This course fulfills the Tier II writing requirement. The objective of this course is to have students write a complete research paper on some topic in American politics. At the end of the semester you will be expected to have a research paper that has a well defined theory and testable hypotheses derived from the theory. You will be expected to empirically test your hypotheses from the data set that I will provide. You will also have other writing assignments throughout the course.

Required materials:
1. Some storage medium. You can purchase a 250mb zip disk (Make sure it is a PC disk and NOT a MAC disk. Also a 100mb zip disk will NOT work in this computer lab.) Alternatively you may purchase a memory key. Or if you need to conserve funds you can use your AFS space, but absolutely no excuses about losing data/paper/assignments due to computer crashes will be accepted.

2. Print budget (about 10 dollars). You can buy your print tokens online.

Class Requirements

I. Exam:
There will be one midterm exam for this course. For the exam you will be given a research question and you will have to do some data analysis to provide an answer to the question. You will have two days to complete the analysis. All of the analysis for the exam must be conducted in class. You are not permitted to work on the exam outside of class time. The exam is worth 20% of your grade.

Exam Dates: February 20 and 22

II. Research Paper
You will be required to write a complete research paper for this class. This research paper is designed to give students the chance to work with an existing data set, and to develop and test hypotheses about some social or political issue. Students are not required to collect their own data. You will be expected to identify the question you wish to test, test it using SPSS, and write a report describing the nature of the hypothesis, mode of analysis, and substantive results. We will be using the National Election Study for your analysis. You will be required to have at least five sources to support the theory section of your paper. You should also have at least three testable hypotheses.

The research paper will be done in four parts. Each part will be worth a fraction of your grade. For the final paper you will be expected to incorporate any feedback provided in the previous parts. The following is a list of the distribution of points and the due dates. The research paper is worth 50% of your overall grade.
Part 1: Introduction  Feb 13:  05% of total  
Part 2: Theory and testable hypotheses  March 29:  17% of total  
Part 3: Statistical Analysis  April 12:  18% of total  
Part 4: Final product with conclusion  May 1:  10% of total  
Total:  50% of total grade

All work must be done using a word processor. Any work using a typewriter or handwritten work will not be accepted. Late work will be downgraded by 5 percent each day it is late (weekends count as late days). All papers should be double spaced with one inch margins. You should use an 11 or 12 point font. For each part of the paper (and for the final product) when you turn it in please do not use a folder, rather just staple the pages together on the left upper corner. Also make sure the pages are numbered consecutively with your name included in a header on each page.

III. Theory writing exercise  
You will be required to do an in-class theory writing exercise. For this exercise you will be required to write a short and concise theory. Your professor will give you some political situation and you will have to come up with some logical explanation (theory) for the observed events. This portion represents 8% of your grade.

Exercise date: March 20

IV. Presentations  
As part of your grade you will be required to present your research in a “conference like setting.” A major part of being a political scientist is presenting your findings to other colleagues. This is done mostly at regional and national conferences. Presentations will be 5 to 10 minutes long, and will be held during the last three classes of the semester. You will use MS PowerPoint for your presentations. Presentations are worth 7% of your grade.

Presentation dates: April 19, 24, 26

V. Participation, Computer Assignments, Homework  
You will have a variety of computer assignments and homework. Periodically, I will also check attendance, especially during the presentation portion of the course. Class assignments will be graded on a “check” system (sometimes + or -). The combined participation and assignments are worth 15% of your grade.

Overview of Grade Requirements
There are 100 maximum points in this class.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theory exercise</td>
<td>08%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>07%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework/Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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Grading Scale (There is no grading curve in this course)

- 90 - 100  4.0
- 85 - 89   3.5
- 80 - 84   3.0
- 75 - 79   2.5
- 70 - 74   2.0
- 65 - 69   1.5
- 60 - 64   1.0
- 59 or below 0.0
*Class schedule*

January 9: Class Introduction

January 11: Playing with data sets

January 16: Constructing a data file (crosstabs/bar graphs)

January 18: Operationization/recoding data

January 23: Hypothesis formation/level of measurement

January 25: Thinking about topics

January 30: Bivariate correlations/significance levels

February 1: Correlation/Finding sources

February 6: Citing sources

February 8: Regression

February 13: Regression/introductions due.

February 15: Scales and indexes

February 20: Exam day 1

February 22: Exam day 2

February 27: Writing Theories I

March 1: No class

March 5-9: Spring break

March 13: Writing Theories II

March 15: Writing theories

March 20: Theory writing exercise

March 22: Sources

March 27: Work on theories

March 29: Work on theories; Theories and testable hypotheses due

April 3: Constructing your data file, Data analysis review

April 5: Work on Data analysis

April 10: Work on data analysis
April 12: Work on data analysis/Data Analysis due
April 17: Powerpoint instruction
April 19: Presentations
April 24: Presentations
April 26: Presentations
May 1: Final Papers due

* This is a tentative schedule, the instructor can change any part of the schedule.