Syllabus for Social Science Analysis and Methods II

Instructor: Matthew Linley

1 GOALS OF THE COURSE

This course is an introduction to research methods, research design, and the collection and analysis of social science data. Through a series of lectures, discussions, and readings students will learn how the fundamentals of scientific inquiry are applied to political science and other social sciences by examining the philosophy of social science research, theory building, hypothesis testing and the basics of applied qualitative and quantitative research in political science. The goals of this course are to:

- Introduce students to the most frequently used research methods in the social sciences, with an emphasis on those used in Political Science
- Teach students how to develop an answerable research question
- Teach students to design a research proposal that will help them answer their question
- Help students identify the various research designs and methods that can be used to answer the question
- Teach students methods to collect data to answer their question
- Teach students methods to analyze their data
- Prepare students for drafting a research proposal for their own independent research project or graduation thesis

2 OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE

Objectives of this course are as follows :

- Students will be able to understand basic concepts in social science research and several quantitative and qualitative methodologies
- Students will be able to identify suitable research topics for advanced undergraduate projects
- Students will be able to prepare a proposal for an advanced project
- Students will be able to choose appropriate methods in a particular context
- Students will be able to identify techniques for measuring social and political phenomenon
- Students will be able to evaluate methods used by other researchers and analysts

3 COURSE CONTENT

The purpose of this course is to prepare students to do their own research project. Students will learn this through lectures, discussions, brief assignments, peer review of the work of other students, and writing their own draft of a research proposal. We will cover the following topics.

1. Introduction to Research Methods
2. What is the Empirical Approach to Political Science?
3. How to Start a Research Project: Choosing a Topic and Research Question Using the Literature
4. The Basics of Empirical Research: Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables
5. The Basics of Empirical Research: Measurement
6. The Purpose of Research Design: Causal Inference
7. Sampling
8. Drafting a Research Proposal
9. Research Methods: Participant Observation
10. Research Methods: Content Analysis of Documents
11. Research Methods: Surveys and Interviews
12. Data Analysis: Data Cleaning and Descriptive Statistics
13. Data Analysis: Statistical Inference
14. Data Analysis: Statistical Analysis
15. Course Conclusion

4 COURSE PREREQUISITES

We recommend this class for upper year undergraduates in the School of Law or School of Economics, especially those intending to write a graduation thesis. We strongly recommend that students have already completed Social Science Analysis and Methods I. The minimum grade required to pass this course is C- (60% or above).

Letter grades are as follows :

- A+ 95% or above
- A 80% or above, but below 95%
- B 70% or above, but below 80%
- C 65% or above, but below 70%
- C- 60% or above, but below 65%
- F Below 60

I will grade students as follows :

- 15% Class Participation/Attendance
- 10% Assignment 1: Topics and Research Questions
- 10% Assignment 2: Measuring Concepts and Variables
- 10% Assignment 3: Participant Observation
- 10% Assignment 4: Content Analysis
- 10% Assignment 5: Interview
- 10% Assignment 6: Descriptive statistics
- 10% Assignment 7: Statistical inference
- 15% Assignment: 1-Page research proposal for a graduation thesis

5 TEXTBOOK

There is no textbook. I will provide material in class via the NUCT system.

6 REFERENCE BOOK

Johnson, J. B., Reynolds, H. T., Mycoff, J. D., & Mycoff, J. D. (2020). Political science research methods. Thousand Oaks, California: CQ Press, an imprint of SAGE Publications, Inc.,

7 STUDY LOAD

Students should expect 2 to 5 hours per week of preparation, including reading, reflecting, preparing written assignments, and reviewing notes. Additional practice and study may be necessary for those students unfamiliar with using Excel or who have limited experience in data analysis.

8 NOTICE FOR STUDENTS

This course will emphasize research methods used in Political Science. I welcome students from other areas of specialization, such as Law and Economics. But please be aware that most examples (including on assignments) will be taken from the literature on Political Science. I will do my best to teach the general concepts in a way that is accessible to all social science students. This is NOT a course on statistics or probability. The statistics that we use for data analysis will be elementary level. The emphasis will be on teaching practical skills to students in doing their research. Students should have access to a copy of Microsoft Excel or other spreadsheet program able to do simple statistical analyses.

9 HOW TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS

The instructor will be available to answer questions from students immediately after class. Students can also email the instructor questions they may have at linley.matthew[at]j.mbox.nagoya-u.ac.jp

10 LECTURE FORMAT

Seminar format with discussion and occasional in-class activities

List of hybrid classes employing both face-to-face and remote teaching methods will be posted in the "News" of the homepage of the Graduate School of Law.

URL：https://www.law.nagoya-u.ac.jp

*If there are any changes in the teaching methods after the period of course registration, it will be announced on NUCT.

11 ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR REMOTE CLASS

Should any student not be able to attend an in-person class, the lecture will be recorded and distributed to all students. The instructor will be available for answering student questions immediately after each class. Students can also make an appointment to talk to the instructor after class.

We conduct remote classes via NUCT. You should ask questions to instructors using the NUCT "Message" function.

We will conduct student discussions using the NUCT "Message" function. (If the instructor has added the "Forum" function, the "Forum" can also be used.)

Follow your instructor's directions if your instructor has any other directions.