



POL 361
Techniques of Empirical Research

Department of Politics and International Studies
Winter 2019

Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30 – 9:50 AM
NIC 110

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I would like to acknowledge that the land on which our class gathers is the traditional and unceded territory of the Abenaki People.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to quantitative methods in social science research. This course familiarizes students with the use of statistics in political science research and public policy decision making. This course provides students with the skills to interpret and evaluate the results of studies using quantitative methods. Topics include univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistics, sampling, hypothesis testing, and simple regression.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Some people think statistics are boring, too hard to understand, or irrelevant to their lives. They might be right! But, that doesn't mean *you* shouldn't be literate in the design and use of statistical methods in social science research. This course will provide you with the tools to understand research results derived and presented using statistics. Together, we will learn about the design, collection, and interpretation of descriptive statistics (such in the Census of Canada), the use of statistical modelling in policy decision making (such as setting insurance rates), and how to the read scholarly publications containing statistical data (including those tables people usually skip!). The central learning objective in this course is for you to develop *statistical literacy*. By the end of this course, students should be familiar with univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistics, sampling, hypothesis testing, and simple regression analysis. You should be able to interpret the statistical data presented in a scholarly publication. You will develop the foundation required for future training in statistical methods at the graduate level or in professional settings.

READING REQUIREMENTS

In this course, there is one required text. The textbook can be purchased in-person or online through the **Bishop's University Bookstore** (Marjorie Donald Building), accessed in the course reserves at the **John Bassett Memorial Library**, or ordered through online retailers. You may use either the print or the electronic versions of the text.

- Haan, Michael and Jenny Godley. 2017. *An Introduction to Statistics for Canadian Social Scientists*. Third Edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press Canada. 475 pp.

Readings have been limited to ~10-15 pp. per week. The assigned labs are included in the textbook. The labs are designed to reinforce the concepts learned in lecture and to provide hands-on experience in the use of statistical software and the manipulation/interpretation of quantitative data. Students are expected to attend classes prepared to engage these assigned materials through lectures, lab work, classroom discussion, online discussion, and breakout groups.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Due Date	Value
1. Attendance (lecture and labs)	Ongoing	15%
2. Quiz #1	Jan. 31	15%
3. Quiz #2	Feb. 14 ♥	15%
4. Quiz #3	Mar. 14 (Moodle)	15%
5. Quiz #4	Mar. 28	10%
6. Quiz #5	Apr. 9	10%
7. Journal Article Interpretation Assignment	Apr. 9	20%

Attendance (15%) – Attendance in this class is mandatory. Course material is cumulative – that is, each concept builds upon the last one learned. Missing classes, labs, and quizzes is not only detrimental to your ongoing learning, but will impede your ability to learn concepts presented later in the course.

If you need to miss a class for a pre-scheduled event (i.e. academic event, athletic event, or family emergency), arrangements should be made *before* the missed class.

Quizzes 1-5 (10-15% = 65% total) – Your performance in the course will be assessed by five quizzes administered during the term. Each quiz will contain a mixture multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. The quizzes will be scheduled for 30 minutes at the beginning of class.

Students should invest in a scientific calculator (approx. \$12-\$15) for use during quizzes. Smartphones will not be permitted as a substitute for calculators.

Journal Article Interpretation Assignment (20%) – You will be assigned a journal article from the *Canadian Journal of Political Science* that uses quantitative data and statistical analysis. You will write a two-page (<500 word) interpretation of the article. You will be asked to describe and interpret, in detail, the study's core findings, its use of statistics, and what the numerical data presented in the article means. In other words, you will demonstrate your *statistical literacy*!

This assignment must be completed individually. Students working in groups or submitting similar responses could receive a mark of ‘0’ on this assignment. Collaborating on such assignments is a form of academic misconduct.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic accommodations. Student Accessibility & Accommodation Services provides a wide array of individualized support services to meet the needs of students with disabilities in order that they may define and achieve personal autonomy while pursuing higher education. **[To be reviewed.]**

Assignment submission guidelines. All written assignments must be submitted through Moodle. Assignments will not be accepted by email or under my office door. Please see *late penalty* for more information about submitting late assignments.

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments must conform to the stipulated page length, and must be typed using **12 point Times New Roman font (or open-source equivalent), one inch margins, and double spacing of the lines.** Failure to comply with the length or format requirements will result in one of the following penalties, depending on my assessment of the seriousness of the departure from the requirements:

- (a) rejection of the assignment in its entirety and entry of a grade of zero for the assignment;
- (b) refusal to grade those portions of the assignment that fail to comply with the length or format requirements; or
- (c) imposition of a grade penalty reflecting the failure to comply with the length or format requirements, having regard to the nature and extent of the non-compliance.

All written assignments will be marked in accordance with rubrics distributed with assignment instructions and posted on Slack. Grade appeals should be made to me, accompanied by a one-page (~ 250 words) write-up outlining why the assignment grade should be appealed. Once appealed, the grade will be reconsidered and could go up or down.

Classroom community and participation. The classroom should be an anti-oppressive learning environment. We will adhere at all times to a policy of mutual respect in sharing opinions and ideas, in accordance with Bishop’s University’s Policy on the Prevention of Harassment (<https://www.ubishops.ca/about-bu/bishops-university-leadership-and-vision/governance-and-administration/harassment/>). Rude, discriminatory, oppressive, or otherwise marginalizing comments or language will not be tolerated.

Email Policy. I will respond to emails within 48 hours during weekdays. I will only respond sporadically to emails sent on weekends. You should note the course code (‘POL 123’) in the subject line of your email.

Grading. Grading in this course will be done using percentage grades. See below for this course’s grading scheme:

Passing grade.....	50% – 100%; P (pass)
Failing grade.....	0% – 49%; F (failure)
80%–100%.....	(equivalent to A)
70%–79%.....	(equivalent to B)
60%–69%.....	(equivalent to C)
50%–59%.....	(equivalent to D)

I'll use your pronoun. It's no big deal. See www.nbdcampaign.ca. In addition, class rosters and University data systems are provided to instructors with students' legal names. However, knowing that not all students use their legal names or sex/gender assigned at birth, I am happy to use the name and/or pronouns you use. We will take time during our first class together to do introductions, at which point you can share with all members of our learning community what name and pronouns you use. If these change at any point during the semester, please let me know and we can develop a way to share this information with others in a way that is comfortable and safe for you. [Borrowed from Dr. Z Nicolazzo - @trans_killjoy]

Late penalties. Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day, including weekend days.

In exceptional circumstances, I will consider extensions for written work. Appropriate official documentation must be provided. Extensions cannot be granted beyond the end of term.

Language of instruction. The language of instruction of the institution is English. Nonetheless, students have the option to submit individual written work in either English or French, except where a knowledge or competency in a language is an object of the course. Students who wish to submit work in French must notify their instructor by the Add/Drop deadline so that, if necessary, special arrangements can be made for the evaluation of their work. Please see the Academic Calendar for more information.

Make-up tests. Make-up tests for missed midterm exams will only be considered when appropriate official documentation is provided from a medical professional or the Dean of Arts and Sciences. If a quiz will be missed due to a pre-scheduled event (i.e. academic event, athletic event, or family emergency), arrangements should be made *before* the scheduled quiz.

Plagiarism. Reproduced from the Bishop's University Academic Calendar:

2.1 Plagiarism is a kind of academic dishonesty in which an individual uses the work of another without appropriate acknowledgement. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following practices:

- Using another's work without acknowledgement
- Copying material without quotation marks
- Paraphrasing too closely the exact words of the originating author
- Submitting work written in whole or in part as one's own by another individual.

2.2 The following practices related to plagiarism are also prohibited:

- Helping another student plagiarize
- Submitting in whole or in part work for which the student has received credit in another course, unless the permission of the instructor has been obtained
- Submitting any statement of fact known to be false or providing a fabricated reference to a source.

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Religious observance. Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event.

Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Slack. Slack is an online tool that allows users to chat, share content, and direct messages through their browser, desktop, tablet, or smartphone app. Slack has been widely adopted as a means of office communications across the private sector and particularly by journalism, media, and internet companies. We'll be using Slack to facilitate participation outside the classroom. I will also hold online office hours concurrently with my office hours in McGreer and at other times. Supplementary readings and materials will be distributed through Slack. You can download the desktop or mobile app here: www.slack.com.

Writing Centre. The Writing Centre is located in the Library. Get help with planning, organizing, outlining, sentence structure, grammar, referencing and citations. This service is free.

Make an appointment with writing centre staff by using the online booking system (<http://buwritingcenter.simplybook.me>). Appointments are available from Mondays to Friday. Planning in advance is the key to your success; last minute appointments are hard to obtain, especially near the end of the session.

OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Date	Topic	Required Reading/Assessments
Jan. 10	Introduction	Chap. 1
Jan. 15	Univariate Statistics	Chaps. 2-3 *Math self-diagnostic*
Jan. 17		Labs #1, #2, #3
Jan. 22	Probability & the Normal Curve	Chaps. 4-5
Jan. 24		Labs #4 and #5
Jan. 29	Standard Deviation	Chap. 7
Jan. 31		Lab #7 *Quiz #1*
Feb. 5	Sampling	Chaps. 8-9
Feb. 7		Lab #8
Feb. 12	Testing Hypotheses I	Chap. 10
Feb. 14		Lab #9 *Quiz #2*
Feb. 19	Testing Hypotheses II	Chap. 11
Feb. 21		Lab #10
Feb. 26	Bivariate Analysis I	Chap. 12
Feb. 28		Lab #11
Mar. 4-8	READING WEEK	
Mar. 12	Bivariate Analysis II	Chap. 13
Mar. 14	CLASS CANCELLED	*Quiz #3* via MOODLE
Mar. 19	Bivariate Analysis III	Chap. 14
Mar. 21		Labs #12 and #13
Mar. 26	ANOVA	Chap. 15
Mar. 28		Lab #14 *Quiz #4*
Apr. 2	Multivariate Analysis	Chap. 16
Apr. 4		Lab #15
Apr. 9		*Quiz #5* *Journal Article Interpretation due*

Appendix A – Online Code of Conduct

In this course, you will be participating in course discussions and assignments in-person and through a variety of online tools. I expect you to adhere to the same standards of behaviour and engagement that you would follow in person and on campus.

1. Respectful conduct

- a. All participants in online discussions should maintain an environment that is *free of harassment* towards the teaching team and members of the class. This includes demeaning written or oral comments based on ability, age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, ethnic origin, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, language group, marital status, place of origin, race, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, religion, religious dress, religious practice, sex, and/or sexual orientation of that individual or those individuals. All participants must abide by the Bishop's University Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.ubishops.ca/wp-content/uploads/Code-of-Student-Conduct.pdf>). Please refer to the Code for additional information.
- b. All participants should *respect the views of others* and respond in a courteous manner in our discussions about the materials and issues explored in the course.
- c. All participants should make *valuable contributions* to online discussions. Contributions should be thoughtful and in keeping with the tone and direction of our discussions.
- d. All participants should respect the privacy of other members of the class by not sharing or spreading private information.
- e. All participants should respect the integrity of Bishop University's computer systems, such as Moodle, and the online discussion tool slack.com.