Professor Karen Jusko
Encina Hall, Room 441C
(650) 724-9906
kljusko@stanford.edu
Office Hours: Wednesday, 9-10:30am, and by appointment.

Graduate Student Instructors:
Sangick Jeon (sjeon@stanford.edu)
Section: Monday 2:15-3:05pm
Office hours: Thursday 10:00am-12:00pm, in Encina Hall West, Room 465.

Neil Malhotra (neilm@stanford.edu)
Section: Wednesday 2:15-3:05pm
Office hours: Wednesday, 5:00-6:00pm, at the Axe and Palm, and by appointment.

1 Course Description

Why do citizens vote? Do Get-Out-the-Vote campaigns work to increase turnout? Does campaign spending increase the likelihood of electoral success? Why don’t Southern white working-class Americans vote for Democratic presidents? How do electoral rules affect the political representation of the poor? What are the consequences of immigration for social policy in the New Europe? Is economic development necessary for democratic governance? What determines the success of ethnic insurgencies? Why do some civil wars last longer than others? Do international laws protect civilians during military conflict? Are public policies, like the abstinence-only education program or the New York City school vouchers program, effective? How we go about answering these questions – and other important questions about politics and our world – determines the quality of our answers.

This course is about evaluating the quality of answers to political and social science research questions, and introduces fundamental topics in research design, choice of method, and data analysis. Although the material introduces concepts that are relevant to both quantitative and qualitative research methods, this course emphasizes quantitative research and provides an introduction to basic statistical analysis (but should not be viewed as a substitute for statistical training). At the successful completion of the course, students will be well-prepared to conduct independent research, including senior honor theses.
2 Requirements and Grading

Course requirements include four assignments (representing 70% of the final grade), and a final exam (30%).

A. Assignments (70%). There are four assignments for this course:

1. **Measuring Difficult Concepts**
   Distributed January 23, due February 1. (10%)

2. **A Risk Analysis of the Challenger Launch**
   Distributed February 4, due February 15 (15%)

3. **Is Thomas Frank Right About Kansas?**
   Distributed February 20, due February 29 (15%)

4. **War Casualties and Presidential Approval**
   Distributed March 3, due March 14 (30%)

Policies. Assignments should be submitted through the Coursework class website.

Extensions for assignments will *not* be granted, and late assignments will be penalized by 3% for each day an assignment is late.

Although course participants are encouraged to work together, each is expected to complete and turn in their own work. Copied assignments (whether partial or complete) will not be accepted.

Requests that a graded assignment be reviewed must be made in writing, and must include a 2-3 paragraph discussion detailing the basis of the request.

B. Final Exam (30%). A final exam for this course will be held on Thursday March 20, from 8:30am to 11:30am (location TBD). Course participants will be asked to evaluate specific components of the research design and data analysis of a current political science article. The instructor will distribute three possible articles during the last meeting of our course (Wednesday March 12); the exam will be based on one of these articles.

3 Books, Required, and Recommended Reading

This course draws heavily on the following books:


Other books that contribute to lecture and section material, and/or provide support for the assignments include:


All of these books are widely available, and will be put on reserve at Green Library. Other required readings are available through JSTOR, other on-line journal archives (this document includes links to these resources), or will be posted on the Courseworks website.

Please note: Reading should be completed before class, and course participants should be prepared to discuss each book, article, or chapter. Recommended readings supplement lectures and sections, and while participants are not responsible for their content, they may find these readings helpful in the preparation of assignments and for the understanding of course content.

4 Software

The second half of the course (beginning Feb 11), and Assignments 3 and 4, will require that participants use *Stata*, a software package for statistical analysis that is widely used in political science research and graduate training. *Stata* is included in the Leland software package, for use in the Sweet Hall computer clusters and is also available for purchase by Stanford students through a campus-wide licensing agreement (refer to [https://www.stanford.edu/services/softwarelic/stata/order/index.html](https://www.stanford.edu/services/softwarelic/stata/order/index.html)). Course participants should note that the access to the software through the licensing agreement can take a few weeks; orders should be placed early in the quarter.

5 Course Outline

Jan 9 **Introduction: Asking Questions and Making Arguments**

- Shively, “Chapter 1. Doing Research.” 1-12

*Recommended Readings*

Jan 14  **Theory Building**


**Recommended Readings**


Jan 16  **Causal Inference**

- Levitt and Dubner, “Chapter 4. Where have all the criminals gone?” 105-32.

**Recommended Readings**


Jan 21  **Martin Luther King Day**

Jan 23  **Concept Formation and Measurement**

*Note. Read only section A in preparation for our class meeting; sections B and C provide the basis of Assignment 1 in which participants will focus on one or the other topic.*

A. Measuring Racial Prejudice


B. Measuring Democracy


C. Measuring Elite Political Ideology


**Recommended Readings**


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**Jan 28 Experimental Methods**


**Recommended Readings**

Jan 30  **Observational Studies: Confounding Variables**


**Recommended Readings**


Feb 4  **Observational Studies: Selecting Cases, Sampling**


**Recommended Readings**


Feb 6  **Observational Studies: Policy Evaluation and Intervention Research**


**Recommended Readings**


Feb 11 **Approaching Data with Questions: Generating Descriptive Statistics**

Recommended Readings

- Pollock, “Chapter 1. Introduction to Stata,” in *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 5-18.

Feb 13 Approaching Data with Questions: Making Comparisons


Recommended Readings


Feb 18 President’s Day

Feb 20 Approaching Data with Questions: Effective Graphics


Recommended Readings


Feb 25 Approaching Data with Questions: Correlation and an Introduction to Regression


Recommended Readings

Mar 3  **Approaching Data with Questions: More on Regression**


**Recommended Readings**


Mar 5  **Approaching Data with Questions: Inference and Generalizing Beyond Your Data**

- Shively, “Chapter 10. Introduction to Statistics: Inference, or How to Gamble on Your Research.”

**Recommended Readings**


Mar 10  **Approaching Data with Questions: Qualitative Analysis**

- Venkatesh, Sudhir. TBA.

**Recommended Readings**


Mar 12  **Political Science and Politics**