Occidental College
Spring 2023 Course Evaluations

Course: POLS300_0: Research Meth/Pols & Pub Pol
Instructor: Isaac Hale *

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1 - 1. How would you describe your level of engagement in this course? How did you engage in class? For example: Did you come to class prepared? Did you seek help from the instructor, peers, or other supports when needed?

Response Rate	16/19 (84.21%)

• I always came to this class prepared and took advantage of Professor Hale's generous office hours availability. I found him very apt to answer questions and help out the students in any way he could. I enjoyed how the presentation slides balanced content with examples and how there were examples that connected the material to the real world and politics more generally.

• I did come to class prepared, but I did not seek help from the instructor when I needed, and I think I really put myself back by not doing that because I'm sure he was very helpful in office hours.

• I believe that I was quite engaged with this class. I often came to class prepared and I tied my best to participate and seek help from prof. Hale when I needed it.

• I would say that I always came to class prepared, I did sometimes go to office hours and did work within groups. I engaged a lot.

• High engagement, always prepared went to office hours frequently, which is the only class I have done so

• I felt like I was heavily engaged in the class and I often raised my hand and participated that way.

• I engaged frequently, and often was the only one doing so. I'm not sure why, because the material was extremely easy to follow, and many answers were readily apparent or just the next step in logical thinking.

• I felt my engagement in this course was strong, partly due to the very accessible nature of Professor Hale's office hours, as well as the TA Em. The lab days were very helpful for understanding Stata, and going to office hours for help only improved my understanding of the program.

• The class was very engaging. I liked the methods used of a mix of lectures and Fridays being lab days. The one-day-a-week lab day consistency was very helpful.

• strong. everyone in the class jumped in during questions or discussions for clarity and other reasons. Professor Hale was always super welcoming about questions and comments and encouraged everyone to participate

• I was prepared for most classes with the exception of some readings. I went to many office hours and also sought help from our peer advisor.

• I was always engaged and was helped by peers and my professor whenever needed.

• I did come to class prepared and sought help from peers and from prof. Hale. Going to office hours and talking with Hale was the best thing for any issues I was having and Hale was very receptive to the mental health struggles I have been having during this semester. Without Hale's communication over email and in office hours, I would have fallen behind and maybe even dropped the class.

• I did come to class prepared and did participate, but definitely needed help from both Prof. Hale and our TA.

• Going to office hours has always been a great challenge for me. As a first-generation student, I don't always feel comfortable seeking help from professors when I feel like I'm struggling or falling behind. However, Prof. Hale was always very approachable and helpful when I finally conjured up the courage to ask for help. He made me feel comfortable and supported as I took on new territory-- coding. Coming into this class, I was nervous about working with Stata since I had no precious computer science experience, but I rose to the challenge and tried my best. Professor Hale's guidance helped me not only learn and succeed in a new skill, but also made me grow to have a passion for it. Our TA Emme was also really helpful and I often sought her advice as well.

• Good engagement. I answer questions/partcipated in class and went to office hours often.

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2 - 2. How did this course influence, change, or help shape your understanding of the subject matter?

Response Rate	15/19 (78.95%)

• I have been interested in politics as long as I've been interested in anything, but learning the more statistics side of things has always been a bit daunting in my mind. This class really opened my eyes to how and why politics works. I feel like being able to understand data analysis and polling in this way will be vital to my work in electoral politics in and after college.

• I really developed my understanding of how quantitative methods can be used to further political science. I also really learned a lot with regards to STATA, and now i could say i feel ok using it in a future class/career.

• I had no understanding of statistical methods before this course but I think I had a better understanding of that, and research projects overall after the course.

• Taught me how to look at raw data more critically. Instead of only thinking to criticize secondary sources, think about whether primary sources were conducted well

• I learned a lot about research methods and was able to use my knowledge in other classes. I am glad that I learned the coding language Stata as well.

• A lot of useful learning about statistics, politics, study design, experiments, and Stata. Most things weren't entirely new, but were modified or deepened in this class, like learning the reasoning behind political polling and campaign strategies using statistics.

• This course really changed the way I perceive statistics, as well as academic research. An important thing that I learned was correlation and causation, there differences, and when each may occur between variables. I really feel that this course equipped me to do academic research, and effectively pursue research questions.

• The first day of class, the professor said, "You could not have thought about math since your junior year of high school and you would be okay in this class." --> Keep this up and keep making that clear. I learned stata. I knew nothing about it before the class and now I know a lot and even made an evidence-based poster project using stata.

• much better understanding of statistics in general and lots of helpful info about stata, which i honestly hope to never use again

• I had never really looked into the methods of politics so the field as a whole was new to me. It was one of the most helpful courses I have taken at oxy as it is directly applicable to what I learn in my other POLS classes. I am much more equipped to analyze data and understand graph/visuals in research reports after taking this course.

• This course was a great beginner's introduction to data analysis and Stata. These methods and programs were daunting at first but quickly became familiar through class instruction, programming days, and office hours assistance.

• It changed my understanding of the ways quantitative data is dealt with and through what methods. As a CTSJ senior, I have had a methods course already but this class shaped to how I see and crtique quant methods and the room for error.

• I came into this class not knowing much about research methods for politics and I definitely learned a lot. While it was cool to learn about various terminology and different elements that go into political research projects, I will say I do not foresee myself being a political researcher as I learned that data research is really difficult and Stata is not for me.

• Coming in with no previous experience in computer science, POLS 300 has equipped me with the tools necessary to tackle quantitative data analysis. Although I have garnered substantial experience in qualitative research, I did not understand the methods behind quantitative research until I took POLS 300. I definitely understand why this course is a requirement for the major, and I am really grateful for the knowledge I gained in this class. I am so proud of my ability to conduct my own quantitative research.

• I did have some prior knowledge coming into the class, but I thought professor hale did a good job at teaching and making the content fun and engaging.

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3 - 3. What skills or capacities did you expect to gain from this course? How and to what extent did the course help you to develop those skills or capacities?

Response Rate	15/19 (78.95%)

• I learned Stata, and the tools we learned in this course helped me deploy effective experiments in the software. Even after our problem sets and my work on the poster project, I have continued to explore in Stata to check and prove other phenomena, both recreationally and for backing in my other courses.

• As previously mentioned, i learned a lot with regards to STATA. the problem sets and the in class coding days really helped me with this.

• I learned how to code really well, as well better learn how to conduct research and have a concrete plan

• Learned how to analyze data and learned how to use stata, taught well

• I expected to gain an understanding of quantitative research methods and I felt like I did. I had no knowledge of most of the topics, and I now have a much clearer understanding.

• I expected to apply statistics and Stata to politics and achieved both those nicely.

• One of the main "hard" skills that I gained from this course was the ability to use Stata. With that, I learned how to analyze data, both through the program, and just in general to understand correlation, and relationships between variables.

• How to research in politics. The course helped develop these skills to a great extent.

• stata help- very helpful in this regard but i still hate stata qualitative research methods

• I didn't fully know what to expect when I registered for the course, to be completely honest, I was dreading it and only took it originally because it is required for politics majors. However, I was beyond pleased with my time in the course and learned so much. I learned how to use Stata and how to code and understand data; I learned how to analyze huge data sets to make them more digestible, I learned how to interpret statistics and complex things such as t tests and p values.

• I had no coding or data experience before this course and now feel relatively comfortable using these data analysis methods. I would feel comfortable including these introductory skills in an application or on my CV.

• I expected to gain the knowledge of a new statistical programming language, and I did through stata. This course propelled me to launching my own research project utilizing and testing my knowledge of datasets, access, and statistical analysis.

• I expected to gain more of an understanding of research methods and get somewhat of an insight into what comps are like and I believe I did.

• I expected to learn a coding language and the methods used in quantitative research methods in politics, and I have learned exactly that. I feel confident in my knowledge in Stata and in my ability to analyze data presented in academic and non-academic settings.

• I think the poster project is/was a good way to apply what we know without being too overwhelming. I definitely got more comfortable with stats and learned some new codes I hadn't used before.

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4 - 4. What aspects/features of the instruction were particularly effective or ineffective? What aspects/features of the course facilitated or impeded your learning? For example: How well did the professor structure class periods (e.g., discussion facilitation, group work, in-class exercises, lectures, handouts, etc), reading questions, assignments, exams, community-based work, field work, laboratory work, studio work, etc.?

Response Rate	16/19 (84.21%)

• I think that the programming days were great, though I think they could have been a but more interactive. It's hard for me to learn something like coding when doing more watching than doing

• I think the professor structured the assignments in a way that really made sense to check on the students' progress on their poster project, to ensure they were working on it as needed. I also think the professor did his very best to engage students in a way that's pretty unique and helpful.

• The lectures helped a lot and I found them all quite helpful. Additoanlly, having the code for programming days available was a big help when doing my final project.

• I thought that the slides were very effective, always asked us to engage which was nice. I don't think anyone was ineffective at all this was a great course.

• Lectures were concise and effective, same as coding days. Nothing impeded on my learning

• The coding days were very helpful for my stata knowledge and I liked having weekly assignments along with a large project to work on.

• Prof Hale is a really good lecturer, so classes were engaging and easy to follow. The readings often felt disconnected from the material unfortunately, and there often wasn't much reason to keep up with them if you were following along in class. Maybe re-evaluating the reading structure to something with both "required" and "recommended" could help keep them relevant to students at various places in the class.

• One of the aspects of the class that I would critique is the slide shows. Sometimes I feel that the classes are filled with just going through very long slideshows, which makes sense considering all of the information we are learning, but I think integrating more class discussion could be helpful for students learning experience.

• Again, consistency helped. Nothing about this course was bad.

• i think everything was effective for the most part. classes were structured well and assignments were spread out enough. i appreciated the slides being put up on moodle.

• I know it's not extremely helpful to only give praise, however, this class was wonderful. I have virtually zero tips for how to improve it, with the exception maybe of lowering readings during problem set weeks. Professor Hale was able to teach a subject that many find mundane (so sorry) and make it interesting and oftentimes fun. His spirit and attitude made class enjoyable and the subjects more digestible. Overall, I absolutely loved this class.

• Programming days and independent study groups were especially helpful to my understanding. We were encouraged to meet with classmates outside of course hours to work through problem sets.

• Hale's lecture always found ways to keep me engaged through asking questions or memes or bad data/stats. These presentations mixed learning and breaks from the hard stuff by applied analysis of real world examples. It deepened my learning.

• I thought that the class was structured well, Prof. Hale tried to make the information on the various topics we were learning about super relatable, although sometimes it was hard to sit through a 45-lecture. Also I feel like everyone could've probably done with 1 or 2 more days in class where we worked on our projects just for asking specific questions and whatnot.

• The in-class lab days were especially helpful. Being able to follow an existing do file with instructions, tips, and code made grasping these new and unfamiliar concepts more manageable. The lab days also helped guide me as I worked on the problem sets. Prof. Hale did an excellent job at structuring lecture and lab days and provided enough time to complete each assignment. His powerpoints/ notes were also incredibly easy to understand if I felt like I needed to revisit topics.

• programming days were good and structured well. So were lecture periods. Really no complaints about the structure or instruction.

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5 - 5. What aspects of the course or instruction helped or hindered the creation of an inclusive learning environment that is responsive to, and promotes the success of, a diverse group of students?

Response Rate	12/19 (63.16%)

• none

• One thing that helped was having us work in groups for the Problem Sets, or having lab days was helpful for an interactive aspect of learning the topics discussed in class and in the readings.

• Mainly office hours were open for many hours each day and I felt welcomed every time. I have not gone to office hours for any other teacher.

• The course is built for Politics students, but offers several examples, strategies, and readings that have to do with other departments. This helps keep the class away from a singular track and offer a space for students interested in things beyond American political perspectives.

• Professor Hale always encourages asking questions, reasserting the attage that there is no wrong question. He acknowledges that Stata is difficult and very foreign to many of us, and approaches the topic with that in mind. This made it so that I did not feel like I was falling behind or lost in class which was really helpful for me when learning new subject matter.

• Nothing helped or hindered it. The course happened to have diversity in it and I really like that.

• none hindered really. very inclusive environment and very inclusive professor

• The general style Professor Hale teaches in is inclusive and creates a fun learning environment.

• Our assignments were structured in such a way that working with classmates was still an educational experience - copying your peer's work would not sufficiently teach you the data analysis process. It was necessary to work through these problems together to ensure everybody was on the same page.

• as a lectured-based class, it wasn't always a great space to hear everyone's diverse viewpoints. So i do think about how participation can occur in non-synchronous or non-verbal ways that include everyone's voice.

• I thought that the inclusion of the memes was smart and just bringing in various examples of studies that we could relate to was super helpful in terms of keeping everyone engaged.

• Prof. Hale was always very approachable and supportive. He was readily available during office hours to help with problem sets and poster project concerns. Professor Hale's patience and guidance through challenging assignments really supported my growth and success in the class. On weeks in which big assignments were due, Prof. Hale increased his office hours to be able to help all the students who sought guidance. Having a TA was also really helpful and I would encourage the department to continue having a TA available whenever the course is offered.

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6 - 6. What other suggestions (if any) do you have for the next time the course is taught?

Response Rate	11/19 (57.89%)

• I think that maybe even more programming days could be helpful in making sure we really know our way around stata.

• N/A

• I have no other suggestions for how this course should be taught

• I think stata is good to learn for beginners because, from what I've heard, R is much more complicated and students wouldn't be able to learn as much.

• Clearly state at the beginning of the course that the books are available on Amazon for rent at 1/4 to 1/2 of the price of the bookstore.

• more problem set prep!

• I appreciated the way this course was taught along with the responsiveness and approachability of our professor. Office hours were held at convenient times and feedback was always detailed and helpful.

• more group work and learning outside if possible

• Like I said before I think one or two more classes to work on the project would've been helpful because at the end everyone had very specific questions that took a long time to answer. Additionally, I think that scheduling office hours sometimes by appointment and sometimes by drop-in would be EXTREMELY helpful because there were a few times when I showed up to office hours but didn't actually get in.

• Please continue having a student TA available. Oftentimes students feel like they can approach a peer tutor more than a professor, so this option is especially conducive to a supportive learning environment for all students-- especially those who are first-generation or from underserved backgrounds who might not feel comfortable reaching out to a professor directly. Three problem sets was the sweet spot as well in terms of workload and learning opportunity. Prof. Hale is an excellent instructor for this course.

• I don't think I have any suggestion or changes that I would make

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7 - 7. What else (if anything) would you like to share about the course or the instruction?

Response Rate	9/19 (47.37%)

• This was overall a great introductory course for statistics and a great course for research in general, Professor Hale was really approachable and explained topics clearly. I highly recommend this course for any politcs, uep, or DWA related majors.

• I think the final coding day was the most helpful. I think maybe putting this day a little earlier and another less important lecture for that day would be better since I felt a little anxious about how I was going to complete my project until the final coding day. Finishing our coding days earlier would ease this anxiety.

• I really enjoy Prof. Hale and I think he made a traditionally boring subject into a decently interesting one.

• Professor Hale is a very good teacher

• It's a helpful course, and when Prof. Hale teaches it, it's even better.

• It was an amazing class and Professor Hale is an extremely talented professor!!!

• I was nervous to enroll in this course but had a much more rewarding and entertaining time than I had expected!

• Despite the material not being up my alley I really enjoyed the instruction of the course by Prof. Hale!

• Overall a really great and positive learning experience for me. I was able to garner new skills I previously thought of myself as incapable of having. Being able to properly interpret data is incredibly helpful, and I am excited to continue doing quantitative research.