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**UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO**  
**Political Science 3600: Research in Political Science**  
**Fall 2018**

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Instructor: Dr. José D. Villalobos  
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Office Hours: MW 4-5pm (or by appointment)

Course Registration Number: 16971  
Classroom: Quinn Hall 202  
Date/Time: MW 1:30-3:20pm

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### **COURSE OVERVIEW**

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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 and also be able to incorporate your contributions into a broader perspective vis-à-vis a presentation project developed with your peers. Please note that course assignments and assessments are developed in line with UTEP's "Edge Advantages" goals. In line with UTEP's Edge mission, portions of the class will deal with civic engagement issues and the prospects for key policy reforms in the current political environment, as well as provide opportunities for students to engage in their communities to affect change through voter registration efforts or other means. I look forward to working with you during the course of the semester and encourage you to be active in our in-class activities and discussions.

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### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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I believe, with adequate effort and willingness, all of you are capable of doing well in this course.

Learning outcomes relevant to Social and Behavior Sciences (SBS) and in line with UTEP's Edge Mission - Students can expect to learn the following by the end of this course:

- To define, understand, and apply basic concepts, principles, and practices regarding the scientific study of politics (Targeted Edge Advantages: Critical thinking, Problem solving)
- To develop research questions and hypotheses, identify and apply relevant theoretical frameworks, and formulate strategies for systematic research (Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Critical thinking, Problem solving, Leadership, Confidence)
- To recognize and apply basic analytical methods and approaches that political scientists use for the systematic study of political phenomena (Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Critical thinking, Problem solving, Leadership, Confidence, Global Awareness, Social responsibility)
- To draw valid inferences from statistical analyses by using the scientific method (Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Critical thinking, Problem solving)

- To understand and apply the basics of academic writing commonly employed in the political science literature (Targeted Edge Advantages: Communication, Confidence, Social responsibility)

## OBJECTIVES FOR PROFESSIONALISM

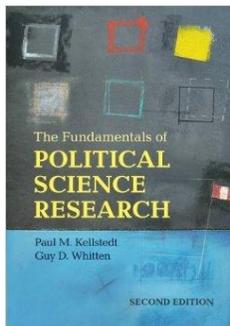
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It is essential that the utmost respect and professionalism be adhered in all exchanges between class members. This is a political science course and we will be discussing at times sensitive and controversial topics. Avoid any unnecessary arguments 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.

## REQUIRED COURSE TEXT

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Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. New York: Cambridge University Press. (ISBN: 9781107621664)

This book is available at online bookstores and suppliers in hardback, paperback, and online formats for purchase or rent.

## ADDITIONAL READINGS

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

## GRADING POLICY

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

Course Requirement	Due	Weight
Midterm Exam	10/17	15 percent
Final Exam	12/12	20 percent
Research Project	12/5	20 percent
Research Presentation	11/28 or 12/3	10 percent
Homework Assignments	Various dates	25 percent (in total)
Class Participation	All meetings	10 percent
Extra Credit Voter Registration	12/12	Up to 2 bonus points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 (or up to 102 with bonus points)</b>	

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

Points	Letter
$\geq 89.50$	A
79.50-89.49	B
69.50-79.49	C
59.50-69.49	D
$\leq 59.49$	F

I do not change grades or give individual-specific extra-credit opportunities to be fair to everyone. If you are concerned about your grade, please come and see me during my office hours. This is particularly important if your grade on the first exam is not what you expected. I will not change the grade, but I can give you feedback and suggestions on how to improve your performance in the class.

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

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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% of the 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 one unexcused absence, 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 (Note that if you leave the class early, the time of your departure will be recorded).* The class participation portion of the grade is non-negotiable and left solely to the discretion of the instructor.

### **INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROJECT**

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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 an individual, and a presentation as a group. Throughout the semester, we will discuss the expectations for the research paper (and presentation) in greater detail. Below are the major guidelines:

- The paper should be double-spaced; 5-6 pages long (not counting the cover page with your full name and title!); typed in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins; and pages should be numbered. Papers that do not follow the formatting guidelines will lose 10 points.
- Your individual paper that you will submit should have a literature review of at least 5 scholarly sources (see also below) that give a well-rounded understanding of the topic at hand. You should then follow the literature review with a paper proposal that consists of the following: a clear causal claim, independent variable, dependent variable, direction of relationships, and type of proposed approach (e.g., cross-sectional, time-series, case study, experimental, etc.).
- There should be no more than two extensive quotations (in excess of three lines of text).
- 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 her/him *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.
- 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).
- Tables and figures should be included on separate pages at the end of the text. As such, please do not embed them in the text as this may cause spacing problems. Instead, right below (or right above) the paragraph where you mention a figure or a table, insert a centered designation that reads as such:  

[Table (or Figure) 1 here]
- You must provide at least 5 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).
- 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.

- You are welcome to come and discuss your paper progress during my office hours (or by appointment).

Additional instructions will be provided in class.

Note: As you may know, UTEP has recently begun an initiative called Edge, which recognizes that “Students enter UTEP with many talents, great strengths, and big dreams. The UTEP Edge – the cross-campus culture of student success and empowerment – develops these assets through high-impact experiences made possible by the expertise and dedication of faculty, staff, alumni and community partners.” Accordingly, the course assignments are developed with a mindset to allow each student to apply their learning exercises and skills in a way that aligns with what UTEP refers to as “Edge Advantages” goals as listed under our learning outcomes for the course. To see more information about UTEP’s Edge Experiences and Edge Advantages assets, visit: <https://www.utep.edu/edge/about/about.html>

## **GROUP RESEARCH PRESENTATION**

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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 by the end of the designated date of your presentation. The research presentation constitutes 10 percent of your final grade point average. Additional instructions will be provided in class.

Note: Among other Edge Advantages mentioned above, the presentations in this course are primarily designed to trigger the Edge Advantage “Problem Solving” where students find solutions to difficult or complex issues as well as “Critical Thinking” in which students become adept at analyzing and evaluating issues in order to solve problems and develop informed opinions.

## **EXAMS**

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There are two exams for the course: a midterm exam and a comprehensive final. Questions are based on the readings, lectures, and class discussions.

### **Make-up exams**

Make-up exams will be given *only* in the case of a *documented* university-excused absence (see the “excused absences” section below). Note that make-up exams may be in a different format than the original exam and may require more intensive preparation. If you miss a test and your absence is not considered excused, you will receive a zero on the test. This policy will be strictly enforced.

## **EXTRA CREDIT**

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I will be providing up to 2 bonus points added to the final average for those who complete 2 hours of voter registration outside of class on their own. Essentially, you can do 1 hour for 1 bonus point or 2 hours for 2 bonus points (I will provide more information about this opportunity at the time I assign it for those who are interested).

Note: This community engagement activity allows one to put into practice some of the skills being developed for the course that fall in line with UTEP's overall longstanding mission of outreach as well as our current UTEP Edge Advantage mission of engagement, with a particular focus on community leadership, building self-confidence by getting out into the community, global awareness of voter participation needs, social responsibility in helping to fill that need, and communication in engaging others in a nonpartisan manner about active participation in the electoral process. As such, Targeted Edge Advantages for this activity apply particularly to the categories of Leadership, Confidence, Global Awareness, Social Responsibility, and Communication.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

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I will excuse absences and late work *only* when a student participates in an official university-recognized activity, observes a recognized religious holiday of her/his 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, you must notify me *in writing* prior to the date of absence. That said, in cases where advance notification is not feasible (e.g. a medical emergency), you must provide notification as soon as possible following your absence. Such notification must include an explanation of why notice could not be sent in advance. You must also provide satisfactory documentation verifying the reason for the absence. In case of an illness, a doctor's note is the proper documentation required. *For my records, you should e-mail me a scanned copy of the documentation that verifies the reason for your absence (if you don't have access to a scanner, you can take a photo of the documentation).* *Documentation that is not provided in a timely manner will not be accepted.* Please do not ask me to excuse absences for minor illnesses or scheduling conflicts. I am aware that students have other interests and obligations, but you should nevertheless make this class a priority. If you are likely to have recurring conflicts, please take another course that better fits your schedule.

See academic regulations in UTEP Undergraduate Catalogue for a list of excused absences: <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=54418>. 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."

## **CLASSROOM AND E-MAIL PROTOCOL**

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Chatting, e-mailing, internet browsing, or any activity not related to official class activity is prohibited. The best way to contact me is via UTEP e-mail. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24 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.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND MISCONDUCT**

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Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It 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. *One example of collusion is signing in for another person (or having someone sign for you) on the class attendance sheet.*

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. Here is an informative webcast on plagiarism: <http://www.plagiarism.org/resources/webcasts>.

Be aware, 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 by the instructor for originality via *SafeAssign*—an online originality checking service made available by UTEP.

Any act of academic 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 <http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386> for further information.

## **COPYRIGHT STATEMENT FOR COURSE MATERIALS**

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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. They may not be further retained or disseminated.

## **AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)**

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The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you require specific accommodations and support services, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Please keep in mind that accommodations need to be requested at least two weeks (or a month if advance planning, such as the acquisition of books-on-tape, is required) prior to the beginning of the semester. Here is the contact information for CASS: web: <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>; phone: (915) 747-5148; fax: (915) 747-8712; e-mail: [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu); location: UTEP Union Building East Room 106.

## **UTEP TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

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The University of Texas at El Paso offers complete technical information and Help Desk support at: <http://issweb.utep.edu/techsupport/>.

**CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS\***

<b>SECTION I: PREPARING FOR AND DESIGNING RESEARCH</b>	
8/27	<b>Introduction and Course Overview</b> Discussion: The scientific study of politics
8/29	<b>Scientific Study of Politics</b> K & W Chapter 1
9/3	<b>Labor Day Holiday (NO CLASS)</b>
9/5	<b>Developing Research Questions, Theories and Hypotheses</b> K & W Chapter 2
9/10	<b>Research Paper Project: Getting Started</b> *Full instructions, assignment, and organization for the individual paper and group presentation projects to get started.
9/12	<b>Evaluating Causal Relationships</b> K & W Chapter 3
9/17	<b>Conducting Literature Reviews</b> Johnson, Janet and H.T. Reynolds, with Jason D. Mycoff. 2008. <i>Political Science Research Methods</i> . Washington DC: CQ Press. Chapter 6. Document on Citation and Reference Requirements
9/19	<b>UT System Student Success Summit (NO CLASS)</b> <i>No class – continue work on individual paper and group presentation projects.</i>
9/24	<b>An Overview of the Academic Writing Process</b> Roselle, Laura and Sharon Spray. 2008. <i>Research and Writing in International Relations</i> . New York: Longman. Chapters 4, 11, and 12. <b>Research Ethics</b> Babbie, Earl. 2004. <i>The Basics of Social Research</i> . Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing. Chapter 3. Document on Academic Misconduct and Dishonesty
9/26	<b>Research Design: Qualitative Methods</b> Levy, Jack S. 2002. <i>Qualitative Methods in International Relations</i> . In F. P. Harvey & M. Brecher (Eds.), <i>Evaluating Methodology in International Studies</i> . Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 432-454.
10/1	<b>Research Design: Quantitative Methods</b> K & W Chapter 4

10/3	<p><b>Research Design: Experimental Methods</b>  K &amp; W Chapter 4 (continued)  Morton, Rebecca B., and Kenneth C. Williams. 2010. <i>Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality: From Nature to the Lab</i>. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1.</p>
10/8	<p><b>Research Design: Formal Modeling</b>  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.</p>
10/10	<p><b>Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement</b>  K &amp; W Chapter 5  <b>Sampling</b>  Johnson, Janet and H.T. Reynolds, with Jason D. Mycoff. 2008. <i>Political Science Research Methods</i>. Washington DC: CQ Press. Chapter 7.</p>
10/15	<p><b>Review for Midterm Exam</b></p>
10/17	<p><b>Midterm Exam</b></p>
<p><b>SECTION II: ANALYZING DATA</b></p>	
10/22	<p><b>Data Analysis Using STATA</b>  Stata Manual</p>
10/24	<p><b>Obtaining and Coding Data</b>  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.</p>
10/29	<p><b>Preparing Your Datasets for Analysis</b>  (Full session lab work)</p>
10/31	<p><b>Probability and Statistical Inference (Part I – Descriptive Statistics and Graphs)</b>  K &amp; W Chapter 6</p>
11/5	<p><b>Probability and Statistical Inference (Part II – Continued)</b>  K &amp; W Chapter 6 (Continued)</p>
11/7	<p><b>Bivariate Hypothesis Testing and Regression Models (Part I)</b>  K &amp; W Chapter 7 &amp; Chapter 8</p>
11/12	<p><b>IOSSBR Conference (NO CLASS)</b></p>

	<i>No class – continue work on individual paper and group presentation projects.</i>
11/14	<b>Bivariate Hypothesis Testing and Regression Models (Part II)</b> K & W Chapter 7 & Chapter 8
11/19	<b>Multiple Regression</b> K & W Chapter 9 & Chapter 10
11/21	<b>Thanksgiving Holiday (NO CLASS)</b> <i>No class – continue work on individual paper and group presentation projects.</i>
11/26	<b>Qualitative versus Quantitative Approaches &amp; Other Types of Modeling</b> K & W Chapter 12 Johnson, Janet and H.T. Reynolds, with Jason D. Mycoff. 2008. <i>Political Science Research Methods</i> . Washington DC: CQ Press. Chapter 14.
11/28	<b>Research Presentations</b>
12/3	<b>Research Presentations</b>
12/5	<b>Review for Final Exam</b> <b>*NOTE: Final Research Projects Due</b>
12/12	<b>FINAL EXAM @ 4-6:45pm</b>

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