

# **Introduction to Empirical Analysis and Quantitative Methods, PS 3, Summer 2019\***

*Four (4) semester credits*

## **Course Description**

This course provides an overview of some of the methods employed in political science research. Its purpose is to familiarize you with the scientific study of politics, and to teach you how to pose and answer empirical research questions using appropriate evidence and arguments. Along the way we will learn about how to formulate and evaluate theories, how to design research to discover whether a particular theory holds up empirically, and some basic research strategies. By the end of the course you should have the tools to critically evaluate the kinds of social science arguments found in everyday life and be able to conduct your own independent research.

## **Prerequisites**

There are no prior course requirements other than high school level mathematics.

## **Course Objectives**

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Distinguish among different types of social science methodologies
- Solve basic 2x2 games
- Describe the logic of the experimental method
- Interpret basic descriptive statistical results
- Formulate and test hypotheses
- Explain and apply bivariate OLS regression

## **Instructor Information, Contact, Office Hours, & Communication**

### **Course Instructor**

Jason Wittenberg

[witty@berkeley.edu](mailto:witty@berkeley.edu)

## **Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs)**

While the instructor will interact with the whole class and will oversee all activities and grading, as well as being available to resolve any issues that may arise, the GSIs will be your main point of contact. Your GSIs are responsible for assisting you directly with your questions about assignments and course requirements, as outlined in the Assignments and Calendar. The GSIs will also facilitate ongoing discussion and interaction with you on major topics in each module.

## **Office Hours**

The course instructor and GSIs will offer both in person and virtual office hours, when students can communicate real time (synchronously) using Zoom and the Chat tool. While these office hours are optional, they can be valuable for discussion, answering questions, and reviewing for exams.

The session will be for one hour. However, if no one shows up in the first 15 minutes, then that office hour will be cancelled.

## **Course Mail**

Make sure to check the Course Mail for messages from the instructor. You can access course email within the Learning Management System by clicking on the Inbox link or choose to have your course mail forwarded to your personal email account or your cell phone.

## **Question & Answer Forum**

Please use this forum to post questions about the course material, assignments, the learning management system or online homework. **The instructor/GSIs will monitor this forum**, but you should also feel free to post answers to help other students. This helps to create a general FAQ so that all students in the course may benefit from the exchange.

## **Course Materials and Technical Requirements**

### **Required Materials**

- Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, The Fundamentals of Political Science Research. Third Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. (Note: There are first and second editions of this book

floating around. I cannot say how these editions differ from the third. However, the lectures, assignments, and exams assume the third edition.)

- Other readings for this course will be available on bCourses.

You are free to purchase your textbooks from any vendor. Please be sure to thoroughly review the return policies before making a purchasing decision as UC Berkeley does not reimburse students for course materials in the event of a textbook change or an unexpected cancellation or rescheduled course section.

## Technical Requirements

This course is built on a Learning Management system (LMS) called Canvas and you will need to meet these [computer specifications to participate within this online platform](#).

### Optional

Canvas allows you to record audio or video files of yourself and upload them in the course. Although doing so is not required for any of the activities, using these features will enhance your engagement in the course. If you would like to use these features, you will need to have a webcam and a microphone installed on your computer.

### Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulties please alert one of the GSIs immediately. However, understand that neither the GSIs, nor the professor can assist you with technical problems. You must call or email tech support and make sure you resolve any issues immediately.

*In your course, click on the "Help" button on the bottom left of the global navigation menu. Be sure to document (save emails and transaction numbers) for all interactions with tech support.*

**Extensions and late submissions will not be accepted due to "technical difficulties."**

## Learning Activities

### VERY IMPORTANT

You won't be able to access your course material until you read and make your pledge to Academic Integrity. Click the button below to navigate to and complete the Academic Integrity pledge.

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PLEDGE

You are expected to fully participate in all the course activities described here.

1. Read the assigned textbook pages
2. Watch and listen to the lecture presentations
3. Read web-based announcements and postings assign during the course
4. Compose and post assigned responses to lectures and readings
5. Complete the midterm exam and final exam
6. Complete writing assignments

## **Sections**

For grading purposes, each of you has been assigned to one of the course GSIs and placed within his/her section. Your particular GSI will grade all of your work, as well as that of your section-mates, and engage with you in the course discussions. You can see whose section you've been placed in by exploring the "Section" column within the "People" page or by examining your discussion group's title, which includes your GSI's name.

## **Modules**

A module is a grouping of topics related to one area of study, typically with readings, lectures and various kinds of assignments. Each module contains a list of Learning Outcomes for the module. Your assignments reflect the learning activities to perform to reach those outcomes. For an at-a-glance view of due dates and projects, refer to the course calendar.

## **Reading Assignments**

Each module includes assigned readings relevant to each topic covered in that module.

## **Multimedia Lectures**

Recorded lectures support your readings and assignments, but also contain additional material that may be included in the exams. You are expected to take notes while viewing the lectures as you would in a regular classroom.

## **Homework - 25%**

There will be seven short homework assignments and a few ungraded self-assessment quizzes that put the modules' lessons into practice. Some questions will assess basic conceptual understanding, and

require short essay-type responses (typically no more than a page). Others will assess how well you can apply the techniques we learn, and require solving problems. To achieve full credit on these problems you will need to both have the correct answer and show the steps you took to reach it. There may also be multiple choice questions in which you will not need to show how you got your answer. Assignments will be posted at the beginning of the week, and are due at the end of the week.

## **Discussion Fora - 25%**

Each module contains a group discussion. This is an opportunity to pose questions to each other and the instructors about the material. Your posts and responses to others are considered your class participation and represent a unique opportunity for you to exchange views with your classmates, share ideas, and ensure your understanding of the course material.

Discussion groups have been pre-assigned and include other members of your GSI section. When you navigate to a discussion forum, you will automatically be taken to your group's instance of that discussion and to your group's space within the course. When finished with the discussion, you will need to navigate from your group space back to the main course space in order to continue participating in other aspects of the course.

While the Discussion Forum assignments are asynchronous (not real time), you will be expected to make an initial posting by 5:00 pm Wednesday (PST) and to respond to at least one other student's position by 5:00 pm Friday; continued participation throughout the remainder of the week is highly encouraged.

## **Midterm - 20%**

There will be one timed take-home midterm exam, to be taken at the beginning of Week 4. The exam will consist of problems that are designed to assess your understanding of core concepts and ability to solve problems and interpret your solutions.

If you have a Letter of Accommodation at UC Berkeley, confirm with your GSI that it has been received and accommodations have been made. When you start the midterm, check the timer when you open it to confirm you have the correct time accommodation.

## **Final Exam - 30%**

There will be a 3-hour closed book final exam on paper. Students must take the final exam in person on the UC Berkeley campus, or make arrangements to have it proctored if you are unable to be on campus. (DSP students may have other arrangements.) The final exam will be August 15, 2019 from Noon - 3 p.m. Room LATI120.

## **Reminder: Your Course End Date**

Your course will end on August 16th. As you work through the course, please keep the end date in mind, and if you want to save any commentary or assignments for future reference, please make sure to print or copy/paste those materials before your access ends.

## **Grading and Course Policies**

Students are expected to watch multimedia lectures, do the assigned reading, complete all exams and homework, and participate in discussions. The course grade will be based on two in-class midterms, a final exam, homework assignments, and participation in discussions. The course grade will be determined based on the following formula:

**Table 1: Final Grade Percentages**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage of Grade</b>
Discussion Assignments	25%
Midterm	20%
Homework	25%
Final Exam	30%

It is important to note that not all components are graded online and included in the online course grade book. Because of this, the online course grade book will not display your overall course grade at any given time or your final grade. It should simply be used to assess your performance on the components that are included within it: the discussions, written assignments and midterm exam. Your final letter grade will be mailed to you by the registrar's office.

## **Late Work Policy**

Late work will be penalized 10% per late day or portion thereof, and will not be graded if turned in more than two days late. Extensions will not be granted without proof of a legitimate medical or personal reason.

## **Course Policies**

### **Promptness**

Homework assignments and discussion forum postings all have specific final due dates and times. You will not receive full credit if assignments are submitted after the indicated due date.

Further, each online activity must be submitted through the course website by the due date. Fax or mail submission will not be accepted. Students who wait until the final hours prior to a submission deadline risk having problems with their ISP, hardware, software, or various other site access difficulties. Therefore, it is advisable to submit assignments and tests through the course website early. Students should plan accordingly and get into the habit of checking the course website several times each week, and submitting and posting early.

### **Honor Code**

The student community at UC Berkeley has adopted the following Honor Code: "As a member of the UC Berkeley community, I act with honesty, integrity, and respect for others." The expectation is that you will adhere to this code.

### **Collaboration and Independence**

Reviewing lecture and reading materials and studying for exams can be enjoyable and enriching things to do with fellow students. This is recommended. However, unless otherwise instructed, homework assignments and online exams are to be completed independently and materials submitted as homework should be the result of one's own independent work.

### **Cheating**

A good lifetime strategy is always to act in such a way that no one would ever imagine that you would even consider cheating. Anyone caught cheating on a quiz or writing assignment in this course will receive a failing grade in the course and will also be reported to the University Center for Student Conduct.

### **Plagiarism**

To copy text or ideas from another source without appropriate reference is plagiarism and will result in a failing grade for your assignment and usually further disciplinary action. For additional information on plagiarism and how to avoid it, explore the resources linked below:

[UC Berkeley Library Citation Page, Plagiarism Section](#)

[GSI Guide for Preventing Plagiarism](#)

## **Academic Integrity and Ethics**

Cheating on exams and plagiarism are two common examples of dishonest, unethical behavior. Honesty and integrity are of great importance in all facets of life. They help to build a sense of self-confidence, and are key to building trust within relationships, whether personal or professional. There is no tolerance for dishonesty in the academic world, for it undermines what we are dedicated to doing - furthering knowledge for the benefit of humanity.

## **Incomplete Course Grade**

Students who have substantially completed the course but for serious extenuating circumstances, are unable to complete the final exam, may request an Incomplete grade. This request must be submitted in writing or by email to the GSI and course instructor. You must provide verifiable documentation for the seriousness of the extenuating circumstances. According to the policy of the college, Incomplete grades must be made up within the first three weeks of the next semester.

## **Students with Disabilities**

If you are requiring course accommodations due to a physical, emotional, or learning disability contact the [UC Berkeley's Disabled Students' Program \(DSP\)](#).

Notify the instructor and GSI through course email and inform them which accommodations you would like to use.

UC Berkeley is committed to providing robust educational experiences for all learners. With this goal in mind, we have activated the ALLY tool for this course. You will now be able to download content in a format that best fits your learning preference. PDF, HTML, EPUB and MP3 are now available for most content items. For more information visit the alternative formats link or watch the video entitled, "[Ally First Steps Guide](#)".



## **End of Course Evaluation**

Before your course end date, please take a few minutes to participate in our Course Evaluation to share your opinions about this course. You will be receiving the Course Evaluation via email. The evaluation does not request any personal information, and your responses will remain strictly confidential. You may only take the evaluation once.

\*Subject to Change