**GVPT 601**

**Research Design for Political Analytics**

**Spring, 2022**

Dr. Richard N. Engstrom

Wednesdays, 6:30pm-9:15pm

Tydings Hall, Room 1132

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Office Hours: by appointment

**Course Description**

This class is a graduate-level introduction to coding in political science. Coding is defined for this class as transforming data from a raw form into a form that conveys meaning. Data are “recoded” when they are transformed from a raw form to a form useful for analysis (when start and end times, for example, are recoded to express durations) and coding takes place when we write instructions in a data analysis program to run statistical processes on datasets to reveal relationships, or significant differences, between groups. It covers different approaches to collecting and organizing data and addresses the strengths and limitations of different decisions. Students who successfully complete the course will be able to gather raw data, transform those data into measures useful for answering research questions, and present analyses that bring data results to bear on research questions.

**Grades**

In this class you will be assessed based on the following:

1. Performance on a **midterm and final exam** (25% each, for a total of 50%)
2. Performance on a **presentation related to data analysis and organization** (20%)
3. Performance on a **group dataset collection and recoding assignment** (20%)
4. Quality of **participation** in seminar discussions (10%)

**Exams** will be essay tests, requiring 3-5 paragraphs per answer.  Questions will be drawn from readings and seminar discussions. During the first half of the semester, each student will be assigned a week for which they will **present and lead a discussion on a researcher’s approach to using data to make arguments.** During the second half of the semester, each student will also be assigned a week for which they will be paired with another student to **present the results of a data-collection and recoding assignment**, explaining the data’s limitations and coding decisions that were made. **Participation** in seminars will involve an evaluation of the frequency and quality of student participation in both in-class and online discussions (if necessary).

Final grades will be assigned on the following scale:

A+        98-100%

A          92-97%

A-         90-91%

B+        88-89%

B          82-87%

B-         80-81%

C+        78-79%

C          72-77%

C-         70-71%

D+        68-69%

D          62-67%

D-        60-61%

F          59% or lower

**Readings**

There is one required textbooks in this course, and students will also be asked to find research and other guides to using data to make arguments. Those materials will be used by the student in a presentation and assessment of the arguments and insights provided. The textbook we will be using is:

* Walker, Kyle. Analyzing U.S. Census Data. <https://walker-data.com/census-r/>. This is the open-source version of the CRC Press book due to be published in 2022.

Class Format

This class will be run as a graduate-level seminar, which means it will be discussion-based rather than lecture-based. Every student is expected to come to class prepared to discuss the week’s readings. It is usually helpful for students to come to class with questions related to the readings, and for students to be prepared to help others in the seminar with their questions. Seminars will normally be broken into two segments. During Weeks 2-7, the first class segment will be used to discuss the week’s readings and then, after a short break, the second segment will be used to present and discuss research articles brought to class by students that are related to their research interests. Every student will present an article for discussion. During Weeks 9-15, the first segment of class will again be used to discuss the week’s readings, while the second segment will be used to discuss the results of empirical exercises from the Imai text. Students will be assigned either individually or as a member of a team to lead the discussion of each week’s empirical exercises.

It is very likely that seminars will meet in person for the entire fall semester. But, due to the possibility that the COVID-19 virus could change how safe it is to meet in person, the class may have to transition to an online format at some point during the semester. I anticipate running any online classes on Zoom and maintaining the course schedule. Any changes will be announced in class and/or via email and on ELMS.

**Course Schedule**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Date | Readings |
| Week 1    Week 2 | 1/26    2/2 | Introduction, Overview    Project Organization |
| Week 3 | 2/9 | Data Cleaning |
| Week 4 | 2/16 | **Data and Arguments Presentations I** |
| Week 5 | 2/23 | Data Recoding and Analysis I |
| Week 6 | 3/2 | **Data and Arguments Presentations II** |
| Week 7 | 3/9 | Data Recoding and Analysis II |
| Week 8 | 3/16 | **Midterm Exam** |
| Week 9  Week 10 | 3/23  3/30 | **SPRING BREAK**  Walker, Chapters 1-2 |
| Week 11 | 4/6 | Walker, Chapters 2-3 |
| Week 12 | 4/13 | Walker, Chapters 5-6 |
| Week 13 | 4/20 | Walker, Chapters 7-8 |
| Week 14 | 4/27 | Walker, Chapters 9-10 |
| Week 15 | 5/4 | Walker, Chapters 11-12, **final datasets due** |
| Week 16 | TBD | **Final Exam** |
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**Make-up Assignments**

Make-up Exams and Assignments will be given for a documented, unexpected emergency or as the result of a university-authorized commitment.

**Contacting the Instructor**

Students with requests or questions about the class should feel free to contact the instructor.  I am happy to discuss issues related to DSS accommodations, class content, or other issues related to the class.

**Statement on Diversity and Inclusivity**

The Government and Politics department deeply values the voices and perspectives of all people. We are committed to having a diverse department that recognizes and appreciates the differences in race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, abilities, class, nationality, and other factors. Our department prioritizes diversity and seeks to foster a diverse community reflected in its faculty, staff, and students.

In this class, students are invited to share their thoughts and a diversity of opinions is welcome. Respectful communication is expected, even when expressing differing perspectives. Supporting one’s statement with research findings is encouraged. In accordance with free speech statues, speech that contains threats of violence is prohibited.

**Reporting Racism and Other Forms of Hate and Bias**

If you experience racism or other forms of bias in this class or any GVPT course, we encourage you to do at least one of the following:

·  Please report the experience to the instructor or teaching assistant

·  Report the experience to David Cunningham, the GVPT Director of Undergraduate Studies at [dacunnin@umd.edu](mailto:dacunnin@umd.edu)

·  Report the experience to the GVPT Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, led by Professor Antoine Banks at [abanks12@umd.edu](mailto:abanks12@umd.edu)

Please also report all incidents of hate and bias to the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at <https://diversity.umd.edu/bias/>.

**Additional Course Information**

The syllabus is tentative, and mid-semester changes to the class may be necessary.  Changes are at the discretion of the instructor and will be announced in class. Students are required to ensure that their emails are registered with ELMS.

Additional information about course-related policies at the University of Maryland, including academic integrity, sexual misconduct, and discrimination, can be found on the Course Related Policies page, hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Studies:

http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html