

POL SCI 11A: Political Analysis  
Summer II 2022 MWF, 1:00 PM – 2:50 PM @ SE 101

Instructor: N. Uras Demir

(Call me Uras)

E-mail: [demirn@uci.edu](mailto:demirn@uci.edu)

Class Location: [SE 101](#)

Class Hours: MWF 1:00 PM – 2:50 PM

Office Hours: F 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM (or by appointment) @ SSPB 5282 or [Zoom](#)

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION (WHAT IS THIS COURSE ABOUT?)**

How do political scientists carry out research? This course aims to introduce students to the fundamentals of the scientific study of politics. The course will cover what a causal theory is, how we move from abstract theorizing to empirical measurement, how we carry out empirical measurements, and how we interpret and present empirical findings. While this course is primarily designed for political science majors, all social science majors will gain firsthand experience producing research papers.

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**COURSE OBJECTIVES (WHAT WILL I GET OUT OF THIS COURSE?)**

I designed this course to share transferable skills that will help you in other classes and outside the campus. Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to (1) produce causal arguments about political events, (2) produce research designs, (3) gather data, (4) summarize data, (5) visualize data, (6) apply basic quantitative methods to the data and (7) interpret the outcomes. You will also gain experience in (8) presenting your research project in a professional environment. Finally, you will (9) gain experience working with a programming language and (10) learn the basics of data science.

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**COURSE MATERIALS:**

*Textbook?*

- The Fundamentals of Political Science Research, by Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten (3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Cambridge University Press). New~\$50, Rent ~\$20 on [Amazon](#), Library:

*Additional readings?*

- Any additional readings will be posted on the [Canvas](#) course space for our course ahead of time.

*Course Slides?*

- All slides will be posted on the [Canvas](#) course space for our course ahead of time.

*Any Software?*

- For the analyses, we will use **R**. **No previous coding or statistical proficiency is necessary**. I will explain the analyses and how to use them with statistical software throughout the course in a straightforward format. After this course, you will be able to write R on your CV.

*Teaching tech?*

- We will also use third-party applications, like, Kahoot and polleverywhere, in the course. These require the students to have access to a computer or a smartphone during the course.

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**COMMUNICATIONS:**

Course materials and updates will be posted online on the [Canvas](#) course space for our course. You must be able to receive notifications from the website and should check this account regularly. I will also set up a [Discord](#) server for the course, which will serve as a space for you to communicate. I will monitor the Discord channel to ensure it remains a civil and inclusive environment.

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**EMAIL POLICY**

If you have a question about the course, email me ([demirn@uci.edu](mailto:demirn@uci.edu))! **Messages should be sent from Canvas or your uci.edu email account.** Please include the course name (POL SCI 11A) in the subject line. Please resend your message if you don't receive a reply within 48 hours.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY**

TL;DR: Be nice, and don't cheat. If you are not sure about something, talk to me! You are responsible for turning in your own work, citing material properly, and conducting yourself in a civil and ethical manner. You are also responsible for abiding by the [University's Academic Honesty policy](#) and the [Principles of Community](#).

**ASSESSMENTS & GRADES**

*Exams?*

- No midterm or final exam.

*Attendance?*

- Required. You can miss 3 days out of the fifteen days that we are meeting. Beyond that, you get 0 for your attendance.\*

*Workshops?*

- Six in-class workshops. We will go over problem sets. I will show you how to write and run the code on R, and I will provide the code too. At the end of these workshops, you will turn in a short report. We will try to finish these in class. The lowest two of the in-class workshop grades will be dropped. Missed more than 2 workshops? 10 points off for each missed submission.\*

*Project?*

- You will develop a research project in three phases. See below for instructions.

*Extra credit?*

- Fill out both the midterm and final instructor evaluations.

*Late policy?*

- 2 points off from the assignment for each late day.\*

ASSIGNMENT		PERCENTAGE
ATTENDANCE		10%
IN-CLASS WORKSHOP	DATA SUMMARY	10 % EACH (LOWEST TWO WILL BE DROPPED)
IN-CLASS WORKSHOP	DATA VISUALIZATION	
IN-CLASS WORKSHOP	DEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST	
IN-CLASS WORKSHOP	INDEPENDENT SAMPLE T-TEST	
IN-CLASS WORKSHOP	CORRELATION COEFFICIENT	
IN-CLASS WORKSHOP	REGRESSION ANALYSIS	
RESEARCH	PART 1	20%
RESEARCH	PRESENTATION	10%
RESEARCH	PART 2	20%
TOTAL		100%
EXTRA CREDIT	FEEDBACK	+3%

*\*Except for an excusable circumstance, in which case you need to talk to me!*

### THE GRADING SCALE

A	100-95%
A-	94-90%
B+	89-85%
B	84-80%
C+	79-75%
C	74-70%
C-	69-65%
D+	64-60%
D	59-55%
D-	54-50%
F	49% and below

Not happy with your grade? Formal grade appeals must be made via email within two days after the grade was posted. If you request a grade review, I will regrade your entire assignment. Therefore, understand that your grade may go up or down following regrading.

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### DISABILITIES AND ACCOMMODATION POLICY

This class will be run in an inclusive and welcoming environment. If you need accommodation due to a physical or mental condition that interferes with your academic experience, please contact the DSC ([dsc@uci.edu](mailto:dsc@uci.edu)) or let me know as soon as possible so that I can help you connect with the DSC. The people at the DSC are student allies, and they will make arrangements that will help you with your course progress.

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### MANAGING STRESS

Your mental wellbeing is above anything else! Being a student is often stressful. This is especially true for students who are members of underrepresented groups in academia. Please know that my door is always open to discuss how to make your workload more manageable and any specific challenges you may be having in our class or the university. While I will be there to support you, I am not a trained specialist but fortunately there are such professionals available to you as a student at UCI:

- **The Counseling Center offers FREE, CONFIDENTIAL short-term therapy for all registered students and can also help with referrals for longer-term care. For more information, give them a call at (949)824-6457 or visit their [website](#).**

Please note that these resources are not only for folks with formal mental health diagnoses but for anyone dealing with **stress** and **anxiety**. Also, it can be intimidating and an unwelcome addition to your emotional load to seek out help. Please let me know if it would be helpful to have someone contact the relevant services on your behalf or even walk over to the Counseling Center with you!

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### CAMPUS RESOURCES

I will be mentioning various campus resources throughout the quarter, but if you are dealing with any issues interfering with your academic experience, PLEASE talk to me so we can explore support mechanisms available at UCI together.

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## THE RESEARCH PROJECT ASSIGNMENT

Half of your grade will come from the research project assignment. This assignment has three components.

### 1. RESEARCH PROJECT PART 1 (AUGUST 22<sup>ND</sup> BY 11:59 PM)

This is the front end of your research project. This assignment should be about 3-4 double-spaced pages, excluding tables and graphs. Data? Check canvas for options. This assignment should have four sections:

- Introduction (half a page)
  - Identify a research topic
  - Identify a causal research question
- Literature Review (one page)
  - Produce a short literature review
- Argument and Hypotheses (half a page)
  - Provide a causal explanation
  - Operationalize your dependent and independent variables
  - Produce a hypothesis
- Data (half a page excluding the tables and graphs)
  - Gather data for your variables and describe sources
  - Produce summary statistics
  - Produce data visualizations

### 2. RESEARCH WORKSHOP (AUGUST 31<sup>ST</sup> OR SEPTEMBER 2<sup>ND</sup>, IN-CLASS)

We will have a two-day research workshop where everyone will present their research projects. Another line to put on your CV! You will produce a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation for the participants. This presentation should have slides on:

- The research question.  
The argument.
- The hypothesis.
- The data.
- Summary statistics table for the variables.
- The histograms for the variables.
- The hypothesis test.
- Limitations of the study.

*The hypothesis test can either be a proposed one (i.e., I am planning to use regression analysis because... ) or a completed one (i.e., I used regression analysis because...). In the first case include a slide on expected findings. In the second case, include a slide with the findings table. On limitations, think about the following questions. Are there any possible confounders? What about ignored variables? Can you apply this in a different setting? What do you need to do to improve your research?*

### 3. RESEARCH PROJECT PART 2 (SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup> BY 11:59 PM)

This is the back end of your research project. This assignment should be about 2-3 double-spaced pages, excluding the tables and the bibliography. This assignment should ideally have four sections:

- Method and Findings (half a page excluding the tables)
  - Provide reasoning for the hypothesis test that you chose
  - Run the hypothesis test
  - Present the results
  - Interpret the results
- Discussion (one page)
  - Discuss what the results mean for your argument
  - Discuss limitations (what other variables might explain the DV)
- Conclusion (half a page)
  - Summary of the question, the argument, and the findings.
- Bibliography (separate page, APA style citations, [here's a link to a cheat sheet](#)).

*Data? Again, check canvas. What if my results don't look good? You are not graded on the statistical significance of your findings! Not statistically significant findings are fine. I am interested in your reasoning behind using a method and your interpretation of the results! Page limit? Around the numbers mentioned above (it could be slightly under or above). Editing rules? Standard margins, Times New Roman 12 pts—Don't mess with these! Please talk to me if you feel lost!*

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Schedule	Subject	Anything Due?	Notes
Week 1 M (August 1 <sup>st</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Introduction to Political Science Research		
Week 1 M (August 1 <sup>st</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Finding Research Topics & Concepts		
Week 1 W (August 3 <sup>rd</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	The Two Basic Variables, Research Questions, and Literature Review		
Week 1 W (August 3 <sup>rd</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Literature Review Demo		
Week 1 F (August 5 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Causality		
Week 1 F (August 5 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Hypotheses		
Week 2 M (August 8 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Research Design		
Week 2 M (August 8 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Measuring Concepts and Gathering Data		
Week 2 W (August 10 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Crash Course in Working With R I		
Week 2 W (August 10 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Crash Course in Working With R II		
Week 2 F (August 12 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Summarizing Data		
Week 2 F (August 12 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Summarizing Data Workshop (R)		
Week 3 M (August 15 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Visualizing Data		
Week 3 M (August 15 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Visualizing Data Workshop (R)	Data Summary R Workshop Due	
Week 3 W (August 17 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Statistical Inference	Data Visualization R Workshop Due	

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Week 3 W (August 17 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Bivariate Hypothesis Testing		
Week 3 F (August 19 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Dependent Sample t-Test		
Week 3 F (August 19 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Dependent Sample t-Test Workshop (R)		
Week 4 M (August 22 <sup>nd</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Independent Sample t-Test	Dependent Sample R Workshop & Research Design Part 1 Due	
Week 4 M (August 22 <sup>nd</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Independent Sample t-Test Workshop (R)		
Week 4 W (August 24 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	The Correlation Coefficient*	Two Sample t-Test R Workshop Due	
Week 4 W (August 24 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	The Correlation Coefficient Workshop (R)*		
Week 4 F (August 26 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Two-Variable Regression Analysis	The Correlation Coefficient R Workshop Due	
Week 4 F (August 26 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Two-Variable Regression Analysis Workshop (R)		
Week 5 M (August 29 <sup>th</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Research Ethics and Research Presentation Demo by Uras	Two-Variable Regression Analysis R Workshop Due	
Week 5 M (August 29 <sup>th</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Research Q&A		
Week 5 W (August 31 <sup>st</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Research Workshop	Presentation Session 1	
Week 5 W (August 31 <sup>st</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Research Workshop	Presentation Session 2	
Week 5 F (September 2 <sup>nd</sup> ) 1:00-1:50 PM	Professionalization Day		
Week 5 F (September 2 <sup>nd</sup> ) 2:00-2:50 PM	Professionalization Day		

*Note: The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the me may be necessary.  
 \*denotes week's we might change.*