

PLAD 710

Political Research With Quantitative Methods

Monday & Wednesday 12:30 – 1:45pm
New Cabell 337

Course web site:
<http://collab.itc.virginia.edu>

Nick Winter
nwinter@virginia.edu
<http://faculty.virginia.edu/nwinter>
100 Cabell Hall
924-6994
Office hours: Wednesday 2:30-4:00pm
and by appointment

This course will introduce students to some basic methods for conducting quantitative analyses in political science, with a focus on statistics and econometrics. The central theme of the course consists in applying quantitative methods to explore and evaluate political science theories.

Statistical analysis has become a standard elements of the political science “tool kit,” and basic familiarity with it is valuable for students in all sub-fields of the discipline. My goal in this class is provide basic familiarity with statistics and econometrics for studying politics, and to lay a solid foundation for further coursework for those who choose to pursue quantitative analysis in more depth.

Thus, we will begin at the beginning—with basic probability theory—then move through basic statistical analysis, and conclude with regression analysis. The lectures and problem sets will include a moderate amount of statistical theory, because I believe strongly that familiarity with the underlying theory is critical to the smart application of statistical techniques. The later problem sets will shift the emphasis toward application and data analysis.

There are no prerequisites for the course. The course will include some mathematical content; however, no math beyond high school algebra is assumed before you begin.

Course Requirements

Requirements for this course include lectures, reading, homework assignments, a midterm exam, and a final exam.

The midterm will be held in class as noted on the syllabus below. We will schedule the final exam at a mutually agreeable time after the end of classes. You will be allowed one page of notes (front only) for the midterm, and two pages (i.e., front and back of a single sheet) for the final.

Understanding statistics requires “learning by doing,” and for that reason I emphasize homework assignments in this class. You can expect about seven homework assignments during the term. The early assignments will consists of “paper-and-pencil” exercises to help solidify your understanding of basic concepts and procedures; the later assignments will ask you to conduct analysis of real political science data that I provide. I encourage group work on homework assignments, although each student should write up and turn in his or her own set of answers.

Because the material in this course is cumulative, attending class consistently and staying current on the reading and homework is absolutely vital for your success. *Therefore, no incompletes will be given in this course.* In addition, anyone auditing the course is strongly encouraged to attend consistently and to complete the reading and homework assignments.

The statistical software we will use is Stata. The software and documentation are available on the computers in the Politics Department computer lab in Cabell Hall, as well as on some computers in other ITC computer labs (see http://www.itc.virginia.edu/labs/listSoftLocations.php?soft_title_id=125 for a listing). Though you do not need to purchase your own copy of Stata, you may wish to do so, especially if you anticipate further empirical work beyond this course. It is available for Windows, Macintosh and Unix platforms at a discount through ITC.

See <http://www.itc.virginia.edu/research/stata/> for purchase information. (*Note that the student version of Stata, so-called "small Stata," will not be sufficient to analyze the data sets for some of the problem sets; you will need the standard, "Intercooled" version of Stata.*)

Readings

There are several required books for this course. They should be available from the campus bookstore; used copies of the Wonnacott and Wonnacott book are also readily available on-line at a substantial discount.

Achen, Christopher H. 1982. *Interpreting and Using Regression*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fox, John. 1991. *Regression Diagnostics*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wonnacott, Thomas H. and Ronald J. Wonnacott. 1990. *Introductory Statistics for Business and Economics*. Fourth Edition. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

In addition, we will read substantial portions of the following book, which is unfortunately out of print. I will make available copies of the relevant sections.

Kelejian, Harry H. and Wallace E. Oates. 1989. *Introduction to Econometrics: Principles and Applications*. Third Edition. New York: Harper and Row.

If you plan to go on with statistical analysis, you might also consider purchasing the following resource as well. Hamilton's book is essentially a compendium of tons of example Stata commands, along with the output from Stata.

Hamilton, Lawrence C. 2006. *Statistics with Stata. Updated for Version 9*. Belmont, CA: Thompson/Brooks-Cole.

(The older version, updated for Version 8, should also serve your purposes.)

Copies of assigned articles will be available on-line.

Course Schedule and Outline

JANUARY 13: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

JANUARY 14 & 21: BASIC PROBABILITY & DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, skim chapter 1, read sections 2-1, 2-2, 2-3 & 2-6; chapter 3

JANUARY 26 & 28: PROBABILITY DISTRIBUTIONS AND RANDOM VARIABLES

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, chapters 4-5

FEBRUARY 2 & 4: SAMPLING AND POINT ESTIMATION &

INTRODUCTION TO STATISTICAL COMPUTING USING STATA

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, chapters 6-7

Optional: Stata Documentation; in particular *Getting Started with Stata* and selections from the *Stata User's Manual*

FEBRUARY 9 & 11: INTERVAL ESTIMATION AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, chapters 8-9

Cohen, Jacob. 1994. "The Earth is Round ($p < .05$)" *American Psychologist* 49(12):997-1003.
Available from Collab.

FEBRUARY 16 & 18: UNIVARIATE & BIVARIATE DATA ANALYSIS

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, section 2-7

Kastellec, Jonathan P., and Eduardo L. Leoni. 2007. "Using Graphs Instead of Tables in Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics* 5(4), pages 755-763.

Epstein, Lee, Andrew D. Martin, and Matthew M. Schneider. 2006. "On the Effective Communication of the Results of Empirical Studies, Part I." *Vanderbilt Law Review* 59(6):1811-71.

Epstein, Lee, Andrew D. Martin, and Christina L. Boyd. 2007. "On the Effective Communication of the Results of Empirical Studies, Part II." *Vanderbilt Law Review* 60(3), pages 801-31.

FEBRUARY 23 & 25: TABULAR DATA ANALYSIS AND CHI-SQUARE; MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, chapter 17

MARCH 2 & 4: SPRING BREAK (NO CLASS)

MARCH 9 & 11: MIDTERM EXAM

Catch up and review on Monday

In-class midterm exam on Wednesday, March 12

MARCH 16 & 18: BIVARIATE REGRESSION

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, chapter 11 and 12-1, 12-2

Achen, pages 1-37

Kelejian & Oates, pages 1-9, 25-33, and 43-86

MARCH 23 & 25: HYPOTHESIS TESTING, CONFIDENCE INTERVALS, PREDICTION

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, 12-3 through 12-5

Achen, pages 37-51

Kelejian & Oates, pages 89-104 and 123-131

MARCH 30 & APRIL 1: MULTIPLE REGRESSION

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, chapter 13

Kelejian & Oates, chapter 4 (134-161) and 200-202

Fox, pages 1-10

APRIL 6 & 8: MORE MULTIPLE REGRESSION

Kastellec, Jonathan P., and Eduardo L. Leoni. 2007. "Using Graphs Instead of Tables in Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics* 5(4), pages 763-768.

Epstein, Lee, Andrew D. Martin, and Christina L. Boyd. 2007. "On the Effective Communication of the Results of Empirical Studies, Part II." *Vanderbilt Law Review* 60(3), pages 831-46.

APRIL 13 & 15: REGRESSION TOPICS: COLINEARITY, DUMMY VARIABLES, INTERACTION TERMS, AND MORE

Achen, pages 51-79

Fox, pages 10-21 and 75-80

King, Gary. 1986. "How Not to Lie With Statistics: Avoiding Common Mistakes in Quantitative Political Science." *American Journal of Political Science* 30(3):666-87.

Available from Collab; also from <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0092-5853%28198608%2930%3A3%3C666%3AHNTLWS%3E2.0.CO%3B2-3>.

Kelejian & Oates, pages 205-211 and 178-186

APRIL 20 & 22: REGRESSION TOPICS: NON-LINEAR RELATIONSHIPS, VARIABLE SELECTION AND MODEL SPECIFICATION, OUTLIERS AND INFLUENTIAL DATA

Wonnacott & Wonnacott, chapters 14

Fox, chapters 4 & 7

Bartels, Larry M. 1990. "Five Approaches to Model Specification." *Political Methodologist* 3(2):2-6.
Available from the course web site.

Kelejian & Oates, pages 251-256

APRIL 27: REVIEW, CATCH UP, AND "WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?"