

PSC 203: Public Policy Analysis

Fall 2005

Time: Wednesday, 6 PM - 8 PM

Location: Hall of States

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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the field of public policy analysis and to equip them with the basic quantitative skills necessary to be a knowledgeable consumer and producer of public policy analyses.

If you need to contact me, you can reach me via e-mail (preferred) or via my telephone voicemail. I will be available immediately after class every Wednesday and by appointment. You are also welcome to contact the TA for assistance.

Course Requirements & Grading

Grades will be determined by three computer assignments, a group project, a mid-term, a final (take-home), and class participation. Each component is weighted as follows:

Computer Assignments	15%
Project (Phase I)	20%
Project (Phase II)	20%
Midterm	15%
Final	20%
Class Participation	10%

The computer assignments will be completed using the statistical software program, STATA (version 9). These assignments are intended to acquaint you with the techniques necessary to successfully implement your projects. STATA can be purchased directly from Stata's website: <http://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplan.html>. Note that STATA comes in three flavors, Small, Intercooled, & Special Edition (SE), wherein the primary differences are in terms of variable & observation capacities. You can purchase a single year or perpetual license. For the purposes of this course, a one-year license of Intercooled STATA should be sufficient. However, if you expect to use STATA in the future, i.e. outside of a year hence, the perpetual license may be a better value.

The project is a group project and requires that students organize into groups of three. Each group will designate a group leader, whom will be responsible for maintaining regular contact with the course instructor. This project is, essentially, a comprehensive database analysis and is comprised of four distinct tasks to be articulated via presentations and written reports:

1. The purpose of the analysis,
2. The sources and format of the data,
3. Proposed methods of analysis,
4. Result of analysis.

The project is divided into two phases. The first phase constitutes the *proposal* phase and will include the first three tasks. The deliverables of the proposal phase will include a written proposal (10-15 pages) and a fifteen-minute presentation. The second phase of the project is the *implementation* phase and will include the fourth task. As with the first phase, the deliverables will include a final report (10-15 pages) and another fifteen-minute presentation of your results and recommendations.

The midterm will be an in-class, closed-book exam to be held the last half of a yet-to-be-determined class. The questions for the exam will expect you to articulate the concepts learned in class and in the reading materials via short-answer and essay-like questions. More details will follow as the exam date approaches.

The final is a take-home exam and will be an extension & culmination of the three prior computer assignments.

Since this is a graduate course, I expect attendance and participation. Note that 10% of your final grade is a function of your class participation.

Course Textbooks

There are four required texts for this class:

1. Statistics: A Guide to the Unknown (Fourth Edition). Roxy Peck, George Casella, George Cobb, Roger Hoerl, Deborah Nolan, Robert Starbuck, Hal Stern. Duxbury
2. The World of the Policy Analyst. Robert Heineman, ed.
3. Evaluation (Second Edition). Carol Weiss.
4. Data Analysis using STATA. Kohler and Kreuter. STATA Press.

From time to time, I will also distribute supplemental course materials as appropriate.

Coursework Assignment Handout/Due Dates

Assignment	Handout Date	Due Date
Computer Assignment #1	September 07	September 21
Computer Assignment #2	September 21	September 28
Presentation #1		October 12
Proposal #1		October 19
Midterm		October 26
Computer Assignment #3	October 19	November 02
Presentation #2		30 November or 07 December???
Proposal #2		07 December or 14 December???
Final	November 23	30 November

Course Itinerary

Date	Topic(s)	Reading(s)
31 August	Course Introduction and Overview	
07 September	Basic Terminology & Logic	
14 September	Conceptualization & Measurement	
21 September	Research Design	
28 September	Basic Statistical Concepts, I	
05 October	Basic Statistical Concepts, II	
12 October	Presentations, I	
19 October	Descriptive Statistics, I	
26 October	Descriptive Statistics, II	

02 November	Multivariate Statistics, I	
09 November	Multivariate Statistics, II	
16 November	Hypothesis Testing, I	
23 November	Hypothesis Testing, II	
30 November	Sampling, I & II	
07 December	Presentations, II ??	
14 December???	Presentations, II ??	