OBJECTIVES

People, experts or not, make statements every day regarding political life. These may include:

“The 2012 presidential election is too close to call”
“The Tea Party was responsible for Republicans taking control of the House in 2010”
“Views on tax policy determine approval of congressional candidates”
“The news media are biased when covering politics”

One of the best things about political science is that we have the tools to assess the validity of these claims and statements; it is not called a ‘science’ for no reason. This course will provide you an introduction to research methods and quantitative analysis used by political scientists – and social scientists. You will be introduced to the logic of quantitative analysis and the basic tools used to study politics. Since this is a required course of political science majors, it is imperative for you to be exposed to the mechanics that allow us to say what we say.

GATEWAY IS YOUR FRIEND

I will regularly update class information on the website for the class on MyGateway (http://mygateway.usml.edu).

READING MATERIAL

Class readings will be drawn from four sources:


Additional Sources:

For labs, we will be using a statistical package called Stata (v12.0). Stata is available on your classroom computers and in the first floor computer lab in SSB.

REQUIREMENTS

It is important to keep up with class readings and you should generally aim to complete the weekly readings before we start a new topic. In addition to the readings, you will also be responsible for the following:

1. Assignments: (4 assignments combine for 32% of your final grade)
2. *Freakonomics & Outliers* Quizzes: (6 quizzes combine for 18% of your final grade)
3. Research Paper: (combined pieces worth 50% of your final grade)

The assignments often will involve using Stata to analyze data using the techniques we learn during class. Students can work in groups, but should not turn in identical assignments. Students generally receive the assignments a week before they are due. There will be more information on the research paper throughout the semester.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will be discounted one-third a letter grade each day it is late. For example, if you receive a B on an assignment and it is a day later then it is a B-, etc. If an assignment has not been turned in after a week then the student receives a 0. This is to insure we can go over the assignments in class after a week from when they are due.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

University policy dictates that instructors can only communicate with students’ UMSL email accounts and not gmail, yahoo, etc. accounts. In your emails, please include introduction (e.g., ‘Hello Prof Fogarty’) and closing (e.g., ‘Thanks’) statements. It might be wise for you to add a ‘signature’ statement to your emails so that faculty and staff can easily identify you.

PLAGIARISM

Generally, plagiarism is defined as turning in work that has been written by someone else, without attribution, and it is not acceptable in this or any other academic course. Again, for assignment students can work together in groups, but everything you turn in should be your own. Any plagiarism found on an assignment results in an F for that assignment and perhaps other disciplinary consequences through the regular UMSL channels.
CLASS SCHEDULE

Topic 1: Introduction

Topic 2: Scientific Method
   Pollock: Introduction

Topic 3: Causation
   Pollock: Chapters 3 & 5
   Assignment 1 Due
   *Freakonomics* Quiz 1: Chapters 1 & 2 (2/3)
   *Freakonomics* Quiz 2: Chapters 3 & 4 (2/17)

Topic 4: Research Design
   Pollock: Chapters 1 & 4
   *Freakonomics* Quiz 3: Chapter 5 (3/3)

Topic 5: Data & Measurement
   Pollock: Chapter 2
   Assignment 2 Due
   *Outliers* Quiz 4: Introduction, Chapters 1-2 (3/19)

Topic 6: Univariate & Descriptive Statistics
   Pollock: Chapters 2 & 6
   *Outliers* Quiz 5: Chapters 3-5 (4/2)

Topic 7: Sampling, Probability, & Survey Design
   Pollock: Chapter 6
   Assignment 3 Due
   *Outliers* Quiz 6: Chapters 6-9, Epilogue (4/9)

Topic 8: Bivariate Statistics & Hypothesis Testing
   Pollock: Chapters 7 & 8

Topic 9: Multivariate Analysis
   Pollock: Chapter 8
   Assignment 4 Due

Topic 10: Catch-up, Review, Research Time

Week of 3/24: No Class – Spring Break
Final Paper due Monday 5/12 by 5pm