

## **POLI 3492 Political Inquiry I**

Dalhousie University, Fall 2018

Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:05-11:25 in Dunn 301A

Instructor: Professor Steven Holloway

Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30 to 1 p.m., or by appointment, Henry Hicks, Room 360

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### **Course Description**

This course is a general introduction to empirical research methods in political science and the social sciences more generally. Students will gain "hands - on" experience in the understanding of basic statistics and the use of the computer in social science research. Emphasis will be placed on pragmatic understanding of the ubiquitous political phenomena of opinion polling, predictions of election results, and quantitative statistical analysis regularly found in contemporary Political Science journals. The tools learned in this course may broaden employment opportunities and/or offer an introduction to post-graduate research method courses. Aimed at the basic level, no prior mathematical or computer skills are assumed or required. Furthermore, the emphasis will be on a practical, "user-friendly," intuitive understanding of the statistical processes rather than on learning the math behind them.

The basic statistics will be taught using two statistical computer programs. The first "Microcase" for Windows is a very simple, user-friendly program that comes with the textbook and includes several data sets. The student can download and run the software on their own computer 24/7. The second program is called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a.k.a. IBM SPSS Statistics. It will be used in conjunction with Canadian Election Survey (CES) data sets. Instruction in the use of both programs will be conducted in class lectures [but it may be necessary to schedule a special session in a computer lab later.]

SPSS is installed on the computers in all of the student computer labs on campus including the Library Learning Commons (located in the Killam, Kellogg, and Sexton libraries). These labs are *not* open 24 hours a day so plan accordingly. For more details on the location and opening hours of the labs, see:

<https://dalu.sharepoint.com/sites/mydal/dc/ITS/Wiki/Computer%20Labs.aspx>

Given the sequential nature of the material, students should adopt the method they would use in learning a foreign language -- keeping up with more smaller assignments than found in a typical PS lecture course. If you fall behind, or try to skip step 2 or 3, you're less likely to understand step 4 and all remaining steps. Therefore coming to class, doing the assignments and seeking help if don't understand is very important. The research paper and examinations are due on the dates given. Late research papers are assessed a penalty per day late. [More on this paper later.] Make up exams are usually not given and may be tougher than the original. The Final Exam will be during the time in Dec reserved for Exams. Do not buy tickets or plan to leave campus before the period of exams ends or a specific date has been assigned.

Textbook:

LeRoy, Michael, *Research Methods in Political Science* 8th Ed ["Roy" below]

Note: you also need the accompanying Windows software, *Microcase*, so a used copy of the book, may not be a good idea.

Articles with links on Brightspace -

Donald L. Jordan and Peter M. Sanchez, "Traditional versus Technology-Aided Instruction: The Effects of Visual Stimulus in the Classroom," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 1. (Mar., 1994), pp. 64-67. ["Jordan & Sanchez" below.]

William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani, "Knowledge and Foreign Policy Opinions: Some Models for Consideration," *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2. (Summer, 1966), pp. 187-199. ["Gamson & Modig" below.]

On reserve:

David Marsh and Gerry Stoker, *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1995.) (M&S in outline) JA 71 T497 1995b

James R Brown, *Who Rules in Science*, Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 2001. ("JR Brown") Dal Library [electronic resource] .

Jonathan Rauch, *The Kindly Inquisitors*, Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1993. KB 79.C3 R24

The final grade will be based on:

Six small assignments	20%
Quiz (19 <sup>th</sup> Oct)	20%
Final exam TBA	35%
Research paper (23 <sup>rd</sup> Nov)	20%
Class Participation	5%

### **Class Schedule** (very much subject to change)

5 Sep - Introduction - how important are statistical methods in PS today?  
We'll examine on-line several important journals for examples

#### **The First Great Methods Debate**

7 Sep - Traditional versus Behavioural

Modes of the traditional research -Historical, Institutional, Legal, and Normative

R.A. Rhodes, "The Institutional Approach", in M&S, chpt 2. - required [REQ]

12 Sep - The Scientific Approach

Behaviour and quantitative methods

LeRoy [Roy] Chp 1. Install Microcase and try Worksheet [wkt] 1 on your own

JR Brown, Chp 2 "The Scientific Experience" & skim1. (optional)  
W.L. Miller, "Quantitative Methods", M&S, Chp8. (optional)

14 Sep – Objections to science from the first debate. Begin Measurement.  
Roy Chp 2. - Measurement [REQ]  
Colin Hay, "Structure and Agency" M&S, chp 10 (optional)

### **Measurement and Data**

19 Sep – Assignment 1 Due [a page from Wkt2 –TBA]  
In class, the rest of Wkt2.  
Roy Chp 3 Types of Data [REQ]

### **Hypotheses and Variables**

21 Sep – In class, Wkt3. Variables.  
Roy Chp 4 Variables, Variation and Explanation [REQ]

26 Sep – In class, Wkt4. Hypothesis testing.  
Roy Chp 5 Hypotheses [REQ]

### **Surveys, Sampling and sampling distributions**

28 Sep - Assignment 2 Due [a page from Wkt5 –TBA]  
In class, the rest of Wkt5.  
Roy Chp 6 Sampling [REQ] and 7 Data Entry [optional]

### **Some Basic Univariate descriptive statistics**

Measures of central tendency, variation

3 Oct - In class, Wkt6.  
Roy Chp 8 Descriptive Stats [REQ]  
[Central Limit Theorem and significance]

5 Oct - In class, Wkt8  
How to use SPSS. [possible lab day]  
More on confidence intervals.

10 Oct - Assignment 3 Due – print out from SPSS.  
Roy Chp 9 Crosstabs [REQ]

### **Simple measures of bivariate association**

Hypothesis test, significance test, t-test and chi-square.

12 Oct - In class, Wkt10.  
Roy Chp 10 Tests of statistical significance [REQ]  
Also required – "Jordan & Sanchez" - article link on Brightspace

17 Oct - Assignment 4 Due [a page from Wkt10 –TBA]  
In class, the rest of Wkt10.  
Review to this point

19 Oct – Quiz

**Control variables and spurious relationships**

24 Oct - Roy Chp 11 Controls with Crosstabs [REQ]  
Also required – "Gamson & Modig" - article link on Brightspace

**Correlations among metric variables**

Pearson correlation, scatter plots and regression.  
26 Oct - Assignment 5 Due – print out from SPSS of own crosstab.  
In class, Wkt11.  
Roy Chp 12 – read first half – simple regression [REQ]

31 Oct - More on regression [catch-up day]

Nov 2 - Multiple regression

By this date all students should have submitted a brief statement on their planned research paper (for approval by the instructor), including hypothesis to be tested, data set, and basic method.

Roy Chp 12 – read rest of chapter [REQ]

Nov 7 - Assignment 6 Due [a page from Wkt12 –TBA]  
More on multiple regression – Beta Weights

Nov 9 - In class, the rest of Wkt12. [possible lab day]

Dal Reading Week [ 14 & 16 Nov]

**More advanced topics**

Nov 21 - ANOVA

Nov 23 - Research paper to be uploaded in Brightspace by this date.

Nov 28 – a brief introduction to logistic regression, factor analysis, and scaling and cluster analysis

Nov 30 – review for the final

Final exam period – 6 thru 16 Dec.

## **SECTION B: UNIVERSITY POLICIES, STATEMENTS, GUIDELINES and RESOURCES for SUPPORT**

This course is governed by the academic rules and regulations set forth in the [University Calendar](#) and the Senate.

### **University Statements**

#### *Academic Integrity*

At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect (The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999). As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity. Click [here](#) to read more.

#### *Accessibility*

The Advising and Access Services Centre is Dalhousie's centre of expertise for student accessibility and accommodation. The advising team works with students who request accommodation as a result of: a disability, religious obligation, or any barrier related to any other characteristic protected under Human Rights legislation (NS, NB, PEI, NFLD). Click [here](#) to read more.

#### *Student Code of Conduct*

Everyone at Dalhousie is expected to treat others with dignity and respect. The Code of Student Conduct allows Dalhousie to take disciplinary action if students don't follow this community expectation. When appropriate, violations of the code can be resolved in a reasonable and informal manner—perhaps through a restorative justice process. If an informal resolution can't be reached, or would be inappropriate, procedures exist for formal dispute resolution. Click [here](#) to read more.

#### *Diversity and Inclusion – Culture of Respect*

Every person at Dalhousie has a right to be respected and safe. We believe inclusiveness is fundamental to education. We stand for equality. Dalhousie is strengthened in our diversity. We are a respectful and inclusive community. We are committed to being a place where everyone feels welcome and supported, which is why our Strategic Direction prioritizes fostering a culture of diversity and inclusiveness (Strategic Priority 5.2). Click [here](#) to read more.

#### *Recognition of Mi'kmaq Territory*

Dalhousie University would like to acknowledge that the University is on Traditional Mi'kmaq Territory. The Elders in Residence program provides students with access to First Nations elders for guidance, counsel and support. Visit the office in the McCain Building (room 3037) or contact the programs at [elders@dal.ca](mailto:elders@dal.ca) or 902-494-6803 (leave a message).

### **University Policies and Programs**

- Important Dates in the Academic Year (including add/drop dates)  
[http://www.dal.ca/academics/important\\_dates.html](http://www.dal.ca/academics/important_dates.html)
- University Grading Practices: Statement of Principles and Procedures

[https://www.dal.ca/dept/university\\_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html](https://www.dal.ca/dept/university_secretariat/policies/academic/grading-practices-policy.html)

- Scent-Free Program  
<https://www.dal.ca/dept/safety/programs-services/occupational-safety/scent-free.html>

### **Learning and Support Resources**

- General Academic Support - Academic Advising:  
[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/advising.html)
- Copyright and Fair Dealing: <https://libraries.dal.ca/services/copyright-office/fair-dealing/fair-dealing-guidelines.html>
- Libraries: <http://libraries.dal.ca>
- Student Health and Wellness (includes Counselling and Psychological Services):  
[https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/health-and-wellness/services-support/student-health-and-wellness.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/health-and-wellness/services-support/student-health-and-wellness.html)
- Black Student Advising: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/black-student-advising.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/black-student-advising.html)
- Indigenous Student Centre: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/communities/indigenous.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/communities/indigenous.html)
- ELearning Website: <https://www.dal.ca/dept/elearning.html>
- Student Advocacy Services: <http://dsu.ca/dsas>
- Dalhousie Ombudsperson: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/safety-respect/student-rights-and-responsibilities/where-to-get-help/ombudsperson.html)
- Writing Centre: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html)
- Studying for Success program and tutoring: [https://www.dal.ca/campus\\_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html](https://www.dal.ca/campus_life/academic-support/study-skills-and-tutoring.html)