



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF ARTS

POLI 399 – L01
Quantitative Research Methods
Fall 2018

INSTRUCTOR Melanee Thomas
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OFFICE SS 714
EMAIL thomasm@ucalgary.ca
OFFICE HOURS Wednesday 2-5 pm, Thursday 11 am – 12 pm
(<https://thomasm.youcanbook.me>)
or by appointment (email to arrange)
COURSE DAY/TIME TR 2 PM to 315 PM
COURSE LOCATION ENE 243
COURSE ANTI-REQUISITES ENG 319; PSCY 300, 301, 312; SOC 311 and 315; STATS
205, 213, 217, 327
TUTORIALS T 930 – 11 AM (SS 018)
T 11 AM – 1230 PM (SS 018)
R 930 – 11 AM (SS 018)
TEACHING ASSISTANTS Holly Ching (holly.ching1@ucalgary.ca)
Brett Goodwin (bogoodwi@ucalgary.ca)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

POLI 399 is a hands-on course designed to introduce you to the fundamentals of, and theoretical framework behind the empirical research process in political science. You will learn the steps required to complete an empirical political science research project: what questions to ask, how to design and implement the project, how to operationalize theoretical concepts, and how to collect and analyse data. In so doing, you will become more proficient at research yourself, and you should also become a more informed, critical consumer of both scientific and popular literature on politics. Though this course may be more demanding than many others you might take, you will acquire skills and knowledge that will be valuable to you in all your future classes and future careers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify and critique key elements of the scientific method, as it applies to political science;
- Identify and critique measurement/operationalization options in empirical political science;
- Identify and outline key steps and assumptions associated with analytical common methods in empirical political science, including, but not limited to sample design, survey research, experiments, cross tabulations, descriptive and inferential statistics, regression analysis, content analysis, and case studies;
- Critique the use of common analytical methods in empirical political science;
- Develop a working knowledge of SPSS.

ACCOMMODATIONS

I endeavour to ensure that this course is inclusive of people with a variety of learning styles and abilities. Nonetheless, some students may require additional accommodations.

Students with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation **must** be registered with the Student Accessibility Services (SAS) in order to be eligible for formal academic accommodation (see below). They can be contacted at (403) 220-8237 or access@ucalgary.ca. If you are a student with accommodations granted through SAS, please come discuss your needs with me *as soon as possible* after an Accommodation letter has been issued.

Accommodations for acute illness and emergencies, as well as accommodations on protected grounds (race; colour; ancestry; place of origin; religious beliefs; gender — including pregnancy and gender identity; marital status; family status; source of income; and sexual orientation) will be addressed on a case by case basis in accordance with University of Calgary policy (see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>).

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The following textbook is available for purchase at the university bookstore:

Noack, Andrea M. 2018. *Social Statistics in Action: A Canadian Introduction*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

A comprehensive reading list and schedule will be posted to D2L. Several additional readings will also be posted on D2L, each designed to help students process the material presented in class. Some of these readings are journal articles. To access these articles, you need a University of Calgary internet connection or VPN to access these articles. You should be able to access these articles through the library's website, or through Google Scholar.

- a. Information on obtaining a University of Calgary VPN is here: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/it/networks/vpn>.

Several videos designed to assist with tutorials will also be available on D2L.

Your time in class and especially in tutorial will be best spent if you take the time to prepare the material *before* coming to class/tutorial.

COURSE COMPONENT WEIGHTS AND DUE DATES:

COMPONENT	WEIGHTING	DUE DATES
Tutorial Exercises	15%	Throughout the term, in tutorial
Top Hat/Attendance	10%	Most lectures
Quiz #1	12.5%	October 2, in class
Quiz #2	12.5%	October 30, in class
Research Report	25%	November 29, on D2L
Final Exam (2 hours)	25%	Scheduled by Registrar
Total	100%	

GRADE SCALE

A+	=	90-100	B+	=	75-79	C+	=	63-66	D+	=	53-56
A	=	85-89	B	=	70-74	C	=	60-62	D	=	50-52
A-	=	80-84	B-	=	67-69	C-	=	57-59	F	=	0-49

Writing Statement:

Written assignments are often required in Political Science courses, including this one, and the quality of writing skills, including but not limited to such elements as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization, will be taken into account in the determination of grades. Students are encouraged to make use of the services offered through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library) or at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

LATE POLICY

Tutorial assignments must be completed during your scheduled tutorial. Late tutorial assignments will **NOT** be accepted. Extensions will not be granted for the Research Report outside exceptional, documented instances of illness or personal/family emergencies. Late research reports will be deducted a letter gradation per day (A to A-, A- to B+, and so on) including weekend days. **Reports will not be accepted 7 calendar days after the due date.**

TAs may not grant extensions. If you require an accommodation, please contact the instructor as early as possible and in person to request an extension. Students are encouraged to speak with the instructor in person as early as possible if they encounter any situation or circumstances that are making it difficult for them to meet the course requirements.

TUTORIAL EXERCISES

Tutorial exercises are designed to teach you how to use SPSS to analyse data. Some tutorial

assignments will be completed during tutorial; others will be completed on D2L. Further information about tutorial assignments will be provided in class throughout the term.

QUIZZES

The first quiz will take place on Tuesday, October 2; the second will take place on Tuesday, October 30. Each is worth 12.5% of your final grade. The quizzes will cover material presented in lectures, readings, and tutorials. No aids, such as textbooks or notes, are permitted during the quizzes. More information about the quiz format will be provided in class.

Note that the Department of Political Science requires that any student who misses a scheduled quiz for legitimate reasons (i.e. illness or personal/family emergency **with documentation**) are responsible for contacting the instructor via email **within 48 hours** of the missed quiz to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup quiz.

RESEARCH REPORT

A research report documents the results of a research project. Your research project will involve establishing a hypothesis about Canadian political behaviour, based on published research, and testing this hypothesis statistically with the data sets provided in tutorial. Each hypothesis will be tested using three control variables using cross tabulations. Your research report should be approximately 10-12 pages in length. Further information about this assignment will be provided in class and on D2L.

Research reports are due on D2L by 1159 PM on November 29, 2018.

I strongly advise each student to meet with me about his or her research report prior to November 1, 2018.

FINAL EXAM

A two-hour final exam – scheduled by the Registrar – will take place during the examination period (December 10-20, 2018). The exam is worth 25% of your final grade, and will cumulatively cover material from the lectures, readings, and tutorials. The final exam will cover material presented in lectures, readings, and tutorials. No aids, such as textbooks or notes, are permitted during the exam. More information about the exam format will be provided in class. See below for more information on deferring a final exam.

TOP HAT

Please note we will be using Top Hat in POLI 399. This is designed to help me assess how well students are processing information presented in class. As a result, I encourage you to bring your cellular phone, smart phone, laptop computer or tablet to provide feedback

during sanctioned times in class. A total of 10% of your final grade will be determined from your participation through the Top Hat system. If you do not possess a cell phone, smart phone, laptop or tablet computer, come see me immediately. Students are responsible for ensuring they are registered on the Top Hat system, and that their responses/presence is properly recorded by the system.

Most of your Top Hat grade will be determined by simply being present (i.e. each question asked in class = 1 point; simply providing an answer = 0.75 point).

EMAIL POLICY

Please direct all emails to me, rather than to your TAs. Their time is extremely limited, and the bulk of it will be dedicated to helping you in person in tutorials. My policy is to respond to e-mails within 24-48 hours on weekdays. Students should not expect email responses on weekends, except if emergency. Emails should contain a salutation and a signature. **Questions related to course material should cite the lecture, textbook/reading, and page/slide number(s) reviewed prior to sending an email seeking clarification.** Questions that might be helpful to others in the class will be added to the course website on D2L.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

This schedule is tentative and subject to change. Not all topics will be given equal time of weight.

A detailed schedule with readings is available on D2L.

- INTRODUCTION TO CLASS
- **TOPIC 1: How do you know?**
 - How do you know something is “true”? How do we agree on what counts as evidence? How can we fit evidence into a system that helps us explain the political world? How do we observe the things political scientists care about, such as power or democracy?
 - Sections include the Scientific Method, Concepts and Theories, Variables and Hypotheses, Moving from Concepts to Variables
- **TOPIC 2: How do we measure?**
 - Once we’ve decided what variables we want to use, how do we go about actually measuring them?
 - Sections include Measurement, Measurement Validity, Measurement Reliability
- **TOPIC 3: How do we set up a study?**
 - How do we know when we can say “A causes B”? How can we study a population with a sample?
 - Sections include Research Design, Causal Thinking, Experiments, Control Variables, Designing a Sample, Estimating Sampling Error, Estimating Sampling Size
- **TOPIC 4: Statistics**

- What statistics are useful in political science? When do we use statistics? How do we use statistics to generate evidence in political science? Which statistics do we choose? How do we interpret the numbers the computer generates?
 - Sections include Describing Variables, Statistical Significance, Crosstabulations, Interpreting the Effects of Control Variables, Regression Analysis
- **TOPIC 5: Ethics**
 - What ethical considerations must we consider when we use quantitative methods in research?
- REVIEW

TUTORIAL SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED PREPARATION

*Each tutorial topic has a corresponding video. You must use the URLs provided on D2L to access each video. **NOTE WELL** that tutorials move at a different pace than lectures, so the videos are crucial to your tutorial success.*

- WEEK 1 (Sept 11-13): Introduction to SPSS
 - Video (URL on D2L)
- WEEK 2 (Sept 18-20): Levels of Measurement
 - Video (URL on D2L)
- WEEK 3 (Sept 25-27): Working with Variables
 - Video (URL on D2L)
- WEEK 4 (Oct 2-4): Descriptive Statistics
 - Video (URL on D2L)
- WEEK 5 (Oct 9-11): Statistical Inference
 - Video (URL on D2L)
- WEEK 6 (Oct 16-18): Statistics: Nominal-Level Measures of Association
- WEEK 7: (Oct 23-25) Statistics: Nominal-Level Measures of Association
 - Video (URL on D2L)
- WEEK 8 (Oct 30-Nov 1): Statistics: Nominal- and Ordinal- Level Measures of Association
 - Video (URL on D2L)
- WEEK 9 (Nov 6-8): Weighting Cases and Control Variables
 - Video (URL on D2L)
- WEEK 10 (Nov 13-15): TERM BREAK NO TUTORIALS
- WEEK 11 (Nov 20-22): CONSULTATION ON RESEARCH REPORT
- WEEK 12 (Nov 27-29): CONSULTATION ON RESEARCH REPORT

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Absence From a Mid-term Examination:

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons (e.g. illness with the appropriate documentation) are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

Deferral of a Final Examination:

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

Appeals:

If a student has a concern about the course or a grade they have been assigned, they must first discuss their concerns with the instructor. If this does not resolve the matter, the student then proceed with an academic appeal. The first step in an academic appeal is to set up a meeting with the Department Head. Appeals must be requested within 15 days of receipt of the graded assignment.

University Regulations:

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University policies found in the Academic Regulations sections of the Calendar at www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html.

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Plagiarism And Other Forms Of Academic Misconduct:

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP):

FOIP legislation requires that instructors maintain the confidentiality of student information. In practice, this means that student assignment and tests cannot be left for collection in any public place without the consent of the student. It also means that grades cannot be distributed via email. Final exams are kept by instructors but can be viewed by contacting them or the main office in the Department of Political Science. Any uncollected assignments and tests meant to be returned will be destroyed after six months from the end of term; final examinations are destroyed after one year.

Evacuation Assembly Points:

In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

For program planning and advice, visit the Arts Students' Centre in Social Sciences 102, call 403-220-3580 or email artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit arts.ucalgary.ca/advising for program assistance.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit their office in the MacKimmie Library Block.

Important Contact Information:

Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)
Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives
Phone: 403-220-6551
Email: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca,
arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
Students' Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students' Association
Phone: 403-220-5997
Email: ask@gsa.ucalgary.ca
URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa

Student Ombudsman
Phone: 403-220-6420
Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Campus Mental Health Resources:

SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

Campus Mental Health Strategy: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>