

## PO218: Answering Questions in Political Science

### Research in Practice

Winter 2017

**Instructor:** A. Perrella

**Office:** DAWB 4-110 or K401B (255 King St. N.)

**Lecture:** Tues. 10-11:20am

**Office Hours:** Thurs. 1-2pm

**Room:** SBE-1220

**Email:** aperrella@wlu.ca

**Lab:** Thurs. 10-10:50am; 11-11:50am

### Course description

**P**olitical analysis helps one navigate through a turbulent and often acrimonious world. Much of that analysis depends on how we understand political concepts, and how we draw connections among them. PO218 provides students with some common methodological tools useful to analyze political phenomena. The course includes hands-on training in the use of software employed in the social sciences, offering students the opportunity to develop transferable skills in addition to combining theory with practice.

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## Course objectives

By the end of the course students should:

1. Acquire an understanding of a variety of approaches used to answer research questions in political science.
2. Develop a working knowledge of some of the basic statistics used in the social sciences.
3. Be able to use SPSS as a tool to test hypotheses and help answer research questions.

## Required Text

Healey, Joseph F., and Steven G. Prus. (2016). *Statistics: A Tool for Social Research*. 3rd Canadian Edition. Toronto: Nelson.

## Course Evaluation

<b>Component</b>	<b>Due dates</b>	<b>Grade weight</b>
Participation	Ongoing	10%
Mid-term exam	Feb. 14	20%
Lab assignment 1	Jan. 31	10%
Lab assignment 2	Mar. 14	10%
Lab assignment 3	Apr. 3	10%
Final Exam	TBA	40%

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## Topics and required readings

- 1- Introduction: Chapter 1
- 2- Descriptive measures: Chapter 2
- 3- Central tendency and dispersion: Chapter 3
- 4- Sampling and normal distribution: Chapter 4
- 5- Confidence intervals: Chapters 5 & 6
- 6- Hypothesis testing: Chapter 7

Mid-term exam covers  
sections 1 through 6

- 7- Comparing means and proportions: Chapter 8
- 8- Correlation analysis: Chapters 13
- 9- Bivariate contingency tables: Chapters 10 to 12
- 10- Elaboration and statistical control: Chapter 14
- 11- More advanced methods (time permitting)

## Course Policies

### **Academic Misconduct and the Need for Academic Integrity:**

Academic integrity is greatly valued in this course. Academic misconduct occurs in a variety of forms. Students are required to familiarise themselves with the University policies on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty as well as the associated penalties, which can be severe.

### **Plagiarism:**

According to the Academic Calendar (2016-17), plagiarism “involves using the thoughts, ideas, or writings of another person and passing them off as your own (adapted from the Oxford English Dictionary definition). It can involve taking credit for ideas that were not your own or using the words of others without properly citing them.” For further information: <https://students.wlu.ca/academics/academic-integrity/index.html>. Should you have any questions about these issues, feel free to discuss them with me.

### **Participation:**

Students are obliged to attend every class. Participation grades will be deducted for absences. More than five absences will reduce the participation grade to zero.

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### **Communication:**

Students are welcome to ask questions during scheduled class time (Tuesday lecture or Thursday lab). Email or office hours are not to be used for questions about course material or exam contents. Such matters must be raised during class time.

An active WLU e-mail account is required as a means of communication. Please ensure your account is active. Check it regularly. The course has a MyLearningSpace website. Important messages will be posted there. Enrol in the webpage and check it regularly.

### **University Resources:**

The University provides a large selection of professional, academic and personal support services to assist students to succeed in their academic careers. Please consult the University website for available resources.

*Wilfrid Laurier University uses software that can check for **plagiarism**. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form and have it checked for plagiarism.*

*Students with disabilities or special needs are advised to contact Laurier's **Accessible Learning Office** (<https://www.wlu.ca/accessible-learning/index.html>) for information regarding its services and resources. Students are encouraged to review the Academic Calendar for information regarding all services available on campus.*

On behalf of WLUSU (wlusu.com)

**Foot Patrol Walk Home Service:**

1.519.886.FOOT x3668

Foot Patrol is a volunteer operated walk-home service, available daily during evening hours. Male-female, radio-dispatched teams trained in Emergency First Aid are available on request to escort students to and from campus as well as to off-campus destinations, either by foot or by van.

**Counselling Services and Peer Help Line:**

1.886.281.PEER x7337

Counselling Services are available to help students deal with emotional, psychological and social challenges of university. Counselling, consultation or referrals are available at the Student Wellness Centre. Peer Help Line, a confidential listening, referral, information and support line, is available during evening hours to provide support.

**Student Food bank**

All Laurier students are eligible to use the Student Food Bank. Anonymous requests can be made online at wlusu.com under the Services tab. All dietary restrictions are accommodated, and food hampers typically last up to a week.