The Course

Introduction to Political Analysis
A required course for Political Science majors to introduce students to the fundamentals of political science research and convey the need for skepticism as the foundation of scientific inquiry.

The Goals:
- For students to learn how to apply statistical tools to test political scientific theories.
- For students to become critical consumers of research.

Because the theoretical concepts introduced in the course are best understood in context, adding a service learning experience to the course will help students to better appreciate the potential applications of research.

Learning Objectives:
- Making the connection between the philosophy of scientific inquiry and the practical application of statistical techniques
- Gaining an understanding of the goals and ethical issues in survey design and analysis
- Learning the steps of survey processing and data analysis
- Developing skills in using STATA (statistical software)
- Learning how to produce and present results of data analysis.

The Client:
The Town of Acton

The Project:
A Citizen Satisfaction Survey

The Plan:
Combine Advanced Students with Beginning Students

An Opportunity for Advanced Students:
Because of the scale of the project and the amount of data processing, combined with the need for more advanced methods training for students who have already completed the Introduction to Political Analysis course, this service learning project also involves four students who have already taken the introductory course and expressed a desire to learn more advanced techniques. These students enrolled in a directed study/practicum

Learning Objectives for Advanced Students:
- Developing an expertise in applied statistics (using STATA)
- Learning how to construct and analyze a survey to meet client needs
- Developing leadership skills through assisting intro students with lab assignments
- Learning how to produce and present a report on survey results

Question 2: We would like to get a sense of how you feel about the quality of life in Acton using something called a feeling thermometer which ranges from 0 degrees to 100 degrees. Ratings between 50 degrees and 100 degrees mean you feel favorable and warm toward the quality of life in Acton and ratings between 0 degrees and 50 degrees mean you don’t feel favorable toward the quality of life in Acton. Where would you place yourself on this feeling thermometer?

The Product
(Work in Progress)

Students share preliminary results with Acton Town Manager Steve Ledoux

Advanced and Intro level students work together to process data