Research Methods in Political Science
Political Science 380 – UBC – 2007-8 Term 1
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Course Description and Objectives
Fundamental to the study of political science is the ability to make good inferences. In political science we primarily make two types of empirical inferences: descriptive inferences (the world looks like X) and causal inferences (X leads to Y). This course seeks to help students develop better analytic tools for making good empirical inferences and to better recognize when others are making poor inferences. As many inferences rely on quantitative evidence, this course will provide a basic introduction to statistics (through OLS regression), although no mathematical ability beyond basic high school algebra is assumed.

Format of the course: There are three primary components of the course: lectures, sections, and online work. These three components are designed to be complementary and to allow students to become involved in actively learning the course material through a variety of methods.

Readings: Huff's <u>How to Lie With Statistics</u> is available for purchase from the bookstore. All other course readings and the SPSS Workbook will be made available online through the Vista Blackboard site.

Assignments: There are four homework assignments, each worth 10% of your final mark. They are submitted online and due Sept 25, Oct 16, Nov 6, Nov 27. All homework assignments must be submitted electronically by 5 p.m. on the date they are due in order not to be considered late. Without documentation from Arts Advising, students will be assessed a 10% penalty for each day it is late. Late assignments <u>cannot</u> be submitted via Vista Blackboard, but must be emailed to the instructor. A further 20% of your mark is based on your participation and performance on mini-assignments throughout the term.

Examinations: A midterm examination will occur in class on Thursday, October 18 (15%). The final examination is worth 25% of your final mark.

General Course Policies: Students have the responsibility to act in accordance with community standards of behaviour, respect, and uphold principles of scholarly integrity. Students must also abide by the rules and regulations of the University regarding student conduct.

Plagiarism: Please review the UBC Calendar "Academic Regulations" for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Also visit www.arts.ubc.ca and go to the students' section for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.

Course Schedule

Week	Topic	Readings
Sept 4	Introduction, Inferences	None
Sept 11	Research Design	Huff I, 7-10
Sept 18	Getting Data I (Measurement)	Huff 1, Sarle
Sept 25	Getting Data II (Sampling)	Converse & Traugott
Oct 2	Describing Data I (Numbers)	Huff 2, Gould
Oct 9	Describing Data II (Graphics)	Huff 3-6
Oct 16	Midterm Review/Exam	None
Oct 23	Relationships I (Tables)	Licklider
Oct 30	Relationships II (Scatterplots)	Matland
Nov 6	Relationships III (Regression I)	Hurwitz & Peffley
Nov 13	Relationships IV (Regression II)	Jackman
Nov 20	Advanced Topics I	TBA
Nov 27	Review	None

A more detailed course calendar is on the Vista Blackboard site.