

PLSC 210, Fall 2015

Intro Political Analysis - 16598 - PLSC 210 - 3

Class 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm TR Pray-Harrold Hall 420

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Office Hours: T-Th: 9:00-9:30a, 12:15-2:00p, 4:45-5:00p and by appointment.
CRN: 16598

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(identify yourself and the class you are attending: 210 on the subject line with all email correspondence), failure to do so may result in no response.

e-mails should be limited to discussion about assignments, exams, or classroom discussions, failure to do so may result in no response unless you are responding to a request from the professor.

For General Education Requirement:

Very important notice: This course does not automatically count as a QR (Quantitative Reasoning) course for every student who takes it. In general, students need to meet one of the following prerequisites in order for this course to satisfy the QR requirement:

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- > ACT math score: 23 to 27; or
- > SAT math score: 580 to 660; or
- > EMU Math Placement Exam (QR Choice): College Level Math Score (CLM) 53 to 92; or
- > Credit in MATH 104 with a grade of "C" or better
- >
- > If you do not meet any of these prerequisites, or if you are not sure about it, it is essential that you check with an adviser about what class to take to satisfy your QR requirement for general education. For more information go to www.emich.edu/gened.

Course Description: This course is designed to introduce students to sophisticated analyses of the political world and its phenomena. It is hoped that this course will enable students to develop the skills necessary to critically and objectively observe political issues and issues that are informed by, or a subset of, politics and government. These issues involve some of the most important concerns of human beings and societies such as: the allocation of scarce economic resources, the right to exercise freedoms, the ability to be free from discrimination, the right to be involved in decision-making processes, and the right to choose your leaders. In the examination of these and other issues we will consider micro and macro-level analyses, including the examination of personality and its influence, attitudes, socialization, power, and communication.

However, the primary purpose of this course is to assist you in the development of the analytical tools needed to engage in credible, social science based political and policy research.

Many of you may consider this course to be rather rigorous and difficult in comparison to some of your other courses. Nevertheless, I will attempt to make it very interesting through the use of case studies and stories about research from the applied and academic worlds. Having said that, this course requires highly focused, disciplined, and very hard work. This is not a course that is kind to those who miss class: it is very difficult to keep up and understand the materials without being up to date on reading assignments as well as classroom attendance.

It is hoped that after taking this course students will be able to objectively and critically observe and analyze information about politics and public policy from all sources.

Texts:

Philip H. Pollock III. 2012. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 4th ed. Washington D.C. Sage CQ Press

ISBN: 978-1-60871-686-9 (Referred to in the syllabus as Pollock)

Philip H. Pollock III. 2012. *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*, 4th ed. Washington D.C. Sage CQ Press

ISBN: 978-1-60871-687-6 (Referred to in the syllabus as SPSS Companion)

The two books may be purchased by students as a package often with discounts.

These should be available at campus area bookstores or online from a variety of sources.

Software: SPSS required but available on campus lab computers.

Optional: SPSS Student Version Software:

The data sets CD in the SPSS Companion are **data sets only**, they do not provide the **IBM Statistics SPSS software necessary to run the data** and therefore complete some assignments or exams. When completing assignments and exams with SPSS content, you will need to either **purchase the software** or use the computers provided in the labs on campus which generally contain the software.

Cautions: the software generally is expensive but less so for student versions. If you purchase a new student version try to get the latest student version. The EMU bookstore should be able to order this for you. You should also be able to order student versions online from the IBM website and other websites such as Amazon and others. If you purchase an older version beware of licensing issues: often older (used) CD's have only a short time remaining on the license.

The labs often have different releases depending on the lab and sometimes different releases even within the lab. These differences include releases e.g., 17.0 18.0 19.0 etc. and student versus full (professional) versions. In general, if you use data sets from your SPSS Companion using different releases for the same assignment there is no difficulty posed. If you use different versions (student versus full versions) the data sets in your SPSS Companion are going to be different, and therefore, may pose difficulties.

It is highly recommended that you purchase your own personal copy of SPSS if you are able to afford it. It is also recommended that you purchase a new version of the SPSS Companion book with a new data set. Failure to do so may have a significant impact on your grade.

There are labs with computers which contain the SPSS software in the Student Center, Halle Library, and Pray-Harrold.

Save the data sets from the CD in the Companion asap on a flash and perhaps your hard drive. Remove the CD from the Companion as it will crack easily, so put it in a safe place: perhaps in a CD sleeve.

Loading SPSS and the data set on a phone app may pose some difficulty, however you may be able to e-mail the data set to yourself once loaded,

and you may be able to find a way to get access to the SPSS software if your copy allows you access to the server or can be downloaded electronically.

Exams, Paper, Assessments:

There will be three exams, and one paper in several phases totaling approximately 12-15 pages. Both the exams and the paper will tend to focus on real world applications. In this paper during the first phases you will determine a **research question** and make a **problem statement**, you will write a **literature review**, develop a(n) **hypothesis(es)**, and you will select and/or **design a research model**(design) to test your hypotheses. Later you test your hypothesis(es). You will then write your **results** and **conclusions**. **The paper will be written in the American Political Science Association style. The APSA Style Manual is available online. You may get a sense of this style by reading articles in the American Political Science Review and through sample papers that I will provide or by visiting the APSA site. By combining the phases** you will have completed your paper. **Hence once you complete all of the phases you combine them and submit them as one product: the paper.** The phases are graded but your final paper grade will be determined by the final product. **The paper will be graded on content: ie. The extent to which you develop your ideas, style: the extent to which you conform to APSA style, and quality of writing: the extent to which your writing rises to the level of an educated person.** The phases are to guide your efforts, the final product is 10% of your grade. In addition, you will be assessed on participation in the discussions. There will be three examinations: one after each unit. The examinations will be weighted 30 percent each, these will be based on classroom discussions/lectures and readings. . They will include questions/problems from both the Pollock text and the SPSS Companion as well as discussions. . The paper will constitute 10 percent of your grade: Participation in classroom discussions and attendance will be considered in determining your grade.

Three Exams: 30% each: total 90%

Paper 10% 12-15 page including tables, appendices, and indices.

**Participation in discussions and attendance considered,
direction of grades considered**

Scale: 90-100=A, 88-89=A-, 86-87=B+, 80-85=B, 78-79=B-, 76-77=C+, 70-75=C, 68-69=C-, 65-67=D+, 62-64=D, 60-61=D-, 0-59=F

Late assignments/exams are not permitted. **Exams and assignments are take-home and you are given generous amounts of time to complete them. Therefore no late assignments or exams will be accepted.** Any assignment or exam not completed by the due date will be graded **ZERO**. Exceptions are rare and not likely, and require written documentation acceptable to the professor at his discretion. **In any event, even if you have an acceptable reason for a late exam or assignment it may result in a delay of your final grade due to time constraints for submitting grades at the end of the semester requiring that on time submissions be given priority.**

Special needs students (for example, learning disabled) who qualify under ADA/EMU policies are **exempted** from this classroom policy regarding due dates. However, grades may be delayed as in the above case of late assignments and exams.

For your paper, select a topic of interest to you for your paper involving: local, state, national, or international politics or public policy. The topic should be small enough for you to complete a meaningful paper within a 12-15 page format which includes the phases above.

Use the **American Political Science Association Style**, basically an author- date style. You can go to the library or online and read sample American Political Science Review articles to gain a flavor of the style or download articles from Google Scholar, or from the electronic Journals section at Halle library and many other sources to gain a sense of the style. Or as stated above go to the APSA site. In addition, there will be discussions and materials available to assist you with the paper assignment.

All examinations, and paper phases must be typed and submitted via e-mail and are due by **6:00 pm** of the due date unless instructed otherwise by the professor.

E-mail verification is required if I do not receive an assignment or exam: therefore, save a copy of all sent e-mails (original e-mail) showing the actual e-mail sent: date, time and attachment. There are sometimes difficulties with the e-mail

system or assignments and exams may be lost for other reasons.

Save them in either hard copy or on a disk but failure to produce proof that an e-mail was sent with the assignment or exam on time, will result in a ZERO for that assignment or exam.

Regular and meaningful participation in the discussions will be required, this will be considered in your grade. **This is an interesting but difficult and challenging class. Missing even one lecture may have an effect on your grade. In addition, if you are not fairly comfortable with computers, reasonably good at math and a good student (3.0 GPA) or higher, you may have difficulty in this course. It is very easy to get lost and behind in this course, so DO NOT MISS CLASS.** While in class you must listen very carefully and have a good command of the English language, both written and spoken.

Letters of Recommendation: Letters of recommendation, in general, will only be written for the top two to three students in this class when requested. Exceptions are rare and recommendations in these cases will only be provided where the student's performance in another, relevant arena, is exceptional and known by the professor.

Academic Dishonesty

Any cheating, copying of another's work, cheating on the exams, etc. will be addressed severely with strong consequences based upon university policies and the policies of the Office of Work Ethic

For most of you, 2 hours per day 4 days a week of reading and preparation will be required at a minimum. Preparations for exams will require for most of you an additional 10-15 hours of preparation.

Tentative Reading and Discussion Schedule

This schedule is tentative due to the possibility of unforeseen events yet we will do our best to stay on schedule. Please read assigned reading **prior** to scheduled class or you may get lost and have difficulty recovering.

Unit 1 The Scientific Approach, Defining, Measuring, and Describing Concepts, Literature Reviews, Framing Hypotheses, Comparisons.

Week 1

Pollock, Introduction: The Scientific Approach

Pollock, Chapter 1: The Definition and Measurement of Concepts

Problem Statements Handout (Please read asap)

Start thinking about the political problem in society or the political issue that you want to study as the topic of your paper. It should be a political issue: campaigns, elections, public opinion, gender and politics, race/ethnicity and politics, state and local politics, international politics or comparative politics, etc. Good sources for ideas include multimedia: internet, magazines, books, television news stations, videos addressing political issues, etc.

Week 2

Problem Statement and Research Question Assigned:

Pollock, Chapter 2: Measuring and Describing Variables

SPSS Companion, Chapter 1: An Introduction to SPSS

Pollock, Chapter 2 Continued: Measuring and Describing Variables

SPSS Companion, Chapter 1 Continued: An Introduction to SPSS

SPSS Companion, Chapter 2: Descriptive Statistics

Pollock, Chapter 3: Proposing Explanations, Framing Hypotheses, Making Comparisons

Week 3

SPSS Companion, Chapter 2: Descriptive Statistics Continued

Pollock, Chapter 3 Continued: Proposing Explanations,
Framing Hypotheses, Making Comparisons

Week 4

Literature Review Handout (Please read asap)
Literature Review Assigned:

SPSS Companion, Chapter 3: Transforming Variables

SPSS Companion, Chapter 3: Transforming Variables Continued

Week 5

SPSS Companion, Chapter 3 Continued:

Review for Examination 1: Covering Unit 1 Chapters 1-3 Pollock and 1-3

Companion

Examination 1: Covering Unit 1: due via mail attachment

Pollock, Chapter 4: Research Design and the Logic of Control

Hypotheses Statements Handout (Please read asap)

Unit 2 Research Design and Controlled Comparisons

Week 6

Hypotheses Assigned:

Pollock, Chapter 4 Continued: Research Design and the Logic of Control

Week 7

Pollock, Chapter 5: Making Controlled Comparisons

SPSS Companion Chapter 4, Comparisons

Week 8

Read Pollock, Chapter 5 Continued Reading: Read Companion Making Controlled Comparisons Chapter 5:

Read SPSS Companion, Chapter 5 Continued Reading: Making Controlled Comparisons

Review for Examination 2: Covering Unit 2
Examination 2 Assigned Covering Unit 2
Chapters 4,5 Pollock
Chapters 4,5 Companion

Week 9

Unit 3 Statistical Inference, Tests of Significance, Correlation and Regression Analysis

Pollock, Chapter 5 Continued : SPSS Companion Making Controlled Comparisons Chapter 5:

SPSS Companion, Chapter 5 Continued: Making Controlled Comparisons

Hypotheses Tests and Results Handout (please read asap)

Hypotheses Tests and Results Assigned

Pollock, Chapter 6: Foundations of Statistical Inference

Week 10

SPSS Companion, Chapter 6: Making Inferences About Sample Means

Pollock, Chapter 6 Continued: Foundations of Statistical Inference
Ch 7 Pollock Significance and Measures of Association

Pollock, Chapter 7 Continued: Tests of Significance and Measures of Association

SPSS Companion, Chapter 7: Chi Square and Measures of Association

Week 11

SPSS Companion, Chapter 7 Continued: Chi Square and Measures of Association

Pollock, Chapter 8: Correlation and Linear Regression

Conclusions Handout (please read asap)

SPSS Companion, Chapter 11: Doing Your Own Political Analysis

Pollock, Chapter 8 Continued: Correlation and Linear Regression

SPSS Companion, Chapter 8: Correlation and Linear Regression

Week 12

Pollock, Chapter 9: Logistic Regression

Conclusions and **the entire paper due**

SPSS Companion, Chapter 9: Dummy Variables and Interaction Effects

Pollock, Chapter 9 Continued: Logistic Regression

SPSS Companion, Chapter 9 Continued: Dummy Variables and Interaction Effects

Week 13

SPSS Companion, Chapter 10: Logistic Regression

SPSS Companion, Chapter 10 Continued: Logistic Regression

Pollock, Chapter 10: Thinking Empirically, Thinking Probabilistically

Week 14

SPSS Companion, Chapter 11 Doing Your Own Political Analysis
Pollock, Chapter 10 Continued: Thinking Empirically, Thinking Probabilistically **Final examination Assigned**

Week 15

Final Exam Due Tuesday, December 15, 2015 3:00pm via e-mail attachment in Rich Text Format or Word 97-2003.

Professor should be Available for Questions for the Final Examination via e-mail or in Class

Good Luck!!!