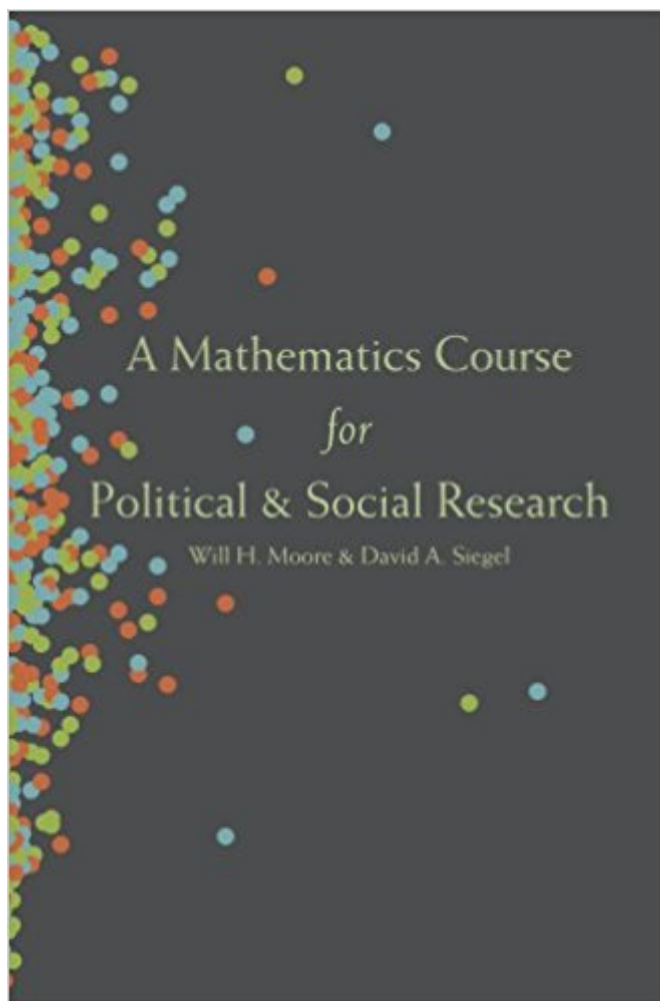


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A Mathematics Course For Political And Social Research



Synopsis

Political science and sociology increasingly rely on mathematical modeling and sophisticated data analysis, and many graduate programs in these fields now require students to take a "math camp" or a semester-long or yearlong course to acquire the necessary skills. Available textbooks are written for mathematics or economics majors, and fail to convey to students of political science and sociology the reasons for learning often-abstract mathematical concepts. A Mathematics Course for Political and Social Research fills this gap, providing both a primer for math novices in the social sciences and a handy reference for seasoned researchers. The book begins with the fundamental building blocks of mathematics and basic algebra, then goes on to cover essential subjects such as calculus in one and more than one variable, including optimization, constrained optimization, and implicit functions; linear algebra, including Markov chains and eigenvectors; and probability. It describes the intermediate steps most other textbooks leave out, features numerous exercises throughout, and grounds all concepts by illustrating their use and importance in political science and sociology. Uniquely designed and ideal for students and researchers in political science and sociology Uses practical examples from political science and sociology Features "Why Do I Care?" sections that explain why concepts are useful Includes numerous exercises Complete online solutions manual (available only to professors, email david.siegel at duke.edu, subject line "Solution Set") Selected solutions available online to students

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Customer Reviews

"This book by Moore and Siegel, intended for the advanced political and social science student,

appropriately avoids mathematical proofs and unnecessarily formal definitions while maintaining rigor and proper terminology. . . . When needed, the clear illustrations accompany the material, providing strong visualization of the related concept."--Choice
"Written in an intuitive and accessible way, this book can be used as a primer for math novices in the social sciences as well as a handy reference for the researchers in this area."--Nicolae Popovici, *Studia Mathematica*

"Moore and Siegel provide an exceptionally clear exposition for political scientists with little formal training in mathematics. They do this by emphasizing intuition and providing reasons for why the topic is important. Anyone who has taught a first-year graduate course in political methodology has heard students ask why they need to know mathematics. It is refreshing to have the answers in this book."--Jan Box-Steffensmeier, Ohio State University
"This highly accessible book provides a comprehensive introduction to the essential mathematical concepts political science students need to succeed in graduate school and their research careers. It assumes students have no mathematical background beyond high school algebra, and uses examples from political science. Moore and Siegel explain concepts in plain English and do an excellent job balancing the technical details with the intuition needed to understand them."--Kyle A. Joyce, University of California, Davis
"The major hurdle in teaching math to political science graduate students isn't the math. It's convincing them to concentrate on difficult topics that seem abstruse and useless. This book persistently reminds students why quantitative methods are the coin of the political science realm. I can see it becoming a staple of graduate courses for years."--William Minozzi, Ohio State University

For decades, political scientists with little math background were introduced to the techniques using books borrowed from economics departments. I myself used Chiang as an undergraduate, then used Binmore and Simon & Blume as a graduate student. When I tried to teach, the selections were not much better: I tried Sydsaeter & Hammond, Klein, and too many books to mention here. With rare exceptions, their examples are drawn from economics and assume the student has the appropriate background knowledge. A heavy burden fell on the instructor to persuade students that the material was relevant to them. This book has taken away some of that burden with copious "why should I care?" subsections that explain the material's relevance. As the authors explain in their preface, they also sought to strip away some of the bravado that is too typical in math textbooks, removing the "Clearly..." and "Obviously..." meta-discourse. The book's coverage makes it ideal for a one-semester math class or a summer 'math camp' for students in the typical, empirically-oriented doctoral program in political science. It has sections on univariate and multivariate calculus,

probability theory, and matrix algebra. I assigned it for my math class this summer despite having only the table of contents in hand, but after using the book, I'll assign it again (and again, and again...) enthusiastically.

A comprehensive intro to the math one needs for advanced stats. I would have rated it higher on substance but think that it was a bit lacking in physical format. So my rating is really 4 1/2 stars.

For someone who hates math, this was an awesome intro to complex topics. The corresponding video lectures were very helpful.

Good book! Especially like the way the authors link math to social research.

Clear, accessible, and well-written. The authors make a great effort to keep all readers on board and to explain why mathematical concepts are useful for political scientists at every stage.

classic math book... have to buy it but a little bit expensive.

Not accessible to readers at all who don't have a math vocabulary background.

Difficult to follow, some exercises were wrong. Overall did not really use it for my class.

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