Course Description

This course covers three aspects of politics and numbers. First, we will examine how political numbers and statistics are constructed. Statistics and numbers about domestic and foreign policies infuse our political debates, but the construction of such numbers is not immune to political influence. Second, we will study how mathematical reasoning by members of the public affects the way they think about politics and various public policies. Third, we will examine the numbers, or estimated effects, that are generated as a product of experiments. This is a WID course, so there will be a large number of writing assignments throughout the semester.

Learning Objectives

As a result of completing this course, students will:

- Be able to critically examine and deconstruct political numbers and statistics.
- Understand the potential consequences of political innumeracy on public opinion and, perhaps, policy making.
- Be able to write competently at an advanced undergraduate level, with an emphasis on the effective presentation of numeric and statistical information.

Grades

As a rule, there will be no deadline extensions given in this course. Exceptions only will be made with prior consent for planned events such as sponsored GWU activities or religious observances or under unusual circumstances such as a documented medical emergency. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade (e.g., A- to B-) each day.
Your course grade will be based on the following components:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tr>
<td>One page response papers (9)</td>
<td>Weekly, 1/28 to 4/8 sessions, due the <strong>Friday before class</strong></td>
<td>2 points each, for a total of 18 points</td>
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<td>Class participation and discussion</td>
<td>Throughout the semester</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<td>Seminar leadership</td>
<td>Article proposal to me by 1/28 One assigned week, 4/15, 4/22, 4/29</td>
<td>10 points</td>
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<td>One 5 page essay, with peer review</td>
<td>March 4 peer review</td>
<td>20 points</td>
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<td>March 18 final draft due</td>
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<td>One long (10-12) paper</td>
<td>Draft 4/15, Final 4/29</td>
<td>25 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turning in everything on time all semester</td>
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<td>2 points</td>
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Detailed guidelines and rubrics for the essay and long paper will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard well in advance of the assignment deadlines.

Response papers will work as follows. For each paper, you will write a one page critical response to the readings. Do not merely summarize the readings. Offer critiques or raise issues that are not addressed (or not adequately addressed) by the authors. Conclude with three questions that could provide topics for discussion on Monday. Weekly response papers must be emailed to me in .pdf form by 11:59pm on Friday. The papers may be, but need not be, single-spaced (i.e., 2 double spaced or 1 single spaced page maximum). Your response papers will be posted on Blackboard on Sunday. I’ll send out an email when the papers are posted. This will give us all a chance to think about the varying responses to the readings prior to class. The response papers will be graded pass/fail. If you complete the assignment, you get 2 points. If you do not complete the assignment, you get 0 points for the assignment.

**Participation and Reading**

You are expected to attend seminar and complete each reading assignment before the class period(s) for which it is assigned. Taking the response papers seriously will make you a much more effective participant in our class discussions. No-laptop policies are cropping up in classrooms across the country. These policies have emerged to confront the distractions laptops can create for the laptop-using students, the students sitting near them, and the professors delivering lectures or leading discussions. Laptops will not be allowed in this class, and I ask that you also put away your cell phones during class. You can text after class.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

I personally support the GW Code of Academic Integrity. It states: “Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” For the remainder of the code, see: [http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html)
SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)
Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to: http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC)  202-994-5300
The University Counseling Center (UCC) offers 24/7 assistance and referral to address students’ personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:
- crisis and emergency mental health consultations
- confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group), and referrals
  http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices

SECURITY
In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that the class is in is affected, follow the evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation, seek shelter at a predetermined rendezvous location.

Course Calendar [subject to change due to extenuating circumstances]

1.14  Introduction/Course overview

1.28  Politics of Numbers


2.4  Incentives and Challenges


2.11 **Just count everything: The politics and impact of censuses**


2.25 **Hard things to count: Domestic numbers**


3.4 **Political Numeracy I: Why should we care?**


3.18 Political numeracy II: Estimating politically relevant quantities


3.25 Political Experiments: logic and structure

Donald P. Green, and Alan S. Gerber. 20102. Field Experiments, chapters 1-2.


4.1 Political Experiments: American politics


4.8 Political Experiments: Comparative politics and IR


4.15, 4.22, 4.29

Student selections I, II, III