QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS
POL S 2810/ Spring 2017
LECTURE AND LAB: MoWeFr 11:00AM - 12:07PM / KH D1043
Lower division POLS core requirement
Prerequisite: POLS 150 and MATH 091 or satisfactory performance on mathematics placement examination given during registration.

Professor Gar Culbert, Ph.D.
Office: E&T A525
gculbert@calstatela.edu
Office hours: Mo and Fr 9:00am – 9:45am, Mo 2:15pm – 3:15pm, and Th by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION
With increasing regularity political scientists are employing quantitative methodologies to investigate political phenomena. In this course you will be introduced to these methods so that, at a minimum, you will be able to read such studies with greater comprehension. This will hopefully evolve in to you have a greater ability to critically assess the quantitative research of others, and eventually lead you to even conduct your own research. This, however, as the course title states, is an introduction only. And while our aims here are relatively modest, they should serve as a foundation for further study in this arena should you choose to pursue it. The skills learned in the class should apply across disciplines and should make you a more sophisticated scholar and reader regardless of your future pursuits. Certainly this class is about understanding and using numbers. More importantly, however, this course is about critical thinking and the logic of research design.

POL S STATED LEARNING OUTCOMES
Critical Thinking and Political Communication:
Students should demonstrate critical thinking skills through their understanding of the theories and methods of political science, and should have the capacity to present and defend their views effectively in written and/or oral format.

Foundations of Political Science
Students should have a basic knowledge of the content of the major subfields in political science: American Politics, Comparative Politics, International Relations, and Political Theory.

POLICIES:
Moodle
This class will make use of Moodle as means to grant students access to material as well as a mode of communication. Course materials (including, but not limited to, assignments and the syllabus), will be posted on, or e-mailed through Moodle. To log into Moodle, students must have an NIS account. BE SURE YOU ARE ON MOODLE BY THE 2ND CLASS MEETING. Users can log directly into the course by using the following URL: https://moodle.calstatela.edu/. Students who are registered for this class on GET will automatically be entered into the Moodle site for the course.
**E-mail**

E-mail is a tremendous tool and has dramatically altered the way people interact and communicate with one another. It is a great way for you to get in contact with me and ask questions. While the best way to interact with me is face-to-face (usually during office hours) please do not hesitate to send me, or our GA, e-mails if you have questions about the course material. However, here are some things you should know about e-mail.

For this class, you must make use of your “calstatela.edu” e-mail address. I tend not to read or respond to e-mails from your gmail, yahoo, or any other personal e-mail accounts.

E-mails sent to me (or any other member of the faculty for that matter) should be considered formal documents. It is not appropriate to open your e-mail informally (ex. “Yo prof.” or “hey-“) nor is it appropriate to not use appropriate punctuation or grammar. You are not writing a text message or updating your twitter account. You are writing an e-mail to your professor and the form and tone of the e-mail should indicate as much.

Please do not e-mail me about the material in this document. If you want to ask about a point of clarification you should absolutely do so. But please be sure you have read the syllabus first and have looked for the answer to your question there before e-mailing me.

Please be sure to use the proper subject heading in your e-mails to me. Too often students simply press reply to an e-mail, but they are actually e-mailing me about a different topic all together. I get a lot of e-mails from students on a daily basis and it is difficult for me to triage and keep track of these e-mails if the subject heading does not indicate what is actually going on in the e-mail.

Also, please avoid e-mailing me about your grades or performance in the class. You should be able to figure that out most of the time. Please e-mail me with questions about how you can learn more and how you might improve your understanding of the course material.

*I reserve the right to simply ignore e-mails that do not meet any of these criteria.*

Finally, I have a very bad memory … especially for conversations that you have with me individually. So, for example, if you talk to me after class to set-up an appointment to meet with me during office hours, you must follow-up with an e-mail. If you don’t, chances are I will forget that we had the conversation.

**Students with Disabilities**

Reasonable accommodation will be provided to any student who is registered with the Office of Students with Disabilities and requests needed accommodation. Students with verified disabilities are eligible for a variety of support services from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) in the Student Affairs Building, Room 115. If you think you may require academic accommodations, you must be registered with the OSD office.

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

You must do your own work. Plagiarism is not acceptable. Academic dishonesty of any sort will be addressed, and will likely result in you receiving an F for the assignment or course and a report to the Dean of Students. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to,
presenting someone else’s work as your own work, and failure to properly and appropriately reference and acknowledge the ideas and words of others. Whenever an idea is remotely derivative, you must cite your source! Please review the Student Handbook for more information.

**Incompletes**
Although it is generally discouraged, it is within the professor's discretion to grant incompletes. I am not inclined to avail myself of this option. However, under extraordinary and appropriate circumstances (i.e. in the event of some emergency) I may grant an incomplete if the student provides the appropriate documentation and has already completed 2/3 of the required workload for the semester.

**Grading Criteria and Due Dates**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework/Exercises</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>MidTerm Assignment/Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper/Project</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>May 17th</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Every class meeting</td>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<td>A</td>
<td>93 or more</td>
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<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 92</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
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<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 72</td>
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<td>D+</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>63 – 66</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60 – 62</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59 or less</td>
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**Classroom Expectations**

**Attendance:**
It is entirely up to you whether or not to show up for class. But I can assure you that you need to in order to pass this class. And, of course, your participation grade depends on you actually be in class. You cannot pass this class unless you complete it. And you need to be in class in order to complete the participation component. Excessive absences will result in failure.

**Classroom Behavior and Electronic Devices:**
I also expect common courtesy for your fellow classmates and as well as myself. This means turning off your cell phones, saving your private conversations for outside of class, showing up on time for class on time, returning from breaks in a timely manner, and staying for the duration of each class.

**Use of any** kind of electronic device (aside from those in the classroom—which should only be used for class work) **is not allowed**; this includes cell phones, tape recorders, and laptop computers. Lecture notes must be taken by hand unless reasonable accommodations are necessary.
If you demonstrate a lack of courtesy in the aforementioned or other (at this time unforeseen) ways you will be asked to leave the class, receiving a zero for that day’s assignment. Please behave appropriately.

Disclaimer:
In order for this class to be fun (which it absolutely can and should be) please come to class with a sense of humor, an open mind, and a willingness to work! The discussion of political issues inevitably generates controversy and disagreement among students; that is part of what makes politics so interesting. Trust among students, and between students and myself, is necessary to foster truly interesting and helpful discussions. It is absolutely necessary that students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas, and while of course you are entitled, indeed, welcome, to disagree with your classmates and myself, please do so respectfully. Some points of view or opinions expressed in class may be offensive to you, please try not to take them personally. We are trying to learn about the world and the political interactions that take place among people who sometimes have strong disagreements. Allowing people to challenge your own sensibilities and legitimately considering what it is that they have to say will lead to a more rewarding experience for everyone in class.

Course Requirements
Your final grade in the class will be broken into four (4) principal components. You must complete all of these in order to receive a passing grade in the class.

1. **Exercises/Homework (30%)**: There will be regularly scheduled exercises assigned from both texts. The due dates for each are announced in class as they come up. You cannot turn these assignments in late!

2. **Midterm Exam (15%)**: For this exam you will be asked to demonstrate your mastery of the material and skills presented at that point in the semester. There should be no surprises at this point. This exam will have both a multiple choice and/or short answer component in addition to a lab component.

3. **Final Project (50%)**: You are required, on or before the start of the final on December 7th to turn in a final paper that should be no more than 20 pages in length. We will discuss the specifics of this paper in more detail as the semester develops, but your essential job is to design (but not execute) your own research project in political science. The good news is that you will have plenty of time to work on this paper. Midway through the semester you should have picked out a topic already, as you will be asked to answer some fairly basic questions about it in in-class. You cannot turn this paper in late!

4. **In Class Participation (10%)**: As with most other things in life, just showing up is not enough. You must be prepared to participate. Quality participation will involve coming to class having read and critically reflected upon the weekly readings, and then using this preparation to engage in an exchange of ideas. Regurgitation is not sufficient.
is not a spectator sport. If you are not actively engaged in our discussion, I will call on you to reflect, respond or address the question at hand.

When all is said and done I ask that in class, and especially in your papers, you indicate what it is that you are thinking, and explain why you think it. This, of course, presupposes (1) that you think something and, (2) that you can demonstrate what it is in the text that has caused you to take this position. While this seems straightforward enough on the surface, let me assure you that this fundamental point has been overlooked a number of times by all of us. Indeed it is essential that you be able to present solid reasoning for the positions you take. There are no “right” answers in politics—there are plenty of wrong ones though.

**Course Materials**

You are expected, to come to class with a hard copy of the assigned texts EVERY day. IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL that you are able to access the internet and Moodle. Fortunately, the campus is equipped with a number of computer labs and the library (which also has a number of computers you can use) is centrally located.


Software for the class is available through the myCSULA portal. We will discuss this further in class.

I am also a firm believer that the study of politics is made more relevant and interesting through reference to current events in the real world. You are **ENCOURAGED** to read daily newspapers (on-line or in print) and periodicals (even television) for articles or discussions of issues and stories that relate to the course. You should then bring interesting examples to class for discussion. Being able to apply the issues we discuss in this course to experiences and events outside the class will not only make the class more interesting but will make the class more rewarding as well.

You will also probably want to have a small USB “thumb” drive for transferring data, as well as a small calculator for in-class work.

**Course Schedule:**

This lecture schedule should be interpreted as a general outline for the class. Readings will be added/removed and the schedule will most likely be modified throughout the semester. Therefore it is important that you come to class so that you know what’s going on at all times. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to find out what you missed—be sure to get the contact information of a fellow classmate so that you can inquire with them about the material you missed and any assignments that might be due.
Unit 1: *Course Introduction and Measuring Concepts*
- * Essentials: Chapter 1
  - Exercises Due at start of the Unit 1.
- * Companion: Chapter 1
  - Exercises due before start of Unit 2.

Goal: produce working, measurable, definitions of terms.

Unit 2: *Measuring and Describing Variables*
- * Essentials: Chapter 2
  - Exercises Due at start of Unit 2.
- * Companion: Chapter 2
  - Exercises Due before start of Unit 3.

Goal 1: Interpret a Frequency Table.
Goal 1: Categorize variable as nominal, ordinal, nominal, binary
Goal 2: Describe central tendency of variable.
Goal 3: Describe distribution of variable.

Unit 3: *Developing Hypotheses*
- * Essentials: Chapter 3
  - Exercises Due at start of Unit 3.
- * Companion: Chapter 3
  - Exercises Due before start of Unit 4.

Goal 1: Write a formal Hypothesis
Goal 2: Interpret a Means Comparison Table
Goal 3: Interpret a Crosstabulation

Unit 4: *Research Design*
- * Essentials: Chapter 2
  - Exercises Due at start of Unit 4.
- * Companion: Chapter 2
  - Exercises Due before Midterm Review Unit X.

Goal 1: Describe the differences between experimental and quasi-experimental design.
Goal 2: Identify a controlled relationship as spurious, additive, or interactive.

Unit X: *Midterm Review*
- In class and take-home review exercises
Unit 5: Making Controlled Comparisons
- Essentials: Chapter 5
  - Exercises Due at start of Unit 5.
- Companion: Chapter 5
  - Exercises Due before start of Unit 6.
Goal 1: Interpret a Controlled Means Comparison Table
Goal 2: Interpret a Controlled Crosstabulation

Unit 6: Introducing Statistical Inference and Tests of Significance
- Essentials: Chapter 6
  - Exercises Due at start of Unit 6.
- Companion: Chapter 5
  - Exercises Due before start of Final Unit Y.
Goal 1: Test the significance of a zero order relationship
Goal 2: Test the significance of a controlled relationship

Final Unit Y: Putting it all together
- Final Project Due in class on May 17th, 2017 at 11:20 am