

George Washington University, Department of Political Science, Spring 2002
PSC 104 (10): Methods of Public Policy Analysis
Monday and Wednesday, 9:30-10:45, Hall of Government 308

Instructor: Professor Lawrence
Office: Fungler 507b
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 11:00-12:15 or by appointment
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Course web site: home.gwu.edu/~edl/psc104s02.html

Course Overview. This course provides an overview of research methods in public policy. Unlike most Political Science courses, this class does not concentrate on a particular subject area, country, or political era. Rather, this course covers how political scientists (and other social scientists) go about investigating research questions systematically. This course will increase your understanding of research that you encounter in your other courses as well as in the media and will prepare you to undertake your own research as well. In addition to studying the fundamental aspects of research design and data analysis, we will examine several specific topics in public policy over the course of the semester.

Because social scientific research is a *process*, the course is organized in order of the major steps necessary for conducting research. A midterm and final will allow you to evaluate and apply your understanding of key steps the research process. Three data analysis assignments will require you to collect data and analyze it using the skills you will develop during the semester.

Required Texts (available in GW Bookstore):

Johnson, Janet Buttolph and Richard A. Joslyn. 2001. *Political Science Research Methods*. Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press. [ISBN 9-781568-023298]
Gonick, Larry and Woolcott Smith. 1995. *The Cartoon Guide to Statistics*. Harper-Collins. [ISBN 0-06-273102-5]

Recommended Text (available in GW Bookstore):

Anagnoson, Theodore and Richard DeLeon. *Stataquest 4*. Duxbury Press. [ISBN 0534421371]
Note: The software included with the book will *not* work on Macs, unless you can simulate a wintel machine on your Mac.

Other Readings: Additional readings will either be linked on the course webpage (see below) or, on occasion, distributed in class.

Grades. I will base your course grade on the following:

Midterm Exam [closed book]	March 4	20%
Data Analysis I	February 25	10%
Data Analysis II	April 15	20%
Data Analysis III	April 24	20%
Final Exam [open book, open notes]	As in the official schedule	30%

In order to pass this class, all requirements must be completed. As a rule, there will be no make-up exams or deadline extensions given in this course. Exceptions only will be made with prior consent for planned events such as sponsored GWU activities or religious observances or under unusual circumstances such as a documented medical emergency. In all other cases, completing the assignment after the deadline will result in a substantial point deduction of one full letter grade per day (24 hours). There will be no “extra credit” in this course. **All graded work must be completed in accordance with The George Washington University Code of Academic Integrity.**

Assignments. The due dates on the assignments are specified in the table above and the course schedule below. The midterm exam will cover material from the first two sections of the course, while the final will emphasize the material after the midterm. On a few occasions, we may meet in the computer lab in 636 Fungler. In order to complete the data analysis assignments, you will need a Novell account so that you can use the software in the computer lab. You can get a Novell account in the basement of the Academic Center.

Participation and Reading. You are expected not only to attend lecture, but also to participate. I will not take attendance, but this is a small class, and your absence will be noticed. You should complete each reading assignment before the class period(s) for which it is assigned. Doing the reading prior to class will make it easier for you to follow lecture and will increase your ability to contribute constructively to class discussion.

Course Schedule:

Posing Questions and Constructing Answers

January 14 (M)	Course Overview	
January 16 (W)		JJR, ch. 1 “UC and the SATs” [link on webpage]
January 21 (M)	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day—NO CLASS	
January 23 (W)	Political Science as Science	JJR, ch. 2
January 28 (M)	Research Questions	JJR, ch. 3
January 30 (W)	Theory and Explanation	Bill James, “On Baseball being 75% pitching” [handout]
February 4 (M)	Summarizing Data: Descriptive Statistics	JJR, ch. 11; Gonick and Smith, chs. 4 & 5

Research Design—How can we answer research questions?

February 6 (W)	Measurement I	JJR, ch. 4
February 11 (M)	Measurement II	Popkin and McDonald “Turnout” [link on webpage]
February 13 (W)	Research Design: Experiments I	JJR, pp. 112-133 Gonick & Smith, ch. 10
February 18 (M)	President’s Day—NO CLASS	
February 20 (W)	Research Design: Experiments II	David Glenn “The Voucher Vortex” [link on webpage]

February 25 (M)	Research Design: Observational I	DATA ANALYSIS I DUE
February 27 (W)	Research Design: Observational II	Readings TBA [links on webpage]
March 4 (M)	MIDTERM EXAM	
March 6 (W)	Statistical logic	Gonick & Smith, chs. 1-3

Data Collection—How should we gather evidence?

March 11 (M)	Sample Selection	JJR, ch. 7; Gonick & Smith, ch. 6 (skim)
March 13 (W)	Data Collection I: Participant Observation	JJR, ch. 8
March 18 & 20	Spring Break, NO CLASSES	
March 25 (M)	Data Collection II: Document Analysis	JJR, ch. 9
March 27 (W)	Data Collection III: Interviews and Surveys	JJR, ch. 10

Data Analysis—How do we summarize evidence?

April 1 (M)	Bivariate Analysis I	JJR, ch. 12
April 3 (W)	Bivariate Analysis II	Gonick & Smith, ch. 7
April 8 (M)	Bivariate Analysis III	Gonick & Smith, ch. 8, 9, 11
April 10 (W)	Bivariate Analysis IV	DATA ANALYSIS II DUE
April 15 (M)	Multivariate Analysis I	JJR, ch. 13
April 17 (W)	Multivariate Analysis II	
April 22 (M)	Multivariate Analysis III	

Coming to conclusions—What can we claim, given our analysis?

April 24 (W)	Reaching Conclusions	JJR, ch. 14	DATA ANALYSIS III DUE
April 29 (M)	Second half overview		

Note: The schedule, policies, and assignments in this course are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.