

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO
POLS 3600-002 (CRN 23630): Research in Political Science
Spring 2023
TR 1:30pm-3:20pm
Liberal Arts Building 403

Instructor: Dr. Cigdem Sirin (Phonetic: Cheedém Shirin  Hear my name) / Pronouns: She|Her|Hers)
Office Location: Benedict Hall 302
E-mail: cigdemsirin@utep.edu
Class Website: Blackboard through MyUTEP portal
Office Hours: Tuesdays 12pm-1pm (both in person and virtually *via Zoom*) or by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

The primary goal of this course is to introduce you to the scientific study of politics. Throughout this course, we will cover various topics including developing research questions, theories and hypotheses, evaluating causal relationships, designing research, operationalization and measurement of variables, analyzing data, and making statistical inferences. Therein, you will learn how to apply the scientific method for studying political phenomena by conducting your own empirical research.

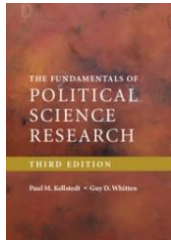
LEARNING OUTCOMES

I believe, with adequate effort and willingness, all of you are capable of doing well in this course. By the end of this course, you can expect to accomplish the following learning outcomes:

- To define, understand, and apply basic concepts, principles, and practices regarding the scientific study of politics.
- To develop research questions and hypotheses, identify and apply relevant theoretical frameworks, and formulate strategies for systematic research.
- To recognize and apply basic analytical methods and approaches that political scientists use for the systematic study of political phenomena.
- To draw valid inferences from statistical analyses by using the scientific method.
- To understand and apply the basics of academic writing commonly employed in the political science literature.
- To collaborate on research projects via team-based learning activities.

Targeted [UTEP Edge](#) advantages: Communication, critical thinking, problem solving, social responsibility, and global awareness.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXT



Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 3rd edition. New York: Cambridge University Press. (ISBN: 9781108131704)

This book is available at the UTEP Bookstore and also available at various other venues for rent or purchase.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

Apart from the required book, I will also assign several additional readings as listed in the course schedule section of this syllabus. All these items are available on Blackboard in the “Additional Readings” folder.

GRADING POLICY

Your final grade in this class will be based on the following requirements:

Course Requirement	Due Dates*	Weight
Midterm Exam	03/07	20 percent
Final Exam	TBA	20 percent
Research Project	05/07	20 percent
Research Presentation	04/27 - 05/02	5 percent
3 Homework Assignments	02/23; 03/28; 04/13	15 percent (in total)
5 Quizzes	Various dates	10 percent (in total)
Class Participation	All meetings	10 percent

*The designated time zone for all due dates is Mountain Time (MT).

All grades (including the final grade) are based on the following distribution of points:

Points	Letter
≥ 89.50	A
79.50-89.49	B
69.50-79.49	C
59.50-69.49	D
≤ 59.49	F

If you are concerned about your grade, please contact me and/or visit me during my office hours or by appointment. I will be happy to give you personalized feedback and suggestions on how to improve your course performance.

EXAMS

There are two exams for the course: a midterm and a final. Each exam constitutes 20 percent of your final grade point average. Questions are based on the readings, lecture notes, and online discussions. The exams will be “open book” so that you will be able to review all support materials you think are necessary to answer the exam questions. The exams will be administered

via Blackboard. The exams are to be taken individually—it is not allowed to discuss the exam questions with the classmates or anyone else. Refer to the section on “Academic Integrity” below to review the university and instructor policies on cheating, collusion, and plagiarism.

TEAM-BASED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

At the beginning of the semester, the students will be assigned into research teams and will engage in various activities. Each team will collaborate on a group project, collectively present their research, and work together on homework assignments that will constitute key parts of their research paper.

Among other Edge Advantages, these activities are particularly in line with the Edge Advantage “Critical Thinking” in which students become adept at analyzing and evaluating issues in order to solve problems and develop informed opinions, as well as the Edge Advantage “Teamwork” where students learn to participate as an effective, efficient member of a group in order to meet a common goal. Another Edge Advantage that naturally aligns with working as a research team is “Leadership,” which urges students to step up, think, and act critically and creatively to bring others together to accomplish a common task—especially since each team member will take the lead in a specific part of the project.

GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the scientific study of politics. An important part of this goal is to help you develop the analytical skills necessary to grasp the dynamics of systematically studying political phenomena by writing an empirical research paper on a topic of your choosing as a group. The research project constitutes 20 percent of your final grade point average. Throughout the semester, we will discuss the expectations for the research paper in greater detail. Below are the major guidelines:

Formatting Guidelines

- The paper should be double-spaced and 10-12 pages long (not counting the cover page, abstract, tables, figures, and references).
- The paper should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins, and pages should be numbered.
- There should be no more than two extensive quotations (in excess of three lines of text).

Citation and References

- In your research paper, you must provide at least 10 scholarly sources (academic books and articles) or you will lose 5 points for each missing scholarly source. You can use up to four readings assigned for the course, but they should not be the sole source of information. If you are unclear about what constitutes a scholarly book or article, please ask (for example, Wikipedia is NOT a scholarly source, nor are magazines and newspapers such as the *Economist* or the *New York Times*).
- The formatting of your paper should follow the *American Political Science Association* (APSA) style. Specifically, you are required to carefully read the document on citation and reference requirements (also available on Blackboard) and employ these formatting rules for your research paper. Papers submitted with an inaccurate citation/reference format will lose up to 25 points (depending on severity).

Plagiarism

- Make sure you are aware of the scholarly pitfalls of plagiarism, which are discussed in detail in the document on academic misconduct (available on Blackboard). Specifically, whenever you use an idea or information from another source, you must give credit to the author by properly citing them *within the text* as well as by including a list of all references at the end of the text. Not doing so constitutes an act of plagiarism, which will result in a score of zero for the paper.

Quality of Writing

- In addition to the substantive quality of your assignments, grades will also be based on the clarity of one's writing (e.g., appropriate tone of writing, organization, quality of spelling and grammar, etc.).
- Please note that the University Writing Center (UWC) provides writing assistance to all UTEP students. The UWC is located on the second (ground) floor of the library in Room 227 Library; phone: (915) 747-5112. The UWC also provides online writing consultation – visit <http://uwc.utep.edu/index.php/online-consultation> to make an online appointment.

Deadline

You should submit your paper electronically via “SafeAssign” (an online originality checking service made available by UTEP and embedded in Blackboard) by the designated deadline. Papers submitted late will lose 10 points (1 letter grade) per day (including weekends). Here is a helpful video tutorial on "Safe Assign" paper submission/originality check tool: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gGRgjzDYEA>.

GROUP RESEARCH PRESENTATION

You will present your research project (approximately 15 minutes presentation and 5 minutes of Q&A) in one of the class sessions at the end of the semester. You should prepare and submit a PowerPoint document on Blackboard by the end of the designated date of your presentation. Research presentation constitutes 5 percent of your final grade point average.

GROUP HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

There are three homework assignments that constitute, in total, 15 percent of your final grade. These assignments are designed to serve as necessary steps that will contribute to the process of writing your research paper. The assignments should be double-spaced; 2-4 pages long (not counting the front sheet, references, tables, and/or figures); typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins; and pages should be numbered. Assignments that do not follow the formatting guidelines will lose 10 points.

Assignments should be submitted electronically via “SafeAssign” (embedded in Blackboard) by 11:59pm (MT) on the designated due date. Assignments submitted late will lose 10 points (1 letter grade) per day (including weekends). Upon completion of each assignment, each group member will also conduct peer evaluations of the performance and contributions of other group members regarding the group project. These evaluations will be due by 11:59pm on the due date of each assignment (to be submitted via Blackboard). Those who fail to submit their peer evaluations on time will lose 10 points.

Assignment 1:

Pick a political topic that you are interested in doing research on. After you identify the topic: (1) formulate a research question based on two factors that you expect to be causally related, (2) provide a credible causal explanation for your arguments and expectations, and (3) present your hypothesis.

Assignment 2:

Submit your review of the literature regarding your research topic. You must provide at least 7 scholarly sources (academic books and articles) or you will lose 5 points for each missing scholarly source. On a separate page, you should also include the references that you cite in your literature review. Follow the *American Political Science Association* (APSA) style. Specifically, you are required to carefully read the document on citation and reference requirements (available on Blackboard) and employ these formatting rules for this assignment.

Assignment 3:

Discuss your data and research design. Specifically: (1) discuss your operationalization of the dependent and independent variables (including the control variables) that you will employ in your research design, (2) identify and discuss the data that you will make use of to test your hypothesis, and (3) provide a table of summary statistics for all of the variables you will use in your analytical models.

QUIZZES

As part of the coursework, you will have periodic in-class and take-home quizzes (a total of 5) over the assigned readings for a given class meeting and/or on the material presented in the lectures. The quizzes will constitute, in total, 10 percent of your final grade. Please keep in mind that the quizzes will not be announced ahead of time. Students who are not in class on the day of a quiz will receive a zero for that quiz without a university-excused absence. Only those with a valid university-excused absence (that is appropriately documented for the relevant class day) will be given a make-up quiz.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

I expect everyone to attend class on the scheduled dates and times. Keep in mind that class participation is more than just attending the class meetings—you should come to class alert, be willing to ask and answer questions, and contribute intellectually to class discussions. To do so, you should complete the assigned readings before each class meeting. Exams will cover material from the readings and the lectures, so doing just one or the other will leave you at a disadvantage. You will be asked to sign an attendance sheet at each class meeting and it is your responsibility to make sure to sign-in. In-class attendance and participation will count for 10 percent of your final grade such that one must attend and participate in class to earn an A. Only those students who attend class regularly and actively participate in class discussions will receive full credit (100) for their class participation grade. *After two unexcused absences, I will begin to deduct 10 points from your participation grade for each absence thereafter. If you arrive late and request to sign-in at the end of the class meeting, I will deduct 5 points from your participation grade for each incident of tardiness after two late arrivals. The same policy will apply to incidents of leaving class early.*

COURSE/INSTRUCTOR POLICIES

E-Mail Protocol

UTEP e-mail is the best way to contact me. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt during weekdays. I will respond to weekend messages by Monday at the latest. When e-mailing me, please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

Online Etiquette and Effective Communication

It is essential that utmost respect and professionalism be adhered in all exchanges between class members. This is a political science course and we will be at times discussing sensitive and controversial topics. In our virtual discussions, avoid any unnecessary arguments with other class members, such as political polemical arguments (e.g., negative partisan talking points targeting those of opposing ideological perspectives or particular political figures) or, even worse, personal attacks on others for having different views. No inappropriate behavior will be tolerated. Unprofessional conduct will be dealt with swiftly through the university and it is at the professor's full discretion to have a student dropped from the course for any inappropriate behavior.

Excused Absences and Excuse for Late Work

I will excuse absences and late work when a student participates in an official university-recognized activity, observes a recognized religious holiday of their faith that happens to coincide with a class session, is called to and participates in active military service for a reasonably brief period, or confronts a medical emergency. To be excused, please notify me in writing prior to the date of absence if possible. That said, in cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. a medical emergency or lack of childcare), please provide notification as soon as possible following your absence. *If available*, please also provide satisfactory documentation verifying the reason for the absence (such as a doctor's note) for my records. According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, "When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of "W" before the course drop deadline and with a grade of "F" after the course drop deadline."

Incomplete Grade Policy

Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

Academic Integrity

Academic misconduct and dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. This includes, but is not limited to cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student and possessing unauthorized materials during a test. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Plagiarism is commonly defined as passing off the ideas, works, writing, etc., of another person as your own. Accordingly, you are committing

plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own work, even if you have the permission of that person. If you are unsure whether a citation is required, err on the side of caution and provide one. A document detailing different forms of plagiarism is provided on Blackboard. Just as the Internet has made it easier to find material, it has also made it easier to trace the source of any written work. All written work submitted for this course will be checked for originality via *SafeAssign*—an online originality checking service made available by UTEP. Any act of academic misconduct and dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to [this link](#) for further information.

Copyright Statement for Course Materials

All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course.

Diversity

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socio-economic status, race/ethnicity, religion, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally and/or for other students.

Accessibility

It is my goal to create a learning experience that is as accessible as possible. If you anticipate any issues related to the format, materials, or requirements of this course, please meet with me outside of class so we can explore potential options. Students with disabilities may also wish to work with the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in this course, including official accommodations. Please visit their website for contact and additional information: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>. If you have already been approved for accommodations through the CASS, please meet with me so we can develop an implementation plan together.

Land Acknowledgement Statement

As members of the University of Texas at El Paso community, we acknowledge that we are meeting on unceded Indigenous land. We would like to recognize and pay our respects to the Indigenous people with long ties to the immediate region: Lipan Apache, Mescalero Apache, Piro, Manso, Suma, Jumano, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, and Tortugas Pueblo. We also acknowledge the nations whose territories include present day Texas: the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, and the peoples of Chihuahua and northern Mexico from whom most/many of our students descend, such as the Rarámuri, Tepehuan, Wixarrika and Nahuatlaca peoples. Finally, we recognize all of the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories here in Paso del Norte, on Turtle Island. The University of Texas at El Paso honors your history and cultures

and we seek greater awareness of the myriad ways in which your legacy can guide us in fruitful partnerships and mutually fulfilling relationships.

Alternate Means of Submitting Work in Case of Technical Issues

I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, please contact the UTEP [Help Desk](#). You can email me (cigdemsirin@utep.edu) your assignment as a last resort if you cannot submit your work on Blackboard due to technical issues.

SOFTWARE REQUIREMENTS

You will need the following software on your computer to efficiently work in this course (your computer may already have some of these programs installed):

- Microsoft Office. If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP's Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](#) and follow the instructions.

RESOURCES FOR ASSISTANCE

UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:

Technology Resources

[UTEP Help Desk](#): If you encounter technical difficulties beyond your scope of troubleshooting, please contact the Help Desk as they are trained specifically in assisting with technological needs of students.

Academic Resources

[UTEP Library](#): Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.

[University Writing Center \(UWC\)](#): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.

[Math Tutoring Center \(MaRCS\)](#): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.

[History Tutoring Center \(HTC\)](#): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.

[RefWorks](#): A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

Individual Resources

[Military Student Success Center](#): Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.

[Center for Accommodations and Support Services](#): Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#): Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS*

SECTION I: DESIGNING RESEARCH	
01/17	Introduction; Course Overview
01/19	The Scientific Study of Politics K & W Chapter 1
01/24	The Art of Theory Building K & W Chapter 2
01/26	Evaluating Causal Relationships K & W Chapter 3
01/31	Conducting Literature Reviews Johnson, Janet and H.T. Reynolds, with Jason D. Mycoff. 2008. <i>Political Science Research Methods</i> . Washington DC: CQ Press. Chapter 6.
02/02	An Overview of the Academic Writing Process Roselle, Laura and Sharon Spray. 2008. <i>Research and Writing in International Relations</i> . New York: Longman. Chapters 4, 11, and 12. Research Ethics Babbie, Earl. 2004. <i>The Basics of Social Research</i> . Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing. Chapter 3. Document on Academic Misconduct and Dishonesty
02/07	Research Design: Qualitative Studies Levy, Jack S. 2002. "Qualitative Methods in International Relations." In F. P. Harvey & M. Brecher (Eds.), <i>Evaluating Methodology in International Studies</i> . Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 432-454.
02/09	Research Design: Quantitative Studies K & W Chapter 4, pp. 92-99
02/14	In-class group work for the research project
02/16	Research Design: Experimental Studies
02/21	Research Design: Formal Modeling Morton, Rebecca B. 1999. <i>Methods and Models: A Guide to the Empirical Analysis of Formal Models in Political Science</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2.
02/23	Measuring Concepts of Interest K & W Chapter 5 Assignment 1 due by 11:59pm
02/28	Probability and Statistical Inference K & W Chapter 7 Johnson, Janet and H.T. Reynolds, with Jason D. Mycoff. 2008. <i>Political Science Research Methods</i> . Washington DC: CQ Press. Chapter 7.
03/02	Review for Midterm Exam
03/07	Midterm Exam

SECTION II: ANALYZING DATA	
03/09	Getting to Know Your Data K & W Chapter 6
03/13-03/17	Spring Break (No Classes)
03/21	Data Analysis Using STATA Stata Manual
03/23	Obtaining and Coding Data Brians, Craig L., Lars Willnat, Jarol B. Manheim, and Richard C. Rich. 2008. <i>Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods</i> . 7th ed. New York: Pearson/Longman. Chapter 14. Preparing Your Datasets for Analysis
03/28	Producing Descriptive Statistics and Graphs in Stata Stata Manual Assignment 2 due by 11:59pm
03/30	Bivariate Hypothesis Testing K & W Chapter 8
04/04	Two-Variable Regression Models K & W Chapter 9
04/06	Multiple Regression Models: The Basics K & W Chapter 10
04/11	In-class group work for the research project
04/13	In-class group work for the research project Assignment 3 due by 11:59pm
04/18	Multiple Regression Model Specification K & W Chapter 11
04/20	Limited Dependent Variables and Time-Series Data K & W Chapter 12
04/25	Reporting Empirical Results Johnson, Janet and H.T. Reynolds, with Jason D. Mycoff. 2008. <i>Political Science Research Methods</i> . Washington DC: CQ Press. Chapter 14. Dissecting a Sample Research Article Villalobos, José D. "Agency Input as A Policy-Making Tool: Analyzing the Influence of Agency Input on Presidential Policy Success in Congress." <i>Administration & Society</i> 45, no. 7 (2013): 837-874.
04/27	Research Presentations
05/02	Research Presentations
05/04	Concluding Remarks and Review for Final Exam
05/07	Research Project due by 11:59pm
TBA	Final Exam

*Note: This is a provisional schedule of our course. With advanced notice, I may introduce specific changes based on progress in class.