Introduction to Political Analysis – POLS 3302-002 – Fall 2020

Hybrid Face-to-Face & Asynchronous Online

Professor: Dr. Gregory Saxton
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Office Hours: MF 11AM – 12:30PM
Office: Holden Hall 023

F2F Meetings: Friday, 1:00 – 1:50 PM
F2F Location: Agriculture Science 214
Online Meetings: Asynchronous on Blackboard

Overview:

This course is meant to familiarize students with political science research methodology, as well as how to understand and conduct political science research. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to identify and locate academic sources on a variety of political and social science topics, to identify the particular research designs used in these studies, to identify the strengths and weaknesses of these studies, and to utilize these publications and research methods in future political science courses. In addition to mastering the nuts-and-bolts of political science research design, you will also learn how to conduct quantitative analysis in Excel. The skills you learn in this class will be useful in your academic life and in your future employment.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand the basic goals of social science research and describe the purpose of research design in political science.
    - Evaluation method: Exam 1
2. Be able to locate and summarize peer reviewed sources through library databases
    - Evaluation method: Lab 1
3. Demonstrate the ability to perform descriptive statistics by hand
    - Evaluation method: Lab 3
4. Demonstrate the ability to perform bivariate and multivariate statistics in Excel
    - Evaluation method: Lab 4, Lab 5, Research paper part 2
5. Learn how to formulate an appropriate research question, develop testable hypotheses, and operationalize concepts in order to test said hypotheses
    - Evaluation method: Research paper part 1
6. Have a working knowledge of basic descriptive statistics and be able to interpret the types of regression analyses that appear in published articles
    - Evaluation method: Lab 2, Exam 2

Course Materials

<u>Required Text</u>
Johnson, Janet, H. T. Reynolds, and Jason Mycoff. 2019. *Political Science Research Methods*. Sage CQ Press, 9th Edition. ISBN 9781544331430. You're welcome to purchase an older version of the required textbook if you prefer, but you are responsible for checking content order changes.

You will need access to a computer with a reliable internet connection for the online portion of the class and in order to complete/submit assignments. Additionally, we will be using Microsoft Excel in this class. You can download the entire MS Office suite free-of-charge through TTU at this site: http://www.depts.ttu.edu/itts/software/

In addition to the textbook, you will also be responsible for reading a variety of peer-reviewed research articles and book chapters. These readings are listed in the course schedule [Author's Last Name (Year of Publication)] and can be found in the relevant weekly module folder on Blackboard.

All of your assignments will be completed on Blackboard. If you are having trouble with Blackboard, it is your responsibility to contact Blackboard support and get the issue resolved. Their email is blackboard@ttu.edu

Course Requirements

To accommodate Texas Tech University's COVID-19 reopening plans, this course will be taught in a hybrid format that combines face-to-face (F2F) instruction with remote online learning. In terms of what that means, here is what you can expect.

1. This class was originally scheduled to meet in person MWF from 1-1:50PM. Moving forward, the Monday/Wednesday sessions will take place asynchronously on Blackboard. We will meet in person on Friday from 1-1:50PM.
2. "Asynchronous" means that the online materials will be available for you to work through whenever you want, so long as you complete them prior to 11:59PM on Thursday each week.
3. The online learning modules will be available no later than 9AM each Monday.
4. Our Friday F2F session will run largely like a discussion session where we go over what you've learned in the online modules and apply the week's concepts.
5. All homework, labs, written assignments, and exams will be completed on Blackboard.
6. Although there are a number of benefits to F2F instruction that are difficult to replicate in a virtual learning environment, I understand that many of you will have concerns about being in a classroom this fall. You are welcome to join the Friday meeting via Zoom – although I expect you to participate just like if you were in class. I will also record and post the audio from the F2F meetings, along with any slides I use.
7. **Pay close attention to due dates in the course schedule. All due dates correspond to 11:59PM Central Time.** Do not wait until the last minute to complete assignments. Late-night technology problems are not an acceptable excuse for missing a deadline, especially since assignments are available for you to work on well in advance of the due date!

Earning Your Grade

The grading and assignments for this course have been designed to offer you *a variety of ways to succeed.* Below is a breakdown of how your grade for this course will be assessed.

Lab Assignments: 20% (4 x 5% each)
Homework Assignments: 20% (5 x 4% each)
Research Paper: 30% (2 parts x 15% each)
Exams: 30% (2 midterms x 15% each)

Lab Assignments: Throughout the semester, you will complete five (5) lab assignments that will allow you to apply the various research method techniques we cover in class. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest lab grade. Accordingly, your lab grade will be worth 20% of your final grade (5% each). Lab due dates are listed in the course schedule. You will have access to your lab assignments throughout the semester on Blackboard under the "Lab Assignments" link on the left-hand toolbar. Because the labs are available to you from the beginning of the semester, **lab assignments cannot be submitted late or made up in any way.**

Homework Assignments: Throughout the semester, you will complete five (5) homework assignments that are designed to check your understanding of concepts and methods we will be covering this in class. Accordingly, your homework grade will be worth 20% of your final grade (4% each). Homework due dates are listed in the course schedule. You will have access to your homework assignments throughout the semester on Blackboard under the "Homework Assignments" link on the left-hand toolbar. Because the homeworks are available to you from the beginning of the semester, **homework assignments cannot be submitted late or made up in any way.**

Research Paper: This course requires students to complete two written assignments. The first paper will include 1) research question, 2) theory (and hypotheses), and 3) research design. The second paper will present data analysis and a discussion of findings. Each paper should be no longer than six double-spaced pages of text. More detailed descriptions of these assignments will be posted to Blackboard under the "Research Paper" link. Each paper will constitute 15% of your final grade.

Both installments of your research paper will be uploaded to Blackboard and processed through plagiarism checking software. If you fail to submit your paper by the due date, it will be penalized by 20 (twenty) points for every day (out of 100 points). That means if you turn it in one day late, I will calculate a grade out of 100 *and then subtract* 20 points.

Exams: You will take two (2) non-cumulative midterm exams on Blackboard. Each exam will consist of 30 multiple-choice questions. You will have 50 minutes to complete the exam, and you can only take it once. That said, you should not take the exam until you have studied all the material. Each exam will be available from 9AM the day prior until 11:59PM Central Time on the date listed in the course schedule. After 50 minutes (or after 11:59PM), the exam will auto-submit and any unanswered questions will be marked wrong. You can take the exam whenever you want during the period it is open, but you must complete it by 11:59PM on the due date.

Students are responsible for all devices (i.e., computers, printers, iPads, cell phones, scanners) and reliable internet/WiFi connection during all required work in this class. Plan ahead and have a back-up plan in place

Calculating Your Grade

Each assignment will receive a percentage grade and both midterm and final grade formulas will result in a percentage, which will translate into a letter grade using the following scale:

Points	Letter Grade
97-100%	A+
93-96%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
…	
59% or below	F

Please do not contact me requesting an arbitrary grade increase (this includes requests for "rounding" at the end of the semester). If you have an appeal about an assignment grade besides a simple clerical error, you must type a formal appeal describing the problem. Your appeal should clearly explain why you believe that your original work correctly answered the question and make a cogent argument for improving your grade. Attach a copy of the original work to your appeal. This appeal will not be accepted within two days of the return of the assignments or exam, as the intention of this rule is to allow you time to consider and formulate your appeal and let any emotions cool.

I will make the final determination about "rounding" and will heavily base my final decision on a holistic evaluation of your participation during the semester.

Attendance Policy

There is no official attendance policy for this class. I will not take attendance during our F2F meetings, and the rest of the course will be completed online at your own pace. If you miss a Friday in-person meeting, it is your responsibility to review the material you missed.

Additional TTU Rules

- In case of an illness that will require an absence from class for more than one week, the student should notify her/his academic dean. The dean's office will inform the student's instructors through the departmental office. In case of class absences because of a brief illness, the student should inform the instructor directly. OP 34.04
- The Texas state legislature has passed rules governing absences for **religious observances**. TTU OP 34.19 stipulates the following:

- o A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence.
- o A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence.
- o A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence; however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment satisfactorily.

Academic Accommodations

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note, instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information you may contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405.

LGBTQIA Support

I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu, 806.742.5433.

Academic Integrity, Cheating and Plagiarism

Cheating and plagiarism are serious crimes and will be handled in accordance with Texas Tech University policy. **I have no tolerance for this type of behavior**. Students caught cheating may receive a failing grade for the course, not simply for the assignment, and the incident may be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. **Remember that copying from internet sources, closely paraphrasing sources, and quoting without citing sources are all forms of plagiarism.** For more information on the definitions of and penalties for cheating and plagiarism, please consult the following website: http://www.depts.ttu.edu/dos/handbook/

Classroom Behavior and Civility

Please be respectful to others in this class and engage in civil discourse when we discuss topics with a diversity of perspectives. This includes being respectful in online discussions, during Zoom meetings, *and* in your engagement with course materials. It is one thing to disagree with the normative basis of a question or argument, but in disagreeing, it is everyone's responsibility to do so in a respectful manner. Critiques of readings should be based in scientific reason and not in the character of the author. Any personal or discriminatory remarks based on race, sex, religion, age, ethnicity, nationality, or sexual orientation made by students will likewise not be tolerated.

COVID-19 Policies

- <mark>Face coverings are required in class</mark>, as well as in all university buildings.
- Students are expected to sit at least six (6) feet apart in class. On the first day of class, I will create a seating chart based on where you're seated. To allow for contract tracing if/when someone becomes sick, <mark>you MUST sit in your assigned seat every time we meet in person</mark>.
- If Texas Tech University campus operations are required to change because of health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that this course will move to a fully online delivery format. Should that be necessary, students will need to have access to a webcam and microphone for remote delivery of the class.
- If you are ill and think the symptoms might be COVID-19-related:
  - Call Student Health Services at 806.743.2848 or your health care provider.
  - Self-report as soon as possible using the Dean of Students COVID-19 webpage. This website has specific directions about how to upload documentation from a medical provider and what will happen if your illness renders you unable to participate in classes for more than one week.
  - If your illness is determined to be COVID-19-related, all remaining documentation and communication will be handled through the Office of the Dean of Students, including notification of your instructors of the period of time you may be absent from and may return to classes.
- Above all, <mark>if you are feeling even mildly sick, please do not come to class</mark>. As long as you are keeping up with the course materials, your grade will not be impacted by F2F attendance.

**Disclaimer – I reserve the right to modify this syllabus at any time as I see fit to better accommodate the course. Modifications will be communicated via Blackboard, email, or in class. A current version of the syllabus will always be available on Blackboard.

Course Schedule JRM denotes the required textbook by Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff. All other readings are available on Blackboard (denoted at "Bb") in the respective weekly folder Unless otherwise noted, all assignment due dates correspond to 11:59PM Central Time on **Thursdays**		
Week	**Reading**	**Assignment Due**
Week 1: 8/24 – 8/28 Introduction to the course / Scientific Research	JRM Chapter 1 "Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don't" (Bb)	No assignment due. Familiarize yourself with the syllabus and Blackboard layout.
Week 2: 8/31 – 9/4 The Empirical Approach to Political Science	JRM Chapter 2 "Political Science Methodology" by Brady et al. (Bb)	Homework 1

Week 3: 9/7 – 9/11 Beginning the Research Process	JRM Chapter 3 "Doing a Literature Review" by Knopf (Bb)	Homework 2
Week 4: 9/14 – 9/18 Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables	JRM Chapter 4 p. 73-87 (through "defining concepts") Street et al. (2017) "The Politics Effects of Having Undocumented Partents" - Bb	Lab 1
Week 5: 9/21 – 9/25 Measurement	JRM Chapter 4 p. 88-98 Carnes and Lupu (2015) "Rethinging the Comparative Perspectives on Class and Representation"- Bb	Homework 3
Week 6: 9/28 – 10/2 Sampling	JRM Ch 5 **No F2F meeting this week – Relax after Exam 1**	Exam 1
Week 7: 10/5-10/9 Making Causal Inferences	JRM Chapter 6 Chen, Pan, & Xu (2016) "Sources of Authoritarian Responsiveness" - Bb	Lab 2
Week 8: 10/12 – 10/16 Survey Methods & Interviewing	JRM Chapter 9 JRM Chapter 10	Research Paper Part 1
Week 9: 10/19 – 10/23 Making Sense of Data: First Steps	JRM Chapter 11 Kastellec and Leoni (2007) "Using Graphs Instead of Tables" - Bb	Lab 3
Week 10: 10/26 – 10/30 Statistical Inference	JRM Chapter 12 "Margin of Error in Presidential Polls" *Pew Research* - Bb	Lab 4
Week 11: 11/2 – 11/6 Bivariate Relationships	JRM Chapter 13	Homework 4 Make sure to vote on Tuesday!
Week 12: 11/9 – 11/13 Multivariate Analysis Part 1	JRM Chapter 14 307-323 (through "categorical independent variables") *Applied Regression* by Lewis-Beck Chapter 3 (Multiple Regression) - Bb	Lab 5

Week 13: 11/16 – 11/20	JRM Chapter 14 324-329	Homework 5
Multivariate Analysis Part 2	Barnes, Beaulieu, and Saxton (2018) "Restoring Trust in the Police" - Bb	
Week 14: 11/23 – 11/27 - No Class This Week - Thanksgiving		
Week 15: 11/30 – 12/2	There are no assigned readings this week.	Research Paper Part 2
Final exam review		Classes end on a Wednesday – we'll hold a virtual exam review session via Zoom.
Final Exam - Due by Tuesday December 8 at 11:59PM Central Time		