POL 226: Approaches to Political Science

Lecture 1 - Introduction

Professor Enrique Quezada-Llanes

AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE

Plan for Today

1. Introductions
2. Course Overview
3. Syllabus

A Bit About Myself

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Research Interests

Racial and ethnic politics, religion and politics, and political behavior.

Hobbies

Coffee, table tennis, and reading.

Tell Me About Yourself

- Name
- Year
- Major
- Why are you taking this course?
  (be honest, you won't hurt my feelings!)
- YouTube genre that you're into
  (or, something that brings you joy)

In This Course, You Will Learn:

1. Answer substantive questions
2. How to analyze quantitative data
3. How to assess the validity of statistical claims
4. The fundamental problem of causal inference!
5. To program in R

The Course is Divided As Follows

1. (short) Philosophy of Science
2. R 101
3. Experiments
4. Survey Data
5. Making Predictions with Linear Regression
6. Observational Studies
7. Probability

You Will Need Some Materials

Textbook

Llaudet, Elena and Kosuke Imai. 2022. *Data Analysis for Social Science: A Friendly and Practical Introduction*. United States: Princeton University Press.

Software

1. R: `http://www.r-project.org`
2. RStudio: `https://posit.co/`

- Works with MacOS, Windows, and Linux

Course Website

For most class-related materials, check the course website:

`https://pol226.fall23.equezadallanes.com/`

Some materials will only be made available through Canvas

Let's check the syllabus

Do we Really Need Statistics?

Well, yes and no.

This class is about answering how to answer substantive questions using quantitative data

- **Substantive** means we are concerned with practical questions (rather than methodological)
- **Quantitative** means we are using numerical data to measure and answer those questions (rather than qualitative data)

But I Hate/Am Not Good at Math

Take a deep breath! It's fine. No reason to panic.

In this course, you will gain practical skills. Unfortunately (or fortunately), you will not become a statistician, but you will learn

- how to code in R to use statistical models to answer questions that interest you.

Understanding quantitative data in today's world is a valuable skill. Think about how many companies and government agencies want to have data-driven insights.

You Have Resources

This course will not be easy (I think!), but you will have resources available to you.

1. Textbook
   - Designed for students with no prior experience with statistics or coding
2. Your classmates!
   - Make sure you are talking to each other outside of class. Ask questions if you don't understand some concept or line of code.
3. Internet forums like StackOverflow
   - For most questions you may have about how to do something in R, you can find an answer online. You still have to know why that piece of code works or how to adapt it to your particular needs.
4. Me!
   - You can come during office hours or anytime you see my office door open.

For Next Class

Read

- *Data Analysis for Social Science* (from now on DASS). Chapter 1: pp. 1-6.
- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research.* Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1: pp 3-19 (stop at section 1.2.2).

We're done!

Questions or comments?

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