

POLS 4000: Systematic Analysis

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Class Hours: TR 9:30-10:45am

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Course Description¹

Many students often comment, particularly in introductory courses, that they struggle with political science because they do not do well with history. However, political science is more than history, though history certainly informs our discipline, particularly those of us that study American political development. Political science is a social science that makes scientific observations to test hypotheses and propose theories. This course is designed to teach you *how* we test the hypotheses, propose theories, and explain phenomena and give you the requisite skills to conduct your own research.

The course has four components to teach you how to analyze, interpret, and present political science research. First, you will complete four research paper homework assignments to teach you how to draft a complete, coherent, research paper. The second component is in-class lectures and independent readings that will teach you the core terms and concepts needed to conduct research in political science; your knowledge will be assessed on two separate exams. The third component is lab exercises that will teach you how to conduct statistical analysis independently using computer software. Lastly, you will write a research paper building upon the homework assignments above and you will demonstrate your ability to conduct independent, original research and present it effectively.

Required Readings

- Pollock, Philip H. III. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. 5th Edition
- Pollock, Philip H. III. 2016. *An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*. 5th Edition

Software

IBM SPSS Statistics Standard GradPack 25 is available on lab and library computers but you can purchase a 6 month license if you wish to have it on a personal computer. ([Windows](#) | [macOS](#))

¹I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus at any time. Students will be notified when changes are made.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester you will be able to:

- interpret statistical analysis;
- propose and test hypotheses;
- recall key concepts and definitions;
- analyze data using statistical software;
- synthesize research in the form of a literature review;
- present independent research in the form of a research paper.

Course Assignments

Research Paper Homework Assignments:

- Assignment 1: Develop a Research Question (Due February 15 by 5:00pm)
- Assignment 2: The Literature Review (Due March 15 by 5:00pm)
- Assignment 3: Research Design (Due March 29 by 5:00pm)
- Assignment 4: Analysis & Assessment (Due May 1 by 5:00pm)

Lab Exercises (Multiple Due Dates): We will work through various exercises during our lab class sessions. You will complete these in class and submit them to D2L by the end of class.

Exam #1 (March 8): The first exam will be a one hour in-class exam consisting of short answer and essay questions designed to assess your ability to recall key terms and concepts from Pollock chapters 1-5 and skills acquired through lab work.

Exam #2 (May 3): The second exam will be a one hour in-class exam consisting of short answer and essay questions designed to assess your ability to recall key terms and concepts from Pollock chapters 6-10 and skills acquired through lab work.

Research Paper (Due May 11): The paper will be due the Friday of finals week, but if you keep up with the paper assignments you'll easily have it finished the last week of classes. The paper must conform to standard formatting (12 point font, 1 inch margins, and double spaced) and follow the [APSA citation style](#).

The paper must be an original research paper (i.e., you cannot submit a paper that has been or is being submitted to another class). However, I will consider permitting students that have attempted this class before to use a research idea from the previous attempt on a case-by-case basis. You need to meet with me by the end of week two if you want to continue working on a paper/idea that you the began in a previous semester of POLS 4000.

Specification Grading

Specification grading is something I am trying for the first time this semester. All of your assignments will be graded as Pass/Fail and you will know exactly what is required for a passing grade. The purpose for this is to (hopefully) avoid the subjectivity of grading and to save you the urge to email asking why your paper was a 93 instead of a 97 or an 84 instead of a 90. Numerical grading, even with a strong rubric, is challenging and often inconsistent. Therefore, we will use specification grading and you get to determine your final grade in the class by completing one of the following “bundles.” The bundles must be completed as prescribed, i.e., you do not get to swap assignments. For example, if you complete all lab exercises, the paper assignments, and the final exam with a “Sat” you will still fail the course. You **MUST** complete the bundle as specified. Finally, I will give students the opportunity to revise and resubmit assignments that are borderline (which I realize is subjective, but I am doing my best). Students that receive an “R & R” will be given detailed feedback on how to make their assignment satisfactory and will be given one week to resubmit after the feedback is delivered.

Bundle	Satisfactory Grade on:
A	Ten Lab Exercises, All paper homework assignments, Both Exams, & Research Paper
B	Seven Lab Exercises, Both Exams, & Research Paper
C	Both Exams & Research Paper
D	Both Exams
F	None of the above

Course Policies:

- **Office Hours and Contact:** Office hours are stated on the front page of the syllabus. I will be in my office to assist students during the times listed UNLESS an emergency arises in which case I will notify students. Students can contact me via GeorgiaView, Slack, or email (keith.lee@gcsu.edu), though Slack is preferred.
- **Late Policy:** No assignments will be accepted after the due date. Every assignment will be posted with ample time to complete them, thus a medical/family emergency on the due date is not an acceptable excuse. Get your work done early and you should not have any issues.
- **Attendance and Absences:** Attendance is mandatory for this class. Students completing the A bundle must have no more than 2 absences; B bundle no more than 3 absences; C bundle no more than 4 absences. Five or more absences will result in a “D” for the course as long as you pass both exams.
- **Academic dishonesty:** Cheating, to include plagiarism, will not be tolerated and will result in an “F” in the course. This class will use plagiarism detection via GeorgiaView.
- Please read these additional [common syllabus statements](#) provided by Georgia College.

Class Schedule

EPA - *The Essentials of Political Analysis*

CPA - *An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*

*Note: I do call on students regularly asking questions from the text. Rather than give quizzes this semester, I will use these opportunities to assess your preparation. If you are not able to answer basic questions, thus indicating you are not prepared, you will be asked to leave and will receive an absence for that day's class.

Week 01, 01/15 - 01/19: Course Introduction

- Tuesday: Course Syllabus; Introduction in EPA (pp. xvii-xxii)
- Thursday: EPA Chapter 1

Week 02, 01/22 - 01/26: Measurement

- Tuesday: EPA Chapter 2
- Thursday: LAB CPA Getting Started & Chapter 1

Week 03, 01/29 - 02/02: Descriptive Statistics

- Tuesday: LAB CPA Chapter 2
- Thursday: LAB CPA Chapter 3

Week 04, 02/05 - 02/09: Propositions, Hypotheses, and Comparisons

- Tuesday: EPA Chapter 3
- Thursday: LAB CPA Chapter 4

Week 05, 02/12 - 02/16: Research Design and the Logic of Control

- Tuesday: EPA Chapter 4; [Lee, Bryan, & LaPlant 2017](#)
- Thursday: CPA Chapter 11

Week 06, 02/19 - 02/23: Making Controlled Comparisons

- Tuesday: EPA Chapter 5
- Thursday: LAB Chapter 5

Week 07, 02/26 - 03/02: Writing a Literature Review

- Tuesday: Review Chapter and Notes from EPA 11; [Knopf 2006](#)
- Thursday: Independent Writing Day (No Class)

Week 08, 03/05 - 03/09: Exam Week

- Tuesday: Exam Review
- Thursday: Exam #1

Week 09, 03/12 - 03/16: Research Question, Hypotheses, and Peer Review

- Tuesday: **LAB** Literature Review Peer Review (Bring 2 copies of draft to class)
- Thursday: **LAB** Workshop on Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Models

Week 10, 03/19 - 03/23: Spring Break

Week 11, 03/26 - 03/30: Inference

- Tuesday: EPA Chapter 6
- Thursday: **LAB** CPA Chapter 6

Week 12, 04/02 - 04/06: Measures of Association

- Tuesday: EPA Chapter 7
- Thursday: **LAB** CPA Chapter 7

Week 13, 04/09 - 04/13: Correlation & Linear Regression

- Tuesday: EPA Chapter 8
- Thursday: **LAB** CPA Chapter 8

Week 14, 04/16 - 04/20: Interaction Effects

- Tuesday: Review Chapter and Notes from EPA 5 and [Lee, Bryan, & LaPlant 2017](#)
- Thursday: **LAB** CPA Chapter 9

Week 15, 04/23 - 04/27: Logistic Regression

- Tuesday: EPA Chapter 9
- Thursday: **LAB** CPA Chapter 10

Week 16, 04/30 - 05/04: Exam Week

- Tuesday: EPA Chapter 10; Exam Review
- Thursday: Exam #2

Week 17, 05/07 - 05/11: Final Exam Week