, Ch. 8, pp.124-127; Ch. 9, pp.128-133
• Essentials, Ch. 7, pp.158-160, 163-168

Recommended
• Schaum: Ch. 15.
15. Interaction Effects in Multiple Regression

Readings:
- SPSS, Ch. 9, pp.133-141
- Essentials, Ch. 7, pp.160-163

Exam 3

Final Data Analysis/Paper. This assignment uses multiple regression. One of the variables in the regression should be based on data that you collect and add to an SPSS data set. Specific details will be given in class.