

**POL 280: Research Methods**  
**Fall 2018 (Syllabus Version: 9/4/2018)**  
**B04 Kirby Hall, T R 12:30p-1:45p**

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**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course introduces students to basic ideas in scientific epistemology, social science research design, statistical analysis, and the application of all these ideas to substantive questions in political science.

Students will be able to:

1. understand basic empirical (qualitative and quantitative) approaches to the scientific study of the social world to substantive topics in political science;
2. execute and interpret statistical analysis of quantitative political data to answer about substantive questions in political science; and
3. recognize and understand threats to inference based on empirical data in political science, including the weaknesses of research designs and statistical analyses.

**GRADING POLICIES AND ASSIGNMENT DETAILS**

**Grade Components:**

- Homeworks and Quizzes: 25%
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%
- Poster Presentation: 25%

**Grading Scale:**

100%-97%: A+	76.9%-73%: C
96.9%-93%: A	72.9%-70%: C-
92.9%-90%: A-	69.9%-67%: D+
89.9%-87%: B+	66.9%-63%: D
86.9%-83%: B	62.9%-60%: D-
82.9%-80%: B-	>59.5%: F
79.9%-77%: C+	

**Exams:** There will be two exams in this class, a midterm and a final. All exams are cumulative, but will focus on material learned since the last exam. Exams will be take home, you will have 90 minutes in which to take the exam and you will be bound by

the honor system when taking the exam. No class materials, references, or other students may be consulted during an exam.

**Homework:** Homework problem sets will be distributed on Sakai. I encourage collaborative work on problem sets: the goal of a homework problem set is to help you learn the material and enable you to perform well on the (non-collaborative!) exams. With that said, simply copying another student's homework answers is not permitted and will be treated as academic dishonesty.

**Quizzes:** A diagnostic quiz will be assigned at the beginning of the semester, and a review quiz will be assigned at the end. These instruments are designed to help me understand what you learned during class and to help you prepare for the final exam. No class materials, references, or other students may be consulted during a quiz.

**Poster Presentation:** Students will ask a research question, create a research design, collect data, determine the answer to their question, and summarize the entire project in a poster and presentation session to which students and faculty in the department will be invited. More information on this project will be presented in a separate handout.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is typically a prerequisite for success in the class, although no points are deducted on the basis of an absence alone. Anything taught in class is testable material, and not everything I teach in class will be in the course reading material.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

**Late Work:** Assignments are due at the date and time I specify for the assignment. Late homeworks/proposals will be marked off at 5 percentage points for the first 24 hours late, and an additional 10 percentage points for every subsequent 24 hours late.

Important note: Students are responsible for submitting working, uncorrupted files for all assignments. If a file is corrupted and needs to be re-sent, and re-sending happens after the assignment deadline, a late penalty will be assessed.

Exams may not be taken late. Failing to take the exam during the scheduled time window will result in no credit for the exam.

Penalties for late homeworks may be waived and exams may be re-scheduled under the following three circumstances:

- (1) a death in the immediate family (parent, spouse, sibling, or child) within two weeks before the assignment due date;
- (2) in the event of an unforeseeable medical emergency affecting you, your spouse, or your child; or
- (3) participation in a Wake Forest-sponsored academic or sporting event.

In the event of (1) or (3), you must give me **at least 24 hours advance notice and preferably more** (via e-mail or a phone call) that you will miss the exam/homework, or it may not be made up. I may require supporting documentation. All penalty waivers are at the discretion of the instructor. Under these circumstances, I will extend your homework due date or schedule you a make-up exam time. **Important note: conflicts with a work schedule, non-academic trip, or vacation are not a valid reason to miss an exam or any other assignment** and cannot be the basis for a penalty waiver.

**Honor Code/Academic Misconduct:** All forms of academic misconduct will be handled according to the Wake Forest University Honor Code. Details on the Honor Code are available at <https://studentconduct.wfu.edu/honor-system-wfu/>.

If you ever have any questions about what you should do to stay within the honor code on a particular assignment, **contact me with your question and I can assist you**. I cannot guarantee a timely response unless you contact me at least 24 hours in advance of the time the assignment is due.

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability and require accommodation in this class, please contact me as soon as possible (within the first two weeks of class) to discuss these accommodations. You will also need to contact the Disability Services Office (telephone extension: 5929) in 118 Reynolda Hall. More information is available at <https://lac.wfu.edu/disability-services/>.

**Syllabus Change Policy:** All policies of this syllabus may be changed by Prof. Esarey with advance notice.

## **COURSE MATERIALS**

### **Required Texts:**

- Wheelan, Charles. 2013. *Naked Statistics*. New York: W.W. Norton and Co. This book provides a high-level and easier-to-understand introduction to statistical concepts and is often productively read first (when assigned).
- Kellstedt and Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research, Second Edition*. Cambridge University Press. This book provides a more in-depth coverage of concepts in research design and statistical analysis. When both Wheelan and Kellstedt/Whitten are both assigned, this book may be more productively read after first reading Wheelan.
- James E. Monogan III. 2015. *Political Analysis Using R*. Springer. This book is about how to do things in R. When multiple readings are assigned, this book is usually best read last.

Other readings are available on the Sakai website.

**Software:** This course will teach statistical and analytical material primarily through R. We will be using a server that is specially configured for R. You will need your computer (or a tablet) and a browser.

In order to use R you will go to: <https://rstudio.justinesarey.com/> In order to use this protected server you will need a user name and password (which will be supplied).

In addition, R is free and available for Windows and Macintosh from <http://cran.r-project.org/>. RStudio is also free and available for Windows and Macintosh at <http://www.rstudio.com>.

All students must have a valid Wake Forest e-mail address and login (and access to the Sakai website) to participate in this course.

### **COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNED READINGS**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>
Aug 28	<b>Introduction</b> <b>A bit of R</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monogan, Ch. 1.</li> </ul>
<b>Aug 30</b>	<b>Diagnostic Quiz on Sakai (take during class time)</b>	
Aug 30	<b>Class Cancelled</b>	APSA Conference   No Class
Sep 4-6	<b>Descriptive Statistics and Graphs with R/RStudio</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelan Chapters 1-2.</li> <li>• Monogan, Ch. 2.1-2.6, Ch. 3.1-3.2.</li> </ul>
<b>Sep 4</b>	<b>Assignment 1 On Sakai</b>	
Sep 11	<b>Is political science really science?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 1 up to and including Section 1.2.</li> <li>• Karl Popper, "Science as Falsification." URL: <a href="https://goo.gl/aCVTI9">https://goo.gl/aCVTI9</a></li> <li>• Cowl, Clayton et al. 1998. "Factors Associated with Fatalities and Injuries from Hot-Air Balloon Crashes," <u>Journal of the American Medical Association</u>, 279 (13): 1011- 1014. URL: <a href="https://goo.gl/JZqH4j">https://goo.gl/JZqH4j</a></li> </ul>

Sep 11	<b>Assignment 1 Due</b>	
Sep 11	<b>Assignment 2 On Sakai</b>	
Sep 13	<b>Research questions, theories, concepts, and hypotheses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 1 and 2.</li> </ul>
Sep 18	<b>Research design I: experiments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 3 and Ch. 4 up to and including Section 4.2.</li> </ul>
Sep 18	<b>Research design I: experiments and causal inference</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joel Turner, "The Messenger Overwhelming the Message: Ideological Cues and Perceptions of Bias in Television News." <i>Political Behavior</i> 29 (December 2007): 441-464. URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/ENqx9w">http://goo.gl/ENqx9w</a></li> </ul>
Sep 20	<b>Research Question Proposal Due</b>	
Sep 20	<b>Research Design II: non-experimental, large sample designs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 4, Section 4.3-end.</li> <li>• Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green, "Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout? A Field Experiment." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 65 (Spring 2001). URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/KAdNMW">http://goo.gl/KAdNMW</a>.</li> <li>• Monogan Ch. 3.3-3.4</li> </ul>
Sep 25	<b>Research Design II: non-experimental, large sample designs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jeffrey S. DeSimone, "Fraternity Membership and Binge Drinking." <i>Journal of Health Economics</i> 26 (September 2007), 950-967. URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/nBK9ON">http://goo.gl/nBK9ON</a>.</li> <li>• David Broockman and Donald P. Green, "Do Online Advertisements Increase Political Candidates' Name Recognition or Favorability?" <i>Political Behavior</i> 36 (2014), 263-289. URL: <a href="https://goo.gl/Yz9NvP">https://goo.gl/Yz9NvP</a></li> </ul>

Sep 27	Assignment 2 Due	
Sep 27	Assignment 3 on Sakai	
Sep 27	<b>Research Design III: non-experimental, case study designs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>James Mahoney. "Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis." <i>Sociological Methods and Research</i> 28 (2000): 387-424. URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/HCjR6O">http://goo.gl/HCjR6O</a>.</li> <li>Ashutosh Varshney, "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond." <i>World Politics</i> 53 (April 2001), 362-398. URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/eZnmCV">http://goo.gl/eZnmCV</a>.</li> </ul>
Oct 2	<b>Measurement: levels of measurement, reliability, and validity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 5 up to and including Section 5.8.</li> </ul>
Oct 4	<b>Measurement: levels of measurement, reliability, and validity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jeffrey A. Segal and Albert D. Cover, "Ideological Values and the Votes of US Supreme Court Justices." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 83 (June 1989), 557-564. URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/Wxpc7N">http://goo.gl/Wxpc7N</a>.</li> </ul>
Oct 9	<b>Techniques for and problems with social scientific data collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shahryar Minhas, Jay Ulfelder and Michael D. Ward, "Mining texts to efficiently generate global data on political regime types." <i>Research and Politics</i> (2015) DOI: <a href="https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2053168015589217">https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2053168015589217</a></li> </ul>
Oct 11	Assignment 3 Due	
Oct 11	<b>No Class</b>	Fall Break   No Class

Oct 16	<b>Techniques for and problems with social scientific data collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steven Levitt and Sudhir Venkatesh, “An Economic Analysis of a Drug-Selling Gang’s Finances.” <i>Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> 115 (2000): 755-789. URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/lZrv9F">http://goo.gl/lZrv9F</a>.</li> <li>• Yale IRB Training, “Introduction/Ethical Overview.” Material available on Sakai. Special note: make sure to read the following: “Introduction”, “Respect for Persons”, “Beneficence”, “Justice”, and “The importance of conducting research ethically.”</li> </ul>
Oct 18	<b>Research Design Proposal Due</b>	
Oct 18	<b>Midterm Exam Distributed</b>	
Oct 18	<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 5. from Section 5.9 to the end</li> <li>• Monogan, Ch. 4.1</li> </ul>
Oct 22	<b>Midterm Exam Due</b>	
Oct 23	<b>Assignment 4 on Sakai</b>	
Oct 23	<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelan Chapter 3.</li> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 5. from Section 5.9 to the end</li> <li>• Monogan, Ch. 4.2</li> </ul>
Oct 25	<b>Probability distributions and sampling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelan, Chapter 5.</li> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 6.</li> <li>• Review: Monogan, Ch. 3.</li> </ul>
Oct 30	<b>Probability distributions and sampling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelan, Ch. 8.</li> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 6.</li> <li>• Optional: Wheelan, Ch. 6.</li> </ul>
Nov 1	<b>Assignment 4 Due</b>	
Nov 1	<b>Assignment 5 on Sakai</b>	
Nov 1	<b>Basic hypothesis testing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelan, Ch. 9.</li> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 7, Sections 7.1-7.3 and 7.4.2.</li> </ul>

Nov 6	<b>Basic hypothesis testing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelan, Ch. 10.</li> <li>• Jeffrey J. Mondak, "Newspapers and Political Awareness." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 39 (May 1995); see especially pp. 523-525, for a two-sample t-test. URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/oydzPW">http://goo.gl/oydzPW</a>.</li> <li>• Monogan, Ch. 5.1</li> </ul>
Nov 8	<b>Initial Project Data Summary Due</b>	
Nov 8	<b>Crosstabs and the <math>\chi^2</math> test</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 7, Section 7.4.1</li> <li>• Monogan, Ch. 5.2.</li> <li>• Second look: Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green, "Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout? A Field Experiment." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 65 (Spring 2001), 75-85; see especially p. 79 for data for a chi-squared test. URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/KAdNMW">http://goo.gl/KAdNMW</a>.</li> </ul>
Nov 13	<b>Assignment 5 Due</b>	
Nov 13	<b>Assignment 6 on Sakai</b>	
Nov 15	<b>Correlation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 7, Section 7.4.3</li> <li>• Amy Caiazza, "Does Women's Representation in Elected Office Lead to Women-Friendly Policy?" <i>Women and Politics</i> 26 (2004), 35-70. URL: <a href="http://goo.gl/C417VH">http://goo.gl/C417VH</a>.</li> <li>• Monogan, Ch. 5.3</li> </ul>
Nov 20	<b>Regression I: theory and basics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 8., Sections 8.1-8.4.</li> </ul>
Nov 22	<b>No Class</b>	Thanksgiving   No Class
Nov 27	<b>Regression I: theory and basics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelan, Ch. 11.</li> <li>• Monogan, Ch. 6.1</li> </ul>



Nov 29	<b>Regression II: inference, multiple regression, and interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelan, Ch. 12.</li> <li>• Kellstedt and Whitten, Ch. 9</li> <li>• Alan Abramowitz, "Will Time for Change Mean Time for Trump?" <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i> 49 (2016):  <a href="https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096516001268">https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096516001268</a></li> </ul>
Dec 4	<b>Assignment 6 Due</b>	
Dec 4	<b>Regression II: inference, multiple regression, and interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monogan, Ch. 6, Sections 6.2.1-6.2.3</li> <li>• Donohue III, John J., and Steven D. Levitt. "The impact of legalized abortion on crime." <i>The Quarterly Journal of Economics</i> 116, no. 2 (2001): 379-420:  <a href="https://goo.gl/ZnurCX">https://goo.gl/ZnurCX</a></li> </ul>
Dec 6	<b>Poster Presentation Session</b>	
Dec 7	<b>Review Quiz on Sakai (Due by 11:59 PM)</b>	