# INST 381: Quantitative Research Methods for International Governance and Politics

[The University of Mississippi](http://www.olemiss.edu/)   
Fall 2016, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 14:30-15:45, 027 Honors College   
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## Course Overview

This undergraduate lecture course is a general introduction to the basic features of the research methods used in the scientific study of politics and policy around the world. The course starts with a broad overview of the social science approach to the study of global politics and policy, noting especially the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research and between normative and positive theories. After the brief overview, the course will specifically focus on quantitative research methods. It combines abstract discussions of the important concepts, strategies, and processes of research design with hands-on experiences of searching for, collecting, cleaning, processing, and analyzing real-world data on global politics and policy. It concludes with students completing independently a small research project from beginning to end on a topic in global politics and policy of his or her own choosing, based on what has been learned during the semester.

This course is especially suitable for students at the Croft Institute for International Studies because:

1. The course has a substantive emphasis on contemporary real-world issues in global politics and policy. The concepts, strategies, processes, and techniques are illustrated by actual examples and real data, and the underlying theories and substantive issues are those that international studies majors are interested in and care about.
2. Students can easily apply the concepts and methods learned in this course to other social science research projects that international studies majors often deal with in their course work or senior theses.

## Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, students should be able to conduct their own independent research on a topic in global politics and policy by using appropriate scientific research methods. This includes designing a research project, reviewing relevant literature, developing a theory, formulating hypotheses, collecting data, conducting analyses using basic statistical techniques such as cross-tabulation and regression, interpreting the outputs, and critically evaluating their own research and that conducted by others.

## Course Structure

The class will meet two times a week, each lasting for 75 minutes. It is essential for students to complete the required reading before each class and attend all class sessions. The lecture is designed to highlight subjects of particular interest or difficulty in an interactive manner rather than for the instructor to lecture on the information presented in the textbook and other course materials. Moreover, much learning will take place outside the classroom setting, especially during group study sessions and in computer laboratories.

## Course Materials

We will be using the following textbook for this course:

* Philip H. Pollock III. 2008. [*An SPSS Companion to Political Analysis, 3rd Edition*](http://www.amazon.com/SPSS-Companion-Political-Analysis/dp/0872896072). ISBN: 9780872896079.

For SPSS statistical software installation instructions, please log on to [http://my.olemiss.edu](http://my.olemiss.edu/), select the Student role, click on "Technology", "Research Software", and then "SPSS".

Additional reading assignments may be added throughout the semester. Most of them are contemporary examples of social science research on important topics in global politics and policy. We will discuss those examples of research in class to illustrate class lessons. Students are also encouraged to suggest readings on issues that are related to their geographic concentration so that the course may set the stage for their senior thesis.

## Course Grades

Grades for this course are distributed as follows: pop quizzes 20%; weekly assignments 45%; in-class presentation 10%; final research paper 25%. Besides, you are also required to complete the [Training on the Protection of Human Subjects](http://www.research.olemiss.edu/ACITI/What_is_Human_Subjects_Research_201106.pdf) and to take the [Human Subjects Research Ethics Quiz](https://www.research.olemiss.edu/ACITI) by the end of the semester.

The weekly assignments are printed in the textbook at the end of each chapter. They normally contain a mixture of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Later in the semester the assignments will include computer exercises as well. Students are required to complete the assignment every week for the corresponding chapter and turn it in at the end of class on Tuesday. Assignments that are turned in late without a reasonable excuse or assignments that show signs of cheating will be graded zero. Students are encouraged to meet regularly outside of class to study together and to read and review course material. However, the completed assignment every week should demonstrate independent effort, \*not\* teamwork. Each student will be conducting an independent research project throughout the semester, which will serve as the final exam for the course. There is a rough outline on Pages 235-237 of the textbook that you may follow generally in writing your final research paper. The final paper should be uploaded via SafeAssignment on Blackboard no later than midnight at the end of Tuesday, December 6th.

## Course Schedule

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Month** | **Date** | **Day** | **Topic** | **Required Reading** |
| August | 23rd | Tuesday | Introduction & Administration |  |
| 25th | Thursday | Overview of Research Methods | [Le Roy 2009](http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/inst381/LeRoy09.pdf) |
| 30th | Tuesday | Important Concepts | [Trochim 2006](http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/inst381/Trochim2006methods.doc) |
| September | 1st | Thursday | Finding Data for Analysis | [UM Library](http://guides.lib.olemiss.edu/subject/political_science); [ICPSR](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/international.jsp) |
| 6th | Tuesday | Introduction to SPSS | Chapter 1 |
| 8th | Thursday | Exam in class |
| 13th | Tuesday | Descriptive Statistics | Chapter 2 |
| 15th | Thursday | [Sampling & S.D.](http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/inst381/sampling&SD.ppt) |
| 20th | Tuesday | Transforming Variables | Chapter 3 |
| 22nd | Thursday | [EuroBarometer73.2](http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/inst381/EuroBarometer73.2.zip) |
| 27th | Tuesday | Making Comparisons | Chapter 4; [PowerPoint](http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/inst381/Making%20Comparisons.ppt) |
| 29th | Thursday | [Pew Global 2012 Spring](http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/inst381/PewGlobal2012Spring.zip) |
| October | 4th | Tuesday | Making Controlled Comparisons | Chapter 5 |
| 6th | Thursday | [Inglehart](http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/inst381/Inglehart03.pdf); [Hooghe & Marks](http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/inst381/HoogheMarks04.pdf) |
| 11th | Tuesday | Making Inferences about Sample Means | Chapter 6 |
| 13th | Thursday |
| 18th | Tuesday | Chi-square and Measures of Association | Chapter 7 |
| 20th | Thursday |
| 25th | Tuesday | Correlation and Linear Regression | Chapter 8 |
| 27th | Thursday | [Regression Analysis](http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/output/reg_spss_long.htm) |
| November | 1st | Tuesday | Dummy Variables and Interaction Effects | Chapter 9 |
| 3rd | Thursday |
| 8th | Tuesday | Logistic Regression | Chapter 10 |
| 10th | Thursday | [Example](http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/dae/logit.htm); [Annotated Output](http://www.ats.ucla.edu/stat/spss/output/logistic.htm) |
| 15th | Tuesday | Doing Your Own Political Analysis | Chapter 11 |
| 17th | Thursday | [PowerPoint template](http://www.olemiss.edu/courses/inst381/INST381presentation.ppt) |
| 29th | Tuesday | Student presentations |
| December | 1st | Thursday |
| 6th | Tuesday | Final research paper due at midnight. |  |