POLI 110 – Investigating Politics: An Introduction to Scientific Political Analysis

2018 Summer Term 1 (M-W 1PM – 4PM)
Buchanan A203

Instructor: Eric Merkley

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Office Hours: M-W 11:30-12:30

1. Overview and Objectives

This course prepares students to engage with the field of political science by introducing them to the basic logic and tools used by political scientists to understand and explain the political world. The course will teach students how to ask answerable questions; how to define key political concepts; how to formulate hypotheses and theories about political dynamics; how to measure the phenomena we want to study; how to think about and assess relationships of cause-and-effect; and how to report our findings to the world. We will consider these issues by examining how political scientists have investigated major questions in domestic and international affairs, such as the effectiveness of foreign aid, the link between economic development and democracy, and how citizens arrive at their vote choice and evaluate candidates for public office.

2. Immediate To-Do List

Here's a checklist of the things that you want to be sure you have done before the second lecture (**before Wed May 16th**) to ensure that you are ready to fully participate in the course.

- Read this syllabus carefully and ask any questions you have

- Purchase the POLI 110 course pack from the UBC bookstore

- Subscribe to TopHat (see below for instructions)

- Ensure that Student Services has your current email address on file

3. Course Format

Your attendance at Monday, Wednesday lectures (1pm-4pm) is mandatory. Most of our lectures will involve me lecturing. But, you will be regularly asked questions in class that require a response via TopHat. Your participation in these in-class question-and-answer sessions is the foundation of your class participation. Each lecture will also include group activities that reinforce the material covered and participation in these activities will also be marked.

In this class I will use different online tools to:

- Provide content (readings, lectures, homework) – Canvas

- Participate in class – TopHat

- Submit group work and quizzes – Qualtrics

- Submit homework and research design – Turnitin

4. Grading and Assessed Coursework

4.1 Final Exam (25%)

There is only one (final) exam. This exam will test you on all the material covered in the lectures, activities, and readings. The date and time of the final exam are to be set by the Registrar.

4.2 Attendance and Participation (15%)

Participation will be taken via TopHat. In most lectures, you will be asked to answer questions using TopHat. Part of your participation mark for POLI 110 will depend on your engagement with these questions. Your mark does not depend on whether you get the answers right. The questions are exercises to provoke discussion and learning. However, to get credit for participation at a given lecture, you must be present at the lecture and input responses to all questions using your own device (phone, tablet, or computer). 10%

Sign up for TopHat at www.tophat.com, and enroll in your respective course (free for you).

Course: POLI 110-927; **Joincode**: 946417; **Password**: science

To use Top Hat, you must bring your own laptop, tablet, or phone (easier with a smartphone, but even flip phone can be used) to each lecture. If this will be a problem, please contact me immediately.

All class meetings dedicate some time to practical exercises, for which you will be working with your peers in small groups. You will be asked to discuss specific questions with your group, share your answers with the whole class, and submit your answers via Qualtrics. 5%

4.3 Pop Quizzes (10%)

Students will be asked to periodically complete very short, surprise quizzes throughout the course of the term covering material in the course. This quizzes will be submitted via Qualtrics. Students must attend lecture in order to complete them.

4.4 Homework Assignment (3 X 10% = 30%)

There will be 3 homework assignments. They must be submitted electronically on Turnitin. More on submission below. The homework assignments are intended to help you work through the material presented in lecture and in course readings by applying key concepts, arguments, and methods to real world political issues.

For the first homework, we will be using this article:

Merkley et al. 2018. "Having their Say: Authority, Voice, and Satisfaction with Democracy." *Journal of Politics* (Forthcoming).

The link is provided here. It is also available on Canvas.

For the second and third assignment, you will choose one topic discussed in one of the following 5 "card stacks" from the public affairs website vox.com. Each card stack provides a wealth of information about a major political or policy issue in the world today. You are welcome to choose different topics for different homework assignments, or to use the same topic repeatedly: it is entirely up to you.

You must choose from one of the following 5 card stacks:

- ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria)
- Marijuana Legalization
- Same-sex Marriage
- Crime Rate in the United States
- Brexit

Homework must be submitted on Turnitin by 11:59pm on the due date specified below. Late homework will generally not be accepted unless accommodation has been arranged in advance. More details below.

4.5   Research Design (20%)

A central goal of this course is to teach you how to plan and conduct empirical research based on the scientific method. In place of a term paper, you are asked to write a research proposal that demonstrates what you have learned throughout the course by applying it to a topic you are interested in. The research proposal is due after the last class meeting, on Thursday, June 21st at 11:59pm.

Detailed instructions will be given and posted on Canvas closer to the due date. This assignment is worth 20% of your mark for the course. Extensions on deadlines will be given for documented emergencies only. Without documentation, late papers will be penalized two (2) points out of 100 per day, including weekends.

Assessed Course Components		
Assignment	Date/Due Date	Percentage of Overall Grade
Lecture Participation (TopHat/Activities)	All Lectures	15%
Pop quizzes	Any Lecture	10%
Homework (3 Assignments)	May 30th (Wed) June 8th (Fri) June 15th (Fri)	30% (10% each)
Research Design	June 21st (Thurs)	20%
Final Exam	Exam Period (June 25-29th) Date/Time Set by Registrar	25%

5. Required Texts and Material

- **Custom course pack.** The course pack can be purchased at the UBC Bookstore and consists of a compilation of textbook excerpts that are required reading for the course. Unless specified otherwise, all the readings listed in the weekly schedule are available in the course pack. The readings are listed by author's name.

- **Readings available electronically.** As listed below in the detailed syllabus, some required readings for the course are electronically available either on the course website (see section below on the Course Website), or simply through a link on the web. It is your responsibility to download all readings from the appropriate location.

- **Course webpage and emails.** There is a course webpage for POLI 110 on UBC's Canvas System. You can log in with your CWL username and password. I will use this page to post important course documents (readings, syllabus, lecture slides, etc.) and send emails to you throughout the term. Lecture slides will be posted after each class.

6. Course Schedule and Readings

Part I: Introduction to Social Science

Topic 1 (Mon May 14th) - Course Structure, Requirements, Objectives and Introduction

Readings:

- Course Syllabus

Topic 2 (Mon May 14th) - What is Social Science?

Readings:

- Neuman, pp 2-7 in Course Package.

Part II: Causality in the Social Sciences

Topic 3 (Wed May 16th) - Types of Questions and Claims

Readings:

- "Distinguishing between Normative and Empirical Statements" On Course Website (Canvas)

No Class on Monday May 21st (Stat Holiday)

Topic 4 (Wed May 23rd) - Causal Claims: What is causality?

Readings:

- "Causality: Counterfactuals, Deterministic Claims, and Probabilistic Claims" On Course Website (Canvas)

Topic 5 (Mon May 28th) - Types of Causal Claims

Readings:

- "General and Specific Knowledge in the Social Sciences" on Course Website (Canvas)

- For Activity: Wikipedia entry, Causes of the French Revolution

- For Activity: Wikipedia entry, Russian Revolution (ONLY section 1 on "Background")

Topic 6 (Wed May 30th) - Causal Logics (Guest Lecturer: Miriam Matejova

Readings:

- "Causal Logics" on Course Website (Canvas)

Part III: Studying Causality Empirically

Topic 7 (Mon Jun 4th) - Concepts and Measurement

Readings:

- Johnson and Joslyn, pp. 49-53 in Course Package

- Hoover and Donovan, pp. 18-24 in Course Package

Topic 8 (Wed Jun 6th) - Challenges of Measurement and Sampling

Readings:

- Manheim and Rich, pp. 91-95 in Course Package

- "Measurement Error" On Course Website (Canvas)

Topic 9 (Mon Jun 11th) - Variables and Hypotheses

Readings:

- Hoover and Donovan, pp. 24-27 in Course Package

- Manheim and Rich, pp. 27-30 in Course Package

- Johnson and Jocelyn, pp. 27-30 in Course Package

Topic 10 (Wed Jun 13th) - Covariation as a Means of Assessing Causation

Readings:

- White, pp. 61-65 in Course Package

Topic 11 (Mon Jun 18th) - Why Covariation Doesn't Always Mean Causation

Readings:

- Neuman, pp. 98-99 in Course Package

- For Activity: Levitt and Dubner (Freakonomics), pp. 161-176 in Course Package

Topic 12 (Wed Jun 20th) – Solutions to the Fundamental Problem of Causal Inference – Random Assignment and Process Tracing

Readings:

- Arthur Conan Doyle's "Silver Blaze" (Canvas)

- Neuman, pp. 68-74 and pp. 78-82 in Course Package

7. Course Policies

7.1 Contacting Course Instructor

Summer courses are intense. We will see each other 6 hours each week and I will be available during office hours. As a result, I strongly recommend asking substantive questions about course content and requirements in person. Email should be reserved strictly for time sensitive questions or quick points of clarification. If you are to send an email please put "POLI 110" in the subject line. During the week I will try to respond within 24 hours, but emails received during the weekend will be answered on Monday. I will not respond to emails on the due date of an assignment.

7.2 Re-Grading

If you'd like anything re-graded, you must prepare a single-page memo outlining your case for re-grading. The memo needs to be serious and specific. I will then re-examine a particular item. Know, however, that a given grade can either increase or decrease.

7.3 Personal Electronics

Please put away your cellphones during class. You should also try to take notes by hand in this course. That way, you process the information, instead of just copying everything down verbatim. It will also make the studying environment more productive for yourself and your fellow students. Further, lecture slides will be made available on Canvas. There is little use in copying everything you see word-for-word.

7.4 Missing Class and Late Homework

Attendance and participation is required at all class sessions due to the intensive nature of this course. Late homework assignments **will not be accepted** except in the event of a documented serious illness or serious personal emergency (see section on Accommodation below). Missed examinations will result in a grade of zero except in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

7.5 Accommodation for Emergency Situations

Students who need additional time for an assignment or will miss a lecture, tutorial, or exam for a medical or serious personal reason must contact the course instructor **before** the due date or exam/lecture/tutorial date and as soon as the problem arises.

Requests for accommodation **made after an assignment's due date, or after the missed exam or lecture will not generally be considered.** Some documentation, such as a doctor's note, will usually be required to make accommodation. Please note that accommodations will not be made for foreseeable circumstances, such as having multiple papers due in the same week. Accommodations are reserved for unforeseeable events that are outside a student's control (e.g., illness, a death in the family). When there is a difficult situation that is foreseeable, it is your responsibility to organize your work for this course so that you can nonetheless turn in the assignment on time.

Due date extensions will usually not be granted for work lost due to computer crashes or the loss of a computer file. The reason for this is that there are simple and free ways of regularly and automatically backing up your work.

7.6 Other Accommodations

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University also accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let me know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who know in advance that they will have difficulty completing assignments because of varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume that they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with me before the course drop date.

Read the university calendar so that you are aware of no-penalty drop dates, requirements for medical authorization (to defer an exam, for example) and other procedures that may affect you.

7.7 Other University Resources

University students often encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. If you run into difficulties and need assistance, I encourage you to contact me by email or by dropping by my office. I will do my best to support your success during the term. This includes identifying concerns I may have about your academic progress or wellbeing through Early Alert. With Early Alert, faculty members can connect you with advisors who offer student's support and assistance getting back on track to success. Only specialized UBC advisors are able to access any concerns I may identify, and Early Alert does not affect your academic record.

For more information: https://facultystaff.students.ubc.ca/systems-tools/early-alert

If you find yourself struggling, the University of British Columbia offers a range of other supports – please reach out and take advantage of them.

- Student resources

- Counseling Services

- Food Bank

7.8 Respectful University Environment

UBC recognizes that "the best possible environment for working, learning and living is one in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity and inclusion are valued." The full UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff can be found here. Students should read this statement carefully and take note of both the protections and the responsibilities that it outlines for all members of the UBC community. Students should also review the Student Code of Conduct.

This course values frank discussion, healthy debate, and the free and respectful exchange of ideas. Students are welcome to voice and defend their views, which may differ from those of other students or of the instructor. However, disrespectful behavior, including bullying and harassment, will not be tolerated. The instructor and teaching assistant will be professional and respectful in all their exchanges with students, and students will exercise similar professionalism and respect in their interactions with each other, with the teaching assistant, and with the instructor.

If you have any concerns about the class environment, please raise them with the instructor. You also have the options of contacting the Head of the Political Science Department, UBC's Equity and Inclusion Office, or the UBC Ombudsperson for Students.

7.9 Equity and Harassment

UBC is committed to equity (including but not limited to gender equity) and fostering a safe learning environment for everyone. All peoples should be able to study, work, and learn in a supportive environment that is free from sexual violence, harassment, and discrimination. UBC's Policy #3 on Discrimination and Harassment defines harassment as: "unwanted and unwelcome attention from a person who knows, or ought to know, that the behaviour is unwelcome. Harassment can range from written or spoken comments to unwanted jokes, gifts, and physical assault, and may be accompanied by threats or promises regarding work or study opportunities and conditions. Harassment can be either a single incident or a series of related incidents." Such behavior is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at UBC. If you or someone you know has encountered sexual violence or harassment, you can find confidential support and resources at the AMS Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC) and the Equity and Inclusion Office. The SASC is an all-genders service that serves the UBC-Vancouver campus community and is committed to creating a safer campus community, free from sexualized violence. Their work is informed by feminism, anti-oppression and recognition of intersectionality. The Equity and Inclusion Office is committed to fostering a community in which human rights are respected and equity and diversity are integral to university life.

Resources are available at:

Sexual Assault Support Centre (SASC)
249M, Student Union Building, UBC
604-827-5180
sasc@ams.ubc.ca
http://amssasc.ca

Equity and Inclusion Office
2306–1874 East Mall (Brock Hall)
604.822.6353
equity@equity.ubc.ca
http://equity.ubc.ca

7.10 Academic Integrity and Responsibility

Academic dishonesty in the form of cheating or plagiarism will not be tolerated. The University considers plagiarism to be the most serious academic occurrence that a student can commit. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the presentation or submission of the work of another person, without citation or credits, as the student's own work. Whether intentional or accidental, instances of plagiarism will have serious academic consequences.

In my experience, many students who believe they know what plagiarism is do not actually have a clear understanding of where the line between proper and improper use of sources lies. I thus strongly encourage you to read the UBC library's excellent online resources. If you have any doubts about how and when to properly acknowledge another person's work, please discuss these with the course instructor. Punishment for cheating or plagiarism will include a grade of zero and other disciplinary action. Please refer to the University policies on cheating and plagiarism for examples of what constitutes academic misconduct and the extent of disciplinary action that could be taken.

7.11 Acknowledgement

UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

7.12 Turnitin

In accordance with departmental policy, in this course you will be required to submit your research paper in electronic form to a service called Turnitin. UBC subscribes to this service that checks written material for originality by searching for matching text. This service is in increasing use in universities as protection for students against the impact of academic fraud on scholarship competitions, graduate and law school admissions, and degree reputation. Students will submit their homework and research design to the Turnitin website, where software scans the paper against a database which includes public websites, paper writing services, essays submitted to Turnitin, and journal articles. The service then produces a report on the paper's originality. The instructor will review the reports, and where necessary, the papers themselves. Please note that Turnitin stores information on servers that reside in the United States. If you do not wish to use your name when creating your Turnitin account, please use the first 5 digits of your student number as an alias instead. For more information on Turnitin, reasons for its use, and general policies, see the UBC Vice President Academic and Provost web site, at http://www.vpacademic.ubc.ca/integrity/Turnitin/index.htm

This is a paperless course. Students are only required to submit their papers to Turnitin.

Still a little uncertain or paranoid about what constitutes plagiarism? For a quick refresher visit:

http://www.indiana.edu/%7Ewts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml and/or:
http://sja.ucdavis.edu/files/plagiarism.pdf

To submit your paper to Turnitin, log on to the Turnitin site, at:

www.turnitin.com

You will be asked to create a unique "user profile," consisting of an ID (e-mail address) and password (see upper right hand corner of the Turnitin homepage). Once this ID is created, you will be able to add courses to your profile. To add a course, you will need:

Course ID: 18061013

Course Password: science

Once added to a course, you will be able to submit your homeworks to the service. You will be asked to provide your name and student number, as well as some details about your assignment. This information will be used only to identify your submission to your instructor. Please ensure that there is NO IDENTIFYING INFORMATION included in the text of your assignment, including headers. This is for your own privacy (if you do submit identifying information by mistake and you are not concerned, you can leave it as is). You will be asked to cut and paste (text only) the body of your assignment, and the bibliography into separate fields within the website. Simply confirm the submission, and Turnitin will issue a receipt (via e-mail). If you encounter difficulties submitting your bibliography, do not be concerned. The important element is the body (text) of the paper.

Please note that Turnitin stores information on servers that reside in the United States. If you do not wish to use your name when creating your Turnitin account, please use the first 5 digits of your student number as an alias instead. Assignments are not accessible to the public once submitted to Turnitin, and you, as the author, retain ownership of your original material. Your work will be added to Turnitin's archive for comparison against subsequently submitted material, thus ensuring that your work is not plagiarized.