

Bush 631: Final project

Data driven policymaking

Instructions

This document provides you with instructions regarding the final project of this class.

In the project, you will explore a topic or a policy of interest in the context of international affairs. The main objective is to study the relevant topic with an interesting research question(s), present explanations for the events/behavior of the main actors, and derive implications for policymaking. Quantitative methods are a central part of the project. The data analysis will be integrated in a way that supports your study of the topic and the proposed implications/recommendations for policy. You may use the empirical results in any appropriate section including evidence for existing conditions, causes for certain outcomes or support for recommendations.

For the final project, you will prepare three products:

1. Research proposal
2. Data report
3. Visual presentation of the study and an executive summary.

Tips for writing all your documents:

- Follow the ‘best practices of writing’ - resources available at the Bush school writing website ([Link](#)).
- Use the **Bottom-Line-Up-Front (BLUF)** guidelines for every section of your documents.
- ‘Break-down’ your arguments into multiple paragraphs.
- You can use some of the suggestions from this guide: *Project proposal memo* ([Link](#))
- Follow consistent rules for citations and providing credit for any content that is not originally yours (add cites at the end of your document).

Research proposal (due 03.31.2023)

This document presents your plan for the research. It must answer the following questions:

1. What is the topic / policy area that you study?
2. Why is this topic / policy important and interesting? (the “so what?”).
3. What does the existing state of knowledge of this issue / topic? (the primary points in the literature)
4. How do you intend to explore the issue?
5. What quantitative data do you intend to collect?
6. The general outline of the visual presentation product.

Few more pointers:

- The research proposal is written as a single document in which you describe your plan to study the issue.
- Document length is 1-2 pages max.

Data report (due 04.15.2023)

In this document, you will introduce and run a preliminary analysis of the data you intend to use in the final project.

- Describe your topic of research and its importance - briefly!
- Describe the data - type (experiment/observational, public opinion survey), size, type of vars (factorial, continuous), scope (years/countries covered, sample features).
- Detail (and cite) the sources of data.
- Explain why you chose this data? how does it help in your study of the topic of interest?
- Your DV(s): describe the measures used in the data (add a figure / table that offers more insight about the measure(s) - for example, the distribution of values, the mean and SD, etc.)
- Your IVs - describe the measures you will use from the data (add figures/tables that offer more insight about the measure(s) - for example, the distribution of values, the mean and SD, etc.)
- Briefly describe the type of data analysis you plan to conduct to answer your research questions.

Few more pointers:

- Like the research proposal, the data report is written as a single document - use titles or sub-titles to describe the different sections.

- Pay attention to your tables / figures - think about the reader and how you can help him/her get a clear picture of your data.
- Document length should be about 2-3 pages long.

Poster/Infographic (presentations event on 05.04.2023)

The product will address all aspects of your project.

- Clear and focused description of the topic and its importance.
- Use visual tools to present your theory/expectations.
- Figures/plots should be informative - the audience can learn from them without added text.
- Describe the **primary/most relevant** implications of your work.
- Add contact information.

Executive summary (due 05.04.2023)

This document complements the poster/infographic.

- What is the topic? Why is it important?
- What is your explanation/expectation for the topic at-stake?
- Describe the data collected: source, size, type.
- Brief description of the empirical tests.
- Main results (you can add table to summarize some findings).
- Expand on the policy/practical implications of research.
- Document should be 1-1.5 pages long.