**PSC-4099**

**Thesis Assignment #5:**

**A *polished* draft of your findings section and study conclusions**

**This assignment is due electronically (I will print out your hard copy) by the start of class on Tuesday, November 26.** To submit the assignment electronically, e-mail the work as *an attachment* (i.e. a pdf, doc, docx, or rtf formatted file) to msetzler@highpoint.edu. To be accepted as on-time work, *the subject line of the email must be:* ***psc4099 assignment 5.***

This assignment is a critical milestone in the term, and failing to submit it as scheduled will result in heavy deductions to both your assignment and professionalism grades. **There will be a two percent reduction in your *overall* course grade for every day the paper is late), up to a maximum deduction of 10% of your course grade**, which is what this assignment is worth.

**What is the purpose of this assignment and what should yours look like?** This is the final major assignment to make sure that you are on track to submit a strong senior thesis. Hopefully, the bulk of this assignment will carry over into the final version of your thesis, providing a strong draft of your findings and conclusion section.

For a sample of what the first part of your assignment (sections 1, 2, and 4 below), take a look at this example, which summarizes the pre-findings sections of an article by Drs. Graeber and Setzler: <https://marksetzler.org/SeniorSem/Assignments/ThesisAssignments/PSC-4099-ThesisAssn4_Assignment%20example.docx>.

For a sample of what the findings component of this assignment should look like (sections 5-8 below), please take another look at the thesis-length article I have asked you to read a couple of times previously: <https://brazilianpoliticalsciencereview.org/article/did-brazilians-vote-for-jair-bolsonaro-because-they-share-his-most-controversial-views/>. Begin with the “Findings” section on page 8 (of 16, which includes the bibliography). Alternatively, take a look at the sample theses by Madison Deane and Maggie Selman, which you were asked to review a few times earlier in the term.

**Assignment Instructions.** You will write a paper that has eight sections. Each section should be strongly informed by writing and SPSS analyses you already have completed for earlier assignments and your class presentations. The first four sections can be revisions of work you previously submitted in Thesis Assignment #4; this part of the assignment will summarize the front-end and methods section of your thesis. The next two sections should be more detailed, appropriately-formatted versions of the research findings you have prepared and presented in class presentations. And the last two sections will be a conclusion and bibliography.

Here are more details on what is expected for each section; in your assignment, please make sure to title each section separately:

1. **An introduction (in a half a page or so)**. Begin the assignment by writing a brief summary of what your research question is, why it is important, and what we still need to know.
2. **Your hypotheses and a brief explanation of the logic behind them (in less than one page)**. Next, list all of your project’s testable hypotheses that identify what you expect the relationship to between your independent and dependent variables. This part of your assignment should run no more than a page and typically can be shorter because you should have made the theoretical case for your hypotheses in the first section of the assignment. Each hypothesis should explicitly refer to independent and dependent variables that you have correctly coded in your dataset. It should be obvious that these hypotheses will answer your research question/s and also that they don’t examine concepts and ideas not related to your research question.
3. **A summary of your data and variable measurement (in one to two pages, depending on how many variables you have and how complex your project is).** In a few sentences, list the source of your dataset and describe its basic features, including what population it represents, if it is a random sample (which almost always is the case with thesis projects), the organization collecting the data, the sample size, and when it was administered. Then provide a description—in this order—of the dependent, independent, particularly important control variables (e.g., a control for ideology if you are primarily interested in how partisanship influences an attitude), and then the other control variables, including how they are measured and coded. In your descriptions of each variable, group the control variables logically. For examples, socioeconomic measures (like education and income) belong together as do political measures (like partisanship and ideology) and demographic variables (e.g., age and gender).
4. **A descriptive statistics table.** This should be a nice looking table, prepared in a word processing program and similar to what you see in the sample document linked above. The table should have all of your study’s variables, and it must list the number of observations, means, minimum values, maximum values, and standard deviations for each variable. Important: in this table and all others, you should list variables in exactly the same order noted above: dependent variables, independent variables, and then your control variables. This statistical information is required so your instructor can verify that you have not accidentally omitted observations when recoding or neglected to recode missing data.
5. **Bivariate analysis findings.** You should provide a bivariate analysis that includes at least one bar chart or table AND an analytical summary of what these data tell you about your hypotheses. In the workshop readings and on-line materials, we covered ways to use bar charts, means tests (t-tests), association tests, and confidence intervals, which are all common ways that scholars show that there is a relationship between their key variables. You do NOT need to use multiple bivariate methods in your study (in the sample reading above about a Brazilian election, the author uses a bar chart and includes confidence intervals, but either of these measures would have worked fine by itself). Instead, you should use and report findings with the method that is the best fit for your particular project. In most cases, bar charts showing how each of your independent (but not control) variables relates to your dependent variable/s will be the most elegant way to show the bivariate relationships.

Remember that the main point for this part of your findings section is to make a quick case that there is (or is not) a relationship between your independent and dependent variables before you use regression to better understand that relationship. In your description of the findings that are reported in the figure/table’s data, focus on what the data tells us about your hypotheses rather than describing all of the variables (i.e., your control variables should not be a major focus of the discussion here or in your regression tables).
6. **Regression analysis findings.** Present tables with regression analyses AND a write a summary of what that data tells you about your hypotheses. Your assignment must include multivariate analysis tables (either linear or logistic regression models—the choice depends on the structure of your dependent variable—and analyses of them). The tables and your written summary of these analyses must report and properly explain appropriate statistics and tests of significance for both the models as a while and for the coefficients for each independent variable (again, do not focus on control variables). I do not expect you to incorporate graphs and tables that are fully formatted and ready for a professional presentation in this draft; however, you do need to present and summarize your data in an elegant way (see the sample research on the course website and the articles you have reviewed in your literature research as examples).

In the sample article on Brazilian elections, logistic regression results are reported both in a multi-column regression table and also in a figure with predicted probabilities when each independent variable is at its minimum and maximum value (for linear regression, you would report estimated values of the dependent variable). For this assignment and the final thesis/presentation, you must report your findings in a regression table (see the sample; note; you can report just the odds ratios and star them for significance). Optionally you may also report probability/value estimates in a table or a figure. Oftentimes, it is most effective to show just a regressions table and then to use predicted probabilities/estimates in interesting scenarios that test hypotheses, which is something the sample article referenced above does.
7. **A thoughtful conclusion of a page or two** that summarizes the main findings of your regression analyses for each of your hypotheses, followed by a closing paragraph that explains and how your findings inform what we already knew from the previous studies on your question or in the related area/s.
8. **Your bibliography.** All of the references in this section should be properly formatted to meet APSA style guidelines (see my e-handout on when and how to cite if you have any questions), and include all of the sources you have used in the research study.

Please do your best work. Your assignment will be evaluated on the basis of effort and professionalism. A = Excellent in all respects; B = Good work with evident room for improvement; C = Minimally satisfactory work that obviously could be much stronger; D = Poor work.