

# **POL 201: Intro. to Statistical Methods in Political Science**

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Spring 2015

Lecture: 5:30-6:50, Monday and Wednesday

Course website: <https://sites.google.com/a/stonybrook.edu/mperess/us2015>

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Soc. Behv. Sci. N743

OH: Monday and Wednesday afternoons (pop-in or by appointment)

Overview: This course covers elementary statistical methods in empirical political science, focusing on the analysis of public opinion, survey research designs, and sampling. Public opinion surveys are a vital component of contemporary politics and surveys are used to measure why the public votes as it does and to predict the results on an election. We will explore selecting a sample, designing and implementing a questionnaire, interpreting the results, and presenting the findings. This semester, we will pay special attention to polling done for the 2012 presidential election and the 2014 congressional elections as well as polling on current public policy issues such as health care and immigration.

## Recommended Books:

The following books will be on reserve in the library.

- [1] Weisberg, Herbert F., Jon A. Krosnick, and Bruce D. Bowen (1996). *An Introduction to Survey Research, Polling, and Data Analysis*.

[2] Groves, Robert M., Floyd J. Fowler, Jr., Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau (2004). *Survey Methodology*.

[3] Pollock, Phillip H., III (2005). *An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis*.

Lecture Notes: To supplement the readings, I will post lecture notes for some of the topics that we cover.

Readings: Course readings can be found on the course web page. I reserve the right to update the readings on the syllabus, but I will indicate on the course website which readings will be assigned at least one week in advance.

Software: We will be using Excel and SPSS in this class.

Final Project: The final project will require you to design, implement, and analyze a survey, using the different techniques we will cover in class. I will provide the exact details later in the course. The final project will be due on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The final class of the semester will involve short student presentations of the final projects.

Data Analysis Assignments: I will assign ~4 data analysis assignments throughout the class, which will require you to use of Excel and/or SPSS.

Class Participation: You are expected to attend class regularly and participate in class discussion.

Exam: There will be one exam about two-thirds of the way through the class which will cover basic data analysis and survey analysis.

Grading: Grades will be based on the exam (25%), the data analysis assignments (25%), the final project (25%), and class participation (25%).