

POLS 3600 Syllabus: Research in Political Science

Fall 2022

Basic Course Info

Class Meeting Place: Liberal Arts Building 403

Class Meeting Time: MW 3:00-4:50pm

Professor Information

Dr. Marcos Menchaca

mmenchaca@utep.edu

Office: Benedict Hall 308

Office Hours: Tuesday 3:15-5:00pm, Thursday 3:15-4:15pm and by appointment

TA Information

Alyk Collins

axcollins@miners.utep.edu

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. This class has two parts. First, you will learn the scientific process. Second, you will learn the statistical techniques used in political science. These two parts are taught simultaneously in the beginning. In essence, this course will teach you 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.
- Holbrook, An Introduction to Political and Social Data Analysis Using R.
<https://bookdown.org/tomholbrook12/IPSDAR/>

Helpful Textbooks

These books might be helpful for you to understand the material, but they 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.

- Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Thinking Clearly with Data.

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
08/22	Intro to the class	Syllabus posted online
08/24	Getting Acquainted with R	
08/29	Introduction to Political Science	1. EPA Intro
08/31	Defining and Measuring Concepts HOMEWORK 1 DUE	1. EPA 1
09/07	Measuring and Describing Variables	1. EPA 2
09/12	Building Theory	1. EPA 3

09/14	Framing Hypothesis	1. BF 7
09/19	Research Design	1. EPA 4 2. Harbridge and Malhotra, <i>Electoral Incentives from Survey Experiments</i>
09/21	Statistical Control HOMEWORK 2 DUE	1. EPA 5
09/26	Controlled Comparisons	1. EPA 5
09/28	MIDTERM	
10/03	Foundations of Statistical Inference	1. EPA 6
10/05	Foundations of Statistical Inference	
10/10	Foundations of Statistical Inference	1. EPA 7
10/12	Linear Regression HOMEWORK 3 DUE	1. EPA 8
10/17	Linear Regression	
10/19	Linear Regression PAPER PROPOSALS DUE	
10/24	Linear Regression PEER REVIEW DUE	
10/26	Logistic Regression	1. EPA 9
10/31	Logistic Regression HOMEWORK 4 DUE	
11/02	Logistic Regression	
11/07	Writing a Research Paper	1. Baglione 1
11/09	Research Questions	1. Baglione 2
11/14	Literature Review HOMEWORK 5 DUE	1. Baglione 4 2. The APSA Style Manual
11/16	The Thesis and Paper Revising	1. Baglione 5-6
11/28	Qualitative Analysis	1. Williamson, The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism

11/30	Review PROJECTS DUE	
12/05	FINAL EXAM 1:00-2:20pm	

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 one during the semester. I will announce when they are up on Blackboard and also when they will be due.

Homework

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

Paper Proposal

You are required to submit a paper proposal in the middle of the semester. This exercise is to help you think about what your paper topic should be about. It should contain a brief outline of your theory, your independent variable, your dependent variable, and the stated hypothesis between them. A thorough literature review is not required at this point.

Peer Review

You will be assigned to one other student who you are responsible for giving feedback on their paper proposal. In this exercise, you will assess your assigned paper in a similar way in which academics analyze peer reviewed journal articles: with a critical eye. You will need to address some questions in your review. For example, is the hypothesis even testable with the available data? And you should point out any rival theories to their hypothesis. You should critique your peer in a cordial manner.

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 SALE GRADE PERCENTAGE
1. Paper Project	10%	A 90-100
2. Quizzes	5%	B 80-89
3. Paper Proposal	3%	C 70-79
4. Peer Review	2%	D 50-69
5. Homework	25%	F 0-49
6. Midterm Exam	25%	
7. Final Exam	30%	

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. Of course, other unexpected events do come up. You can always ask me about what the possibilities are if something does happen to you. But be sure to do so sooner rather than later.

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

During class time, you need to devote your attention to my lecture. Talking amongst yourselves is prohibited.

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.

Covid-19 Precautions

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to covidaction@utep.edu, so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit epstrong.org

Land Acknowledgment Statement

We, the UTEP Department of Political Science, acknowledge that we are in the unceded territories of the Indigenous Peoples who, along with countless generations of ancestors, are the guardians and keepers of this land, both throughout history and in contemporary times: the Tigua, Mansos, Sumas, Ndé, the Piroso, Mescalero Apache, Chiricahua Apache, Tarahumara, Yaqui, Jumano, Comanche, Kiowa, Rarámuri, Tohono O'odham, Yaqui, Kickapoo, Diné, Hopi, Zapotec, Mixtec, Aztec-Nahua-Mexica, Huichol, Tepehuan, Coahuilteco, Chichimeca, and the other Native communities who comprise our multinational region. As scholars and people who reside and work in these lands, we respect and honor the millennia-long history of Native peoples on this land and their ongoing presence today.

Note

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