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**PSC 201**

**Political Inquiry**

Fall 2011

11:05-12:20 T/Th

B & L 106

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**Professor:**

Kevin A. Clarke

Harkness 317

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**PURPOSE**

This course provides undergraduates with the analytical, conceptual, and statistical foundation necessary for developing the ability to read and perform empirical research in political science. Topics include experiments and observational studies, concepts and measurement, descriptive data analysis, and statistics. Emphasis is on the use of statistics to evaluate empirical evidence.

**PREREQUISITES**

Working knowledge of high school algebra is the only course prerequisite. Note that this course fulfills the Political Science department's techniques of analysis requirement.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Evaluation is based on problem sets (25% of your grade) and three midterm exams (25% of your grade each). Students may work together on problem sets, but each must turn in his or her own write-up. You will be allowed to use a calculator on all exams. The exams are given as scheduled and are not given early — make any travel plans accordingly. You must take all three exams to pass the course.

**We will make solutions to the problems sets available. Consequently, late problem sets will receive a grade of zero.**

A web page for this course is to be found here:

<http://www.rochester.edu/College/PSC/clarke/201/201.html>

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Be familiar with the University's policies on academic integrity and disciplinary action (<http://www.rochester.edu/College/CCAS/AdviserHandbook/AcadHonesty.html>). Violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with severely, which means that your grade will suffer, and I will forward your case to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty.

Remember that the same technology that has made plagiarism easier to accomplish has also made it easier to detect. If you do not cite a source, it is plagiarism. If you do cite it, it is scholarship.

## TEXT

The following book should be in the bookstore:

Freedman, David, Robert Pisani, and Roger Purves (2007). *Statistics*, 4th ed. New York: Norton. (FPP)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Readings can be found in one of three places: the required texts, online at JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org>), or online at the course web site. Readings available on JSTOR are marked with a †.

### I. Observational Studies and Measurement

#### September 1: No Class

- None

#### September 6: Introduction

- None (first day of class)

#### September 8: Controlled Experiments and Observational Studies

- FPP: 3-30

#### September 13: Concepts, Variables, and Measurement

- Judd *et al.* Ch. 2, 3, & 7

## II. Describing and Summarizing Data

### September 15: Frequency Distributions

- FPP Ch. 3

### September 20: Measures of Central Tendency

- FPP Ch. 4: 1-4
- †Mann and Wolfinger (1980). "Candidates and Parties in Congressional Elections." *American Political Science Review* 74(3): 617-623.

### September 22: Measures of Dispersion

- FPP Ch. 4: 5-9

### September 27: The Normal Approximation

- FPP Ch. 5

### September 29: Measurement Error

- FPP Ch. 6

## III. Analyzing Relationships

### October 4: Correlation I

- FPP Ch. 8
- †Hokenmaier (1998). "Social Security vs. Educational Opportunity in Advanced Industrial Societies: Is There a Trade-Off?" *American Journal of Political Science* 42(2): 709-711.

**October 6: Midterm exam 1 — no exceptions.**

- None

October 11: Fall Break.

- None

October 13: Correlation II

- FPP Ch. 9
- †Segal and Cover (1989). “Ideological Values and the Votes of the United States Supreme Court Justices.” *American Political Science Review* 83(2): 557-565.

October 18: Regression I

- FPP Ch. 10

October 20: Regression II

- FPP Ch. 11 and 12
- †Hurwitz and Peffley (1997). “Public Perceptions of Race and Crime: The Role of Racial Stereotypes.” *American Journal of Political Science* 41(2): 375-401.

**IV. Probability**

October 25: Probability I

- FPP Ch. 13

October 27: Probability II

- FPP Ch. 14

November 1: The Law of Averages

- FPP Ch. 16

November 3: Midterm exam 2 — no exceptions.

- None

November 8: Expectations

- FPP Ch. 17

November 10: The Normal Approximation

- FPP Ch. 18

**V. Sampling**

November 15: Surveys

- FPP Ch. 19
- Judd *et al.* Ch. 6, 9

November 17: Errors in Sampling

- FPP Ch. 20

November 22: Paradoxes

- None

November 24: Happy Thanksgiving

- None

November 29: The Accuracy of Percentages

- FPP Ch. 21

December 1: The Accuracy of Means

- FPP Ch. 23

**VI. Tests of Significance**

December 6: Hypothesis Testing

- FPP Ch. 26

December 8: Hypothesis Tests for Means

- FPP Ch. 27
- †Matland (1994). “Putting Scandinavian Equality to the Test — an Experimental Evaluation of Gender Stereotyping of Political Candidates in a Sample of Norwegian Voters.” *British Journal of Political Science* 24(2): 273-292.
- †Wood *et al.* (1998). “Acclimation Effects’ for Supreme Court Justices: A Cross-Validation, 1888-1940.” *American Journal of Political Science* 42(2): 690-697.

**December 13: Midterm exam 3 — no exceptions.**