

POLS 5300 Seminar in Quantitative Research Methods I (CRN 13308)

Fall 2017

The University of Texas at El Paso

**Wednesday 6:00-8:50 PM
403 LART**

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Office Hours:

Mondays 1:00-3:00

Tuesdays and Thursday 1:30-3:00

and by appointment

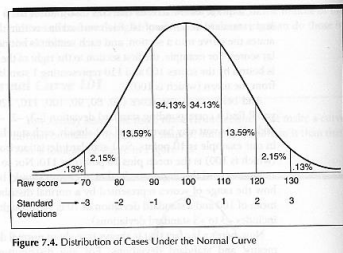


Figure 7.4. Distribution of Cases Under the Normal Curve



Course Overview and Goals

The objective of this course is to introduce students to the world of research methods in political science at the graduate level. There are no pre-requisites for this course, although some background in research design or statistics is helpful. The course mixes lecture with lab and (potentially) field research. The goals of this course are twofold. The first goal is to establish a foundation for more advanced knowledge of data analysis. This includes discussion of epistemology, writing and presenting research projects, theory and hypothesis testing, and in-depth discussion of research designs. The second goal is to provide students with an introduction to quantitative research methods, including descriptive statistics, t-tests, survey design, database construction, statistical software, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. This course will also provide students with the tools and skills required to write papers or professional reports that would meet the standards of the academic and scientific community. At the end of this course, students will (goals and programmatic outcomes):

1. possess a basic understanding of science and hypothesis testing
2. be able to construct various research designs (some will design surveys)

3. be able to interpret and use measures of central tendency, dispersion, association, and causation, including regression analysis
4. be able to manage data and use STATA software at an introductory level
5. be able to write graduate level papers

Student Evaluation

Students' final grades will be evaluated based on class assignments and participation, with the following composition:

- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Participation and Attendance: 10%
- Front End of Research Project: 10%
- Homework Assignments: 20%
- Final Research Project Report (complete): 15%.
- Final Research Project Presentation: 10%
- Final Exam: 20% (cumulative)

The Exams: The exams are designed to test student mastery of the subject matter. The format will be varied. The exams will likely include at least one essay question and several short-answer, multiple choice, and definitional questions. Each exam will also likely include either some statistical calculations or interpretations of statistical results. It is advisable to bring a simple calculator to the exams.

Homework Assignments: These assignments will serve to help provide practical learning experiences regarding hypothesis writing, survey construction, and statistical measures and estimators. Students may discuss these with each other, although students must submit individual work. Students cannot use verbatim sentences shared with other students. **Too much reliance on classmates will be counter-productive to learning the material and performance on the Final Exam.**

Final Project and Literature Review: Students will be evaluated on their ability to construct and carryout a research project. Students will write the paper in two parts. The final research report will include an introduction, literature review, a theory section and hypotheses, a research design section, a results section, and a concluding section. While students have a choice in types of research projects and subject matters, some students may work in a team if they are constructing and fielding a joint survey. Students may conduct the survey individually or in a group, but all papers must be written individually. See the paper guidelines for additional information. UTEP subscribes to ICPSR, which includes many datasets used in published work in the field. Students will professionally present their research.

Plagiarism

I have had the unpleasant experience of catching numerous students engaging in plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of other people's words, songs, ideas, images, or even sentence/paragraph structure without documentation or their consent. For the papers in this class, students must provide citation for passages in the text that are borrowed or inspired by other peoples' works. It is not hard to avoid plagiarizing -- if you use a quote from an author, acknowledge it in a footnote; if you paraphrase or summarize an argument, cite the source from where you obtained the idea. Often parenthetical citations are useful for this purpose. For example, one might write "One compelling reason why governments do what they do is that all people have goals, and they

work to achieve those goals through political behavior. (Lowi, Ginsberg, and Shepsle 2002, p.14)”, and then include the work in a bibliography or reference section at the end of your paper.

If you use facts or figures from a source and they are not common knowledge, note the source of the information. Copying and pasting in text from websites or other electronic documents is completely unacceptable unless you provide a reference, and even then, this may be a stylistic problem. If you directly borrow sentences, or even clauses or sentence fragments, these should be set-off in quotation marks and include a reference to the original source. If you are inspired to borrow the style, organization, or ideas of other person’s work, you will still need to provide references to specific passages and bibliographical information. Most citation of material should be through paraphrasing, which is fine again as long as you note the source in the text.

It is unacceptable to include multiple paragraphs or long passages not set off as block quotes and then provide a single reference of the original source at the end. The goal of writing is to use primarily your own words and ideas. Other people’s words should be used in quotations as examples or evidence. Moreover, when students plagiarize it is often obvious to the instructor. UTEP takes steps through the web and in University classes to inform students about plagiarism. Thus, it is your responsibility to avoid this behavior. I join the University in taking plagiarism very seriously. If caught plagiarizing, I will report you for college review and possible discipline. Similarly, all other forms of cheating are also dishonest and will not be acceptable.

Other Course Expectations, Policies, and Penalties

Graduate education often requires a higher level of organization and commitment. I expect that you will attend every class session and turn in assignments on time. The penalty for late work will be twenty points a day. As mentioned herein, students should prepare for class each week, and nonattendance without some valid excuse constitutes a large reduction in participation points. Additionally, all papers and assignments need to be professional, meaning word-processed with standard citation and writing styles (one can review the APSA or APA guidelines), including page numbers, the use of headings/subheadings, etc. Additionally, the instructor will evaluate requests for an incomplete or withdrawal (after deadline) on a case-by-case basis but will generally be unwilling to grant such without some valid reason relating to the disruption of studies by forces not readily controllable by the student. **The student must document emergencies such as deaths in the family or illness.**

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. *CASS’ Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.* The Student is responsible for presenting to the instructor any CASS accommodation letters and instructions before arrangements need to be made for exams, quizzes, or other needs.

Required Readings

The following books have been ordered through the UTEP bookstore and will serve as the base readings for the entire semester.

- Lewis-Beck, Colin, and Michael S. Lewis-Beck (2016). *Applied Regression: An Introduction, second edition*. Sage. (See online for free at [SAGE Research Methods Online \(SRMO\)](#) through library database available on web, if no longer available for free, then purchase online)
- Pollock, Phillip H. III . *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. With STATA Companion Bundle. Sage/CQ Press. Washington, D.C. See UTEP BOOKSTORE

Optional Readings

The following books have not been ordered for the UTEP bookstore but may help students. Please consider ordering these if you have the resources. These should be available through online book dealers.

- Baglione, Lisa A. (2007). *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. Thomson/Wadsworth. (copies of two chapters will be PDFs on Blackboard)
- Acock, Alan C. (2006). *A Gentle Introduction to Stata*. 2nd edition Stata Press
- or
- Getting Started with Stata. Stata Press <http://www.stata-press.com/books/>
- Fink, Arlene. (2006). *How to Conduct Surveys: A Step-by-Step Guide*. 3rd ed. Sage. (buy online, such as Amazon)
- Hart, Chris. (2004) *Doing a Literature Review*. Sage.
- Vogt, Paul W. (1999) *Dictionary of Statistics & Methodology: A Nontechnical Guide for the Social Sciences*. Sage. (buy online such as Amazon)

Course Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

August 30: Introductions and Introduction to Scientific Method and Experiments
******* Instructions provided on Research Project (posted on Blackboard)**

September 6: The Research Process: Questions, Concepts, and Theory
 Hoover & Donovan: Chapters 1, 2, 3, & 4 (See me to borrow copy and make copies)

Pollock: Preface, Introduction
******* Homework 1 assigned about here**

September 13: Literature Reviews /Probability Theory
 Pollock: Chapter 10
 (Lecture, and you may borrow -- Baglione: Chapters 1, 3 & 5)

September 20: Operationalizing Variables, Control Variables, Describing Variables
 Pollock: Chapters 1 & 2
 Pollock STATA: Chapters 1, 2 & 3
 (Copies or lecture) Hoover & Donovan: Chapters 4 & 5 (pp. 83-89)
******* Homework 2 assigned about here**

******* Students declare subject of research project and team/individual**

September 27: Research Designs

Pollock: Chapter 4

October 4: Making Comparisons with Quantitative Data

Pollock: Chapters 3 & 5

Pollock STATA: Chapters 4 & 5

******* Homework 3 assigned about here**

October 11: Sampling and Statistical Inference

Pollock: Chapters 6 & 7

October 18: MID TERM EXAM

October 25: Significance Testing

Pollock: Chapter 7

Pollock STATA: Chapters 6 & 7

******* Homework 4 assigned about here**

November 1: Designing Surveys and Sampling

Fink (optional book): Chapters 1-4

*******Rough Draft of Front end of paper due (including survey instrument if relevant)**

November 8: Analysis of Correlation

Pollock: Chapter 8 (pp. 183-188)

******* Homework 5 assigned about here**

November 15: Bivariate Linear Regression Analysis

Pollock: Chapter 7 (pp. 188-201)

Pollock STATA: Chapter 8

Lewis-Beck x2: Chapters 1 & 2

November 22: Multiple Regression Analysis

Pollock: Chapter 7 (pp. 201-214)

Pollock STATA: Chapter 9

Lewis-Beckx2: Chapters 3 & 4

******* Homework 6 assigned about here**

November 29: Review of Regression Analysis

Q & A review for exam, evaluations

December 6: Presentations and Review

******Final Research Project (Complete) due December 6**

December 13: FINAL EXAM (IN CLASS, 7:00 TO 9:45)