Data Analysis for Governance: Formal Approaches and Practical Realities

PSCI 3411 A

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Class Times:	8:35 to 11:25 Thursdays starting January 12, 2023 and ending on April 6, 2023.
Office Hours:	There are no fixed office hours, but you can communicate with the instructor by email at any time. He will usually get back to you within a day.

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 instructor in class or through electronic mail. There are no in person office hours. There are very few matters that cannot be dealt with in class or by email.

Course Description and Format

This is technically a lecture course, and there will be significant lecture material. However, there will be various other activities that are outside the bounds of traditional lectures, and those other activities will take up a significant amount of the course. So, it is probably best thought of as being somewhere between a pure lecture and a pure seminar. It is important to note that more will be expected of students in this type of course as will be the case in fourth year courses later in your studies. It is not a passive learning experience like many conventional lectures. Also, this is not a lower level course where you can reasonably expect to know how many points you have in grading in the course on a given day. However, the compensation for this more broad brush grading approach is that there is a truncated grading distribution which makes it difficult to get a truly bad grade.

The practical focus of the course is to prepare a student to deal with the following type of situation. As a consultant or an analytic employee of government, you are asked to prepare a document that

will ultimately, in some form, be presented to a higher level of decision making. It will develop a small set of options to address a large policy issue or a smaller scale improvement in a program. Because of the limited time, we will concentrate on designing ways to collect data to serve policy making. Your papers will elaborate ways to measure and analyse different kinds of variables that might be relevant to defining options and choosing solutions. Most papers will probably not reach the final stage of writing up a formal presentation, but they will concentrate on defining the kinds of data that might drive a more complete paper. This will build on some of the skills you have learned in other courses such as PSCI 2701 and PSCI 2702 or similar courses.

In developing and defending this sort of document, one must deal with both technical and political issues, broadly defined. One must be aware that the leadership that has requested the document already has some general preferences in mind, but they probably do want to at least see those preferences examined in a broader, technically adequate manner. There will probably be a number of different groups involved with different concerns in both the political and technical realms.

In this course, I hope to introduce you to the considerations involved in preparing a document of the kind noted. I hope to do this in a way which gives you some experience of both the political and technical considerations. This will be done in several stages which will be apparent in later parts of the course outline.

Main Text

There are no main texts in this course. For this reason, it is extremely important to attend the class to take in lecture material and to interact with others. For the   purely technical side of the course, there will be some texts that are recommended, but you do not need to buy them. In many cases, the essential content of the texts will be presented in slides and lectures.

Grade Components

Paper at End of Course (due April 6)	65%
Participation	35%

Details relating to the paper due at the end of the course will be provided in class.

Details on participation will be provided after class begins. There will be an attendance component and a discussion/participation component. However, it would be inappropriate to decide on details of participation until we know the number of people enrolled in the course.

This term we are also requiring that you must attend at least one of the first two meetings of the course if you wish to pass the course. This is essential for the continuity of the course.

Course Topics

Note that the instructor considers it to be bad pedagogy and probably bad administration to assign in advance specific dates to the coverage of specific topics. In general, we hope to reach topic 6 no later than week 7 of the course. However, this is an expectation that can be altered in light of student background, interests and progress. We will cover as many of the topics as is appropriate and possible in the order listed below.

1. Introduction to the Course

   This is just a description and discussion of the mechanics of the course.

Practical Realities

2. The Public Affairs Ideas Market

   a. The Emergence of Analytic Problems in Governing

   How do problems for analysis emerge? Recurring expressions of interest versus unexpected events. What are the technical and political factors that initially shape responses and analysis?

   At this point, there will be lectures on the theory behind the emergence of problem and some practical comments on their emergence. Two areas will be introduced as a basis for most illustrations: the problem of poverty and the problem of pandemics. Students should begin to think about which of these problems they want to write their paper on. Some alternative choices might be allowed, but they would have to be at the same level of generality.

   b. The Emergence of Solutions to Problems: The Practical Reality of Predefined Solutions

   Again, we will look at what theories have had to offer on this topic. We will then apply these theories and some other frameworks to the two major issues areas chosen as main examples-poverty and pandemic.

   c. The Meaning of Certain "Magic" Words in Theory and Reality: How Help Form Narratives

Public Good--- Popular discourse, the media and many citizens often use the term "public good" as if it were a magic word with an obvious meaning that justifies a preferred solution. It is more complicated than that, and we will consider some of the background to this concept as well as the practicalities of measuring it.

Evidence--- Another magic word in current policy discourse is "evidence" as in "evidence based policy." We will introduce some general thoughts on this here and elaborate them in a more technical sense later.

The way these concepts are used provides a way of understanding the early interplay of ideas used to sort problems and solutions, and it has continuing importance.

3. The Actors Involved in Collecting Relevant Data: Absorbers and Producers of Data and Information

We will look at aspects of problems, solutions, conceptions of the public good and the actors associated with variations in these dimensions. Here we will look at ways to measure data relevant to different types of actors who might be taken into account in shaping a more complete policy options paper. At this point, I want students to start developing their ideas about where data and information could come from that would support their papers.

   a.   The Perspectives of the Political Leadership: Opinion and Votes

   b.   The Perspectives of the Organized Community/Political Class: Supporting a Narrative of Need or Priority

   c.   The Perspectives of the Bureaucracy: Operations, Management, Satisfaction and Evaluation

   d.   The Perspectives of the Public: A Producer of Preferences and a Target For Manipulation

   e.   The Perspectives of Clients /Beneficiaries of Potential Policy and Programs: Knowledge, Satisfaction

4. Preliminary Discussion of Paper Topics if Necessary

Formal Approaches

5. Some Early Research Design Considerations as a Prelude to More Detailed Issues

6. The Quality of Data and Evidence: A Journey into Some Aspects of Empirical Methods in Policy with Emphasis on Measurement

7. Generating and Analysing Data for Decision Making: Research Design and Analytic Techniques

   It is unlikely that we can do much analysis of the tiny amounts of data we might generate through course activities. However, we will make some general comments on how this should be approached.

Melding the Practical and the Formal

8. Bringing the Evidence to Bear in Policy Making Interactions

   What would a final policy recommendation paper look like, and how would it be used in the policy making process? No matter how good the technical side of such a paper might be, we will see a resurgence of rhetoric and shallow reasoning in order to protect interests. Nevertheless, some parts of the analytics will have to be taken into account.

9. Problem Solving Sessions

   Here, we will deal with any final considerations that are relevant to the completion of student papers.

10. Final Presentations if Time Permits

Note that it is quite likely that some of the major topic will take more than one week to cover.

Finally, note that this is the first time this course has been offered. So, we may adjust the order and importance of some topics depending on how the course is progressing.

Instructor's Other Important Guidelines and Rules

Without going into great detail, various other course, departmental and university rules apply to the conduct of any course. You are expected to know them. From, my point of view, the important rules are:

1. Do your work on time as described in this outline and in class.

2. Do not engage in plagiarism.

3. Do not disrupt the class. This will be interpreted in a more detailed way than in previous years. While participating in the online class, make sure there are no disruptive noises in the background. With respect to persistent behavioural problems, the instructor may limit a person's involvement in the class.

4. Keep an open mind with respect to value systems and approaches to inquiry.

With respect to point one above, the final copy of the course paper should be submitted by the end of April 6, 2023. It must be in electronic form as a WORD attachment to an email. Be sure you keep copies of what you submit, and wait for the instructor's return message that he has received and can open the attachment.

Other rules of general interest from a departmental or university perspective are contained in the material that follows. The instructor only takes responsibility for the essence of the above material.

<u>Standard Departmental Attachment Follows</u>

Appendix

Covid-19 Pandemic Measures

It is important to remember that COVID is still present in Ottawa. The situation can change at any time and the risks of new variants and outbreaks are very real. There are a number of actions you can take to lower your risk and the risk you pose to those around you including being vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying home when you're sick, washing your hands and maintaining proper respiratory and cough etiquette.

Feeling sick? Remaining vigilant and not attending work or school when sick or with symptoms is critically important. If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms do not come to class or campus. If you feel ill or exhibit symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately. In all situations, you should follow Carleton's symptom reporting protocols.

Masks: Masks are no longer mandatory in university buildings and facilities. However, we continue to recommend masking when indoors, particularly if physical distancing cannot be maintained. We are aware that personal preferences regarding optional mask use will vary greatly, and we ask that we all show consideration and care for each other during this transition.

Vaccines: While proof of vaccination is no longer required to access campus or participate in in-person Carleton activities, it may become necessary for the University to bring back proof of vaccination requirements on short notice if the situation and public health advice changes. Students are strongly encouraged to get a full course of vaccination, including booster doses as soon as they are eligible and submit their booster dose information in cuScreen as soon as possible. Please note that Carleton cannot guarantee that it will be able to offer virtual or hybrid learning options for those who are unable to attend the campus.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow requirements and guidelines regarding health and safety which may change from time to time. For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and health and safety requirements please see the University's COVID-19 website and review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca.

Student Mental Health

As a university student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/

- ***Carleton Resources:***
  - Mental Health and Wellbeing: https://carleton.ca/wellness/
  - Health & Counselling Services: https://carleton.ca/health/
  - Paul Menton Centre: https://carleton.ca/pmc/
  - Academic Advising Centre (AAC): https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/
  - Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): https://carleton.ca/csas/
  - Equity & Inclusivity Communities: https://carleton.ca/equity/

- ***Off Campus Resources:***
  - Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/
  - Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, http://www.crisisline.ca/
  - Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/
  - Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, https://good2talk.ca/
  - The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: https://walkincounselling.com

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form (click here).

Religious accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details click here.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out

to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, click here.

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf.

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline.

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support.

Plagiarism

Carleton's Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as "presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own." This includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;

- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

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 may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/.

Intellectual property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

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.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

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. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students 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 our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/.

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.