

POLS 2280 Research Methods Spring 2023

Instructor:	Dr. April A. Johnson
Class Time:	Tues/Thurs 3:30pm-4:45pm
Class Location:	Social Sciences Building, Room 3025
Office Hours:	By appointment
Office Location:	Social Sciences Building, Room 5056
E-Mail:	ajohn551@kennesaw.edu (preferred)
Phone:	470-578-4973

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the logic and methods of empirical political science. Students will first learn to identify good, testable research questions and to develop ways in which those questions can be quantified. Here we cover issues related to formulating hypotheses, identifying causal relationships, and appropriately measuring variables. The second section of the course will introduce students to various types of research designs that political scientists use to collect data and examine their hypotheses. Specifically, we will focus on issues related to sampling, validity, and reliability. The remainder of the course will be an introduction to quantitative methods through applied statistics. This section will explain when and why we can make legitimate claims about a population given data on only a small subset of that population. While learning these concepts, students will simultaneously develop and analyze their own original research project. As such, this course is very much a hands on application of research design and methodology. The primary objective of this course is for you to become critical consumers of empirical social science as well as competent producers of your own research.

Course Objectives

1. Identify real-world applications of research methodology.
2. Define causal inference and explain its relationship within exploratory vs. explanatory research.
3. Identify the steps of hypothesis testing.
4. Define a sampling distribution and explain its application to hypothesis testing.
5. Develop a literature review of scholarly journal quality.
6. Critique various aspects of operationalization, measurement, and research design.
7. Display competence in the use of SPSS for data organization and analysis.
8. Interpret (i.e., put into plain language) various statistical outputs, including ordinary least squares coefficients.
9. Place your research findings into the broader scope of this topic.

Required Texts

None! However, Dr. Johnson will regularly share journal articles and/or recent news stories that relate to and inform students' understanding of the topics for that week.

Evaluation of Course Objectives

Research Exercises: Students will complete a total of eight research exercises in this class. Exercises are meant to assess your comprehension of the material and to give you hands on experience critiquing and developing empirical work. Instructions for exercises will be distributed approximately two weeks before each is due.

We will also have eight in-class workshops during the semester. While these technically count as part of your attendance/professionalism grade, participating in workshops should *greatly* assist you when it comes to completing research exercises.

Final Paper: In lieu of a final exam, each student is expected to submit a 15-20 page paper reflecting their own original research to the Kennesaw Journal of Undergraduate Research (KJUR). Students will submit a completed draft to the instructor on the date they present their project in class. Drafts will be returned to students with substantive and organizational feedback from the instructor. After making the appropriate revisions, students will digitally submit their research papers to KJUR.

Note that while this task may seem daunting, this course was designed so that the completion of individual research exercises should help students build their paper/project throughout the semester. Specific formatting guidelines for the final paper, as well as a grading rubric, will be distributed roughly halfway through the semester. Papers should include the following: Abstract, background/literature review, research question, hypotheses, data and methodology, results, discussion, and concluding thoughts. To view the aims & scope of KJUR please visit <http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/kjur/>.

Research Presentation: Each student will give an 8-10 minute (approximate) presentation on their research project during one of the last three class meetings. Instructions and grading criteria for presentations will be disseminated roughly four weeks beforehand.

Attendance/Participation/Professionalism: Students are given one excused absence per semester, no questions asked. In general, I expect students to come to each class, to be attentive, and to be engaged in both lectures and discussion. *Please note that showing up late and/or leaving early is disruptive to the classroom flow (meaning: don't do it!).*

Attending class does not equate to participating in it. Participation includes asking questions about the concepts (write down comments/questions outside of class!), answering questions posed by the instructor, and responding to the comments made by your classmates. I encourage all students to think critically and to share their insights and inquiries with the class.

In addition to attendance and participation, students will be assessed on the professionalism with which they conduct themselves. Professionalism means that students are focused on course material, accountable for their own learning and respectful in their communication both inside and outside of the classroom. Incivilities, such as texting, chatting, or excessive classroom disruptions, will lower your grade in this course.

Distribution of Grades

15%	Attendance/Participation/Professionalism		
60%	Research Exercises (breakdown below)		
	5% - Research Question	5% - Student Critique	10% - Data Analysis I
	5% - Article Critique	10% - Data Submission	10% - Data Analysis II
	5% - Research Design	10% - Literature Review	
10%	Research Presentation		
15%	Final Paper		

Grading Scale

A	90-100	C	70-79	F	59 or below
B	80-89	D	60-69		

Policy for Missed or Late Work

Missing/late work will be accepted only under extenuating circumstances and with proper (medical) documentation. Students will generally not be allowed to make up missing coursework due to transportation, weather, travel, family and/or personal issues, though certain exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis.

Religious Holidays

Students who wish to observe religious holidays must notify the instructor of the date(s) they will be absent within the first week of class. The instructor will make every reasonable effort to honor the request and not penalize the student for missing class and/or assignments. If an examination or assignment is due during the absence the instructor will give the student an opportunity to complete the assessment at an earlier date.

Accessibility and Disability Policy

KSU provides program accessibility and reasonable accommodations for persons defined as disabled under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Students who require specific accommodations (e.g., extra time on exams, designated note takers, visual aids, etc.) to successfully complete this course are welcome! However, in order for the instructor to recognize these accommodations it is the responsibility of the student to officially document their disabilities with the office of Student Disability Services. *Note: Students seeking accommodations should do so within the first week of the semester, as testing and documentation often takes time.* Please visit the Student Disability Services website at sss.kennesaw.edu/sds.

Electronic Communication

Communication for this course will be sent to your official university email address. It is your responsibility to read the email in your official university email account and to do so in a timely manner. *It is recommended that students log into the course in D2L and check their KSU email at least three times per week.* If you choose to forward your official university email to another off-campus account, faculty are *not responsible* for any undeliverable messages to your alternative personal accounts.

The Duo Authentication System

Duo is a two-factor authentication solution supporting the security of personal and university data for campus community members. Two-factor authentication is a method of confirming your identity using two separate elements: 1) Something you know (your NetID password), and 2) something you have (your registered mobile device or landline phone). Duo provides an extra layer of security for your NetID, designed so that no one but you can access your account, even if your password becomes compromised. You will be prompted to authenticate through Duo each time you log-in to Duo compatible services. The service provides multiple options for taking advantage of this additional authentication method, including push notifications through a smartphone app, short codes delivered through the app, or phone calls. For more information visit: <https://uits.kennesaw.edu/duo/index.php>.

Contacting the Instructor

If a student has questions about the material, technical issues in accessing course elements on D2L, or needs to contact the instructor for any other reason, please email me at ajohn551@kennesaw.edu. All emails will get a response within three days (72 hours). If for any reason the instructor will be unavailable on certain days the class will be notified in advance.

Grading Response Times

Research exercises, presentations, and the final paper will be graded within one week (7 days) of the submission deadline. Attendance grades will be updated approximately halfway through the semester.

Writing Assistance

The KSU Writing Center helps students in all disciplines improve their written work. Experienced, friendly writing assistants work with you on topic development, revision, research, documentation, grammar, and more. Appointments with the Writing Center are even available remotely (i.e., online). For more information or to make an appointment, visit www.kennesaw.edu/writingcenter, or stop by Room 242 in the English Building.

Minimum Technical Skills Needed

You will need a high speed internet connection, access to your KSU email, and knowledge of how to use Desire2Learn (D2L). Developing an understanding of the D2L discussion board functions, the assignment functions (in order to turn in papers), and the content tabs (to access instructions, required readings, etc.) will be vital. It is recommended that you access D2L from a desktop computer, not a cell phone, iPad, etc. In order to listen to videos and/or lectures you will need speakers/headphones and a compatible browser. You will also need access to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and the ability to open PDF files. Note that all computers on KSU's main campus satisfy these requirements.

Accessing SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)

Much of the semester will be spent working in the statistical program SPSS. This software is available in many on-campus computer labs, may be downloaded from UITS (<https://uits.kennesaw.edu/>), or may be accessed via the Virtual Owl remote desktop program (<https://virtualowl.kennesaw.edu/index.php>).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic honesty and adherence to KSU's Student Codes of Conduct is expected at all times. Any student found to have engaged in academic misconduct such as plagiarism, collusion, or submitting non-original work is subject to disciplinary sanctions from the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity. **If I suspect that a student has committed plagiarism, even if it is their first time, the student will receive a zero on the assignment and an incident report will be filed with the Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity.** For more information about plagiarism and prevention go to www.plagiarism.org. To view the Kennesaw State University Student Codes of Conduct visit <https://web.kennesaw.edu/scai/content/ksu-student-code-conduct>.

Special Statements on COVID-19

Course Delivery

KSU may shift the method of course delivery at any time during the semester in compliance with University System of Georgia health and safety guidelines. In this case, alternate teaching modalities that may be adopted include hyflex, hybrid, synchronous online, or asynchronous online instruction.

COVID-19 Illness

If you are feeling ill, please stay home and contact your health professional. In addition, please email your instructor to say you are missing class due to illness. Signs of COVID-19 illness include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Cough
- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Runny nose or new sinus congestion
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

- Chills
- Sore Throat
- New loss of taste and/or smell

COVID-19 vaccines are a critical tool in “Protecting the Nest.” If you have not already, you are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated immediately to advance the health and safety of our campus community. As an enrolled KSU student, you are eligible to receive the vaccine on campus. Please call (470) 578-6644 to schedule your vaccination appointment or you may walk into one of our student health clinics. For more information regarding COVID-19 (including testing, vaccines, extended illness procedures and accommodations), see KSU’s official [Covid-19 website](#).

Face Coverings

Based on guidance from the University System of Georgia (USG), masks are encouraged based on individual preference and assessment of personal risk. Disposable face coverings can be picked up at the Office of Emergency Management at Chastain Pointe on the Kennesaw campus and Norton Hall Police Precinct on the Marietta campus. Please email oem@kennesaw.edu if you have questions.

Technical Support

Students are encouraged to seek out resources available to them at Kennesaw State if they are experiencing any technical difficulties that the instructor is not able to solve. You can find this support at the following places:

- Student Technology Services
 - <https://uits.kennesaw.edu/>
 - Email: studenthelpdesk@kennesaw.edu
- Desire2Learn (D2L) Support
 - Training schedule, booklets, and videos available at <https://uits.kennesaw.edu/support/d2ltraining.php>
- Respondus Lockdown browser
 - https://chss.kennesaw.edu/ode/tutorials/Syllabus_LockDownBrowser.pdf

Academic Support Links

KSU offers many academic support resources including Academic Tutoring, Student Success Services, ESL Support, Writing Center, Math Lab, and Supplemental Instruction. Please look at the following link for more information on any of these resources: <https://www.kennesaw.edu/currentstudents.php>.

Student Support Services

KSU has many student support services geared particularly toward online students that can be found at: <https://ols.kennesaw.edu/>

KSU Financial Aid Office: The Office of Student Financial Aid provides assistance for students to help them meet the costs of obtaining a Kennesaw State University education.

<https://financialaid.kennesaw.edu/index.php>

KSU Office of the Registrar: The Office of the Registrar supports academic life at Kennesaw State University, from class registration to graduation and beyond. Explore this site to learn more about our core mission and find resources for students, faculty, staff, and alumni.

<https://registrar.kennesaw.edu/index.php>

KSU Bursar's office: The Bursar's Office provides the following services for KSU students:

- Acceptance of student fee payments
- Disbursements of Financial Aid balance of awards
- Administration of private scholarship funds and funds on deposit accounts
- Administration of Corporate and Third-Party Contracts
- Collection of Perkins Loans/KSU Emergency Loan

<https://fiscalservices.kennesaw.edu/bursar/index.php>

Privacy Policies/Accessibility Statements of External Course Tools:

<https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-us/privacystatement>

https://www.youtube.com/static?&template=privacy_guidelines

<http://www.adobe.com/privacy/policy.html>

https://guides.turnitin.com/Privacy_and_Security

<https://www.adobe.com/accessibility.html>

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/accessibility>

<https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/189278?hl=en>

http://turnitin.com/en_us/about-us/accessibility

Miscellaneous University Policies

[Academic Honesty/Integrity Statement](#)

[Confidentiality and Privacy Statement \(FERPA\)](#)

[Campus Carry Information](#)

[Ethics Statement](#)

[Sexual Harassment Statement](#)

[University – Student Rights Statement](#)

Enrollment Status Statement

Students are solely responsible for managing their enrollment status in a course; nonattendance does not constitute a withdrawal.

Disclaimer

The instructor reserves the right to amend or correct this course syllabus as necessary.

Course Schedule

To view academic deadlines, including add/drop/withdrawal dates, visit registrar.kennesaw.edu/

Date	Topic
Tues 1/10	The First Day
Thurs 1/12	Politics as an Empirical Study
Tues 1/17	Creating a ‘Good’ Research Question
Thurs 1/19	<i>Workshop: Introduction to SPSS and Large Sample Datasets</i>
Tues 1/24	Hypotheses and Variables
Thurs 1/26	<i>Workshop: Compiling a Bibliography and Learning APSA Style</i> Research Exercise #1 Due (Research Question)
Tues 1/31	Measurement
Thurs 2/2	<i>No Class</i>
Tues 2/7	<i>Workshop: Getting Comfortable with SPSS, Finding Data</i>
Thurs 2/9	<i>Workshop: Entering and Coding Observational Data</i> Research Exercise #2 Due (Article Critique)
Tues 2/14	Causal Inference: Experimental Designs
Thurs 2/16	Causal Inference: Nonrandomized Designs
Tues 2/21	Fundamentals of Sampling
Thurs 2/23	Statistical Inference: Population vs. Sample Research Exercise #3 Due (Research Design)
Tues 2/28	<i>Workshop: Organizing and Structuring Your Literature Review</i>
Thurs 3/2	Descriptive Statistics Research Exercise #4 Due (Student Critique)
Tues	<i>Spring Break- No Class</i>

3/7	
Thurs 3/9	<i>Spring Break- No Class</i>
Tues 3/14	Checkpoint I: Individual Meetings Research Exercise #5 Due (Data Submission)
Thurs 3/16	<i>Workshop: Visualizing Your Data and Interpreting Descriptives</i> *Submit to Symposium of Student Scholars* https://research.kennesaw.edu/our/symposium-student-scholars/spring-edition.php
Tues 3/21	Hypothesis Testing
Thurs 3/23	T-tests
Tues 3/28	Confidence Intervals Research Exercise #6 Due (Literature Review)
Thurs 3/30	Intro to Regression
Tues 4/4	Regression Analysis
Thurs 4/6	<i>Workshop: Running and Interpreting Regression Results</i> Research Exercise #7 Due (Data Analysis I)
Tues 4/11	<i>Workshop: Presenting Regression Analyses in a Scholarly Journal</i>
Thurs 4/13	<i>No Class</i> Research Exercise #8 Due (Data Analysis II)
Tues 4/18	Checkpoint II: Individual Meetings and/or Research Presentations/Paper Draft Due
Thurs 4/20	<i>KSU Symposium of Student Scholars</i>
Tues 4/25	Research Presentations/Paper Draft Due
Thurs 4/27	Research Presentations/Paper Draft Due
Final Paper submitted to Dr. Johnson <u>and</u> to KJUR Friday May 5, 2023 by 11:59pm	