

**Political Science 341 – Section 001**  
**Quantitative Methods in Political Science**  
**Fall 2009**  
**Professor Fine**

**Meeting times:** Tuesdays, Thursdays 12:30 - 1:45 pm  
**Location:** #212 Brackett Hall

**Office:** 230E Brackett Hall  
**Office Hours:** T, TH 2-3:30pm, and by appointment (drop-ins always welcome)  
**Office Phone:** 656-3548  
**Email:** [JFINE@CLEMSON.EDU](mailto:JFINE@CLEMSON.EDU)  
**Course Blackboard Web Page:** bb.clemson.edu

**Course Description:**

This course introduces undergraduate students to quantitative methods in political science. As opposed to other political science courses, in which students study a substantive topic in the field, this course focuses on helping students understand where this substantive knowledge originates. This course also seeks to provide students with the tools to become producers of knowledge, rather than simple consumers.

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the process of producing quantitative research, including the scientific method, developing a literature review, collecting data, and analyzing those data through use of appropriate statistical techniques. By the end of the semester, students will also become more critical consumers of research, identifying how the study was conducted and what the strengths and weaknesses of that study are.

This course has two components which students often find intimidating: mastery of mathematical formulas and the use of a statistical computer program (STATA). I will do my best to make learning these as painless as possible, and I assume no prior knowledge of either of these components.

**Course Texts: (Available at the University Bookstores)**

1. *Political Science Research Methods, Sixth Edition*. By Janet B. Johnson, and H. T. Reynolds. (“J&R” hereafter)
2. Assorted handouts (distributed in class) and articles (found on Blackboard)

**Recommended Text: (Available online at popular bookstores such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble, or at CQPress.com):**

1. *STATA Companion to Political Analysis*. By Philip H. Pollock III. CQ Press; Paperback. **ISBN: 0872893057**

**Evaluation:**

- 5% - Class participation
- 20% - Homework assignments (**due periodically throughout the semester**)
- 25% - Midterm Exam (**Thursday, Oct. 8 – 212 Brackett**)
- 25% - Research Design Paper (**Due on Thursday, Dec. 3 at the beginning of class**)
- 25% - Cumulative Final Exam (**Monday, Dec.7, 3:00-5:30pm – 212 Brackett**)

**Grading Scale:** Final grades in the course will fall on a standard 100-point scale where:

A = 89.5 – 100, B = 79.5 – 89.49, C = 69.5 – 79.49, D = 59.5 – 69.49, F < 59.5.

**Attendance:** I will not formally be taking attendance. Students are free to choose whether to attend lecture. However, given that approximately half of the questions for the exams will come directly from lecture, *students should not expect to do well without regularly attending lecture*. Additionally, the participation component of the course grade makes regular attendance important. You obviously cannot participate without attending class.

**Participation:**

Students are encouraged to participate in the class meetings. Note: Participation does not simply mean opening your mouth in class, but rather consists of contributing *positively* to the class discussion. Participation will be scored on randomly selected days throughout the semester. You will be evaluated based on your level of participation relative to the class average.

**Excused Absences:** Any student missing an **exam or a homework/paper due date** must provide documentation to schedule a make-up or turn in a late paper/assignment. *No late assignments will be accepted without proper documentation.*

**Academic Integrity, Cheating and Plagiarism:** Every student is expected to conduct him/herself with academic honesty in this course. The university has a detailed Academic Integrity policy, outlined here: [http://www.cs.clemson.edu/html/academics/academic\\_integrity\\_2002.html](http://www.cs.clemson.edu/html/academics/academic_integrity_2002.html)

**The university defines plagiarism as “the intentional or unintentional copying of language, structure, or ideas of another and attributing the work to one's own efforts.”** For the purpose of this class, **the use of 4 or more consecutive words without quotation marks also constitutes plagiarism.** You **must** document the source of any material that is not an original thought. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, you **must** talk to the instructor *before* handing in an assignment.

**Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty in this course will receive an “F” in the course, and penalties may include suspension or even dismissal from the University.**

**Accommodations for disabilities:** Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. “Qualified students” are those who present a Faculty Accommodation Letter from Student Disability

Services when we meet. Student disability services is located in G-20 Redfern (656-6848).

Accommodations are not retroactive. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

**Research Paper Overview (A much more detailed set of guidelines will be distributed within the first few weeks of class):** You will either write a research design paper or a quantitative research paper. A short proposal (prospectus) for this paper is due no later than Thursday, Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>. The prospectus outlines the research question you plan to examine, and justifies the importance of this research question. This prospectus will be graded as a regular homework assignment.

**\*\*\*I will be happy to discuss possible topics with you and review drafts at any point in the semester, provided that they are given to me no later than one week before the due date\*\*\***

**Additional Opportunities:**

There are often opportunities for undergraduate students in classes such as this to present their research papers at political science conferences, and to compete for research paper awards. Some of these awards are given by Clemson, but many are awarded by political science departments at other universities. Most of these award competitions carry with them a cash prize, and are great opportunities to distinguish you from other undergraduate students applying to graduate or law schools. I will announce these competitions in class and via email, as many students produce final papers that are worthy of submission.

## **Tentative Schedule of Topics:**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Readings/Assignments:</b>
Thursday 20-Aug	Intro to course	J&R 1
Tuesday 25-Aug	Scientific method	J&R 2
Thursday 27-Aug	Freakonomics	<b><u>Freakonomics: Intro &amp; Ch. 1</u></b>
Tuesday 1-Sep	Causality & Validity	J&R 5
		J&R 5
Thursday 3-Sep	Experimental Design	Try to identify broad research topic
Tuesday 8-Sep	Nonexperimental Design	J&R 5
		J&R 6
Thursday 10-Sep	Literature Review	<b><u>Read Articles on Blackboard</u></b>
Tuesday 15-Sep	Individual Appointments	Research for Paper Prospectus
		J&R 3
		Persig Ch. 9
Thursday 17-Sep	Concepts, Indicators, Hypotheses	<b><u>Prospectus Due</u></b>
Tuesday 22-Sep	Measurement	J&R 4
Thursday 24-Sep	Measurement	J&R 4
		Handout
Tuesday 29-Sep	Measurement in Practice	<b><u>Problem Set #1 Due</u></b>
Thursday 1-Oct	Direct and Indirect Observation	J&R 8
Tuesday 6-Oct	Catch-up/Review Session	Study for the Midterm Exam
Thursday 8-Oct	<b><u>Midterm Exam</u></b>	
Tuesday 13-Oct	<b><u>NO CLASS - Fall Break</u></b>	
Thursday 15-Oct	Survey Research Methods	J&R 7
Tuesday 20-Oct	Survey Research Methods	J&R 10
Thursday 22-Oct	Freq. Dist. & Cent. Tendency	J&R 11
Tuesday 27-Oct	Dispersion	J&R 11
Thursday 29-Oct	Individual Appointments	Research for Paper Prospectus
		Literature for your paper
Tuesday 3-Nov	Probability	<b><u>Problem Set #2 Due</u></b>
Thursday 5-Nov	Probability Distributions	Literature for your paper
Tuesday 10-Nov	<b><u>NO CLASS – Paper Work Day</u></b>	Literature for your paper
		J&R 12
Thursday 12-Nov	Gamma and Chi-squared	<b><u>Problem Set #3 Due</u></b>
Tuesday 17-Nov	Difference of Means & ANOVA	J&R 12
Thursday 19-Nov	Correlation and Regression	J&R 12
Tuesday 24-Nov	Regression II	J&R 13
Thursday 26-Nov	<b><u>NO CLASS - Thanksgiving</u></b>	
		Literature for your paper
Tuesday 1-Dec	Work on Papers/Help with Papers	<b><u>Problem Set #4 Due</u></b>
Thursday 3-Dec	Work on Papers/Help with Papers	Literature for your paper
Friday 4-Dec	<b><u>Research Design Paper Due (By 4pm)</u></b>	
Monday 7-Dec	<b><u>Cumulative Final Exam (3-5:30pm)</u></b>	212 Brackett Hall