POLS 3314-001 (66759)
Introduction to Political Analysis
Fall 2023

Class: M W F 02:00 – 02:50 pm, Holden Hall (HH) 121

Instructor: Dongan Tan
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Office Hours: Monday 3:00 – 6:00 pm (or through Zoom)
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I Course Description

Political science research differs significantly from common political discourse. Instead of partisan, philosophical, or ideological arguments, political scientists are engaged in research that aims to explain how politics operates. This course gives an introduction to research design and quantitative data analysis, two essential components of political science research. Research design includes the formulation of appropriate research questions, the development of theories and hypotheses, and consideration of issues of causation. The course will also introduce statistics, the standard method for doing social science research. This course focuses on constructing convincing, systematic arguments utilizing empirical facts and data. Statistical analysis is now an crucial ability in business, politics, journalism, policy analysis, and academia. In this regard, the course can also provide a skill set that is highly useful in the real world.

Required Textbook

Pollock, Phillip H. 2016. *The Essentials of Political Analysis,* 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: CQ Press (ISBN: 978-1506305837).

Required Software

Stata is required. Stata/BE 6-month student licenses are available for purchase here: https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/profplus/student-pricing/. The cost of the license is $48. It is possible that Stata will require you to send an image of your student ID in order to receive this discount. After payment, you should be able to download the software. Get it right away. In the second week of class, we will begin use Stata.

Recommended Resources

The Essentials of Political Analysis student companion website is a recommended resources for additional exploration: https://edge.sagepub.com/pollock. This site is a particularly good resource for review of course materials.

II Course Learning Outcomes

The major mode of instruction will be lectures, with guided labs and homework serving as secondary modes. Upon completion of POLS 3314, students will:

- Describe the purpose and importance of research design in political analysis.
  Methods of assessment: writing assignment, lab, exam
- Demonstrate the capacity to compute and interpret descriptive statistics.
  Methods of assessment: lab, exam

- Demonstrate the capability to compute and interpret bivariate statistics.
  Methods of assessment: writing assignment, lab, exam
- Design a suitable political science research project and use statistics to test a hypothesis.
  Methods of assessment: research paper
- Employ statistical software to execute advanced multivariate statistics.
  Methods of assessment: lab, research paper

Course Expectations: The course does incorporate statistics and computation, but neither advanced mathematics nor prior computing knowledge are required. However, this course requires a strong work ethic and determination to succeed. All assignments and exams are to be turned in via Blackboard by the assigned due date. On the course site, you will find all necessary materials, including syllabus, lecture slides, writing assignment-related resources, exam reviews, submission portals for all assignments and exams, grades, and course announcements. Students are responsible for monitoring Blackboard and remaining updated on all announcements and assignments.

III Course Requirement and Grading

Final grades will be calculated based on the following components:

- 20% Homework: 4 homework assignments.
- 18% Labs: 6 in-class labs, administered about every two weeks.
- 22% Research Paper: 3 short essay assignments.
- 10% Presentation
- 15% Midterm Exam: **March 1st, Wednesday at 2:00 pm to 2:50 pm.**
- 15% Final Exam: **May 9th, Tuesday at 4:30 pm to 7:00 pm.**

Homework (5% each): 4 homework assignments will be assigned throughout the semester, usually given every two or three weeks. They are intended to facilitate the application and practice of topics taught in readings and lectures. In the end, they will assist you in developing data management and analysis abilities and gaining proficiency with key analytical tools. Assignments will be made available on Blackboard once students have learned the necessary concepts and skills.

Labs (3% each): 6 labs will be administered throughout the semester, administered about every two weeks. Like homework, they are intended to enable students to use software to answer questions. They will be more intensive than homework tasks, but I will be present to answer any questions. Blackboard will be populated with all labs as class begins. Students are encouraged to bring their own laptops to download, finish, and submit assignments electronically.

Research Paper (22%): This course requires you to select an appropriate research question that you think it is interesting or important in political science study, and to conduct your own research project by writing 3 short essays, each building on the preceding one. The topics of each paper are as follows:

1. Research question and literature review (6%) – **due February 12th by midnight**
2. Theory, hypothesis, and research design (6%) – **due April 2nd by midnight**
3. Data analysis (10%) – **due May 7th by midnight**

Writing Format Each paper should be double-spaced, written in Times New Roman, size 12 font, 1-inch margins, and no longer than five pages including bibliography. Papers should be submitted to Blackboard in PDF format. Early in the semester, more instructions will be provided regarding content, structure, and grading rubric criteria. In addition, students will have access to various guidelines on Blackboard detailing the proper execution of this task and will be introduced to additional resources, such as library resources and the Writing Center, to help their success.

Presentation (10%): All students are required to conduct a formal presentation of their research paper during the final two weeks. The content of the presentation should include the research question, literature review, theory and hypothesis, research design and results, with the research design and results being the most essential part. I will randomly draw names to determine presentations days. Presentations will be around 10 minutes long, followed by a Q&A, depending on availably of time. The presentation must be formal, which is to say students must prepare slides. More details will be provided as we approach those dates.

Midterm and Final Exams (15% each): There will be 2 exams. Each exam will be administered in-class, with closed books and notes. There will be multiple-choice questions and definition recall questions. Some will need mathematical calculation.[1] You may not use a phone, watch, or graphic calculator for exams involving math. The detailed information about exams will be provided before each exam. The final will be a non-cumulative exam.

Grading Scale
The grading scale used for this course is listed below.

Course Grade Scale	
A	90 – 100
B	80 – 89.9
C	70 – 79.9
D	60 – 69.9
F	≤ 59.9

In order to contest a grade, you must first meet with me. During this meeting, you may ask questions about the grading of the assignment / exam and will receive an explanation. If you are not satisfied with this explanation, you may submit the assignment for re-grading by presenting the original assignment bearing the score / feedback along with a written document explaining how your work meets the criteria of the assignment and why you feel the grade is inaccurate. Upon submission of these materials, I will regrade the assignment. All assignments for regrading must be submitted within one week of the original grade being delivered (notwithstanding religious or scheduled secular holidays). Come the end of the semester, I will not negotiate final grades.

IV Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

Students who attend class regularly exit courses with better performance metrics and, more importantly, a better grasp on concepts and their applications. This is especially true for this course. Although I do not have an attendance policy, I highly, strongly, urgently recommend

[1] Some questions may need mathematical calculation, but it does not assume any math skills beyond high school.

regular attendance. I will accommodate absences for illnesses, religious or university excused events, or personal emergencies of significant gravity but you must communicate with me for these accommodations to be activated.

Late Work and Extensions
Students will be expected to strictly adhere to the assignments and labs schedule articulated in the syllabus. Turning in assignments on time allows the instructor to provide grades and feedback in a timely manner and minimizes the possibility of students falling behind. 10 points will be deducted for every additional 24-hour period after the due date. Though turning in assignments after the due date will be costly, I am open to granting extensions on assignment due dates. In order to get a deadline extension, students must make a written request via email PRIOR to the deadline and articulate a reason for the extension. Keep in mind, it is an option for me to deny the request. In general, I am willing to grant extensions that allow to students to improve an already progressing assignment or paper, not for the purpose of allowing students to put off working on the assignment. Students that have barely started their assignment should expect to receive little sympathy.

Make-up Exams
Missed exams can be made up in cases of considerable illness, personal emergency, university-sponsored events, or religious observances *only with proper documentation and advance notification*. Exams missed due to university-sponsored events or religious holidays require that a student informs me of the absence at least two weeks in advance. The documentation must explicitly state that the student was unable to attend class on the exact date and time in question. Contact me as soon as possible if an illness or emergency arises that prevents you from taking the exam. Students must make up the missed exam within two weeks of the originally scheduled date. Failure to do so will result in a zero. Only one make-up exam will be allowed. **No make-up for the final exam!**

Communication
The best way to contact me is through email or office hours. In the event that you cannot make office hours, please request an appointment. I will respond to most emails within 48 hours of receipt. I will not respond to emails that pose questions that could be answered by reading the syllabus or the course website. I will not respond to emails that do not use proper salutations, sentence structure, and grammar and signal a relevant subject.

Etiquette
In order to create a classroom environment that is conducive to learning, you are expected to adhere to basic classroom etiquette. Do not disrupt class. This includes arriving late, packing up or leaving early, interrupting or holding side conversations, and using electronic devices in a distracting manner. In addition, students are encouraged to discuss and express opinions on many issues, some controversial, that are covered in class. Although differing perspectives are encouraged, I will not tolerate derogatory, disrespectful, or disruptive comments. I reserve the right to ask you to leave the classroom if you are disrupting or obstructing normal class functions.

Electronic Devices
Distractions in the classroom adversely affect everyone's learning and my performance as an instructor. The use of electronic devices in this class is limited to laptops for academic purposes only. They are to be used to take notes, and not to play games, watch videos, engage in social

media etc. All cell phones should be turned off. There should be no texting of messages during class.

Academic Integrity
According to the Texas Tech Student Handbook, academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, misrepresenting facts, and any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor) or the attempt to commit such an act. Any such act will not be tolerated in this class. Any student caught plagiarizing work will be given a failing grade for the course and reported to university officials for possible expulsion from the University. Additional information on TTU's policy concerning academic dishonesty can be found at https://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentconduct/.

Accommodations for Disabilities
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. Official university documentation regarding disabilities will be required. For additional information, please consult the Student Disability Services office at 335 West Hall, 806-742-2405, or https://www.depts.ttu.edu/sds/.

Religious Observances
Texas law requires institutions of higher education to excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day. The student shall also be excused for time necessary to travel. An institution may not penalize the student for the absence and allows for the student to take an exam or complete an assignment from which the student is excused. OP 34.19 indicates that a student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known to the instructor well prior to the absence.

V Course Schedule
You will find the specific course schedule on the following page. You are responsible for reading the required materials before each topic and submitting your assignment by the due date. The presentation schedule will be delivered via email and posted on Blackboard later. I also posted the course schedule on Blackboard so that you may conveniently download and print it.

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Readings
1	W	11-Jan	Introduction	
	F	13-Jan	SPSA Conference – no class	
2	M	16-Jan	Holiday – no class	
	W	18-Jan	What is political science?	
	F	20-Jan	Intro to data tools	Skim Schaffner's Intro Guide to Stata
3	M	23-Jan	Theory building	Read Hoover-Green's "How to Read Political Science"
	W	25-Jan	Theory building	
	F	27-Jan	Lab 1	
4	M	30-Feb	Defining concepts	Read Pollock chapter 1
	W	1-Feb	Measuring concepts *Homework 1 due before midnight*	
	F	3-Feb	Data and variables	Read Pollock chapter 2
5	M	6-Feb	Data and variables	
	W	8-Feb	Lab 2	
	F	10-Feb	Hypotheses	Read Pollock chapter 3
	1st essay assignment due by midnight on Sunday, February 12th			
6	M	13-Feb	Hypotheses	
	W	15-Feb	Research design	Read Pollock chapter 4
	F	17-Feb	Research design *Homework 2 due before midnight*	
7	M	20-Feb	Controlled comparisons	Read Pollock chapter 5
	W	22-Feb	Controlled comparisons	
	F	24-Feb	Lab 3	
8	M	27-Feb	Catchup/ Exam review	
	W	1-Mar	**Midterm Exam**	2:00 pm – 2:50 pm
	F	3-Mar	Statistical inference	Read Pollock chapter 6
9	M	6-Mar	Statistical inference *Homework 3 due before midnight*	
	W	8-Mar	Hypothesis testing	Read Pollock chapter 7
	F	10-Mar	Hypothesis testing	
10	M	13-Mar	Spring Vacation – no class	
	W	15-Mar		
	F	17-Mar		
11	M	20-Mar	Lab 4	
	W	22-Mar	Bivariate analysis	Read Pollock chapter 8
	F	24-Mar	Bivariate analysis	
12	M	27-Mar	Lab 5	
	W	29-Mar	Multivariate analysis	
	F	31-Mar	Multivariate analysis	
	2nd essay assignment due by midnight on Sunday, April 2nd			
13	M	3-Apr	Logistic regression	Read Pollock chapter 9
	W	5-Apr	Logistic regression	
	F	7-Apr	Presenting results	Read K & L's "Using Graphs Instead of Tables in POLS"
14	M	10-Apr	Holiday - no class	
	W	12-Apr	Lab 6	
	F	14-Apr	MPSA Conference – no class *Homework 4 due before midnight*	
15	M	17-Apr	Presentation	The schedule will be sent via email and posted on Blackboard.
	W	19-Apr		
	F	21-Apr		
16	M	24-Apr		
	W	26-Apr		
	F	28-Apr		
17	M	1-May	Catchup/ Exam review	
	3rd essay assignment due by midnight on Sunday, May 7th			
18	T	9-May	**Final Exam**	4:30 pm – 7:00 pm