Description
Statistics show that students who take statistics classes are professionally more successful, socially more popular and physically more attractive than their peers. So, which side are you on now?

Or perhaps you are more interested in the analytical value of statistics, which is no less profound. Knowing about the powers of quantitative analysis will make you ask questions about politics you might otherwise never have considered. And with a manageable kit of statistical tools, you can uncover structure in the political world where before was only fog or chaos. Even better, while learning all these wonderful things, you will also fulfill the methods requirement of the polisci programs.

The course follows the credo that comparison is at the heart of all analysis. While this might be particularly appealing to “comparativists,” we consider comparative politics as a universal method of inference, not as a subfield of the discipline. The class is equally valuable for all substantive specializations concerned with empirical regularities and causal explanations. Distilling causality from regularity is the job of comparison. This is of course a widely shared aim, and the quantie world has some particularly neat tricks in store. You don’t need to be a math whiz to master these (this instructor is living proof).

Our approach will be hands-on and pragmatic. The course cuts across the conventional division of basic and advanced statistics to facilitate the immediate implementation of diverse quantitative designs. Everyone is welcome irrespective of prior statistical training. If you are currently conducting quantitative research, feel encouraged to bring your problems to class. If you are considering collecting your own data, use the opportunity to anticipate the challenges waiting down the road. If you believe that quantitative methods inherently reproduce capitalist exploitation, help us liberate oppressed regression coefficients from the clutches of neoliberal positivism. Or if you are just looking for something new, come along to get inspiration and pick up versatile skills.

Over the course of the semester, students will enjoy the quantie bootcamp™, learn how to use the statistical software Stata, conduct their own quantitative research, present their work in class, and produce a final paper. The instructor actively supports each project and makes sure that it builds on and advances the methodological expertise of the student(s) involved. Credit is awarded for achievement relative to initial proficiency.

Requirements
1) Attend class. We really need you here.
2) Do the reading assignments on Blackboard. I’ll help you choose a textbook if desired.
3) Practice. No one is born a master.
4) Co-teach a lesson on your term project. Don’t forget to feed your audience—dinner is on me.
5) Write a focused research paper resulting from your project. Deadline: May 22 (by email).

Contact GC
Tuesdays (preferably by appointment)
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Semester schedule

1/29  Introduction to the course

Part I. The quantie boot camp

2/5  Data & Stata


2/12  No class (Christina Ricci’s 39th birthday)

2/19  Correlation I: Association


2/26  Correlation II: Regression


3/5  Correlation III: Prediction


3/12  Comparison


3/19  Causality


Part II. Applied projects

3/26  Team I
4/2  Team II
4/9  Team III
4/16  Team IV
4/23  No class (Roy Orbison’s 83rd birthday)
4/30  Team V
5/7  Team VI

TBA

Part III. Time to get your act together

5/14  How to write (quantitative) papers, and how to get them published


5/22  RESEARCH PAPERS DUE (by email)