

POLI 399 (L01) (Quantitative Research Methods)	
Pre/Co-Requisites:	
Instructor: Melanee Thomas	Lecture Location: ST 132
Phone:	Lecture Days/Time: TR 930 to 1045 AM
Email: thomasm@ucalgary.ca	Tutorials Location: SS 018
Office: SS 714	Tutorial Days/Time: W 9 to 1030 AM T 1230 to 2 PM M 12 to 130 PM
Office Hours: By appointment only. To book, go to https://thomasm.youcanbook.me	

COURSE DESCRIPTION

POLI 399 is a hands-on course designed to introduce you to the fundamentals of, and theoretical framework behind the empirical research process in political science. You will learn the foundational skills complete a quantitative empirical political science research project that uses secondary data and statistics. This includes but is not limited to:

- Identifying what research questions and designs pair well with quantitative analysis
- Identifying and understanding the role of evidence and reflection in empirical theory
- Understanding empirical measurement through conceptualization and operationalization
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Sampling and sample design

Throughout the term, students will become more proficient at research yourself, and you should also become a more informed, critical consumer of both scientific and popular literature on politics. Though this course may be more demanding than many others you might take, you will acquire skills and knowledge that will be valuable to you in all your future classes and careers.

COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and critique key elements of the scientific method in general and as it applies to political science, using appropriate language and vocabulary;
2. Identify and apply how conceptualization and operationalization generate evidence for knowledge claims in empirical political science, using appropriate language and vocabulary;
3. Identify and apply levels of measurement to concepts in political science, including matching appropriate statistics to those levels of measurement, using appropriate language and vocabulary;
4. Identify when to use, and outline key steps and assumptions associated with common

analytical methods in empirical political science, including but not limited to sample design, survey research, experiments, cross tabulations, descriptive and inferential statistics, and regression analysis, using appropriate language and vocabulary;

5. Critique the use of common analytical methods in empirical political science, using appropriate concepts, language, and vocabulary;
6. Explain basic statistics and explanatory relationships using your own words, using appropriate language and vocabulary;
7. Develop a working knowledge of reading political science that uses quantitative methods, including its appropriate language and vocabulary;
8. Develop a working knowledge of Stata, including explaining Stata commands in their own words, using appropriate language and vocabulary.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The following textbook is available for purchase at the university bookstore:

- Berdahl, Loleen and Jason Roy. 2021. *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*. Toronto: Oxford University Press. There are earlier versions of this text that will **NOT be equivalent**; students are strongly advised to use the 2021 version of the text.

Additional required readings will be made available on D2L. You may wish to obtain [a UCalgary VPN](#) to make accessing these, and any material from the library easier.

The statistics package you will learn this term is called **Stata**. This will be **accessible for free** in the Faculty of Arts computer labs in two ways: **in person** during your assigned tutorial, and remotely **after hours ONLY**. Students who access the lab remotely during regular class hours (for both POLI 399 and any other class that uses the Arts Labs) will have their remote access revoked. FYI: you will need a VPN to access the labs remotely. Students may choose to purchase access to Stata for \$48USD for 6 months. To do this, [visit this website](#), and choose **Stata/BE** for 6 months.

Students' experience of POLI 399, both in class and in tutorial, will be far more pleasant and useful if you take the time to prepare the material *before* coming to class, and **especially** before attending tutorial.

GRADING SCHEME

INTRODUCTION TO CONTRACT GRADING

I know many students approach POLI 399 with some trepidation, motivated in part by concern about workload and grades. This term, I am piloting contract grading in POLI 399. My goal is to use grading as a contract to help mitigate some anxiety about the class, while also given students more agency and autonomy to determine their workloads.

As a student in POLI 399, your grade will come from the work you **completed**, rather than a subjective assessment of your achievement determined by me or the TAs. My goal is to ensure each assignment is tied to a specific skill I would like you to learn, outlined in the learning objectives listed above. Your grade thus comes from you submitting your work to develop that

skill, and focusses primarily on completeness rather than solely on performance. In other words, in POLI 399, you will determine your grade by fulfilling/completing a contract of work for the term.

I have a few reasons for wanting to shift grading in this direction. First, I think the amount of effort you put into your work should count for something. I know you may be worried about POLI 399, and so I want to assure you that if you complete the work, you will do well in this class. Shifting the focus to complete work may also take some pressure off of you, as the content we'll be working with can often seem very unfamiliar. Second, I think grades should reflect when you learn a lot over the course of the term (vs. already being good at a subject from the start). The assignments set out in the contract are designed to assess that learning process. Third, I think you deserve to have the autonomy and ability to adjust your workload based on your own goals and circumstances. Importantly, I think you deserve some privacy in determining that for yourself. This is why students aren't required to disclose to me or the TAs the grading contract they would like to fulfill, or which assignments they choose (not) to do. Fourth, many of you will likely be working to contracts in the future, so understanding the opportunities and consequences of working to a contract under time constraints builds valuable skills you may use in the future.

To help you determine which contract you wish to work to, I have set out in advance the requirements for a letter grade in each range. If you complete the assignments listed for each grade range on the contract – that is, your work meets the requirements for complete work, as set out below and in the assignment guides on D2L – you will get that grade. My side of the contract is to ensure you have the information you need to know what is considered to be complete for each assignment. I will provide you with detailed instruction sheets that include information about what constitutes acceptable complete work on each assignment, as well as the list of criteria the TAs will be using to assess your work. Along with each instruction sheet, you'll have a self-assessment checklist that you can use to make sure your submission includes all the features it needs to meet the requirements for completeness.

I know this might feel like a lot to have an unfamiliar grading system applied like this in a class. It asks you to trust me to hold up my end of the contract. I appreciate your willingness to trust me in this.

POLI 399 GRADING CONTRACT

Below, you'll find a brief description of the assignments that can count towards your grade. Full instruction sheets and assessment criteria for each type of assignment will be posted on D2L. All work should be uploaded to D2L; more information will be provided in each assignment sheet.

- 1. Reading and Writing** (1000-1200 words each)
 - a. Article analysis: Conceptualization
 - i. DUE BEFORE 5 PM on OCTOBER 6
 - b. Article analysis: Measurement

- i. DUE BEFORE 5 PM on NOVEMBER 4
 - c. Article analysis: Interpreting Statistics
 - i. DUE BEFORE 5 PM on DECEMBER 1
- *Article analyses are designed to build your reading and writing skills specific to empirical and quantitative research. For each article analysis, you will be provided with an article and a list of questions. Your analysis should address all the questions in a narrative, essay form (e.g., no bullet lists or subheadings for each question).*

2. Statistics

- a. Weekly Tutorial Assignments x 7
 - i. Tutorials start the week of September 19
 1. **NO TUTORIAL THE WEEK of OCT 10 or NOV 7**
 2. I strongly recommend everyone attend tutorials in person. You will not have TA support if you choose to complete your tutorials outside of your assigned time. Everyone also **MUST** stick to their assigned tutorial (b/c of fire code and lab capacity).
 - ii. *These are designed to teach you how to use Stata. Assignment guides and datasets will all be posted on D2L.*

3. Participation

- a. Content Quizzes (~200-400 words each) x 6
 - i. DUE BEFORE 5 PM on the following dates: Sept 16; Sept 30; Oct 14; Oct 28; Nov 18; Dec 2
 - ii. *These quizzes are open book, administered on D2L, and will assess how well you are learning the lecture material. Each content quiz will only be open*
- b. Learning and time management objectives + end-of-term reflections (up to 500 words)
 1. Objectives DUE BEFORE 5 PM on Sept 23
 2. Reflection DUE BEFORE 5 PM on Dec 8
 - ii. *Set at least ONE learning, and ONE time management goal at the start of term. Learning goals should be focussed on what new content you'd like to learn; time management goals should be focussed on how you'd like to work.*

There are three possible grades for these assignments:

1. **Missing/not submitted:** will be assessed a 0.
2. **Needs improvement:** parts of the assignment are missing, and/or the assignment fails to show a good faith effort to meet the standard of completeness as outlined in the assignment sheet. It is submitted on time or within the grace period, but does not conform to some of the directions related to the assignment's scope (e.g., length, engagement with sources, etc.).
3. **Complete:** the assignment shows a good faith effort to meet the standard of completeness as outlined in the assignment sheet. It is submitted on time or within the

grace period, and conforms to any directions related to the assignment's scope (e.g., length, engagement with sources, etc.).

Work must be complete for it to count towards your final grade. To help you with this, each assignment guide will include a checklist of what needs to be done for work to be marked as complete.

If an assignment is marked "needs improvement," it can be moved to complete through the following two steps:

1. Revise the assignment based on the feedback received within **ONE WEEK** of receiving the feedback.
2. Include a response memo outlining the changes you made and why.

To ensure an equitable workload for me and the TAs, you will have the opportunity to revise and resubmit your work to move an assignment from "needs improvement" to a "complete" **TWICE** throughout the term.

GRADE RANGE REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete **all** the work for a contracted grade to earn it, across each type of assignment, as outlined below.

To earn an A+ in this course, you must **complete** all possible work in each category listed above.

To earn an A in this course, you must **complete** all 3 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 6 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 6 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

To earn an A- in this course, you must **complete** all 3 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 6 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 5 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

To earn a B+ in this course, you must **complete** all 3 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 5 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 5 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

To earn a B in this course, you must **complete** at least 2 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 5 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 5 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

To earn a B- in this course, you must **complete** at least 2 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 5 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 4 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

To earn a C+ in this course, you must **complete** at least 1 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 5 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 4 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

To earn a C in this course, you must **complete** at least 1 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 4 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 4 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

To earn a C- in this course, you must **complete** at least 1 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 4 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 3 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

To earn a D+ in this course, you must **complete** at least 1 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 3 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 3 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

To earn a D in this course, you must **complete** at least 1 of the Reading and Writing Assignments, at least 3 of the seven Tutorials, and at least 2 of the 7 Participation Assignments.

As the course instructor, I reserve the right to assign a grade of F to any student who fails to submit enough **complete** work to meet the minimum threshold for a D grade set out above.

Please note there is no registrar-scheduled final examination for this course, and there are no extra credit assignments. Students are not required to complete all assignments to pass this course.

The letter grades used in this course can be converted to the University of Calgary's four-point Undergraduate Grading System using the following scale:

90 + %	A+	4.0	67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
85 – 89 %	A	4.0	64 – 66 %	C	2.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7	60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3	55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0	50 – 54 %	D	1.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7	0 – 49 %	F	0

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

All assignments must be submitted via D2L either 1) on or before 5 PM on the day they are due for most assignments OR 2) by 5 PM Friday for weekly tutorial assignments. Because grades are tied to the completion of assignments, assignments that are not handed in on time are considered incomplete. This policy helps ensure the TAs and I have enough time to provide you with useful feedback before the next assignment is due.

Each assignment has an automatic 48-hour grace period; work submitted after this grace period will be considered incomplete. You do not need notify me to use this grace period, but there are no additional extensions beyond circumstances that merit accommodation (see below). Please note that these grounds typically do **not** include schedule management.

ACCOMMODATIONS and COVID-19

TAs may not grant extensions or accommodations. Instead, students are encouraged to speak with me as early as possible if they encounter any situation or circumstances that are making it difficult for them to meet the course requirements.

Students registered with Student Accessibility Services (SAS) should contact me as soon as possible, as this facilitates us arranging the support you need.

Accommodations for acute illness and emergencies, as well as accommodations on protected grounds (such as, but not limited to race; colour; ancestry; place of origin; religious beliefs; gender — including pregnancy and gender identity; marital status; family status; source of income; and sexual orientation) will be addressed in accordance with University of Calgary policy (see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>).

The risk from COVID-19 remains very real. Given that, my actions and decisions will be guided by the following principles:

1. Health and wellbeing are my first priority: yours, your families', and mine
2. Our classroom needs to feel like a safe place, physically and intellectually
3. Fairness means taking students' circumstances into account

We all need to be mindful of keeping one another healthy. If you have not yet been fully vaccinated for COVID-19, I strongly encourage you to do so. It will help keep us all safe.

Please consider always wear a mask in class and in tutorial.

If you or someone in your household is feeling ill, ***please do not come to class***. In that circumstance, contact me as soon as possible so accommodations can be arranged.

Writing Statement:

Written assignments are often required in Political Science courses, including this one, and the quality of writing skills, including but not limited to such elements as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization, will be considered in the determination of grades. Students are encouraged to make use of the services offered through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library) or at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Absence From a Mid-term Examination

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

Deferred Term Work Form: Deferral of term work past the end of a term requires a form to be filled out by the student and submitted, along with any supporting documentation, to the instructor. The form is available at:

<https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/teams/14/deferral-of-term-work-2020.pdf>

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the instructor will email the form to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (ascarts@ucalgary.ca) for approval by the Associate Dean.

Deferral of a Final Examination

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

Reappraisal of Grades:

For Reappraisal of Graded Term Work, see Calendar I.2

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

For Reappraisal of Final Grade, see Calendar I.3

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

Academic Misconduct:

Academic Misconduct refers to student behavior that compromises proper assessment of students' academic activities and includes: cheating; fabrication; falsification; plagiarism; unauthorized assistance; failure to comply with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessments in their courses; and failure to comply with exam regulations applied by the Registrar.

Student committing academic misconduct during the final exam will not receive a passing grade for the course.

For information on the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, Procedure and Academic Integrity, please visit: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html>

Plagiarism And Other Forms Of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

Recording of Lectures:

Recording of lectures is prohibited, except for audio recordings authorized as an accommodation by SAS or an audio recording for individual private study and only with the written permission of the instructor. Any unauthorized electronic or mechanical recording of lectures, their transcription, copying, or distribution, constitutes academic misconduct. See <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/e-6.html>.

Academic Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services. SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground

other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their instructor. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/accommodation-students-disabilities-procedure>

Research Ethics

Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subject research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Instructor Intellectual Property

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act:

Personal information is collected in accordance with FOIP. Assignments can only be returned to the student and will be accessible only to authorized faculty and staff. For more information, see <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/access-information-privacy>

Copyright Legislation:

See the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy> Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

Evacuation Assembly Points

In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/risk/emergency-management/evac-drills-assembly-points/assembly-points> and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

Important Dates:

Please check: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html>.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The Arts Students' Centre is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS102, call them at 403-220-3580, or email them at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>, which has detailed information on common academic concerns, including program planning and advice.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at 403-210-ROCK [7625] or visit them in the MacKimmie Tower.

Important Contact Information

Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)
Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives
Phone: 403-220-6551
Email: arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca,
arts4@su.ucalgary.ca
Students' Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students' Association
Phone: 403-220-5997
Email: askgsa@ucalgary.ca
URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa

Student Ombudsman
Phone: 403-220-6420
Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Campus Mental Health Resources

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the following resources:

SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

Student Wellness Services:
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>

Campus Mental Health Strategy website: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.