

# Political Analysis

POSC 311 (51955R)

## Professor

- Dr. Jennifer Cryer
- Crow CPA (CPA), #301B
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## Course Info.

- Mondays & Wednesdays
- 2:00PM - 3:20PM
- To Be Determined!
- Computer Required
- blackboard.usc.edu

## Office Hours

- Mondays & Wednesdays
- 4:00PM - 5:00PM, or by appt.
- Zoom ID: 971 9890 0557

## Grader

- Kayla Wolfe
- Crow CPA, 327
- kewolf@usc.edu

**Acknowledgements:** This course design was inspired by syllabi from Dr. James Lo's POSC311 @ USC, & Dr. Yiqing Xu's PS150A @ Stanford.

## Overview

This course will introduce students to analysis, research questions, research designs, ethical scholarship, & the development of theory. Further, the course will address approaches to research, both qualitative & quantitative in design. Empirical analysis methods from explanatory & case-based research to experimental & survey designs will be taught—with examples drawn from political behavior, comparative, & IR scholarship. Additionally, we will build coding skill using software. Students learn to develop & analyze data, while also critically evaluating methods.

## Objectives

- Gain understanding of rigorous analytical methodologies, designs, & concepts
- Improve research writing clarity & master political science discourse norms
- Execute basic to intermediate level features of the programming language

## Materials

### Downloadable Software

- a free open-source analysis software (<http://cran.wustl.edu>
- Studio a free IDE interface for (<https://www.rstudio.com>

### Textbook

Kosuke Imai. *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. 2018 (USC Bookstore

## Assignments and Grading Scale

- 10% CITI Program Training - Responsible Conduct of Research Module
- 30% Article Analysis Assignment (x2)
- 40% Applied Problem Sets (x4)
- 20% Research Design Project (Due 5/9)

	F	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A
%	<60	60-65	66-69	70-72	73-75	76-79	80-82	83-85	86-89	90-94	≥95
GPA	0	1	1.3	1.7	2	2.3	2.7	3.0	3.3	3.7	4.0

## Article Analysis Assignments

Students will complete two (2) 2 to 3 page analyses of peer-reviewed articles discussed in class. Students will identify the research questions, describe data sources, explain concepts & measurement of variables, & evaluate the method of analysis. They will then critically assess each, identifying the intellectual merit & rigor, and connecting both scholar decisions & findings to broader impacts. All papers should be well-written & proofread for clarity, with Chicago Manual of Style citations.

## Applied Problem Sets

Students will complete four (4) multi-question problem sets, testing knowledge of coding techniques, research methods, & research theories,, by uploading the .pdf to Blackboard &/or handing in a paper copy. Student are allowed to collaborate with other individuals— however collaborator names must be included at the top of the document, & all responses (code and text) should be in your own words.

## Research Design Project

Students will complete one (1) max ten page research project that will outline a research design, highlighting a critical problem in the literature, a theoretical contribution, hypotheses, & featuring some data collection & data analysis using

# FAQs

## ? New to Design & Stats?

! Great! POSC 311 is an interactive lecture for students with no experience in analysis or statistics—in class we focus on engaging research & practicing coding.

## ? What are Office Hours?

! Office hours are time *set aside for you* to discuss the course or related interests, & are scientifically proven to impact academic success! If you cannot make my listed times, book at: [jenncryer.youcanbook.me](http://jenncryer.youcanbook.me)

## ? Is Attendance Graded?

! No, attendance is not a component of the grade. However, skipping class puts you at risk of missing context, clarity, & tips.

## ? Can I Get Extra Credit?

! Yes, students receive 1% for: revising & reflecting on errors in problem sets, and/or attending office hours—for 2% total.

## ? How Much Work?

! POSC 311 requires both *reading to survey* main ideas & *completing problem sets*. Expect to spend ≈3 hours/week on work.

## ? Citing References?

! I will accept Chicago style citations/references, or any modification of the CMS. Please use the Chicago Manual Style Guide [↗](#) or the APSA Style Guide [↗](#)

## ? Feedback Matters!

! 2% extra credit will be provided to ALL students if 90% of the class completes BOTH mid- AND end-semester reviews. But collective action problems abound!!

## Accessibility & Course Design

It is the USC's goal that learning experiences be as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical, psychological, or academic barriers based on disability/condition, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss the adjustments necessary to overcome the limitations of the course design and ensure your inclusion. You may consult the Office of Disability Services and Programs [↗](#) to facilitate this conversation at 1-213-740-0776 or [DSPFrontDesk@usc.edu](mailto:DSPFrontDesk@usc.edu).



## Emergency Preparedness

In the event of an emergency, USC will provide up-to-date information via the Department of Public Safety website & TrojansAlert messages. In a declared emergency where travel to campus is infeasible, USC will announce an electronic mode of instruction. Report incidents directly to the USC Department of Public Safety [↗](#) at 1-213-740-4321 (University Park campus) or 1-323-442-1000 (Health Sciences campus), & be familiar with Campus Safety and Emergency Preparedness [↗](#) policy.

## Diversity and Inclusivity

I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, ethnicities, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability, beliefs, ideologies - and other visible & non-visible differences. Members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment for every other member. Incidents of bias, hate crimes & microaggressions can be reported to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX [↗](#) at 1-213-740-5086 or [eeotix@usc.edu](mailto:eeotix@usc.edu), to allow for appropriate investigation and response.

## Academic Conduct & Integrity

The USC Office of Student Judicial Affairs & Community Standards has severe sanctions for academic misconduct [↗](#). Academic dishonesty can include, Plagiarism or presenting someone's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in similarly-phrased words, without attribution. Or Contract Cheating i.e. submission of course work done by others on your behalf without receiving authorization. Students are expected to be familiar with all USC Dornsife policies on student integrity [↗](#).

## Mental Health & Crisis Intervention

If harmful experiences outside of the course impact your life, please consult with the USC Student Counseling Services [↗](#), which provides free & confidential mental health treatment for students, at 1-213-740-7711 or Campus Support & Intervention [↗](#), which provides academic support & crisis intervention, at 1-213-740-0411.

## Basic Needs Security

If you have difficulty affording/accessing sufficient food to eat every day, accessing technological services, or lack a safe & viable place to live, & you believe that this may affect your performance in this course, please visit The Student Basic Needs Department [↗](#) at 3730 McClintock Ave #135, Los Angeles, CA 90089.

## Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention

USC Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services [↗](#) provides immediate & confidential therapy for situations related to sexual assault, domestic violence, stalking, etc. Contact the on-call counselor at USC Engmann Student Health Center [↗](#) to confidentially discuss options, rights, & support at 1-213-740-9355 (WELL) (press "0 after-hours) or in Suite 356.

## Class Schedule

\* = Required Reading

### MODULE 1: How Should We Approach Analysis? The Logic & Methods of Social Science

#### 1/10 POSC 311 Overview & Asking Interesting Questions

\* Maryann Barakso et al. "The Research Question". Chap. 2 in *Underst. Polit. Sci. Res. Methods*. 2013  
Nick Huntington-Klein. "Research Questions". Chap. 2 in *Eff. An Introd. to Res. Des. Causality*. 2022

#### 1/12 Research Fundamentals & Processes

\* D.E. McNabb. "Research Fundamentals". Chap. 1 in *Res. Methods Polit. Sci.* 2010  
Therese L. Baker. "The Science of Social Research". Chap. 2 in *Doing Soc. Res.* 1994

#### 1/17 **HOLIDAY**

**NO CLASS**

#### 1/19 The Just Scholar: Ethical Principles in Research

\* Lee Ann Fujii. "Research ethics 101: Dilemmas and responsibilities". *PS - Polit. Sci. Polit.* 45, no. 4 (2012)  
Therese L. Baker. "The Uses and Abuses of Social Research". Chap. 3 in *Doing Soc. Res.* 1994

### MODULE 2: What Are You Asking? How Will You Pursue the Answer?

#### 1/24 Starting the Research Process: Theory, Hypotheses, & Explanations

\* Maryann Barakso et al. "Linking Theory and Inference". In *Underst. Polit. Sci. Res. Methods*. 2013  
D.E. McNabb. "Understanding the Research Process". Chap. 3 in *Res. Methods Polit. Sci.* 2010

#### 1/26 Conceptualizing & Defining Variables

\* Therese L. Baker. "From Concepts to Operationalization to Measurement". Chap. 5 in *Doing Soc. Res.* 1994  
Nick Huntington-Klein. "Describing Variables". Chap. 3 in *Eff. An Introd. to Res. Des. Causality*. 2022

#### 1/31 **CITI Responsible Conduct of Research Training Due**

**By 11:59PM, Uploaded to Blackboard**

#### 1/31 Operationalizing & Measuring Variables

\* Ethan Bueno de Mesquita et al. "Measure Your Mission". Chap. 16 in *Think. Clear. with Data*. 2021  
G.L. Munck et al. "Conceptualization and Measurement". In *SAGE Handb. Res. Methods Polit. Sci. Int. Relations*. 2020

#### 2/2 Discussion: Identifying Variables in Real Research

\* Chad Kendall et al. "How do Voters Respond to Information?" *Am. Econ. Rev.* 105, no. 1 (2015)  
Amber E. Boydstun et al. "Agenda Control in Presidential Debates". *Polit. Commun.* 30, no. 2 (2013)

Lily L. Tsai. "Solidary Groups, Accountability, & Local Public Goods Provision". *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 101, no. 2 (2007)  
Jane Mansbridge. "Rethinking representation". *Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.* 97, no. 4 (2003). arXiv: arXiv:1011.1669v3

### MODULE 3: Cause & Effect? The Fundamental Problem of Causal Inference

#### 2/7 Causality, Counterfactuals & the Potential Outcomes Framework

\* James D. Fearon. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science". *World Polit.* 43, no. 2 (1991)  
Jack S. Levy. "Counterfactuals and Case Studies". *Oxford Handb. Polit. Methodol.*, no. April (2008)

#### 2/9 **Article Response #1 Due**

**By 11:59PM, Uploaded to Blackboard**

#### 2/9 Charting Out Causal Pathways with Directed Acyclic Graphs (DAGs)

\* Nick Huntington-Klein. "Drawing Causal Diagrams". Chap. 7 in *Eff. An Introd. to Res. Des. Causality*. 2022  
Nick Huntington-Klein. "Causal Paths and Closing Back Doors". Chap. 8 in *Eff. An Introd. to Res. Des. Causality*. 2022

S.L. Morgan et al. "Causal Graphs". Chap. 3 in *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference*. 2014

### MODULE 4: Empirical & Causal Analysis with Qualitative Research Methods

#### 2/14 Case Studies & Case Selection

\* Chiara Ruffa. "Case Study Methods". In *SAGE Handb. Res. Methods Polit. Sci. Int. Relations*. 2020  
D.E. McNabb. "Explanatory Research: Case and Historical Methods". Chap. 17 in *Res. Methods Polit. Sci.* 2010

2/16 Discussion: What's The Case Set Here?

\* Eric M. Patashnik et al. "The Struggle to Remake Politics: Liberal Reform and the Limits of Policy Feedback in the Contemporary American State." *Perspect. Polit.* 11, no. 04 (2013)  
Victoria C. Hattam. "Labor, Ideology, and the State: Working-Class Formation in the United States". Chap. 1 in *Labor Visions State Power Orig. Bus. Unionism United States*. 1993

Lindsey A. O'Rourke. "The Strategic Logic of Covert Regime Change". *Secur. Stud.* 29, no. 1 (2020)  
Daniel J. Tichenor et al. "Organized Interests and American Political Development". *Polit. Sci. Q.* 117, no. 4 (2002)

2/21 **HOLIDAY**

**NO CLASS**

2/23 Interviews & Observation Studies

\* D.E. McNabb. "The Interpretive Approach II". Chap. 19 in *Res. Methods Polit. Sci.* 2010  
\* Nora Cate Schaeffer et al. "The Science of Asking Questions". *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 29 (2003)

2/28  **Article Response #2 Due**

**By 11:59PM, Uploaded to Blackboard**

2/28 Discussion: Examples of Observing & Asking in Poli. Sci.

\* Kira Sanbonmatsu. "Electing WoC: The Role of Campaign Trainings". *J. Women, Polit. Policy* 36, no. 2 (2015)  
Stephen Biddle et al. "Testing the Surge: Why Did Violence Decline in Iraq in 2007?" *Int. Secur.* 37, no. 1 (2012)

Richard Bense. *Law, Identity, & the Polling Place in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, 01, 2003  
M.N. Barnett et al. "The politics, power, and pathologies of international organizations". *Int. Organ.* 53, no. 4 (1999)

**MODULE 5:  for Empirical Analysis with Quantitative Research Methods**

3/2 QSS Lab: Understanding Population Dynamics with Means, Medians, Modes, etc.

  In-Class Computing Practice


\* Kosuke Imai. "Introduction". Chap. 1 in *Quant. Soc. Sci.* 2018  
\* D.E. McNabb. "Interpreting Exploratory and Descriptive Statistics". Chap. 11 in *Res. Methods Polit. Sci.* 2010

3/7 QSS Lab: Understanding World Population Dynamics with Scatterplots, Correlations, Distributions, etc.

  In-Class Computing Practice

\* Kosuke Imai. "Measurement". Chap. 3 in *Quant. Soc. Sci.* 2018  
Ethan Bueno de Mesquita et al. "Turn Statistics into Substance". Chap. 15 in *Think. Clear. with Data*. 2021

**MODULE 6: Addressing the Problem of Causal Inference in Political Research**

3/9  **Due: PSet #1 - Measuring Bias in Turnout**

**By 11:59PM, Uploaded to Blackboard**

3/9 Testing Causality with Observations & Experiments

\* Rebecca B. Morton et al. "Experimentation in Political Science". *Oxford Handb. Polit. Methodol.*, no. April 2021 (2008)

3/14 **HOLIDAY**

**NO CLASS**

3/16 **HOLIDAY**

**NO CLASS**

3/21 QSS Lab: Does Small-Class Size Matter In Early Education?

  In-Class Computing Practice

\* Kosuke Imai. "Causality". Chap. 2 in *Quant. Soc. Sci.* 2018

3/23 Discussion: Using Experimentation in Political Science

Katherine Clayton et al. "Real Solutions for Fake News?" *Polit. Behav.* 42, no. 4 (2020)  
Tiffany Davenport et al. "The Enduring Effects of Social Pressure". *Polit. Behav.* 32, no. 3 (2010)

Chad Kendall et al. "How Do Voters Respond to Information?" 2014  
Joanne M. Miller et al. "Conspiracy Endorsement as Motivated Reasoning". *Am. J. Pol. Sci.* 60, no. 4 (2016)

3/28	<b>Due: PSet #2 - Using Surveys to Test Political Efficacy</b>	<b>By 11:59PM, Uploaded to Blackboard</b>
3/28	<u>Discussion: Natural Experiments &amp; Difference-in-Differences</u> Elisabeth R Gerber et al. "Minorities and Direct Legislation". <i>J. Polit.</i> 61, no. 1 (2002) Jens Hainmueller et al. "Who Gets a Swiss Passport? A Natural Experiment". <i>Am. Polit. Sci. Rev.</i> 107, no. 1 (2013)	Adriane Fresh. "The Effect of the Voting Rights Act on Enfranchisement". <i>J. Polit.</i> 80, no. 2 (2018) D. Yokum et al. "A RCT evaluating the effects of police body-worn cameras". <i>PNAS</i> 116, no. 21 (2019)
3/30	<u>Research Design Brief Workshop</u> * Therese L. Baker. "Defining a Researchable Topic and Preparing a Research Plan". Chap. 4 in <i>Doing Soc. Res.</i> 1994	* D.E. McNabb. "Preparing a Research Proposal". Chap. 5 in <i>Res. Methods Polit. Sci.</i> 2010

## MODULE 7: Predicting Outcomes & The Regression Model

4/4	<u>Introduction to Regression Analysis</u> * D.E. McNabb. "Correlation and Regression Analysis in Political Science". Chap. 14 in <i>Res. Methods Polit. Sci.</i> 1. 2010	Frederick J. Gravetter et al. "Correlation and Regression". Chap. 14 in <i>Essentials Stat. Behav. Sci.</i> 2018
4/6	<u>QSS Lab: National News Effects on Voting Outcomes</u> In-Class Computing Practice	* Kosuke Imai. "Prediction". Chap. 4 in <i>Quant. Soc. Sci.</i> 2018

## MODULE 8: On Error in Estimates—Noise, Uncertainty, Random Variables & Probability

4/11	<b>Due: PSet #3 - Using Regression To Study \$ Transfers</b>	<b>By 11:59PM, Uploaded to Blackboard</b>
4/11	<u>Probability and Uncertainty in Our Measurements</u> * Kosuke Imai. "Probability". Chap. 6 in <i>Quant. Soc. Sci.</i> 2018	
4/13	<u>QSS Lab: Publication Bias in Academic Research - Hypothesis Testing &amp; t-Tests</u> In-Class Computing Practice	*Kosuke Imai. "Uncertainty". Chap. 7 in <i>Quant. Soc. Sci.</i> 2018
4/18	<u>QSS Lab: Predicting the 2016 Election with Attention to Errors</u> In-Class Computing Practice	Kosuke Imai. "Uncertainty". Chap. 7 in <i>Quant. Soc. Sci.</i> 2018
4/20	<u>Addressing Statistical Biases: The Other Source of Error</u> * Miguel Delgado-Rodríguez et al. "Bias." <i>J. Epidemiol. Community Health</i> 58, no. 8 (2004)	Bill Casselman. "The legend of Abraham Wald". <i>Am. Math. Soc.</i> (2016)

## MODULE 9: DIY Poli Sci—Summarizing the Basics of Political Analysis

4/25	<b>Due: PSet # 4 - Effects of Crisis on Poli Engagement</b>	<b>By 11:59PM, Uploaded to Blackboard</b>
4/25	<u>Research Design Project Peer Review &amp; Workshop</u>	
4/27	<u>Course Recap</u>	
5/9	<b>Due: Research Design Project</b>	<b>By 11:59PM, Uploaded to Blackboard</b>

## Representation in Course Materials

The American Political Science Association has identified representing the diversity of the profession as a core objective. Thus, I welcome your suggestions to improve this course such that assigned scholarship addresses the perspectives, approaches, & epistemologies of all backgrounds.