

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
Department of History
January 7, 1972

MEMORANDUM

TO: All History Faculty
FROM: Peter Smith
RE: History 695: Quantitative Methods for Historical Research

I will be offering History 695 during Semester II, and I hope that you will bring this fact to the attention of interested students.

The course does not presuppose any background or skill in mathematics. It is open to students in any field of history, undergraduates as well as graduates. Total enrollment is difficult to predict, but will probably not exceed 15 students.*

There are two basic parts to the course. The first section, an "Introduction to Historical Statistics," attempts to cover relationships between theory, data, and technique; descriptive statistics, measures of inequality, nonparametric tests and measures of association, analysis of variance, simple regression and correlation, multiple relationships, time series; and the uses of computers. Class sessions will concentrate on the derivation of important formulae, and students will perform a regular series of statistical exercises.

The second section deals with the application of quantitative techniques to historical research, with specific emphasis on areas of particular interest to students -- such as collective biography, roll-call analysis, the study of elections, content analysis, demography, or sampling procedures. There will be discussions of major writings in each area, and I hope that several members of the Department will come in to explain their own usage of statistical methods. Outside of class students will work on individual "projects," to be designed in consultation with the instructor.

Basic readings will include Charles Dollar and Richard Jensen, Historian's Guide to Statistics; Don Karl Rowney and James Q. Graham, ed., Quantitative History; and Robert P. Swearingna, ed., Quantification in American History.

History 695 will probably meet for one-hour sessions on Monday and Wednesday afternoons at 1:20; the first meeting will be on Wednesday, February 2.

*Consent of the instructor is required for admission to the course. Students are invited to call me to arrange appointments (263-2339; 255-0501 evenings) or come directly to my office at 4101 Humanities.

To: All Interested Persons

From: Peter H. Smith

Re: History 695 -- Quantitative Methods for Historical Research

This is just to report that this course has obtained all the necessary administrative approval and will be offered this coming spring term.

I would very much appreciate it if you would bring History 695 to the attention of interested students. As you may remember (1) the course is open to both undergraduates and graduate students,* (2) it will not presuppose any background or skill in mathematics, (3) it will deal with bibliography and sources as well as statistical techniques, and (4) several members of the History Department will come in to discuss their usage of quantitative methods for various kinds of research.

Because of my own particular interests the practical applications will concern primarily political history, but this emphasis will not preclude reading and discussion of studies in the social, economic, and intellectual fields. Insofar as possible students will be free to concentrate upon their areas of special interest.

A tentative outline (subject to modification according to the needs of students) runs as follows:

Part I. Introduction to Historical Statistics (Weeks 1-7)

Relationships between theory, data, and technique; descriptive statistics, measures of inequality, non-parametric tests, analysis of variance, simple regression and correlation, multiple relationships, time series, the uses of computers.

Part II. Approaches to Politics (Weeks 8-12)

1. The Study of Elites
2. Legislative Roll-Call Analysis
3. Content Analysis
4. Election Analysis
5. Comparative Political History

*Consent of the instructor is required for admission to the course. Students are invited to call me to arrange appointments (263-2339; 233-0087 evenings) or come directly to my office at 4101 Humanities. I will be out of town from January 24 through 31, but will be here the rest of the time.

Part III. Student Research/Study Reports (Weeks 13-15)

Basic readings will include Charles Dollar and Richard Jensen, An Historian's Guide to Statistics (forthcoming); V. Ø. Key, A Primer of Statistics for Political Scientists; Ole Holsti, Content Analysis for the Humanities and Social Sciences;

Lee F. Anderson et al, Legislative Roll-Call Analysis;
Don Karl Rowney and James Q. Graham, eds., Quantitative History: Selected Readings in the Quantitative Analysis of Historical Data;

Robert P. Swearinga, ed., Quantification in American History: Theory and Research. Examples of quantitative research would refer to the U.S., Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere.

History 695 will probably meet on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 3:30 to 5:00.