

POL374, Section 01
Quantitative Methods for Political Science
Fall 2008: MWF 10:00 – 10:50 AM, LDB 203

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Office: AB1 315M (enter room 315K, then turn right)
Office Hours: MWF 9:00 – 9:50, 11:00 – 11:50 AM
TH 5:00-5:50 PM (at UCTR)
& by arrangement everyday

Course Description: This is an introduction to research design and quantitative methods used in contemporary political science research. Students will apply the tools of social science inquiry in a series of projects designed to examine such phenomena as political attitudes and behavior. Emphasis is on the use of descriptive statistics; tabular and graphic presentation of data; measures of association and correlations; and multivariate analysis in political research. Prerequisites: 6 hours POL.

Course Objectives: Specific course objectives include:

- Students will gain factual knowledge and information regarding quantitative statistical methods
- Students will learn fundamental principles and theories in the area of statistical methods
- Students will increase analytical, critical thinking, and communication skills

Textbooks & Required Materials:

Caldwell, Sally. 2004. *Statistics Unplugged 2nd Edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth-Thomson Learning.

Pyrzczak, Fred. 2004. *Success at Statistics: A Worktext with Humor*. 3rd ed. Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.

Additional readings handed out in class, posted on the course Blackboard website, or placed on reserve in Newton Gresham Library.

Optional Materials:

SPSS 15.0 (Career Starter Package). This is the SPSS data analysis software we use in class, and is available on-line for \$45.99. This will allow you to load the software on your personal machine and use it for 6 months. (<http://estore.e-academy.com/>).

Carver, Robert H. and Jane Gradwohl Nash. 2005. *Doing Data Analysis with SPSS Version 14.0*. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Thomson Learning.

Exams and Grading: Your grade in this course will be determined by your performance on 10 problem sets, in-class exercises, a final project, and a comprehensive final exam:

Problem Sets (10@5% each)	50%
In-Class Exercises	10%
Final Project	20%
Final Exam	20%

The *problem sets* will apply concepts discussed in the lectures and the in-class exercises, and will often involve data analysis using SPSS. All problem sets are due at the start of class the day we cover them. Anyone turning in their problem set by 3:00 PM the day before we cover the material in class will be awarded 5 bonus points on the problem set (i.e., if we cover a problem set in class on Monday, turned in before 3:00 PM the preceding Sunday; problem sets covered in class on Wednesday turned in by 3:00 PM Tuesday; problem sets covered in class on Friday turned in by 3:00 PM Thursday). Problem sets turned in after the start of the class in which we cover the problem set will not be accepted. You will receive a grade of zero ('0') for each of the uncompleted problem sets.

The *final project* will involve you gathering, coding, and analyzing survey data. More detailed instructions on this project are posted on the Blackboard course website and will be handed out as the semester progresses.

The *final exam* is cumulative and will involve critical assessment of a research design and interpretation of statistical output.

Course grades will be calculated according to the following scale: A=90.0-100.0; B=80.0-89.9999; C=70.0-79.9999; D=60.0-69.9999; F=less than 60. Please note there is no rounding on overall course grades. **PLEASE NOTE: anyone asking me to calculate their grade for them will be penalized 10 points on their overall course grade.**

Instructor Evaluations

Students will be given the opportunity to complete a course/instructor evaluation form near the end of the semester.

Attendance Policy

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected of each student at Sam Houston State University. Because class attendance and course grade are demonstrably and positively related, I expect students to attend all class sessions of this course. Regular attendance is important because we will cover information in class that is not found in the texts. Attendance will be taken in every class meeting. If you are absent for any reason, it is your responsibility to become informed on what was covered in class. Please get class notes from a fellow student. It is not my policy to give out my lecture notes.

Academic Dishonesty

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: <http://www.shsu.edu/administrative/faculty/sectionb.html#dishonesty>.

Americans with Disabilities Act

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. *NOTE:* No accommodation can be made until you register with the Counseling Center. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/811006.pdf.

Religious Holidays

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: http://www.shsu.edu/~vaf_www/aps/documents/861001.pdf.

Classroom Rules of Conduct

Students are expected to abide by the Classroom Rules of Conduct as outlined by the Dean of Students: <http://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>.

CLASS SCHEDULE & READING ASSIGNMENTS

Note: This schedule and the reading assignments are tentative. Changes will be announced in class.

I. RESEARCH DESIGN

August 27 – August 29: Introduction to the Research Process

August 27: Caldwell, Chapter 1 (pp. 8-15); Pyrczak, Section 1

Fair, Ray C. Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 5-42 (available on Blackboard)

August 29: Almer, Ennis C., “Liquor Outlets Cause Crime?” (available on Blackboard)

Meier and Brudney, Chapter 3 (available on Blackboard)

September 1: No Class Meeting

September 3 – September 5: Concepts & Measures

September 3: Carlson, James M. and Mark S. Hyde, “Conceptualizing, Operationalizing, and Measuring Variables” (available on Blackboard)

September 5: Caldwell, Chapter 1 (pp. 4-8); Pyrczak, Section 2

Herr, J. Paul. 2002. “The Impact of Campaign Appearances in the 1996 Election.” *Journal of Politics* 64(3): 904-913. (available on Blackboard)

SEPTEMBER 8 (MONDAY): PROBLEM SET #1 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

II. DESCRIBING DATA

September 10: Introduction to SPSS

“A First Look at SPSS 14.0.” Session 1 from Carver, Robert H. and Jane Gradwohl Nash. 2006. *Doing Data Analysis with SPSS Version 14*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education. (available on Blackboard)

September 12 – September 15: Counting Responses and Displaying Distributions

Caldwell, Chapter 3; Pyrczak, Sections 3-7, 9, 55

SEPTEMBER 17 (WEDNESDAY): PROBLEM SET #2 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

September 19 – September 24: Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion

Caldwell, Chapter 2; Pyrczak, Sections 10-15

SEPTEMBER 26 (FRIDAY): PROBLEM SET #3 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

III. TESTING HYPOTHESES

September 29 – October 1: Probability

Pyrczak, Section 29

Meier and Brudney, Chapter 7 (pp. 107-111 and 115-120, available on Blackboard)

October 1: ****FINAL PROJECT: CONCEPTS & MEASURES DUE****

October 3 – October 6: Probability and the Normal Distribution

Caldwell, Chapter 4; Pyrczak, Sections 16, 18, 30

October 8: ****FINAL PROJECT: BEGIN DATA COLLECTION****

OCTOBER 8 (WEDNESDAY): PROBLEM SET #4 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

October 10 – October 15: Sampling and Inference

Caldwell, Chapter 5; Pyrczak, Sections 15, 27-28, 33-35

October 17 – October 20: Hypothesis Testing

October 17: Caldwell, Chapters 6; Pyrczak, Sections 31-32, 56-58

October 20: Caldwell, Chapters 9; Pyrczak, Sections 36, 59

OCTOBER 22 (WEDNESDAY): PROBLEM SET #5 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

October 24 – October 27: Comparing Two Samples

Caldwell, Chapter 8; Pyrczak, Sections 37-40

October 27: *****FINAL PROJECT: DATA COLLECTION DUE*****

OCTOBER 29 (WEDNESDAY): PROBLEM SET #6 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

IV. EXAMINING RELATIONSHIPS

October 31 – November 3: Crosstabs & the Chi-Square Statistic

Caldwell, Chapter 11; Pyrczak, Sections 48-50

NOVEMBER 5 (WEDNESDAY): PROBLEM SET #7 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

November 7 – November 10: Crosstabs & Additional Measures of Association

Pyrczak, Section 51

NOVEMBER 12 (WEDNESDAY): PROBLEM SET #8 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

November 14: No Class Meeting

November 17 – November 19: Scatterplots & Correlation

Caldwell, Chapter 12 (pp. 262-281); Pyrczak, Sections 19-22

November 21: Bivariate Regression

Caldwell, Chapter 12 (pp. 281-294); Pyrczak, Section 25

NOVEMBER 24 (MONDAY): PROBLEM SET #9 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

November 26 – November 28: No Class Meetings

December 1 – December 5: Multivariate Regression

Caldwell, Chapter 12 (pp. 281-294)

DECEMBER 8 (MONDAY): PROBLEM SET #10 DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS

V. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

December 10: Cumulative Final Exam Preparation

*****FINAL PROJECT: WRITTEN REPORT DUE AT BEGINNING OF CLASS*****

DECEMBER 15 (MONDAY): FINAL EXAM, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
