Last Updated June 7, 2021

Data Science for the Social World

[Link to most updated version of the syllabus]

Instructor 1

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Course Information

Abbreviation: GOV F355M

Time: None [asynchronous instruction]

<u>Unique Number</u>: 81530

Room: Online

Website: canvas.utexas.edu

1. Course Description

This course provides students with a comprehensive introduction to data science for the political and economic world. By focusing on practical data skills coupled with strong social science reasoning, the course will enable students to acquire skills that will help them prepare for jobs in data science, industry, and academia. Organized around a set of substantive themes and practical tasks, each class topic is motivated by real-world problems and then backed with data science skills to solve those problems. Emphasis is placed on developing proficiency in cleaning, manipulating, wrangling, scraping, visualizing, and mapping data. Most work is conducted in the software programs R and Excel, and to a lesser extent through introductory exercises in other programs. In the process, students learn about good principles of working with data, including through version control with Github. The class takes place through asynchronous instruction, online coding practice problems, exams, and online instructor consultations.

Learning data science skills can be tedious at times, especially as students learn the basics of the programming languages and basic data management. Once proficient, however, we expect that students will be able to develop a set of concrete skills that they can use in internships or jobs. Those skills include: basic analysis of statistical data, visualization of statistical data and relationships, maps of geospatial data, graphical dashboards to display data, webscraping, and text analysis.

2. Course Requirements

2.1. Prerequisite Coursework

There are no prerequisites to enroll in this course. We will work at a speed so that everyone should be able to adequately learn the materials if they do not miss class or required assignments. However, students who have previous knowledge of basic statistics and/or computer programming may find the course easier.

2.2. Required Computer Hardware, Software, and Resources

Since this is an asynchronous course, it is necessary to have a working computer with an internet connection (minimum 5 Mbps) and a modern and updated operating system (e.g., MacOS or Windows). With regard to an internet browser, we highly recommend Chrome, though Safari or Firefox may work for most activities. In addition, this course makes use of the following software programs:

- Excel. Students who do not already have Excel on their computers may obtain the full Microsoft Office Suite, including Excel, for free here. Note that Google Sheets cannot be used as a substitute for Excel.
- Google Sheets. Students can use Google Sheets for free through their utexas email accounts.
- R. It is a free, open-source statistics and data science program. To install R, see here.
- R Studio is a companion program for R. For instructions on how to freely download R Studio, consult here.
- Git. It is the program underlying most version control—i.e., a system of tracking file tracking that facilitates collaboration. For instructions on how to freely install Git, consult here.
- GitHub. It is an online platform that facilitates version control through Git. To use GitHub, students need to create a free Github student account.
- Git Bash. Only students who use Microsoft Windows for their operating system will need to download and install Git Bash. Mac users can directly use the Shell (command line) and do not need to install Git Bash.

Prior knowledge of any of these software programs/platforms is not required. We will teach you the basics of all of these programs during the course. To obtain help with these programs and others, there are two resources that we will utilize:

- Data Camp. It is an online platform that provides hundreds of courses to learn new skills. The courses are interactive and fun. We will be using some of these courses from Data Camp as required homework. We will be providing free access to Data Camp.
- Lynda. You can also access free courses through UT-Austin's Lynda Portal.

2.3. Required Textbooks

Healy, Kieran. 2019. "Data Visualization: A Practical Introduction." Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Draft freely-available here]

Wickham, Hadley and Grolemund, Garrett. 2017. R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data. Sebastol, California: O'Reilly Media. [Freely-available here]

2.4. Grading

1. Homework: 35%

• Homework will take place entirely over Data Camp. Once you are done with each respective assignment, you will need to load proof of completion on Canvas. If the assignment involves completion of a course, load your personalized/named certificate of completion on Canvas. Alternatively, if the assignment entails only chapters/part of a course, kindly load screenshots indicating completion of the respective chapters. We will not accept chapter screenshots when the assignment entails completion of an entire course.

2. Exams: 55%

- Exams will be open-book, open-note, open-Internet, etc. There will never be a situation when coders do not consult previous R scripts or Google, so we wanted to make the exams as realistic as possible by giving students access to these resources. However, the exams will test a lot of material. Students will thus need to study in order to complete exams within a two-hour window. Students will also need to work independently (i.e. no asking others for help), and students are prohibited from posting the exam questions on the Stack Exchange or similar websites. Students who violate any of these policies will be given a zero for the respective exam. The exams will take place at the following dates/times:
 - 1st Exam: 15% (June 14 evening [4 hour window for 2 hour exam])
 - 2nd Exam: 20% (June 28 evening [4 hour window for 2 hour exam])
 - 3rd Exam: 20% (July 8 evening [4 hour window for 2 hour exam])

3. Attendance: 10%

- Attendance will be verified with quizzes that will correspond to the individual videos in each module. We will simply be giving credit for legitimate responses. There will be no penalty for wrong answers, providing that the wrong answers represent legitimate attempts to answer the questions. Given that students will need to watch each video before the exams in order to perform well, grading deadlines for attendance will follow the exam timelines:
 - Modules 1-4: June 14 at 6pm
 - Modules 6-9: June 28 at 6pm

- Modules 11-14: July 8 at 6pm

2.5. Grading Scale

- 92.50-100 (A)
- 72.50-76.49 (C)
- 92.49-89.50 (A-)
- 69.50-72.49 (C-)
- 86.50-89.49 (B+)
- 66.50-69.49 (D+)
- 82.50-86.49 (B)
- 62.50-66.49 (D)
- 79.50-82.49 (B-)
- 59.50-62.49 (D-)
- 76.50-79.49 (C+)
- 59.49 or below (F)

2.6. Grade Rounding

The above grading scale already incorporates very generous grade rounding. Accordingly, there will be no additional rounding of grades under any circumstance.

2.7. Grade Posting on Canvas

We will post all grades to the class website, Canvas. We will also use the option where students may discern the average score of the class. This way, students will know where they stand by the end of semester.

2.8. Grade Appeals

If students would like to appeal their grade on any assignment, it is necessary make the request to both professors and the teaching assistant in writing, over email, within 5 days of receiving the grade. In the grade appeal, students must specify the reason(s) why we may have misgraded the assignment. Acceptable reasons include those pertaining to the concepts and material covered during the course. We will not consider requests for grade changes that are not germane to the course.

2.9. Late Work

Unless you receive prior approval from either professor, we will discount all late homework as follows:

- 1-15 minutes: 0% (grace period for last-minute issues)
- 15 minutes-24 hours late: -10%
- 24-48 hours late: -25\%
- more than 2 days late: -50%
- more than one week: no credit offered

Given grading deadlines from the registrar, the final day for which we will accept homework assignments is July 10.

Students will not be able to submit attendance quizzes late. This policy is in place so that students attend classes—that is, watch the videos—before each respective exam.

Students will be penalized for submitting exams late. For each minute late, we will subtract 1% from the students' final grade for the respective exam.

2.10. Students Rights and Responsibilities

- You have a right to a learning environment that supports mental and physical wellness.
- You have a right to respect.
- You have a right to be assessed and graded fairly.
- You have a right to freedom of opinion and expression.
- You have a right to privacy and confidentiality.
- You have a right to meaningful and equal participation, to self-organize groups to improve your learning environment.
- You have a right to learn in an environment that is welcoming to all people. No student shall be isolated, excluded or diminished in any way.

With these rights come these responsibilities:

- You are responsible for taking care of yourself, managing your time, and communicating with the instructor if things start to feel out of control or overwhelming.
- You are responsible for acting in a way that is worthy of respect and always respectful of others.

2.11. Personal Pronoun and Name Preferences

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. We will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise us of this preference early in the semester so that we may make appropriate changes to our records.

2.12. Academic Integrity

Each student in the course is expected to abide by the University of Texas Honor Code: "As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity." Plagiarism is taken very seriously at UT. Therefore, if you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources. Otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. You are responsible for

understanding UT's Academic Honesty and the University Honor Code, which can be found at the following web address: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

2.13. Drop Policy

Under Texas law, students are only allowed six Q drops while you are in college at any public Texas institution. For more information, see:

http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/csacc/academic/adddrop/qdrop

2.14. University Resources for Students

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. There are also a range of resources on campus:

2.14.1. Services for Students with Disabilities

This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, if you have medical information that you need to share with me, or if you need specific arrangements in case the building needs to be evacuated, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, but I can only do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions. If appropriate, also contact Services for Students with Disabilities, 512-471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329- 3986 (video phone). http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/about/

2.14.2. Counseling and Mental Health Center

Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress.

All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. There are many helpful resources available on campus and an important part of the college experience is learning how to ask for help. Asking for support sooner rather than later is often helpful.

If you or anyone you know experiences any academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings like anxiety or depression, we strongly encourage you to seek support: http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/individualcounseling.html

2.14.3. The Sanger Learning Center

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger Center's classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas. For more information, please visit http://www.utexas.edu/ugs/slc or call 512-471-3614 (JES A332).

Undergraduate Writing Center: http://uwc.utexas.edu/

Libraries: http://www.lib.utexas.edu/ITS: http://www.utexas.edu/its/

Student Emergency Services: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/

2.14.4. Important Safety Information

If you have concerns about the safety or behavior of fellow students, TAs or Professors, call BCAL (the Behavior Concerns Advice Line): 512-232-5050. Your call can be anonymous. If something doesn't feel right, it probably isn't. Trust your instincts and share your concerns.

The following recommendations regarding emergency evacuation from the Office of Campus Safety and Security (512-471-5767, http://www.utexas.edu/safety/):

- Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.
- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.
- Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.
- Link to information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at: www.utexas.edu/emergency

2.15. COVID-19 Safety and Class Participation/Masks

We will all need to make some adjustments in order to benefit from in-person classroom interactions in a safe and healthy manner. Our best protections against spreading COVID-19 on campus are masks (defined as cloth face coverings) and staying home if you are showing symptoms. Therefore, for the benefit of everyone, this is means that all students are required to follow these important rules.

Every student must wear a cloth face-covering properly in class and in all campus buildings at all times. Students are encouraged to participate in documented daily symptom screening. This means that each class day in which on-campus activities occur, students must upload certification from the symptom tracking app and confirm that they completed their symptom screening for that day to Canvas. Students should not upload the results of that screening, just the certificate that they completed it. If the symptom tracking app recommends that the student isolate rather than coming to class, then students must not return to class until cleared by a medical professional. Information regarding safety protocols with and without symptoms can be found here.

If a student is not wearing a cloth face-covering properly in the classroom (or any UT building), that student must leave the classroom (and building). If the student refuses to wear a cloth face covering, class will be dismissed for the remainder of the period, and the student will be subject to disciplinary action as set forth in the university's Institutional Rules/General Conduct 11-404(a)(3). Students who have a condition that precludes the wearing of a cloth face covering must follow the procedures for obtaining an accommodation working with Services for Students with Disabilities.

2.16. Sharing of Course Materials is Prohibited

No materials used in this class, including, but not limited to, lecture hand-outs, videos, assessments (quizzes, exams, papers, projects, homework assignments), in-class materials, review sheets, and additional problem sets, may be shared online or with anyone outside of the class unless you have my explicit, written permission. Unauthorized sharing of materials promotes cheating. It is a violation of the University's Student Honor Code and an act of academic dishonesty. I am well aware of the sites used for sharing materials, and any materials found online that are associated with you, or any suspected unauthorized sharing of materials, will be reported to Student Conduct and Academic Integrity in the Office of the Dean of Students. These reports can result in sanctions, including failure in the course.

2.17. FERPA and Class Recordings

Class recordings are reserved only for students in this class for educational purposes and are protected under FERPA. The recordings should not be shared outside the class in any form. Violation of this restriction by a student could lead to Student Misconduct proceedings. Guidance on public access to class recordings can be found here.

2.18. COVID Caveats

To help keep everyone at UT and in our community safe, it is critical that students report COVID-19 symptoms and testing, regardless of test results, to University Health Services, and faculty and staff report to the HealthPoint Occupational Health Program (OHP) as soon as possible. Please see this link to understand what needs to be reported. In addition, to help understand what to do if a fellow student in the class (or the instructor or TA) tests positive for COVID, see this University Health Services link.

3. Class Schedule, Readings, and Homework

3.1. Part 1: Basics

Module 1: Introduction and Syllabus

Class:

- What is data science?
- Syllabus
- Course overview

Module 2: Intro to Data and Excel Basics

Class:

- Intro to data and its various types
- Essential skills with Microsoft Excel
 - Saving and file types (e.g., .xlsx vs. .csv)
 - Inspecting and filtering data
 - Merging cells, wraping text, and freezing panes
 - Sorting data
 - Pivot tables
 - Missing data
 - Making graphs and troubleshooting
 - Paste special, transposing, formatting, and selecting cells
 - Preparing files for analysis
 - Identifying and creating unique identifiers
 - Relative and absolute cell referencing
 - Basic formulas (IF, SUM, AVERAGE)
 - VLOOKUP

Required Reading:

- Healy, Kieran. 2019. "Data Visualization: A Practical Introduction." Princeton: Princeton University Press.
 - Read: Preface and Chapter 1.

Required Assignment:

- All chapters from Data Camp: Spreadsheet Basics (2 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Monday, June 7 at 11pm
- Chapter 1 from Data Camp: Pivot Tables (1 hour)
 - Please submit this assignment Monday, June 7 at 11pm
- Chapter 2 from Data Camp: Data Analysis with Spreadsheets (1.5 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Monday, June 7 at 11pm

Module 3: Intro to R (Basics)

Class:

- What is R?
- The environment (i.e., the four panes)
- Setting the working directory
- Setting up projects in R Studio
- Basic arithmetic
- Sequences
- Installing packages and loading libraries
- Objects and vectors
- Loading existing data frames
- Creating new data frames manually
- Inspecting the data (head, View, dim, summary, length)
- Classes (mumeric, character/strings, factors)
- Generating new variables
- Dealing with missing values
- Basic calculations
- Getting help

- Descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, quantiles)
- Tables with stargazer
- Cross tabulations (cross tabs)
- Correlations
- Subsetting
- Saving data

Required Reading and Watching:

- Watch this Getting Started with R and R Studio video
 - This video help with the setup of R and R Studio
- Watch this Introduction to R video.
 - This video will also help you with the setup but goes a bit deeper as well.

Assignment:

- All chapters from Data Camp: Intro to R (4 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Wednesday, June 9 at 11pm

Recommended Reading (Not Required:

• Lindberg, Staffan, et al. 2014. "V-Dem: A New Way to Measure Democracy." Journal of Democracy 25:3, 159-169.

Module 4: Data Visualization with ggplot2 in R

Class:

- An introduction to ggplot2
- Histograms, bar plots, scatter plots, line graphs, box plots
- Customizing plot content (color, linetype, sizing, opacity, etc) and meta-information (labels, coordinates, etc)
- Displaying graphs with multiple dimensions within same plot and with facets
- Scatterplots and fitting lines to data
- Basic exposure to regression visualization
- Saving plots
- gapminder plots with gganimate

Required Reading:

- Healy, Kieran. 2019. "Data Visualization: A Practical Introduction." Princeton: Princeton University Press.
 - Read: Chapters 3-5.

Required Assignment:

- All Chapters from Data Camp: Data Visualization with ggplot (Part 1) (5 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Friday, June 11 at 11pm

Module 5: Exam for Part 1 of Course

Required Assignment:

• The exam will be on Monday, June 14 (evening)

3.2. Part 2: Replicability, Programming Basics, and Data Wrangling

Module 6: R Markdown and Version Control (Git/GitHub)

Class:

- R Markdown
 - Setting up .rmd files
 - Inserting code chunks with different features
 - Create new sections and text with different features (see cheatsheet)
- Version control (Git/Github)
 - Using the command line/shell (Mac users) or GitBash (Windows users)
 - Creating repositories/projects in R
 - Committing, adding, and status checking
 - Linking R with GitHub

Required Reading and Installations:

- Wickham, Hadley and Grolemund, Garrett. 2017. R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data. Sebastol, California: O'Reilly Media.
 - Read: Chapter 27 (R Markdown)

- Bryan, Jenny. 2019. "Happy Git with R."
 - Read: Chs. 1, 4-9, 12-14 and make all required installations
- Wickham, Hadley. 2019. "R Packages: Git and Github."
 - Read: all instructions and make all required installations

Required Assignments:

- Chapter 3 (Introduction to R Markdown) and Chapter 4 (Customizing your R Markdown Report) from Data Camp: Communicating with Data in the Tidyverse (1.5-2 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Wednesday, June 16 at 11pm
- All chapters from Data Camp: Intro to Git for Data Science (3 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Wednesday, June 16 at 11pm

Additional Resources:

- Git and Github for Poets Tutorial Series
- R Markdown Cheat Sheets
 - Overall Cheat Sheet

Module 7: Intermediate R (Programming Basics)

Class:

- Conditionals and control flow
- Loops
- Functions
- Utilities and regular expressions (e.g., grep, gsub)
- Dates and times
- Apply commands (e.g., lapply, sapply, tapply)

Required Reading:

- Wickham, Hadley and Grolemund, Garrett. 2017. R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data. Sebastol, California: O'Reilly Media.
 - Read: Chapters 16, 19-21

Required Assignment:

• All Chapters from Data Camp: Intermediate R (4 hours)

- Please submit this assignment by Friday, June 18 at 11pm

Module 8: Data Cleaning with Cross-Sectional Data in R (Part 1)

Class:

- Importing World Bank World Development Indicators data directly from R
- Finding country codes
- Merging data
- Converting characters/string variables to numeric variables
- Removing accents
- Changing file encodings
- Piping
- Recoding data
- Filtering data
- Sorting data
- Taking logs
- Labeling variables

Required Reading:

- Wickham, Hadley and Grolemund, Garrett. 2017. R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data. Sebastol, California: O'Reilly Media.
 - Read: Chapter 12, 13

Required Assignment:

- Chapters 1 and 2 from Data Camp: Cleaning Data in R (2 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Monday, June 21 at 11pm

Module 9: Data Cleaning with Panel Data in R (Part 2)

Class:

- Reshaping
- Appending
- Finding and removing duplicates

- Collapsing/summarizing
- Creating lag and lead variables
- Balancing panel data
- Deflating data and accounting for inflation

Required Reading:

- Wickham, Hadley and Grolemund, Garrett. 2017. R for Data Science: Import, Tidy, Transform, Visualize, and Model Data. Sebastol, California: O'Reilly Media.
 - Read: Chapter 18

Required Assignment:

- Chapters 3 and 4 from Data Camp: Cleaning Data in R (2 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Wednesday, June 23 at 11pm

Module 10: Exam for Part 2 of the Course

Required Assignment:

• The exam will be on Monday, June 28 (evening)

3.3. Part 3: Mapping, Scraping, and Text Analysis

Module 11: Mapping (Part 1)

Class:

- Coordinate systems
- Map projections
- Vector data (points, lines, shapes)
- Raster data
- Shapefiles
- Mapping conventions
- Working with the sf package
- Using rnaturalearth and rnaturalearthdata to acquire static maps
- Plotting point data (latitudes/longitudes) with sf

- Plotting point data with ggplot2
- Interactive mapping with mapview
- Spatial joins with sf
- Spatial sums and means (within polygons)
- Obtaining polygon centroids

Required Reading:

- Pebesma, Edzer. 2020. 1. Simple Features for R
- Pebesma, Edzer. 2020. 5. Plotting Simple Features

Required Assignment:

- All chapters from Data Camp: Working with Geospatial Data in R (4 hours)
 - Please submit the assignment by Wednesday, June 30 at 11pm

Additional Resources

• Pebesma, Edzer. 2019. sf plot reference manual

Module 12: Mapping (Part 2)

<u>Class</u>:

- Using tidycensus to work with US Census data
- Making a shiny app

Required Reading:

- Healy, Kieran. 2019. "Data Visualization: A Practical Introduction." Princeton: Princeton University Press.
 - Read: Chapter 7
- Walker, Kyle. 2020. tidycensus
 - Read: All sections in Basic Usage of tidycensus and Spatial Data with tidycensus

Required Assignment:

- Chapter 1 from Data Camp: Analyzing US Census Data in R (1 hour)
 - Please submit the assignment by Friday, July 2
- All chapters Data Camp: Building Web Applications with Shiny in R (4 hours)
 - Please submit the assignment by Friday, July 2

Module 13: Web Scraping

Class:

- Web page structures
- Basics of HTML and XML, and Using Google Chrome Developer
- Scraping/harvesting with rvest and xml2

Required Reading:

- Pittard, Steve. 2020. Web Scraping with R. [Link here]
 - Read: Chapter 1

Required Assignment:

- All chapters from Data Camp: Working with Web Data in R (4 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Monday, July 5 at 11pm

Further Reading (Not Required):

• Nyhuis, Dominic. 2020. Web Data Collection: Potentials and Challenges. In SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations, ed. Luigi Curini & Robert J. Franzese. London: Sage Publications, pp. 387-403.

Module 14: Text Analysis with tidytext

Class:

- Working with Text as Data
- Sentiment analysis
- Topic Modeling

Required Reading:

- Silge, Julia, and David Robinson. 2020. Text Mining with R: A Tidy Approach. Sebastol, California: O'Reilly Media. [Link here]
 - Read: Chapters 1 and 2

Required Assignment:

- All chapters from Data Camp: Introduction to Text Analysis in R (4 hours)
 - Please submit this assignment by Tuesday, July 6 at 11pm

Module 15: Final Exam

Required Assignment:

• The exam will be on Thursday, July 8 (evening)