IS 600: Research Methods for International Studies
Fall 2016

Tuesday 4:20-7 PM
Mills Godwin Lecture Hall 0129

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Fall 2016 Office Hours:
Monday, 9:00 to 11:00 AM.
Wednesday, 2:00 to 4:00 PM

Catalogue Description and Objectives

IS 600 is an introduction to research methods and epistemological issues for international studies. We will begin with a discussion of more epistemological issues in the social sciences including an overview of relevant perspectives from the philosophy of science, the nature of theory and causation, the making of arguments, case study analysis, and the emerging role of modeling and simulation in the study of international relations. We will then move on to an introduction to the basic quantitative analytic methods that students of international studies are likely to encounter. Here students will learn the basics of quantitative analysis and data management, as well as get some experience with statistical analysis software.

Expectations

Students must have an ODU email account and password with which to access course materials and information through the Blackboard system (https://www.blackboard.odu.edu). An email account with an off-campus service provider (such as Gmail) will not provide you the access to materials you need.

Required Books

Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 2nd Addition, New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 1994.

Duncan J. Watts. *Everything is Obvious: How Common Sense Fails Us*. Crown Business Press 2012.

Recommended Books

Alan C. Acock. A Gentle Introduction to STATA. College Station, TX: STATA Press.

Kate L. Turabian *et al*. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 8th Edition, Chicago, IL: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2013.

Software

We will use STATA v. 14 this semester.

I recommend you purchase a full version of STATA (STATA SE or higher). We will be able to secure a group discount as part of the course. As a practical matter, the exercises we will undertake this semester will exceed the limitations of the student version. More importantly, these software tools are critical to your academic advancement and the mastery of these tools will aid you greatly in the future. Simply put, quantitative analysis is increasingly the gold standard in the discipline (in addition to the private and public sectors) and there is a strong expectation that you are competent with the software. Students on the PhD track (and interested MA students) will continue to use STATA in IS 620. This is my way of saying I encourage you to make the investment in purchasing and learning the STATA software package.

You may also wish to use R, an open-source and free software package ("development environment") for statistical computing and graphics. I have not used R extensively and cannot attest to its ease of use, although GPIS students who completed IS 620 in previous did use R. They may be willing to share their impressions of the software. You may wish to invest in learning how to use given that it is free.   You can download R from http://www.r-project.org.

Course Requirements

Students will receive grades based on four elements:

1. **Exercises** (50 percent of your grade): The student will complete six exercises in which you will apply the concepts and methods we study. Each assignment is **due at the beginning of class** on the day specified **on** the syllabus**.** You must turn in a hard copy to me. In addition to the completed assignment, I also want you to turn in the code you used to produce the results (when applicable). Like always, presentation is important. For general guidelines on the composition, presentation, and submission of your weekly exercise, please download a copy of the "General Guidelines" from our Blackboard page.

2. **Research Design** (25 percent of your grade): The goal of this course is to familiarize you with the scientific method as it pertains to understanding and testing theories of human behavior. To further this objective I am asking you to construct a research design where you develop a set of hypotheses and lay out the

groundwork for how you would test them using empirical data. Specific instructions will follow in due course, but be advised your paper should include the following components:

- Introduction—Discuss the substantive problem and why it matters
- Theory—Outline your explanation. What is the expected relationship between X and Y? What is the chain of logic here?
- Hypotheses—Specify your research and null hypotheses.
- Research Design—Outline and defend your methodological approach to testing these hypotheses. In particular, you should discuss how you have operationalized the concepts, as well as any data and measurement issues. You should also discuss the statistical tests you will use and why they are appropriate to the problem at hand.

3. **Final Examination** (25 percent of your grade): We will have an in-class final exam during the University-designated exam period: Thursday, December 16th from 4:20 to 7:00 p.m. The exam will be comprehensive. I have not yet written the exam, but you will be asked to answer questions about the fundamentals of research design, philosophy of science, and the basics of data analysis. You will be asked to respond to a mixture of short answer and essay questions.

Grades

The assessment of your performance on exercises, the literature review, the statistics project and the final examination will depend upon four factors. First, I will assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of each work's application of relevant statistical techniques. Second, I will assess the creativity and insight of each work. Third, I will assess the clarity, organization and presentation of each work. Finally, I will assess the degree to which the work satisfies the guidelines, questions, and instructions for each assignment. In general, grades in the A range indicate a student is performing very well, a B grade indicates satisfactory performance, a B– indicates performance below the minimum expected performance of GPIS graduate students, and a C or below indicates work that is not acceptable. Students who receive a B– or below should see me to determine what immediate and significant action we might undertake to facilitate your comprehension and application of the course's material.

There is no grading curve for the seminar. It is hypothetically possible for each student to get an A, or for each to get a C. I grade each student's work on its merits, irrespective of the merit of other students' work.

Based on your on-time completion of the required assignments and your adherence to the University's honor code (see below), I will assign you a final grade from the following grade scale.

Percent   Final Grade

94–100	A
90–93	A–
87–89	B+
83–86	B
80–82	B–
70–79	C
60-69	D
0-59	F

Important Course Information

All University policies are in full force and effect in this course.

College Classroom Conduct
The following standards are intended to define acceptable classroom behavior that preserves academic integrity and ensures that students have optimum environmental conditions for effective learning.
1. Students must turn off cell phones and pagers during class or have them set to vibrate mode.
2. Classes are expected to begin on time, and students will respect the time boundaries established by the professor. If classroom doors are locked, students may not knock or seek entrance in other ways.
3. Students should notify instructors in advance when a class will be missed. In the event of an emergency that causes a class to be missed, instructors must be notified as soon as possible.
4. Instructors may require that cell phones and other electronic devices be left on their desks during tests or examinations.
5. Students must not engage in extraneous conversations during classes. Such acts are considered to be violations of the Code of Student Conduct.
6. Students will activate their Old Dominion email accounts and check them before each class. If the student chooses to have his/her messages forwarded to another account, it is the student's responsibility to take the necessary steps to have them forwarded.
7. Consumption of food and drink during class is prohibited, except when the professor has specifically approved of such acts.
8. Offensive language, gestures and the like are disrespectful and disruptive to the teaching-learning process.

Honor Code: The Old Dominion University Honor Code is in effect at all times in this class. Your name on an exam, paper, or homework assignment constitutes your acceptance of the Honor Code:

"I pledge to support the Honor System of Old Dominion University. I will refrain from any form of dishonesty or deception such as lying, cheating, and plagiarism, which are honor violations. I am further aware that as a member of the academic community it is

my responsibility to turn all suspected violators of the Honor System. I will report to an Honor Council hearing as summoned."

Plagiarism: "A student will have committed plagiarism if he or she reproduces someone else's work without acknowledging its source; or if a source is cited which the student has not cited or used. Examples of plagiarism include: submitting a research paper obtained from a commercial research service, the Internet, or from another student as if it were original work; making simple changes to borrowed materials while leaving the organization, content, or phraseology intact; or copying material from a source, supplying proper documentation, but leaving out quotation marks. Plagiarism also occurs in a group project if one or more of the members of the group does none of the group's work and participates in none of the group's activities, but attempts to take credit for the work of the group." Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. (For more information see the University's Code of Student Conduct)

Late Assignments: Punctuality is essential. In order to incentive punctuality, late assignments will be penalized one letter grade per class meeting late. If you know in advance that you will be forced to turn in an assignment late due to travel, illness, sports, clubs etc… Contact me before the class the assignment is due to make alternate arrangements.

Sexual Harassment: Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcomed and unsolicited conduct of a sexual nature, physical or verbal, by a member of the university community of the opposite sex (or the same sex) in an official university position. Sexual harassment in any situation is prohibited. It is the policy of Old Dominion University to provide students and employees with an environment for learning and working which is free of sexual harassment whether by members of the same sex or the opposite sex, which is prohibited by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. (For more information see the University's Policy on Sexual Harassment)

Students with Special Needs: In compliance with PL94-142 and federal legislation affirming the rights of disabled individuals, provisions will be made for students with special needs on an individual basis. The student must be identified as "special needs" by the university and provide a letter from the Office of Educational Accessibility (OEA) located in 1525 Webb Center. Any accommodations will be based upon written guidelines from the OEA. Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term, *(September 8)*. Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although I may contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation. All students are expected to fulfill all course requirements.

E-mail: Students are required to use valid Old Dominion University email accounts to send official information and notices and are held responsible for accessing electronic mail to obtain official University communications. Students should use their secure ODU email account to communicate with professors.

Course Evaluations: Student evaluations provide important feedback for me, and they are an essential component of departmental and university-wide measures of teaching effectiveness. Please fill them out when the time arrives.

Career Management Center: The Career Management Center offers a Career Advantage Program, which provides opportunities to gain work experience related to your major through internships, cooperative education or practical experience outside the classroom. The College of Arts and Letters has career coaches to assist in this process by providing help with resumes, cover letters, job search strategies, and interviewing skills. You may stop by the office in BAL 1006 (tel. 757-683-4388) or email cmc@odu.edu for more information. Their website is https://www.odu.edu/cds

Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change with notice. Any changes will be posted to the course website and either e-mailed OR announced in class, or both.

Course Plan and Schedule

8/30 – **Introduction (are the social sciences actually sciences? And should they be?)**

Here there will be a presentation of class procedures, followed by a broad overview of the evolution of methods in international studies. We will also discuss the tension between science and intuition and the importance of both substance and style.

9/6 – **Philosophy of Science** (or how our intuitions are hardwired to fail us)

Here we will discuss the challenges associated drawing causal inferences about the world. The human brain is hardwired to draw connections between events in an effort to explain cause and effect, even if no such connections exist. The scientific method is invaluable because it allows us

Required Reading—Duncan Watts, *Everything is Obvious* (entire book)
Exercise—Assignment 1

9/13 — Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences

Here we will focus on the qualitative and quantitative research traditions in the social sciences. We will discus the basics of both approaches. We will especially focus on points of disagreement between the two approaches and whether or not qualitative analysis is compatible with scientific inquiry

Required Reading—King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Chapters 1-2)

9/20 – Theory

Background on the implications of developments in the philosophy of science for analytic methods in international studies. A review of the nature of theoretical analysis.

Required Reading—Whitten and Kellstedt, *Fundamentals* (Chapters 1-2)
Exercise—Assignment 2
Exercise—Assignment 1 Due

9/27 – Causation—Here we will discuss the concept of causation and its role in theoretical and policy analysis. We will also several important fallacies in research, argumentation, and analysis. The collection and assessment of research sources

Required Reading—Whitten and Kellstedt, *Fundamentals* (Chapter 3)
Required Reading—King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Chapter 3)
Exercise—Assignment 2 due

10/4 – Research Design

The logic and methods of statistical sampling. The normal distribution and statistical hypothesis testing. Measurement issues and the collection of quantitative international data.

Required Reading—Whitten and Kellstedt, *Fundamentals* (Chapter 4)
Required Reading—King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Chapter 4)
Exercise—Assignment 3

10/11 – *No Class* (Fall Break)

10/18 – The logic and methods of statistical sampling.

Here we will discuss the normal distribution, central limit theorem, and the logic of statistical sampling. We will also discuss the logic of hypothesis testing and the types of measurement issues associated with the collection of quantitative international data.

Required Reading—Whitten and Kellstedt, *Fundamentals* (Chapters 5-6)
Required Reading—King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Chapter 5)
Exercise—Assignment 3 due

10/25 – Crosstab and ANOVA analysis and an introduction to STATA

The operationalization of theoretical relationships. The validation of bivariate statistical relationships using crosstab and ANOVA analysis. The presentation of statistical findings.

Required Reading—Whitten and Kellstedt, *Fundamentals* (Chapters 7)
Exercise—Assignment 4

11/1 – Correlation and bivariate regression analysis I

The concept of correlation and assessing bivariate relationships using regression analysis.

Required Reading—Whitten and Kellstedt, *Fundamentals* (Chapters 8)
Exercise—Assignment 4 due

11/8 – Correlation and bivariate regression analysis II

Required Reading—Additional Materials on Blackboard
Exercise—Assignment 5

11/15 – Multivariate regression I

Here we will discuss the nuts and bolts of multivariate regression analysis. We will also go over how to conduct these analyses in STATA

Required Reading—Whitten and Kellstedt, *Fundamentals* (Chapters 9)

11/22 – Multivariate regression II

Required Reading—Whitten and Kellstedt, *Fundamentals* (Chapters 10)
Exercise—Assignment 5 due
Exercise—Assignment 6

11/29 – Data Management

Here we will discuss data management. Social scientists often deal with large amounts of data from multiple different sources. Creating ways to keep these data files organized is key to both working efficiently and avoiding critical mistakes. We will also discuss the importance of how to utilize do files to keep data, analy

12/6 – Qualitative Methods

Here we will discuss the theory and logic of case studies in the social sciences as well as he method of comparison and the character of counterfactual analytics. We will also touch on the relationship between small and large-N analysis.

Required Reading—King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Chapter 6)
Exercise—Assignment 6 due

12/9 – Research Design Projects Due

December 13: Final Exam (3:45 - 6:45 p.m.)