

POLS 3600 Syllabus: Research in Political Science

Spring 2021

Basic Course Info

Class Meeting Place: online

Class Meeting Time: online (on the student's own time)

Professor Information

Dr. Marcos Menchaca

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Office: Benedict Hall 308

Office Hours: MT 3:00-4:30pm and by appointment

TA Information

Carlos Amaro

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Office: Benedict Hall XXX

Office Hours: TBA

Course Description

An introductory study of the history, nature and current development of political science, with special emphasis on the methods dealing with problems of political science and the techniques of research in politics. You will learn the scientific process and also the statistical techniques used in political science. Additionally, you will learn the basics of formal political theory. In essence, you will learn to think like a political scientist.

Required Textbooks

This is the required textbook for the class and is available at the bookstore.

Pollock and Edwards, Essentials of Political Analysis. 6th edition. (EPA)

Recommended Textbooks

This book is very helpful for you to understand the class material and is available at the bookstore.

Pollock and Edwards, An R Companion to Political Analysis. 2nd edition.

Helpful Textbooks

These books might be helpful for you to understand the material, but are not available at the bookstore.

Baglione, Writing a Research Paper in Political Science. 3rd edition.

Agresi and Finlay. Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences. 5th edition.

Course Outcomes

After successful completion of this course, the student should be able to

- Demonstrate increasingly sophisticated skills in reading primary sources critically,
- Research and evaluate the models, methods, and analyses of others in the field of political science, and critically integrate others' work.
- Began an understanding for using software for statistical data analysis.
- Demonstrate a working knowledge of research design, hypothesis formulation, measurement of variables, data collection, and analysis.

UTEP EDGE

Students will be able to:

- Communicate information clearly and effectively using a variety of tools, media and genres (oral, written, iconographic) in varied contexts for a variety of purposes.
- Demonstrate strategic and adaptable thinking patterns in learning and working conditions.
- Apply analysis, synthesis, and evaluative processes that enable productive problem solving and decision-making to strengthen performance in university and workforce setting.
- Reflect and assess their interests, abilities, responsibilities, cultural understanding, and ethics in order to more effectively pursue their academic, career and life goals.
- Use real world digital tools, research, and resources to access, evaluate, and apply information appropriate for authentic tasks.

Course Assignments/Requirements/Course Schedule

Please note that this schedule is approximate. The only things are set in stone are the exam dates. I hope to keep all of the homework dates as they stand, but I may change them based on how the class schedule is going.

Date	Topics	Readings
01/20	Intro to the class	Syllabus posted online
01/25	Getting Acquainted with R	
01/27	Introduction to Political Science	1. EPA Intro
02/01	Defining and Measuring Concepts	1. EPA 1
02/02	Measuring and Describing Variables	1. EPA 2
02/08	Building Theory HOMEWORK 1 DUE	1. EPA 3
02/10	Framing Hypothesis	
02/15	Research Design	

02/17	Statistical Control	1. EPA 4 2. Harbridge and Malhotra, <i>Electoral Incentives from Survey Experiments</i>
02/22	Statistical Control	
02/24	Controlled Comparisons HOMEWORK 2 DUE	1. EPA 5
02/29	Review	
03/01	MIDTERM	
03/03	Foundations of Statistical Inference	1. EPA 6
03/08	Foundations of Statistical Inference	1. EPA 7
03/10	Linear Regression	1. EPA 8
03/22	Linear Regression HOMEWORK 3 DUE	
03/24	Linear Regression	
03/29	Logistic Regression	1. EPA 9
03/31	Logistic Regression	
04/05	Logistic Regression	
04/07	Writing a Research Paper HOMEWORK 4 DUE	1. Baglione 1
04/12	Research Questions	1. Baglione 2
04/14	Literature Review	1. Baglione 4 2. The APSA Style Manual
04/19	The Thesis and Paper Revising	1. Baglione 5-6
04/21	Editing Your Paper	
04/26	Editing Your Paper HOMEWORK 5 DUE	
04/28	Qualitative Analysis	1. Williamson, The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism

05/03	Careers in Political Science	
05/05	Review PROJECTS DUE	
05/10	FINAL EXAM 4:00-6:45pm	

Midterm Exam

The midterm exams will cover the material in the previous classes.

Quizzes

The quizzes will be like a mini midterm or final exam. They will have similar questions, but will be much shorter in length. I plan on giving at least two during the semester. I will announce when they are up on Blackboard and also when they will be due.

Homeworks

You will be given short homeworks to complete that will cover the statistical part of the class material. An electronic copy should be turned in by the due date.

Paper Project

You will be given a paper project due at the end of the semester. You will be given some datasets and instructions on what to do. You are expected to utilize all that you have learned about statistical programming.

Final Exam

The final is comprehensive, but most of the material will be from the chapters covered after the midterm. There will certainly be a multiple choice part and possibly be a short-answer part.

Grading

CRITERION	PORTION	GRADING SCALE GRADE PERCENTAGE
1. Paper Project	10%	A 90-100
2. Quizzes	5%	B 80-89
3. Homework	25%	C 70-79
4. Midterm Exam	25%	D 50-69
5. Final Exam	35%	F 0-49

Absences

You are expected to be at and take every exam and quiz. If you are not present at the exam, you must have a valid excuse (such as an official athletic activity or a hospitalization). If you are a student athlete and will be absent from an exam, please

bring me the documentation as soon as possible. If you had a medical emergency, please bring me the documentation as soon as you are well and are able to communicate with me through email.

Academic Integrity

You are expected to abide by the strictest standards of academic integrity. If you are unsure of what this means, please read more about it at <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>

Policy on Pre-Grading

I and the TAs are always willing to help you. However, one thing we will not do is what I call pre-grade. Students ask for a pre-grade when they simply send either myself or one of the TAs their homework, or paper and ask the questions, “can you take a look at this and see if it’s OK?” This is essentially asking us to grade the material before you turn it in. Now, you can still ask questions, but these need to be very specific.

Saving Your Work

I highly recommend that you utilize a file saving service (such as OneDrive or Dropbox). By using one of these, if your computer crashes, your work is still saved. This is very important because we will not accept the “my computer crashed” excuse for late homeworks and paper projects. It is hard to verify when this actually happens versus when a student is just making this up as an excuse. Also, you should be keeping good care of your computer (such as running antivirus programs and updating frequently) this semester. This is especially important in an online class in which everything is done through a computer.

Other Policies

There may be other situations come up during the semester that I am not thinking about right now. In such cases, I will create a policy to deal with the matter and post an announcement on Blackboard (which I will always also try to send as an email so that you will get notified of this policy). It is your responsibility to read these announcements fully and to the end.

Note

I do not plan on making any changes to this syllabus. But if any changes to happen, I will notify you.

You will need to save your work to some cloud sharing service. I do not accept the “my computer crashed with all my work on it” excuse anymore.