

**Syllabus for PS 280 Section 1, "Introduction to Political Analysis"
Fall 2008
Christopher Butler, Instructor**

Contact Information

Main Lecture: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 – 10:45 AM
in SSCI 2069

Instructor's Office: SSCI 2051

Office Phone: 277-3742

E-mail: ckbutler@unm.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3:30 to 4:30 and by appointment.

Course Description

The interpretation and analysis of data is essential for almost any career that a political science major might pursue. Lawyers and lobbyists, politicians and professors all need to be able to read and understand reports in which numerical summaries of data (i.e., statistics) are used as evidence to support an argument or point of view. These professionals need to ascertain whether these statistics are being used appropriately. In addition, many of these professionals need to do their own statistical analysis. This course introduces students to statistics and the scientific study of politics. Students will learn why statistics are useful, how to interpret a variety of statistics, how to analyze data to generate their own statistics, and how to tell whether their statistics support their own argument.

Readings

Required:

Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics, 3rd edition by Neil J. Salkind. Sage Publications, 2007

The Tao of Statistics: A Path to Understanding (With No Math) by Dana K. Keller. Sage Publications, 2005

Recommended:

Statistical Analysis with Excel For Dummies by Joseph Schmuller. For Dummies, 2005

Basic Policies

Make-up Policy. If a student has a University-approved excuse for missing an examination AND if the instructor is notified PRIOR to the examination, arrangements for a make-up examination will be made. This policy is for exams only.

Completion. Grades of incomplete (I) will only be given in extraordinary circumstances.

Department Computer Lab. Students have the privilege of using the department's computer lab during business hours (8 AM – 5 PM) when it is not reserved for another class. Politely ask the office staff to let you in. Abuse of this privilege will lead to its loss.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request.

Student Learning Objectives

- The students will demonstrate an ability to think critically regarding political problems, trends, and developments by understanding of time-series and statistics of public policy questions.
- The students will be able to apply political science theories and/or concepts to real-world cases or be able to apply a case or set of cases using an appropriate theory by understanding of operationalization, case selection, and sampling.
- The students will be able to evaluate theories, either in light of empirical evidence or on theoretical grounds by understanding and applying inferential statistics and hypothesis testing.
- The students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of their rights and obligations as a citizen by understanding the use of statistics in political debate and in daily life.

Coursework and Grading

		Grading Scale	
		Percentage Earned	Letter Grade
Homework	15%	99.0 & above	A+
Quizzes	15%	95.0 to 98.9	A
Midterm Exam	30%	91.0 to 94.9	A-
Final Exam	40%	87.0 to 90.9	B+
	100%	83.0 to 86.9	B
		79.0 to 82.9	B-
		75.0 to 78.9	C+
		71.0 to 74.9	C
		67.0 to 70.9	C-
		63.0 to 66.9	D+
		59.0 to 62.9	D
		55.0 to 58.9	D-
		below 55.0	F

Homework and quizzes are used as learning tools rather than a measure of student mastery their first time attempting a problem. There will be homework assignments approximately once a week; quizzes will also be given approximately once per week. Homework assignments and quizzes will be corrected but not graded. Failure to turn in a homework assignment on time will result in a 1% deduction from the student's final total. Failure to turn in a quiz will result in a 1% deduction from the student's final total. Late homework assignments will be corrected but no make-up credit will be given.

Exams will be given in the class. Selected formulas and statistical tables will be provided along with the exam. The final exam will be cumulative.