POL 242Y1 Y (L 0101/0201) (Second Term)

Research Methods for Specialists

University of Toronto
Department of Political Science

All students must sign up for a tutorial in one of the available time-slots (discussed below).

Instructor

Dr. Sebastian Henn
Post-doctoral research fellow
University of Toronto, Department of Political Science
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 3058, 100 St. George Street, Toronto, Ontario M5S 3G3
Office: +1-416-978-6156
E-Mail: sebastian.henn@utoronto.ca
Lecture Hours: Tuesday/Thursday, 12.00-2.00 pm
Lecture Room: TBA

Course Description

This course introduces students of political science to the methods used to gather and analyze evidence. Unlike other political science courses that focus on the classic themes of politics (e.g., democracy, statehood, institutions, actors), this course emphasizes the techniques, and methods, used to explain how and why things happen in politics, providing a toolkit that allows students to conduct their own research and analyze the results. Drawing on political examples when introducing concepts and techniques, the course emphasizes practice (e.g., choice of appropriate statistical procedure, interpretation) over theory (mathematical proofs). As such, no prior background in mathematics is required. Themes covered in this course include: approaches to the study of political science, the decision making in research design and appropriate methods of analysis.

Course Readings

a) Required:

Field, A. (2009). *Discovering Statistics using SPSS*. 3rd ed. London: Sage.

Hanneman, R.; Riddle, M. (2005). *Introduction to Social Network Methods*. URL: http://faculty.ucr.edu/~hanneman/nettext/ (Online-Text)

b) Recommended:

Brians, C. L.; Willnat, L.; Manheim, J. B.; Rich, R. (2007). *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. 8th edition. New York: Pearson Longman.

Kellstedt, P. M.; Whitten, G. D. (2009). *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Beyond the mentioned texts, the course will provide any additional required readings, drawn from academic journal articles and book chapters. They will be made available via the course's Blackboard page (available through the University of Toronto Portal). For further information about the readings, see also below.

Office hours

Tuesday & Thursday, 2.30-4.00 pm (no office hours: 02/23/2012)

Blackboard

The course uses the management system Blackboard which helps to establish efficient communication between instructor, teaching assistant and student. One of its advantages is that students can access their marks at any time on an individual basis. *Questions should be directed to the teaching assistant first*. An answer will normally be provided within 2-3 days, except for the weekend. In urgent cases, students should discuss issues with the teaching assistant or instructor in person or by telephone.

To access the Blackboard-based course website, go to the UofT portal login page at http://portal.utoronto.ca and log in using your UTORid and password. If you need information on how to activate your UTORid and set your password for the first time, please go to http://www.utorid.utoronto.ca. The Help Desk at the Information Commons and telephone assistance under 416-978-HELP can also answer other related questions. Once you have logged in to the portal using your UTORid and password, look for the “My Courses” module, where you will find the link to this course website along with links to all your other Blackboard-based courses. At times, the instructor or teaching assistant may decide to send out important course information by e-mail. To that end, all UofT students are required to have a valid UofT e-mail address. You are responsible for ensuring that your UofT e-mail address is set up AND properly entered in the ROSI system.

Missing the Test

There is no provision for students to do extra work or assignments to make up for low grades on the test. You can certainly ask for an explanation about how your test was marked. Students who miss the test because of documented medical problems or family emergencies may be entitled to write a makeup test. For a medical excuse, the original medical note (not a photocopy) on a UofT

medical certificate is needed. This form is available at (it is also available on the Blackboard site):

http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/undergraduate/forms.

Writing a makeup test is a privilege, not a right. There is no point showing up for a makeup test without the UofT medical certificate properly filled out. (You may of course, submit your medical certificate before the makeup test date). Without submission of the medical certificate, you will not be admitted to the makeup test. Students should notify me (not the TA) as soon as possible that they will be missing the test. Do not wait for weeks after the test date before asking if it is possible to write a makeup test. Students who miss the final exam should consult the Registrar's Office immediately.

Tutorials

All students are to participate in tutorials. Tutorials give students the opportunity to meet regularly in small groups to discuss readings, ideas raised in lectures, and course assignments. Your tutorial grade is based on a combination of attendance and contributions to tutorial discussions. Please note that attendance alone will not guarantee a good tutorial grade. Students who attend diligently but do not make meaningful contributions to the discussion do better than students who do not attend at all, but not as well as students who attend diligently and make meaningful contributions.

Your TA will keep a formal attendance record. If you are concerned that the TA has failed to record your name properly, please immediately bring this to his/her attention, not weeks later or at the end of term. If the name you commonly use varies from your name as recorded by ROSI, let the TA know. Keep in mind that the class list we use for recording marks is the list generated by ROSI.

Do not show up at the end of a tutorial and expect the TA to give you credit for attendance. If you missed a tutorial for what you believe is a legitimate reason, bring this to the attention of the TA as soon as possible. Do not come to me weeks after a tutorial was held and claim the TA failed to record you as present. Students often attempt to switch between tutorial time-slots to accommodate changes in their personal schedule after the term is underway. You do so at your own peril. It is very difficult for the TA to keep track of students who do not stay in the time-slot to which they have been assigned. If you do for some reason wish to switch tutorial time-slots in mid-term, the onus is on you to make sure the TA formally notes this.

The tutorial schedule will be released when classes begin. You must sign up for one of the timeslots made available. No additional time-slots will be scheduled. Once class starts on January 10, you can sign up by e-mailing me or the TA, or simply by showing up at the first tutorial.

However, please be advised that the TA reserves the right to move students from one tutorial to another in order to balance out the numbers.

The tutorial schedule and tutorial topics will be available after classes start on January 10.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense. All cases of plagiarism will be referred to the Dean's Office. If you have any questions about plagiarism you should speak with the instructor. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto's policy on Plagiarism at http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html. You should also consult Margaret Procter's How Not to Plagiarize (UofT Writing Support, http://www.writing. utoronto.ca/advice/using-

sources/how-not-to-plagiarize) and Niko Scharer's Plagiarism & How to Avoid It (UofT Philosophy, http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~nscharer/plag main.htm).

Accessibility Needs
The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodations for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible: disability.servicesimutoronto.ca or http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility.

Weekly Course Schedule

Readings marked by an asterix (*) are core readings on each topic which all students are required to read.

A. Large n-Methods

January, 10th/12th
SPSS Training: Data Handling with SPSS Statistics Desktop
Readings:
Field (2009), Chapter 3*

January, 17th/19th
Correlation Analysis I
Readings:
Field (2009), Chapters 6.1*-6.5*

January, 24th/26th
Correlation Analysis II
Quiz 1
Readings:
Field (2009), Chapters 6.6*-6.9*

January, 31st/2nd
Regression Analysis I
Readings:
Field (2009), Chapters 7.1*-7.6*

February, 7th/9th
Regression Analysis II
Readings:
Field (2009), Chapters 7.7*-7.11*

February, 14th/16th
Regression Analysis III
Quiz 2
Readings:
Field (2009), Chapter 8

February, 21st/23rd
Reading Week

February, 28th/March, 1st
Cluster Analysis
Assignment (due to the following week)
Readings:
TBA

B. Small-n Methods

March, 6th/8th
Case Studies and Comparative Research
Readings:
Brians et al. (2011), Chapter 12

C. Data Acquisition

March, 13th/15th
Quantitative Content Analysis
Readings:
Brians et al. (2007), chapter 10
Brians et al. (2011), Chapter 13

D. Social Network Analysis

March, 20th/22nd
Social Network Analysis I: Methods and Key Concepts
Readings:
Brians et al. (2011), Chapter 13
Hanneman/Riddle (2005), Chapters 1-6*

March, 27th/29th
Social Network Analysis II: Network Data and Types of Networks / Revision Course
Readings:
Brians et al. (2011), Chapter 13
Hanneman/Riddle (2005), Chapters 7*-10*

April, 3rd/5th
Final Test

Grading

1. Assignment	=	10%
2. Attendance in tutorial	=	5%
3. Pop-Up Quiz	=	5%
4. Quizzes (5 % each)	=	10%
5. Final Test	=	20%
Total		50%

Note: penalty for late assignments is 3% per day including week-end. Assignments more than 10 days late will not be accepted except with permission of the instructor.

This changed grading scheme has been accepted by the majority of both sections on January 10, 2012 and January 12, 2012.