

The Graduate School
of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Political Management
Fall 2019

Political Data and Analytics
PMGT 6403.10
3 Credits

Thursdays, 7:10PM – 9:40PM
Tompkins Hall 206

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Carolina Ferrerosa Young

Contact Information

Phone Number: (703) 507-0482

Email Address: Carolinafyoung@gmail.com

Communication

Email is the best way to reach me. I will respond within 24 hours to all student e-mails.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructors and the students. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Required Text and Learning Materials

Wheelan, Chris. 2013. *Naked Statistics*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

R for Data Science: <https://r4ds.had.co.nz/index.html>

Statistical Inference via Data Science: A modern dive into R and the tidyverse:
<https://moderndive.com/index.html>

Various articles and book chapters as loaded onto Blackboard.

Extra Credit Texts

At the end of the semester, I will award extra credit points to the individual project to students that read the following two books over the course of the semester.

Silver, Nate. 2012. *The Signal and the Noise: Why So Many Predictions Fail – But Some Don't*. New York: Penguin Press.

Issenberg, Sasha. 2012. *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns*. New York: Random House, Inc.

To gain 5 extra credit points for each book (10 total), students must write a 3-page response paper for each. Response papers should include critical evaluations of the author's argument and a discussion of what the author may be missing. Early submission of the response papers is encouraged.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://studentconduct.gwu.edu/code-academic-integrity>.

University Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

- Students should notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance.
- Faculty should extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
- Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday should arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW’s Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities. Please notify your instructor if you require accommodations. Additional information is available at <https://disabilitysupport.gwu.edu/>.

Title IX: Confidentiality and Responsible Employee Statement

The George Washington University (GWU) and its faculty are committed to helping create a safe and open learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced any form of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, dating or domestic violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. GWU strongly encourages all members of the community to take action, seek

support and report incidents of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Office. Please be aware that under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, faculty members are required to disclose information about such misconduct to the Title IX Office.

If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can contact Mental Health Services through Colonial Health (counselors are available 24/7 at 202-994-5300 or you can make an appointment to see a counselor in person.). For more information about reporting options and resources at GWU and the community, please visit <https://haven.gwu.edu/>.

In the Event of an Emergency or Crisis during Class

If we experience some an emergency during class time, we will try to stay at this location until we hear that we can move about safely. If we have to leave here, we will meet at **[fill in proximate location]** in order to account for everyone and to make certain that everyone is safe. Please refer to Campus Advisories for the latest information on the University's operating status: <http://www.campusadvisories.gwu.edu/>.

Attendance Policy

Attending class is required. Should you find yourself with a scheduling conflict, please contact me as soon as you are aware of the issue to let me know you will absent; otherwise, it will be considered an unexcused absence and will negatively count against your participation grade.

Out-of-Class/ Independent Learning Expectation

You should expect to spend twice as much time outside of class on reading and assignments and research as you spend in class.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW's online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/all of the following:

Dr. Todd Belt
Director, Political Management Program
tbelt@gwu.edu | 202-994-4363

Dr. Jack Prostko
Associate Dean for Learning and Faculty Development
College of Professional Studies
jackp@gwu.edu | 202-994-3592

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

Political Management Program Objectives

A Political Management degree prepares students to win campaigns for elective office and policy positions, and to do so in a manner that benefits democracy and society as well as their organization and clients.

In completing the degree, students will be able to:

1. Assess a political environment, develop a strategy to achieve specified goals, and execute that strategy;

2. Draw upon a repertoire of effective campaign communication skills;
3. Collect, evaluate, and incorporate empirical evidence to shape and optimize the strategy;
4. Find, engage, and motivate the right leaders, professionals, and citizens;
5. Recognize and work through recurring political dilemmas in a manner that upholds ethical standards and professional conduct.

Graduate School Expectations

Students enrolled in a graduate program should take their academic responsibilities seriously and be prepared to meet the following expectations:

1. Use effective time management skills so as to complete and submit their assignments on their required due dates and times.
2. Have attained a mastery of written communication skills including proper sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and word usage.
3. Understand how to properly format in-text citations and references for resources and information integrated into their written assignments.

GSPM prepares students for careers in the professional political world. In politics, words and deadlines matter. Excellent written communication skills are essential for success. Every word used, whether it is in a television or radio ad, direct mail piece, social media, or a press release, will be scrutinized. Similarly, deadlines are important. Election Day does not get postponed because a candidate and their campaign are not prepared. There are no “do-overs” because a direct mail piece did not arrive to its intended recipients until after the election was concluded. Students will be best positioned for success in the practical political world if they have developed and exercise excellent written communication and time management skills.

THE COURSE

Course Description and Overview

Today’s political managers must be able to answer complex questions; construct comprehensive strategic plans; target specific stakeholders to gather and disseminate information; influence policy decisions; and predict needs, preferences, and outcomes. In order to produce efficacious results, you must rely on data-driven evidence versus opinion. This course is divided into two parts – the first part focuses on the theory and methods of reliable and valid empirical design in order to provide a sound foundation for the second part, which emphasizes hands-on, practical application of quantitative and qualitative skills to better inform decisions and actions and increase the likelihood of success.

Course Learning Objectives

As a result of completing this course, you will be able to:

1. Construct a reliable and valid research design based on the purpose of your political management questions that demonstrates the data required to answer the questions will be appropriate and accessible in a timely manner;
2. Collect appropriate primary or secondary data to answer political management questions;
3. Apply proper analytics and correctly interpret the results to answer political management questions;
4. Make actionable recommendations to political management questions based on findings from analytic results;

5. Prepare a report and presentation documenting the purpose, summary of what's already known, methods, results, and recommendations for political management questions; and
6. Critically evaluate other's research designs, data, analytics, and results to inform decisions and strategy.

Course Requirements

I. Substantive Course Requirements (85% of final grade)

- A. Problem Sets 25%
- B. Individual Project 25% (Individual Project – 20%, Presentation – 5%)
- C. Final Paper 35%

A. Problem Sets (25%): Apply the course concepts and analytics learned in class via homework assignments. *Note: You can collaborate with classmates on homework; however all submissions must be your own work, in your own words.*

B. Individual Project (20%): Select a congressional district to request data on. Using multiple sources, produce a 5-page memo, analyzing the voter profile and election dynamics of that district.

C. Final Paper (35%): Use empirical evidence to explore the political management research question posed in your Individual Project Proposal and make policy/decision recommendations based on results. Detailed requirements will be discussed in class and posted to Blackboard.

1. Construct a literature review consisting of a minimum of 10 empirical sources to summarize what's already known about the relationship between the independent and dependent variables you have selected to study. *Note: empirical pieces use statistical analysis to test whether the independent variable(s) have a significant effect on the dependent variable – they are lengthy and have methodology and findings sections;*
2. Select a secondary dataset(s) from a legitimate source (e.g., General Social Survey, National Election Study, U.S. Census Data, Department of Justice, Pew Research, World Development Indicators, etc.) or construct your own survey (with my approval) to gather primary data;
3. Analyze the variables and relationship(s) in R using appropriate statistical tests;
4. Draw conclusions and make actionable recommendations based on results; and
5. Acknowledge shortcomings of research design and make recommendations to improve.

D. Individual Project Presentation (5%): Using PowerPoint or a similar presentation tool, present your Individual Project purpose, methods, analysis, findings, actionable recommendations based on results, and shortcomings of the design to the class.

II. General Class Participation (15% of final grade)

You are expected to fully prepare and contribute conscientious and professional input to the course dialogue. You are expected to take advantage of and contribute to the dialogue when there are guest speakers present.

Failure to complete class assignments and all evaluations (see Weekly Lecture, Readings, and Assignments Schedule below) will lower your grade. You are responsible for making sure your name is on the class attendance sheet each week (see Attendance Policy below).

Following is the grade scale for all GSPM classes:

Grade*		Grading Standard
A	94-100	Your work is outstanding and ready for submission in a professional environment. Your material, effort, research, and writing demonstrate superior work.
A-	90-93	Represents solid work with minor errors. Overall, excellent work.
B+	87-89	Very good. Represents well-written material, research, and presentation, but needs some minor work.
B	83-86	Satisfactory work, but needs reworking and more effort. Note that although not a failing grade, at the graduate level, anything below a “B” is viewed as unacceptable.
B-	80-82	You’ve completed the assignment, but you are not meeting all of the requirements.
C+	77-79	Needs improvement in content and in effort. Shows some motivation and concern.
C	73-76	Needs reworking, improved effort, and additional research. Shows minimal motivation and concern.
C-	70-72 (lowest grade to pass)	Poor performance. Major errors, too many misspellings, problems with accuracy, etc.
F	Below 70	Unacceptable performance, or inability to submit the assignment.

*Please note that you may be penalized for late submission of assignment(s).

COURSE CALENDAR

Tentative Course Calendar*

*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

DATE	DISCUSSION	READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT CLASS
8/29	Introduction to Political Data and Analytics	- <i>Naked Statistics</i> Intro, Chp 1, Chp 2 - Download RStudio, R, or Tidyverse
9/5	Research Design Literature Review Probability and Conditional Probability	- <i>Naked Statistics</i> Chps 3, 5, 5.5, 6 - Statistics textbook excerpts posted on Blackboard. - Problem Set #1
9/12	Random Variables and Distributions Expectation	- <i>Naked Statistics</i> Chps 4, 7, 8 - Statistics textbook excerpts posted on Blackboard. - Problem Set #2
9/19	Special Distributions Large Random Samples	- <i>Naked Statistics</i> Chp 9 - Statistics textbook excerpts posted on Blackboard. - Problem Set #3
9/26	Estimation Sampling Distributions of Estimators	- <i>Naked Statistics</i> Chp 10 - Statistics textbook excerpts posted on Blackboard. - Problem Set #4
10/3	Testing Hypotheses Categorical Data and Nonparametric Methods	- <i>Naked Statistics</i> Chp 11, 12 - Statistics textbook excerpts posted on Blackboard. - Problem Set #5
10/10	Linear Statistical Models Causal Inference	- <i>Naked Statistics</i> Chp 13, Conclusion - Statistics textbook excerpts posted on Blackboard. - Problem Set #6
10/17	Multivariate Analysis	- Articles posted on Blackboard. - Email research topic of interest before next class.
10/24	Experimental Methods	- Articles posted on Blackboard. - 1-page research proposal for final paper due next class. - Select congressional district data for individual project by next class
10/31	Impact Evaluations	- Articles posted on Blackboard.
11/7	Text Analysis	- Articles posted on Blackboard.

		- Outline for final paper due next class.
11/14	Individual Project Presentations	
11/21	Individual Project Presentations	
11/28	NO CLASS	
12/5	Final Paper Due NO CLASS	

Copyright Statement

Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.