

Political Science 245: Fall 2007
Political Inquiry

Dr. Carl Klarner
 Office #: Holmstedt 322 (second floor)
 Office Phone: 237-2436, much better to e-mail me
 E-mail: cklarner@isugw.indstate.edu
 Office Hours: Thursday 2:00-4:00, MWF 10-10:50
 and by appointment

Class Times and Locations:
 T/Th 12:30-1:45

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, THE FIRST STEP IS TO CHECK THE SYLLABUS.

Required Text

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, and H. T. Reynolds. 2005. *Political Science Research Methods*. 5th edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Overview of Class

This class will give you the tools you need to rigorously assess whether something causes something else. When trying to ascertain what causes what, pitfalls that befuddle a researcher are often similar across research projects. By cataloguing these common problems that others have had to deal with, we can improve our own research efforts. We will discuss how to think rigorously about our theories, and then how to test theories empirically. You will also learn how to use a statistical program called "SPSS," a very user friendly program.

Date	Class Topic / Activity	Reading Assignment	What is due?
August 23	Introduction to the class		
August 28	Introduction to Political Inquiry	Chapter 1 in J & R	
August 30	Class cancelled, I'll be at a conference		
September 4	What is science?	Chapter 2 in J & R	
September 6	How to design a research project.	Chapter 3 in J & R	Exercises from chapter 2 due
September 11	Causal diagrams		
September 13	Key terms in research	Chapter 4 in J & R	Exercises from chapter 3 due
September 18	Review for exam		
September 20	Review for exam		Exercises from chapter 4 due
September 25	Exam #1		
September 27	How to do "decompositions"		
October 2	Measurement	Chapter 6 in J & R	
October 4	More on how to do decompositions		Decomposition #1 due
October 9			Exercises from chapter 6 due

October 11	Basic statistics: sampling	Chapter 9 in J & R	
October 16	Elite interviews and survey research	Chapter 10 in J & R	Exercises from chapter 9 due
October 18	Exam #2		Exercises from chapter 10 will not be required
October 23	Univariate analysis	Chapter 11 in J & R	Have topic for your research project picked
October 25	How to use SPSS		Exercises from chapter 11 due
October 30	How to do your research project		Decomposition #2 due
November 1	Bivariate analysis	Chapter 12 in J & R Jones appendix, chaps 1 & 3	
November 6	How to use SPSS #2	Jones, chaps 6 & 8	Exercises from chapter 12 due
November 8	Multivariate analysis	Chapter 13 in J & R	
November 13	How to use SPSS #3	Jones, chap 9	Exercises from chapter 13 due
November 15	Exam #3		
November 20	No class: work on your projects		
November 22	No class: Thanksgiving break		
November 27	In class help with your research projects		
November 29	No class: work on your projects		
December 4	Students present research projects		
December 6	Students present research projects		
December 7		Research projects due	
Tuesday December 11 th 1:00 PM	No exam during our scheduled final exam		

Grading

Your final grade will be determined by the following work. Unless noted otherwise, all grades written on quizzes, tests, papers, etc. will be percentage grades (i.e., out of 100).

1. Quizzes (10% of grade): These will be given everyday, and will be over the reading and the material from previous classes. Since you actually have to do the reading for this class, I've kept the reading load as light as possible. I will drop your two lowest quiz grades of the semester. Quizzes can only be made up with an excused absence, and must be taken on the first day back after the excused absence. Makeup quizzes will be essay in format, and will be hard. Students who come in late will not be allowed to take the quiz after other students have handed their quiz in.

2. In class writing and class participation (10% of grade): there will be a lot of group work in this class, and group activities will often be followed by students writing about what they learned in their small group sessions.

3. Exercises from book (10% of grade): These are the exercises from the Johnson and Reynolds supplement.
4. Three “decomposition” papers (15% of grade, 5% each): these will be explained in depth later. They are short papers, although time consuming to do.
5. Three exams (30% of grade, 10% each): these will be short answer and essay format. The exams will be cumulative. You can only make up a missed midterm or final with an excused absence. Makeup tests will be essay format, and very difficult.
6. Final project: 25% of grade. This final project will involve finding data, conducting a statistical analysis of it in SPSS, and writing up what you found. You can come up with any project you want, but I will have to approve of it. However, all students must have a different topic from each other.
7. Attendance: students missing seven or more classes will receive a grade of “F” in the class.

I use standard break points for determining grades.

Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade	Percent	Grade
90-100	A	80-85	B	70-75	C	60-65	D
85-90	B+	75-80	C+	65-70	D+	0-60	F

Requests for a grade change must be submitted in writing. No discussion of changing a grade will be allowed before a full description in writing of the student’s complaint has been submitted. This request for a re-grade must be submitted in the body of an e-mail. In addition, you must give me any materials pertaining to the re-grade before I will start to reconsider your grade. All materials pertaining to the re-grade (i.e. your written statement and the material to be re-graded) must be received by me within one day of my handing the material back to the class. The more specific your description of your complaint, the higher the chance that your grade will be changed. A simple statement that you do not think your grade is fair will not result in a higher grade.

Readings

All of the readings from this course are either from Josyln and Rynolds, or have been posted on-line.

Maximizing Learning

I expect students to do all the readings due for a class and to read them carefully. I advise you to take notes over the readings so you understand the main points.

Please feel free to talk to me about the content of the class whenever you see me outside of class. E-mail is an excellent way to communicate with me. If you feel shy about asking questions in class or making suggestions, feel free to e-mail me or talk with me after class.

Respect for Other People

Respect for other people, by not interrupting them, listening carefully to them, and acknowledging their ideas by responding to them is expected. Under no circumstances are students to belittle the ideas of other people although you are encouraged to disagree.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating on tests includes (but may not be limited to) copying answers from another student, supplying answers to another student, obtaining unauthorized copies of the exam, and so forth. Plagiarism is the representation of someone else’s work as your own. One should use quotation marks and citations when quoting from another source. One should also use citations when using another’s ideas, even if you do not use their words. Cheating and plagiarism in this class will be punished to the maximum extent possible. I electronically archive all papers students turn in, and use the software “TurnItIn” to detect plagiarism.

Disability Accommodations

Go to the link http://www.indstate.edu/humres/affactdiversity/ADA_Final_Policy.htm for the University’s disability policy.