

PSCI 2702A Quantitative Research Methods in Political Science

Instructor: Scott Bennett
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Lecture Times: 9:35am to 12:25pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning on July 7 and ending on August 13. Please confirm location on Carleton Central.

Note that actual lectures will usually only occupy the first part of the period, and the last part will often be used for computer lab work or answering student questions.

Office Hours: The instructor will be available for in person consultations during the hour right after each actual lecture presentation. These consultations will usually be held in the labs.

In addition, the instructor will usually be in his office from 8 to 11 am on Fridays.

Read this syllabus carefully. This syllabus stipulates class and university policies. Exemptions from these policies are almost never granted.

NOTE: IN SO FAR AS POSSIBLE, YOU SHOULD TRY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE INSTRUCTORS IN CLASS, LABS OR THROUGH ELECTRONIC MAIL. THE INSTRUCTOR CANNOT GUARANTEE IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO EMAILS, BUT IS USUALLY ABLE TO RESPOND WITHIN 48 HOURS.

NOTE: EMAIL COMMUNICATIONS MUST BE VIA YOUR CARLETON CONNECT ACCOUNT UNLESS YOU ARE TOLD OTHERWISE.

Course Description

The course begins with an overview and partial review of basic concepts of formal analysis of data in political science and related fields. Then the course proceeds to cover specific statistical techniques of relevance in greater detail. Use of computers in applying these techniques will be demonstrated.

Learning Objectives

This course is designed to do the following with respect to research in politics, public policy and public affairs:

1. provide students with a theoretical and practical knowledge of quantitative research methods;
2. provide students with analytical skills required for conducting research using quantitative methods,
3. provide students with the ability to judge the merits and appropriateness of quantitative research methods in comparison to other research methodologies;
4. enhance students' abilities to use computer generated output and, to some degree, students' abilities to use appropriate software;
5. if time permits, briefly introduce students to the vast range of data sets available for research.

There will be greater than usual limits on the extent to which some of these objectives can be pursued in this course because of the highly compressed summer time frame, the possible unreliability of university computer resources and the vicissitudes of teaching support resources.

Lecture Format

Students should note that this section of the course has no discussion groups in the sense that such groups exist in many other courses. The instructor will lecture for part of each time slot. The remainder of class time will be allocated to the instructor's answering students' questions, dealing with students' technical problems, and working with students in the computer labs. If students are not comfortable asking questions in a large group, they should submit questions by email. This method has been found to be a more reliable way of imparting specific information and answers than a combined lecture-discussion group method. It is the responsibility of the student to utilise this system. There are other sections of the course available in Fall/Winter terms for those who are more comfortable with other class formats.

Grade Components

Your grade will depend on one exam, one set of lab exercises and an attendance/participation component. It is important to note that the lab exercises will require you to answer questions about computer output. The only way that you will be able to stay totally current with this material is by attending class. If you do not attend class, you will be placing yourself at a severe disadvantage.

The details of the grading devices are:

Grading Device	% of Total Course Grade
Mid-term exam in class on July 28	45 percent
Lab exercise book to be turned in last class August 13	45 percent
Attendance/Participation	10 percent

Note that there are no valid excuses for missing the exam, and it is not necessary to present any sort of excuse for missing it. If you do miss it, for any reason, your lab exercise book will determine 90 percent of your grade. There are no makeup, rescheduled or substitute exams with respect to the mid-term exam.

Respecting attendance/participation, you will get one point for every class that you attend from beginning to end including the lab component. This will apply for up to 10 classes.

Students will have the opportunity to produce and examine output in labs, and this output will be relevant to the grading devices, particularly the lab exercise book. It is generally important to attend the labs.

Required Text Book

The required text is:

Scott Bennett, *Public Affairs Research Methods: A Quantitative Introduction* (Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996).

It is available for purchase at the University Bookstore. Used copies of this text are often available at book suppliers.

In some parts of the course, this text will be more of a technical reference than a conventional text.

Occasional reserve or secondary readings may also be suggested from time to time.

In many instances, the slides presented in class will be very directly related to the text or other important course content, and the slides will be made available to students,

Course Topics & Reading Schedule

Note that the instructor considers it to be bad pedagogy to assign in advance specific dates to the coverage of specific topics. General expectations can be established, but the assignment of precise dates can do a disservice to students, depending on the background they bring to the course. In general, we hope to cover the first 4 topics no later than the end of the third class (July 14). However, this is an expectation that can be altered in light of student background and progress. We will cover as many of the topics as is appropriate and possible in the order listed below. The instructor has always managed to cover all topics listed except for the last topic. This has been omitted some years due to lack of time, but it is not a critical topic in an introductory course.

Foundations:(estimated to take 1/6 to 1/3 of the course)

1. **Introduction to Quantitative Methods**

Bennett, Chapters 1, 2 and 3

(It is not critical to read these chapters in detail.)

2. **The Logic and Nature of Research Problems**

Bennett, Chapter 4

(With particular emphasis on pages 61-72)

3. **Research Design**

Bennett, Chapters 5

(To be considered in a fairly schematic way with particular emphasis on pages 75 to 82 and pages 109 to 114)

4. **Estimation and Measurement**

Bennett, Chapter 6

5. **Data Collection**

Bennett, Chapter 7

(It is possible that only a few comments will be made about this, and it will probably not be critical to read this chapter in detail. To some extent, this will depend on the background of the students in the course. In all likelihood there will be some form of exercise connected with data collection, and this might be initiated before the lecture material on this topic.)

Specific Techniques: (estimated to take 5/6 to 2/3 of the course)

After unit 6, you will begin to receive lab book questions that are fairly brief and simple but which will necessitate your analysing data to obtain an answer.

6. **Types of Statistical Analysis: An Overview**
Bennett, Chapter 8
7. **Simple Univariate Analysis**
Bennett, Chapter 9
8. **The Nature of Measures of Association**
Bennett, parts of Chapter 10
9. **Measures of Significance and Association Primarily for Nominal and Ordinal Variables**
Bennett, parts of Chapter 10
10. **Measures of Significance and Association for Interval/Ratio Variables or Finely Ranked Data**
Bennett, parts of Chapter 10
11. **Measures of Effect and Impact with Particular Emphasis on Regression**
Bennett, Chapter 11 and, possibly, aspects of Chapter 12
12. **Other Topics in Analysis if Time Permits**
(Some lecture material may be presented to cover this area. No readings are suggested. In all likelihood, we will not have enough time to develop this topic.)

Instructor's Important Guidelines, Rules and Warnings

No Special Scheduling

Each year in the summer version of this course people regularly ask for special treatment in relation to exam scheduling or turning in final work. For example, various excuses are given relating to the commencement of employment, vacations, military service, etc. **No** special arrangements can be made by the instructor for these or other types of reasons.

Of course, a student is able to ask for a health deferral relating to turning in final work. However, this would have to be pursued through authorities other than the instructor.

Non-Attendance at Mid-Term

As indicated previously, if you do not take the mid-term for any reason, your exercise book will be reweighted to reflect 90 percent of your regular grade. There are no makeup, rescheduled or substitute exams with respect to the mid-term.

No Special Grading

The instructor will provide guidance respecting the lab exercises at the proper times, but he will not formally grade the lab exercise books until the end of the course. There are insufficient time and resources in the summer to provide comprehensive advance grading.

Disruptive Behaviour

Unfortunately, there is another element to course grading that is important to note. The instructor reserves the right to deduct up to 10 points from a student's marks for disruptive behaviour in class. You can avoid this kind of penalty by following a simple rule: do not talk or create noise in class unless you are communicating with the instructor. To this, we must now add that you should not be doing anything with computers or other electronic devices during class unless it is directly related to your work in the course. No warnings will be given. Penalties will be applied at the end of the course grade computation. Although this does not have any relevance for the vast majority of students, it is regularly observed that a small percentage of each class have not yet adopted appropriate standards of conduct for a university setting.

It should also be noted that, as an instructional offence, disruptive behaviour in class can also be referred to the Dean in extreme cases.

Email Communication

As noted earlier, email communications pertaining to the class must be via your Carleton Connect account. For better or worse, this is deemed to be “best practice” in privacy regulations that now have implications for Ontario universities. Some exceptions may be possible if the Connect system fails, which it does periodically.

Future References

Although many people are probably not yet thinking about these issues, keep in mind that the instructor will not even consider giving a student a reference in the future unless they have done at least two courses with him and showed above average interest and performance in both courses. If you are not yet thinking about the importance of references from permanent faculty, you should start thinking about it.

Other Rules of importance to the Department are attached on the following pages. The instructor only takes responsibility for the essence of the material above.

Academic Accommodations

Early Feedback Guideline: In all likelihood, the results of the midterm will be available on July 30. This is one day before the July 31 deadline for dropping the course but one day after the date suggested by the university for final early feedback in the course.

Late Penalty: The penalty for lateness is complete loss of all grade points connected with the late work.

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations**. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **June 12, 2009 for early summer examinations, and July 31, 2009 for late / full summer examinations**.

For Religious Observance: Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance (www.carleton.ca/equity).

For Pregnancy: Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Plagiarism: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of “F” for the course.

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

Approval of final grades: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Course Requirements: Students must fulfil all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F. Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available **ONLY** if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

Carleton Political Science Society: The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.

Official Course Outline: The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.