



Syllabus PhD in Politics

Year of Offer	2024-2025 – first year
Study Course	PhD Research in Politics
Teaching/Module	Quantitative Methods
Teaching Period	First Semester
Professors	Paolo Bellucci
Course Year	2024-2025
Field	SPS/04 SCIENZA POLITICA
CFU	5
Total Hours of Frontal Instruction	20

Tipo Testo	Testo in Italiano/Inglese
OBIETTIVI/LEARNING GOALS	<p>The aims of the course are: a) to introduce students to the main quantitative research approaches in empirical political science and b) to foster capacity to do original empirical research on the various themes of the discipline (political institutions, voting, public opinion analysis, public policy, etc.) in a comparative perspective. This is not a class on statistics/mathematics although some statistics will be discussed and studied. Rather it is a class on research methods which will allow students to select the appropriate research design for their own PhD thesis/research papers.</p> <p>Active participation by students is expected and reading requirements are to be fulfilled beforehand (the reading list is kept short, but all requirements have to be met, in order for students to discuss them in class).</p> <p>No previous knowledge is expected. A statistical software (STATA) will be used. Students need to have the software on their laptop. At the completion of the course students will be familiar with different research designs and basic statistical techniques (i.e., regression analysis) to conduct their own research.</p>
RISULTATI DI APPRENDIMENTO ATTESI/ INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Conoscenza e comprensione/ knowledge and understanding:</p> <p>At the end of the course, students will be familiar with different research designs and basic statistical techniques (e.g., regression analysis) for conducting their own research. They will learn the fundamentals of research design and quantitative methods for data analysis in the social sciences.</p> <p>Capacità di applicare conoscenza e comprensione/ applying knowledge and understanding:</p> <p>Students will gain the ability to conduct original research aimed at investigating causal relationships among variables and testing hypotheses about political and social phenomena. They will acquire skills in using statistical software (STATA) to analyze social science data.</p> <p>Autonomia di giudizio/ making judgements:</p> <p>Students, through classroom-conducted analyses of methodological scientific articles, will learn the analytic strategies best suited to their research question.</p> <p>Abilità comunicative/ communication skills:</p> <p>Classroom presentations and paper writing will enable students to communicate the results of their research according to the best practices of the discipline.</p>



Capacità di apprendimento/ learning skills:

Through the writing and discussion of weekly assignments, students will be able to check their progress in learning about the topics addressed.

Prerequisiti / Entry Requirements

N/A

Contenuti Del Corso / Course Content

1. The post-positivist paradigm in the social sciences. Research Designs: Most Similar & Most Dissimilar research design. Theories, concepts, operationalization and variables

Required readings

David Sanders, *Behaviouralism*, in D. Marsh & G. Stoker, *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Palmgrave, 2002

Adam Przeworski, Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*, New York, John Wiley & Sons, Chapter 1 and 2 (17- 46)

Todd Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics. An Introduction*, London and New York, Routledge, 2000 (Ch. 1 - 2. Why compare countries? - How to compare countries, 3 - 35)

Giovanni Sartori, Concept Mis-formation in Comparative Politics, *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Dec., 1970), pp. 1033-1053

Assignment 1 due at Seminar 2: 1000 word paper on selecting a concept relevant for one's own research and deriving observational variables (Quantity of Interest- QoI). To be presented (5 minutes presentation) at Seminar 2

2. The data matrix: cases and variables in STATA. Describing a variable. Univariate statistics: distributions, measures of central tendency and dispersion

Required Readings

Lewis-Beck, Michael S., *Data Analysis. An Introduction*. Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Science, 07-103. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995, pp. 1-18

NB: Assignment 2 due at Seminar 3: 1000 word paper on describing the Quantity of Interest (QoI) with distribution, central tendency and dispersion

3. Association among variables: contingency tables and correlation coefficients. Spurious relationships

Required Readings

Lewis-Beck, Michael S., *Data Analysis. An Introduction*. Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Science, 07-103. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995, pp. 18-39

Herbert A. Simon, Spurious Correlation: A Causal Interpretation, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, Sep., 1954, Vol. 49, No. 267 (Sep., 1954), pp. 467-479

NB: Assignment 3 due at Seminar 4: 2000 word paper describing associations among variables for selected topic (QoI)



4. From association to causality: regression analysis

Required Readings

Lewis-Beck, Colin & Lewis-Beck, Michael S., *Applied Regression. An Introduction*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 2016, 2nd Edition, pp. 1-21.

5. Applied regression analysis: how to run a model and to assess its fit to the data

Required Readings

Lewis-Beck, Colin & Lewis-Beck, Michael S., *Applied Regression. An Introduction*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 2016, 2nd Edition, pp. 23-53.

NB: Assignment 4 due at Seminar 9: 2000 word paper describing causal relationship among variables for selected topic (QoI). To be presented during seminar 9.

6. Running regressions: hands on

Steps in conducting actual research on observational data

7. Reading and understanding quantitative published research

Presentations by students of assigned readings, focusing on theoretical perspectives, hypotheses, findings, critique. All students will have to read individually assigned papers to discuss them.

8. Reading and understanding quantitative published research

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9. Further topics in regression and causal models

Required Readings

Lewis-Beck, Colin & Lewis-Beck, Michael S., *Applied Regression. An Introduction*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 2016, 2nd Edition, pp. 55-96

10. Wrap up. How to move forward

In collaboration with Francesco Marolla, Instructor of Quantitative Methods Term 2 - QM

Testi Di Riferimento / Reference Books

We rely on two (short) textbooks which students would have available:

Lewis-Beck, Michael S., *Data Analysis. An Introduction*. Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Science, 07-103. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 1995, pp. 77

Lewis-Beck, Colin & Lewis-Beck, Michael S., *Applied Regression. An Introduction*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage, 2016, 2nd Edition, pp. 103

Further references:



Halperin, Sandra & Heath, Oliver, *Political Research Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, 2nd Edition. (A comprehensive textbook on research paradigms and methods in the social sciences)

Angrist, Joshua D. & Pischke, Jörn-Steffen. *Mastering metrics. The path from cause to effect*. Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press, 2015. (An engaging account of how to assess causal inference in the social sciences, with just elementary statistics)

<i>Metodologie Didattiche/ Teaching Method</i>	N/A
<i>Modalità di verifica e di accertamento dell'apprendimento/ Detailed Description of Assessment Method</i>	<p>You are expected to attend and actively participate in sessions of the course. In case you cannot attend a particular session for a valid reason (such as illness), please inform the course coordinator via email at the earliest opportunity. In case you do not sufficiently attend meetings, you will be invited to discuss your attendance with the coordinator of the PhD programme (who may determine that you have failed the course and will need to repeat it in the following year).</p> <p>The final course grade will be expressed in thirtieths (/30). A pass mark will be attained with a minimum mark of 18/30, while the maximum mark will be 30/30 <i>com laude</i>, requiring both active class participation (including oral presentation of relevant literature) and the successful completion of a number of empirical assignments. For these, participants will select a comparative politics data set – e.g. Intune, European Election Study, World Values Survey – and return the assignments via e-mail (student's last name_assX.doc) to the course coordinator prior to seminars 3, 4, 5 and 9, respective (details below).</p>