

Public Policy Research POL 604

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Class meets: T/TR, 10:05 am-12:10 pm, 10/25-12/6, HRN 002

Office hours: T/TR, 2:45-4:00 pm or by appointment. Please book meetings at <https://rachelblum.youcanbook.me/>

1 Course Description

Public Policy Research (POL 604) is the second course in the Political Science M.A. program's quantitative methods sequence, conducted in a 'sprint' format. You will build on the statistical knowledge you acquired in POL 603 to learn how to make, test, and evaluate evidence-based claims about politics and policy. This course will acquaint you with the conceptual and technical tools to: 1) accurately and clearly summarize data, and 2) make and test sound statistical inferences. After successful completion of this course, you should be able to conduct your own independent research projects using Stata, and pursue additional methodological training if desired.

2 Student Learning Outcomes

This course will further the learning outcomes for MA students in Political Science in the following ways:

1. Through course readings and discussions, students learn to identify and apply methodology, design and analysis for a problem and understand ethical components of research choices.
2. Through course readings, discussions, and written assignments, students will learn to apply political science knowledge to contemporary issues and problems and identify and evaluate alternative political science-based solutions.
3. Students may draw on course material to formulate, propose and advocate political science-based solutions to contemporary political issues and problems.

4. Course assignments will provide students with introductory skills to conduct and communicate independent, professional-level investigations into sub-disciplinary problems and contribute to knowledge base.

3 Course Policies

Students are expected to:

- Come to every class prepared to actively discuss and engage in the readings and participate in discussions.
- Turn in assignments on time.
- Check email and read the Canvas site frequently.

In return, you can expect that I will:

- Foster an atmosphere where discussion-based learning can occur.
- Show an interest in your learning, and respect your opinions.
- Give timely feedback on your work.
- Check email and read the Canvas site frequently.

Absences

The Student Handbook states, “Every student is expected to attend every class session for which the student is duly registered.” (Part VII, Section 01.701). I am happy to work with you in regards to absences if you notify me before class. I will not penalize you for missing class, although it will be up to you to catch up on the material you missed. This class moves very quickly, so I strongly encourage you to limit absences whenever possible.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating, plagiarism, and any form of academic dishonesty in any portion of the academic work for a course will not be tolerated and shall be grounds for awarding a grade of Withdrawal Academic Dishonesty (W(AD)) for the entire course. A W(AD) is calculated as an F in your grade point average.

Assignment Due Dates

All written assignments must be turned in at the time specified. Late assignments will not be accepted. If for some reason you cannot turn in an assignment on time, please communicate with me before hand to discuss other potential arrangements.

Classroom Conduct

- Cellular Phones: My expectation is that you will turn your phone off and place it in a bag or otherwise out of view during class time.
- Laptop computers/tablets: We will occasionally use laptops for in-class exercises. My expectation is that you will bring your computer to every class, but only use it when specific. Other notes can be taken by hand.

4 Graded Components

Grading System

- A range (90-100): Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- B range (80-89): Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
- C range (70-79): Achievement that meets course requirements in every respect.
- D range (60-69): Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.
- F (0-59): Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed.

Any grading disputes must be made in writing within 48 hours of receiving the grade.

Graded Assignments

- Class participation: 5%
 - Participation includes attendance and discussion.
- Problem Sets: 50%
 - Problem Sets will be due by class time, printed (bring them to class). There will be 9 of these over the course of the semester, with a 10th in-class (Hackathon). Each is worth 5% of your final grade. Problem set instructions will be distributed via Canvas at least by the class period before they are due. Some may be distributed earlier. You are encouraged to work with one another on these problem sets, as long as your explanations are your own. We may work through some problems in class as well. I will make answer keys available on Canvas.
- Quantitative Report: 25%

- This will serve as your class “paper”. Rather than asking you to write a full paper, I am asking you to write a report based on a statistical analysis. I will provide examples and instructions.
- Final exam: 20%
 - We will have a final exam due during the exam period. More instructions will be given in class.

5 Readings

*Most of our readings will come from this **Required Textbook**. I will make other assigned and supplementary readings available online.*

Michael A. Bailey. *Real Stats: Using Econometrics for Political Science and Public Policy*. Oxford University Press. 1st edition.

6 Schedule

- **Readings:** *All readings should be completed by the assigned date. All readings are on Canvas unless otherwise indicated.*
- **Problem Sets:** *All problem sets should be brought to class on their assigned date. Instructions will be posted on Canvas, disseminated in class, or both.*
- **Changes to syllabus:** *As we go through the semester, occasional changes to the schedule may be necessary. I will both discuss these in class and publish these on Canvas in advance.*

| Day | Topic | Readings | Deliverables |
|------------|--|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Oct 25 | Intro & Bivariate Regression | Chs. 1-2 | |
| Oct 30 | Bivariate review & Intro to Multivariate | Chs. 3-4 | Problem Set 1 |
| Nov 1 | Multivariate specifications | Ch. 5 | Problem Set 2 |
| Nov 6 | Control Variables | Ch. 6 | Problem Set 3 |
| Nov 8 | Merging & Transforming data | Ch. 7 | Problem Set 4 |
| Nov 13 | Regression diagnostics | Online | |
| Nov 15 | Presenting results | Online | Problem Set 5 |
| Nov 20 | Interaction terms | Online | Problem Set 6 |
| Nov 27 | Binary dependent variables | Ch. 12 | Problem Set 7 |
| Nov 29 | Predicted Values | Tbd | Problem Set 8 |
| Dec 4 | Hackathon | | Problem Set 9 |
| Dec 6 | Research design & Review | | Quantitative Report Due |
| Dec 11 | Final exam | | 10:15 am-12:15 pm |