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Diplomacy Syllabi

School of Diplomacy and International Relations

Fall 2023

DIPL 6310 Research Methods for Policy Analysis

Brian K. Muzás Ph.D.

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School of Diplomacy and International Relations
DIPL 6310 Research Methods for Policy Analysis
Mondays, 5:00PM – 7:10PM
Muscarelle (Stafford) Hall 206

Professor:	Rev. Brian K. Muzás, Ph.D.	Office:	134 McQuaid Hall
Student Hours:	Mondays, 4:00PM – 5:00PM	Mobile Phone:	+1 201 889 0207
	Other times by appointment	E-mail:	brian.muzas@shu.edu
	(in person, via Teams)		

Course Description

The objectives of this class are twofold. The first goal is to develop a critical understanding of the use of scientific research in the practice and academic study of international affairs. While we will consider issues central to all research and some unique to qualitative analysis, the emphasis in this class is quantitative research. Whether you are primarily interested in security, finance, development, trade, or social issues, much research that is likely of interest to you uses some form of quantitative analysis. This is equally true for policy reports published by the UN, World Bank, Brookings, RAND, or other relevant organizations. To be a productive participant in the world of international affairs, you need to be able to understand the assumptions that underlie quantitative analyses, to disentangle proper and improper uses of quantitative evidence, and to ask intelligent questions about the validity of quantitative measurement and statistical methods. A second goal of the class is to equip you with the basic skills to perform quantitative analyses using a statistical software package (SPSS in this case). These skills include being able to find, download, use, and manipulate datasets published on the internet; to produce and interpret basic graphs and tables in an intelligent way; and to execute and evaluate the output of basic statistical models, especially regression analysis. Bear in mind that the emphasis in this class is on the analysis of data and the substantive interpretation of results. Of necessity, some concepts and relationships will be represented mathematically, but the class is not a mathematical statistics class. Those desiring more rigorous mathematical treatments are encouraged to take follow-up courses in statistical theory and econometrics.

Readings and Materials

Required readings are listed below for each class session. Most readings will come from the following:

- Bhattacherjee, Anol. (2012) Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices, 2nd Edition. http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/3
- Trochim, William M. (2006) The Research Methods Knowledge Base, 2nd Edition. http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/

Other readings will be provided electronically either by internet link or by Blackboard.

We will be using statistical software during the semester. The university has a package called SPSS. Students may use university computers equipped with SPSS either in the information commons area of the library on the second floor or at one of the public computer labs. You may want to purchase the software since a student version is available. Alternatively, there is an open-source statistical package apparently very similar to SPSS called PSPP which is available here: http://www.gnu.org/software/pspp/. I recommend a program called *gretl* available from: https://gretl.sourceforge.net/. If you choose to rent, purchase, or download software, I am not responsible for its functionality.

We will also use a free on-line course on Probability and Statistics from the Open Learning Initiative. This is analogous to an interactive reading assignment. It is essential that you complete these modules before class. Later modules will probably take up much more time than earlier modules, so budget your time accordingly. I will be covering material from these modules during class, but I will not repeat everything. You are of course welcome to work your way through unassigned modules. You can learn

more about the course and sign up here: https://oli.cmu.edu/courses/probability-statistics-open-free/.

Course Objectives
- To familiarize students with the key principles underlying the scientific study of politics, public policy, and international affairs.
- To enable students to undertake their own research and to thoughtfully critique the research of others.
- To allow students to develop their skills in analyzing, and to feel comfortable working with, quantitative data.

Requirements and Grading
- *Homework Assignments - 20%.* There will be a variety of homework assignments during the semester to give you an opportunity to work through the concepts and ideas from the class and/or practice the types of analyses that will be crucial on the midterm exam and the data analysis paper (as well as in your professional lives).
- *Mid-Term In-Class Exam - 20%.* The questions, covering the readings and lectures, will be like those found in the homework and in the questions asked in the on-line modules. The exam will be open-book and -notes.
- *Data Analysis Paper - 30%.* Students will obtain and use data collected by others to research an international affairs topic of their choosing. This paper will have a fixed structure: it starts with a research question and ends with a regression analysis. More specific instructions will follow in class and via BlackBoard. This project may be undertaken individually, in pairs, or in trios.
- *Research Design Paper - 30%.* The research design paper (10 pages) should draw on all the material from the class as well as your knowledge of an interest in researching a substantive international affairs topic. This paper will be due during the exam period. This research design can be qualitative, quantitative, or both. This assignment is preparation for your master's research project. You will:
  - Develop an international relations research question
  - Locate the question in the context of relevant literature (i.e., discuss the importance of the question for theory and policy)
  - Review the relevant literature on the topic
  - Outline a strategy for answering this question by addressing the following issues:
    - Operationalize the dependent variable
    - Develop a series of alternative explanations for the outcome
    - Specify the sort of evidence that will enable you to choose between those alternative explanations

Disability Services Statement
It is the policy and practice of Seton Hall University to promote inclusive learning environments. If you have a documented disability, you may be eligible for reasonable accommodations in compliance with University policy, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and/or the New Jersey Law against Discrimination. Please note, students are not permitted to negotiate accommodations directly with professors. To request accommodations or assistance, please self-identify with the Office for Disability Support Services (DSS), Duffy Hall, Room 67 at the beginning of the semester. For more information or to register for services, contact DSS at (973) 313-6003 or by e-mail at DSS@shu.edu.

Policy on Incompletes
Incompletes will be given only in exceptional cases for emergencies. Students wishing to request a grade of Incomplete must provide documentation to support the request accompanied by a Course Adjustment Form (available from the Diplomacy Main Office) to the professor before the date of the final examination. If the incomplete request is approved, the professor reserves the right to specify the new

submission date for all missing coursework. Students who fail to submit the missing course work within this time period will receive a failing grade for all missing coursework and a final grade based on all coursework assigned. Any Incomplete not resolved within one calendar year of receiving the Incomplete or by the time of graduation (whichever comes first) automatically becomes an "FI" (which is equivalent to an F). It is the responsibility of the student to make sure they have completed all course requirements within the timeframe allotted. Please be aware that Incompletes on your transcript will impact financial aid and academic standing.

Academic Integrity & Dishonesty
Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the administration and may result in a lowered or failing grade for the course and up to possible dismissal from the School of Diplomacy. See University and School standards for academic conduct here: https://www.shu.edu/student-life/upload/Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf and http://www.shu.edu/academics/diplomacy/academic-conduct.cfm. Resources for academic integrity are on the course Blackboard page.

Citation Formats
Papers should utilize one of the Chicago Manual of Style citation formats: Author-Date or Notes and Bibliography. The guidelines for these formats can be found online at https://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

CAPS
As part of our commitment to the health and well-being of all students, Seton Hall University's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) offers initial assessments, counseling, crisis intervention, consultation, and referral services to the SHU community. The CAPS office is located on the second floor of Mooney Hall, room 27. Appointments can be made in-person or by calling 973-761-9500 during regular business hours, Monday-Friday, 8:45 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. In case of a psychological emergency, call CAPS (973-761-9500) at any time to speak to a crisis counselor. For more information, please visit: https://www.shu.edu/counseling-psychological-services/index.cfm.

Course Schedule
Many readings will be posted electronically. If you are unable to access a reading, please contact me in adequate time before the class session in which the reading is due. This schedule may be changed with appropriate notice.

CLASS 01 August 28 – Introduction
No readings assigned.

CLASS 02 September 11 – Social Science and Asking Questions
B: Chapters 1-5
ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE

CLASS 03 September 18 – Causality and Case Studies
B: Chapter 11
T: Design: Internal Validity: Establishing Cause and Effect
Van Evera: selections (available on Blackboard)
ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

CLASS 04 September 25 – Experiments, Quasi-experiments, and Observational Studies
B: Chapter 10 T: Design (all)
ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE

CLASS 05 October 2 – Measurement and Descriptive statistics
OLI Module 4, Examining Distributions
B: Chapters 6-7
T: Analysis: Descriptive Statistics

October 9 – No Class – Fall Break

CLASS 06 October 16 – Association / Correlation
OLI Module 5, Examining Relationships, pages 47 through 59 [Including Linear Relationships 7 and 8.
We will be covering this material again in more detail later in the semester.]
B: Chapter 14
T: Analysis: Descriptive Statistics: Correlation
ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE

CLASS 07 October 23 – Foundations of Statistical Inference I
OLI Modules 11, Random Variables, and 12, Sampling Distributions.
B: Chapters 8 and 15
T: Sampling; Analysis: Inferential Statistics
http://www.mathsisfun.com/data/standard-normal-distribution.html
http://www.sixsigmastudyguide.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/z-table.jpg

CLASS 08 October 30 – Foundations of Statistical Inference II
OLI Modules 14, Estimation, and 15, Hypothesis Testing.
Assignment #5 DUE

CLASS 09 November 6 – **Midterm Exam**: Research Design and Statistical Inference

CLASS 10 November 13 – Linear Regression I
Pollock: Chapter 8 (available on Blackboard)

CLASS 11 November 20 – Linear Regression II
Pollock: Chapter 8 (available on Blackboard)

CLASS 12 November 27 – Linear Regression III
Pollock: Chapter 8 (available on Blackboard)

CLASS 13 December 4 – Writing a Research Design/Learning Regression in *gretl*
No readings assigned
ASSIGNMENT #6 DUE

CLASS 14 December 11 – Working on Data Analysis in Class
No readings assigned

There will be no final examination in this course.

**DATA ANALYSIS PAPER AND RESEARCH DESIGN PAPER ARE BOTH DUE
NO LATER THAN 5:00PM ON TUESDAY, 12/19/2022 (but early submission is welcome!)**

*Please note that I may adjust the syllabus during the semester.