POSC 3101. WRITING AND ARGUMENTATION IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: THE POLITICS OF NUMBERS

(Census Tabulation, 1971)

Tu Th 9:30 – 10:45A
Wehr Physics 209
Professor Philip Rocco
O ce Hours: Th. 2–5 (or by appoint   i

matter, they can also be manipulated in ways that threaten democracy. Numbers themselves become a subject of a debate. Policymakers may cite dubious figures. Government's collection of—and public access to—vital data has become a hotly contested issue. Political division, partisanship, and gridlock have also undermined trust in public statistics.

To better understand the politics of numbers, we will draw on and synthesize a wide range of perspectives from political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, history, science and technology studies (STS), and law. Class meetings will serve the purpose that a studio or

another student with any form of academic misconduct, failing to report any form of academic misconduct, or intentionally interfering with the educational process in any manner. Academic misconduct of any type is unacceptable and will result in immediate referral to Marquette's Academic Integrity Director. If you are in doubt as to whether an action or behavior is subject to the academic misconduct policy, you should consult an appropriate member of the Academic Integrity Council, faculty or sta .

Attendance and Participation: Our class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays in person following the format described above. Class participation and active learning are important aspects of this class. However, I understand that sometimes you must miss academic obligationê

and distracting behaviors that are meant to create a negative environment. This behavior will not be accepted.

Email: Email is the o cial method of contacting students, as per

Constance Citro, "Are We Up to the Challenge of Protecting Federal Statistics?," *Harvard Data Science Review,* 2 (1, 2020).

Anderson, Margo, and Stephen E. Fienberg. "To sample or not to sample? The 2000 census controversy." Journal of Inter

2/16	10. Two ways of looking at knowledge infrastructure	Philip Rocco, Jessica Rich, Kasia Klasa, et al., "Who Counts Where? COVID-19 Surveillance in Federal Countries," *Journal of Health Politics, Policy, and Law* 46 (6, 2021): 959–987.	Research topics due by 2/16 @ 5 PM
2/21	11. One-on-one meetings with Dr. Rocco		

5. Writing Workshop I: The Explainer

2/23	12. Elements of the explainer	Three sample	

4/4	21. Cost analysis and the politics of austerity	Robert Saldin, "Gaming the Congressional Budget Office," *National Affairs*, Fall 2014	
4/6	No class – Easter Break		
4/11	22. Explaining the CBO's power	Ryan Cooper, "The Tyranny of the Congressional Budget Office," *The Week*, May 18, 2020 Philip Rocco, "Keeping Score: The Congressional Budget Office and the Politics of Institutional Durability," *Polity* 53 (4, 2021).	

Writing, Meetings, Peer Review

4/13	No class – Dr. Rocco is at a conference in Chicago		
4/18	23. One-on-one meetings w/ Dr. Rocco		
4/20	24. One-on-one meetings w/ Dr. Rocco		
4/25	25. Peer review of issue briefs	No reading––in-class peer review / workshop	Rough draft of issue brief due 4/25 @ 5 PM
4/27	25. Peer review of issue briefs	No reading––in-class peer review / workshop	Turn in peer review reports at the end of class

Symposium

5/2	26. Lightning talks, Part 1	No reading	Slides for talks due by 5 pm on 5/1 **
5/4	27. Lightning talks, Part 2	No reading	

Major Writing Assignments

Throughout the semest

Nota Bene: In the process of doing the research for this brief, you will invariably find yourself in uncharted and confusing waters. That is because at

Secondary sources should include reputable news sources that provide in-depth reporting on government a airs. At the national level, publications ᴇᴅᴏʟ

What to turn in:

You will turn in a rough version of a 4000–4500-word article manuscript, which addresses the following points:

> What's The Issue? (1000 words): Give a brief overview of the number / measure/ quantitative analysis you are focusing on and characterize the "stakes" of the debate. Why does the particular measure / quantitative analysis matter for politics / policy? Who is a ected and how? What policy choices are available for resolving this debate?
> What's the Background? (1000–1500 words): Give a brief history of the controversy you are discussing. Why did this issue/controversy emerge? Why is measurement / quantification an important part of the controversy? What, if any, past policy decisions have shaped the numbers currently under debate?
> What's the Debate? (1000 words): Discuss all relevant sides and stakeholders in this controversy. Who are they? What are their positions on the quantification / measurement issue in question? What arguments do they make? What interests do they have that might cause them to hold this position? What sources of leverage do they have to advance their agenda? Who seems to have power in this debate/controversy, if anyone? Why?
> What's Next? (1000 words): How, if at all, is this debate likely to be resolved in the near future? What factors might shape how the debate is resolved?

How to prepare this assignment:

Start by thinking about how you might organize your information. What types of information about the issue is most important for understanding what is at stake, who is involved, and what is likely to happen. After you write a rough outline of each section, put it down for a day and then re-read it while asking yourself the following question: "Would what I have written clarify the issue for a lay audience?" If not, re-organize your evidence and re-write to clarify.

Lightning Talk (worth 5% of your grade)

The purpose of a seminar is to create and share new knowledge. On the last week of class, this is precisely what we'll do, in two days of lightning talks. These are short, 5-6 minute presentations capturing the main essence of the findings you produced in your Issue Brief.

What to turn in:

A lightning talk is designed to be a short, captivating presentation for a general audience on your topic. You will be responsible for giving a well-rehearsed 5-6 minute talk that tells us about the controversy you've been examining, gives us an appropriate

amount of background toound

Foundation, 1989.

Andreas, Peter, and Kelly M. Greenhill, eds. *Sex,*

comparative e ectiveness research and the politicizatio

Potential Research Topics

Issues of "algorithmic justice" / "algorithmic inequality"
Credit Ratings (US) / Social Credit System (China)
Deployment of self-tracking in health- and life-insurance plans
Data privacy controversies
Bias in testing instruments (e.g. SAT)
Detecting and addressing gender pay gaps
Controversy over management of 2020 Census (there are multiple possible dimensions
here, from the undercount itself to the question of di erential privacy)
Conflict over measurement of prices (CPI)
Continuing controversy sve