

POL 51

The Scientific Study of Politics

Sections A03 & A04

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Today's Plan

- Overview of class and section
- Introductions
- Getting started with R
- Important information

Why POL 51?

- Learn and apply the scientific method to political science
- (1) Develop key concepts:
 - ▶ Theory building
 - ▶ Research design
 - ▶ Measurement
- (2) Learn methods to empirically analyze political data using R
 - ▶ Statistical software that lets you analyze data, run models, create graphics, and more!

Why discussion section?

- Review materials from class
 - Ask questions
 - Hands-on practice with R
 - Assistance with homework
 - Always bring your laptop!
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- Attendance in section will contribute to your participation grade and is **strongly** recommended for success in this course!

About me

- My name is Amanda Loehrke (she/her)
- Originally from Wisconsin
- 4th year PhD Candidate
- Subfields: American Politics and Methodology
 - ▶ Gender, race & ethnic politics, behavior, representation, identity
 - ▶ Text analysis, machine learning
- Outside of school, I enjoy...
 - ▶ Painting/crafting/making art, jewelry
 - ▶ Hiking, camping, going on walks
 - ▶ Listening to live music

About you

- Your name
- Where you are from
- Year in school
- Major
- One fun/interesting fact
 - ▶ Favorite color/food/show/movie?
 - ▶ Fun place you've visited?
 - ▶ Cool talent?

What is political science?

- **Political science:** the scientific study of political phenomena (behavior, institutions, processes, etc.)
- **Theory:** the framework or model to explain the political phenomena
 - ▶ May focus on concepts like power, authority, governance, and democracy
- **Methodology:** use of qualitative and quantitative methods to study political systems and behavior
 - ▶ Ex) surveys, case studies, experiments, statistical analysis

R and R Studio

- R Studio is a user-friendly graphical interface for R
- Open source, packages for almost everything (data processing, cleaning, visualization, etc.)
- For help, click [here](#).

Downloading R and R Studio

- Downloading R
 - ▶ R for [Windows](#)
 - ▶ R for [macOS](#)
- Downloading R Studio
 - ▶ R Studio: <https://posit.co/downloads/>
- Open the downloaded file (check your **Downloads** folder), click yes through all of the prompts to install like any other program

Downloading R and R Studio

- Downloading R
 - ▶ R for Windows: <https://cran.r-project.org/bin/windows/base/>
 - ▶ R for macOS: <https://cran.r-project.org/bin/macosx/>
- Downloading R Studio
 - ▶ R Studio: <https://posit.co/downloads/>
- Open the downloaded file (check your **Downloads** folder), click yes through all of the prompts to install like any other program
- *If* your computer is an older model, or you are using an iPad or similar, you can access R Studio online:
 - ▶ Go to <https://posit.cloud/>
 - ▶ Create an account using your UC Davis email
 - ▶ Click on "New Project" and select "New Project from Template"
 - ▶ Select "Data Analysis in R with the Tidyverse" and click "OK"

R Studio overview

1. script/source
This is where you write and edit code.
To evaluate your code, you have to click "Run" to evaluate them in the console.

2. environment
In here you can see the objects in your working space (environment) or view your command history (history)

3. console
This is where the script code is evaluated by R. You can also perform calculations, etc. in here that you don't need to save in your script.

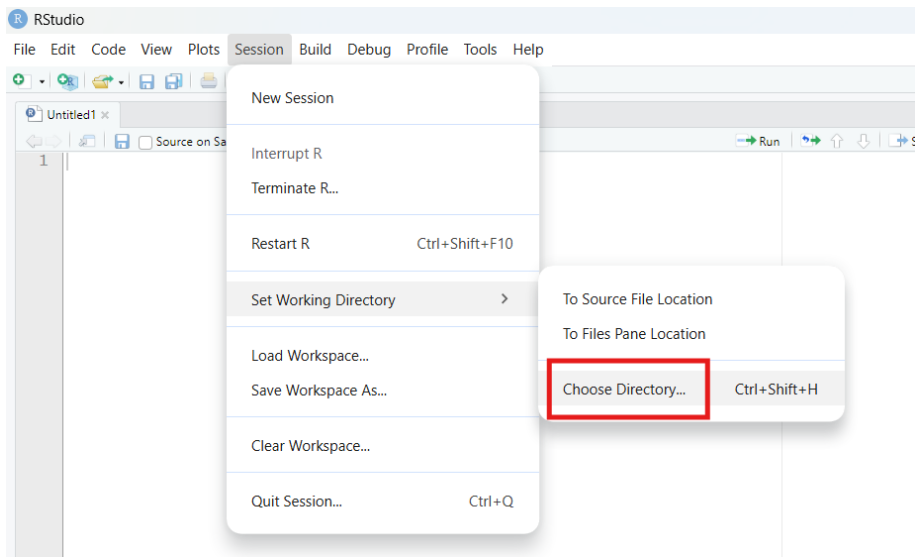
4. files/plots/packages/help
Here you can see file directories, view plots you produce, install and update packages, and access R help.
R help is very useful tool! If you need help you can search for a function or type "?functionname" in the console to see that function's help page.

Getting started With R Studio

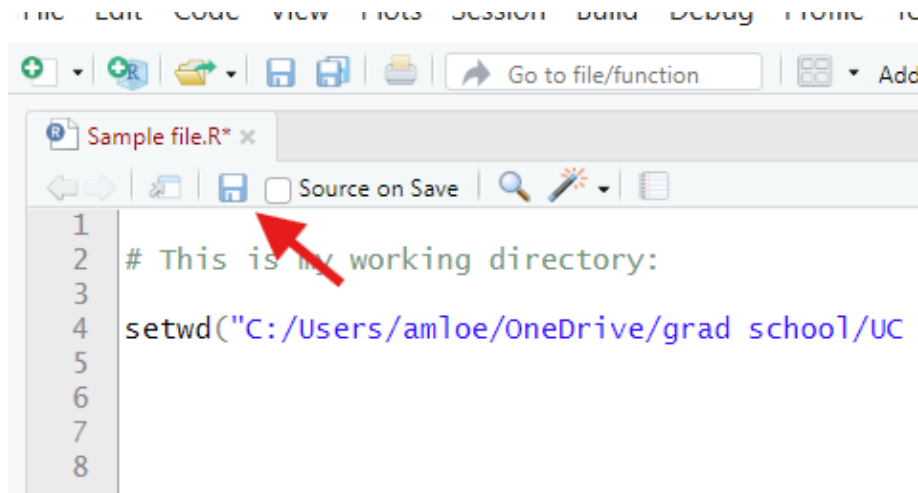
- Create a POL 51 folder on your computer
 - ▶ This is where you will store your R files, download data to use in R, etc.
- Open R Studio
 - ▶ Create a new R script and save to POL 51 folder
 - ▶ Set working directory to your POL 51 folder in R script
 - ★ From the top menu, select
Session → Set Working Directory → Choose Directory
 - ★ Copy the console output and put into your R script
 - ★ Example:

```
setwd("C:/Users/amloe/OneDrive/grad school/UC Davis/Fall 2025/TA POL 51")
```
- For a helpful R Studio tutorial, click [here](#).

Setting working directory



Saving R script



My office hours

- **Tuesdays 1-3pm, [location redacted]**
 - ▶ No appointment needed to attend in-person office hours
- Bring any questions/comments about the course or assignments
- If you cannot attend my office hours, you can *always* go to the professor's or another TA's office hours
 - ▶ Professor [name redacted]: T/TH 12:10 - 1:20pm, [location redacted]
 - ▶ TA [name redacted]: T 12:30-2:30pm, [location redacted]
 - ▶ TA [name redacted]: T 1:00-3:00pm, [location redacted]
 - ▶ TA [name redacted]: TH 1:00-3:00pm, [location redacted]

Contacting me

- Feel free to email at any time with questions or concerns
 - ▶ aloehrke@ucdavis.edu
 - ★ I prefer email over Canvas messaging
- Please ALWAYS check the syllabus/Canvas before emailing
 - ▶ Most questions can be answered by simply looking at the syllabus
- You MUST indicate that you are a student in POL 51 & write in a professional, respectful manner
- I'll do my best to respond within 48 hours; if past that point, send a reminder email

Artificial intelligence usage

- As stated on the syllabus, **"Use of AI generative technology as a substitute for your own writing and coding is prohibited."**
- AI *can* certainly aid in productivity, but it is not a guarantee
- Please use the code taught in class to receive full credit
- When grading, it can be apparent when AI generated code is used
- We want to evaluate *your* understanding of the topics, not AI's
- Use of AI can lead to a report to the Office of Student Support and Judicial Affairs (more information [here](#))

AI usage, continued

- In accordance with the [Academic Code of Conduct](#):

Academic misconduct on exams or other coursework includes "displaying or using any unauthorized material such as notes, cheat-sheets, or electronic devices, or content generated by artificial intelligence"

Plagiarism: "Taking credit for any work not created by the student; work includes, but is not limited to, books, articles, experimental methodology or results, compositions, images, lectures, computer programs, internet postings, and content generated by software or artificial intelligence"

Some general information

- COVID/health precautions

- ▶ Please respect other students' decisions/preferences around masking.
- ▶ If you have symptoms or a contagious illness, please don't come to class.

- Student Health Counseling resources

- ▶ It's OK not to feel OK and there are many campus resources to support your health and well-being.
- ▶ For support: <https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/services/counseling-services> or 530-752-0871.
- ▶ Campus counselors or after-hours clinicians are available 24/7.

Some more general information

- Confidential reporting resources
 - ▶ Please be aware that I have a legal responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence, and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination.
 - ▶ If you would rather share information to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of individuals at <http://hdapp.ucdavis.edu/> and <http://sexualviolence.ucdavis.edu/>.
- Recording or photographing discussion section is not allowed
 - ▶ All section slides and practice R scripts will be posted to Canvas (usually before section)
- Inclusivity and equity
 - ▶ Please feel free to email me, come to office hours, or speak with me after class if there's anything you would like me to know to help create an inclusive and safe learning environment for you all.

Important course information

- Lecture: Tuesday/Thursday 10:30-11:50am, [location redacted]
- **Section A03**: Wednesday 1:10-2pm, [location redacted]
- **Section A04**: Wednesday 2:10-3pm, [location redacted]
- Information about the syllabus, readings, assignments, contact information, etc. is available on Canvas
 - ▶ Exams (24%)
 - ▶ Problem sets (63%)
 - ▶ Participation (13%)
- Attending discussion section is the best way to get hands-on assistance with homework and important information to succeed in this course!