Research Methods for Political Science B | POU33012

Year	Junior Sophister
ECTS Credits	5
Contact Hours	20 hours of lectures, 10 hours of tutorials
Pre-requisite	POU22040
Semester	2
Module Leader & Lecturer	TBC
Contact Email	TBC

Module Outline

Learning Outcomes:

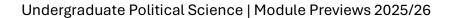On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Understand and critically evaluate political and social science research from a methodological perspective.
- Develop a research question and design and implement an effective plan of research to answer it.
- Identify appropriate quantitative methods for the analysis of different kinds of data and different kinds of research question.
- Correctly apply such methods, diagnose potential errors, and interpret their results.
- Use the statistical programming language R to carry out quantitative research and effectively communicate outcomes.

Module Learning Aims:

This module will provide students with the tools to both critique social scientific research and conduct their own original research into social and political phenomena. As well as offering a quantitative grounding for further academic advancement, the module will introduce students to data analysis skills which are increasingly in demand in the labour market. The module continues the introduction to statistics started in POU33031, and is the second step in the preparation for the dissertation in POU44000 Year Long Research Project in Political Science.

Module Content:

This module explores a variety of both qualitative and quantitative social science research methods, with a particular focus on the logic of scientific inference, research design, and measurement. Students will be introduced to the rules of data analysis, will learn how to perform multivariate regression on various types of data, and become confident and independent users of the statistical programming language R. Hands on experience will be provided in forming and testing hypotheses, identifying and exploring casual mechanisms, and effectively communicating research findings. Alongside this, we will also explore the uses and abuses of statistical reasoning in social and political studies, with the aim of making students critical consumers of academic research.

Students are discouraged from taking this module only, as the course material in the second term builds on the issues discussed during the first term. Students who wish to register for nonetheless are requested to contact the lecturer to discuss to what extent their prior training in methods and basic statistics is sufficient.

Assessment
Attendance and participation: 5%
4 x short assignments: 20%
1 x group paper (2,000 words max): 25%
1x 120 90 minute examination: 50%

Recommended Reading List
James, G., D. Witten, T. Hastie and R. Tibshirani, 2023. An introduction to statistical learning with applications in R. (available here – https://hastie.su.domains/ISLR2/ISLRv2_corrected_June_2023.pdf. Chapters 1 to 4 are relevant to the module).
Huntington-Klein, N., 2023. An introduction to research design and casuality. (available here: https://theeffectbook.net/index.html).