

POLS 3600 Syllabus: Research in Political Science

Spring 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)
- Bueno de Mesquita and Fowler, Thinking Clearly with Data. (BF)

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 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.

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
01/19	Intro to the class	Syllabus posted online
01/24	Getting Acquainted with R	
01/26	Introduction to Political Science	1. EPA Intro
01/30	Defining and Measuring Concepts	1. EPA 1 2. BF 1
02/07	Measuring and Describing Variables	1. EPA 2
02/09	Building Theory HOMEWORK 1 DUE	1. EPA 3 2. BF 3
02/14	Framing Hypothesis	1. BF 7

02/16	Research Design	1. BF 11
02/21	Statistical Control	1. EPA 4 2. Harbridge and Malhotra, <i>Electoral Incentives from Survey Experiments</i>
02/23	Controlled Comparisons HOMEWORK 2 DUE	1. EPA 5 2. BF 9
02/29	Review	
02/28	MIDTERM	
03/02	Foundations of Statistical Inference	1. EPA 6
03/07	Foundations of Statistical Inference	
03/09	Foundations of Statistical Inference	1. EPA 7
03/21	Linear Regression HOMEWORK 3 DUE	1. EPA 8 2. BF 2
03/23	Linear Regression	1. BF 4
03/28	Linear Regression	
03/30	Logistic Regression	1. EPA 9
04/04	Logistic Regression HOMEWORK 4 DUE	
04/06	Logistic Regression	
04/11	Writing a Research Paper	1. Baglione 1
04/13	Research Questions	1. Baglione 2
04/18	Literature Review HOMEWORK 5 DUE	1. Baglione 4 2. The APSA Style Manual
04/20	The Thesis and Paper Revising	1. Baglione 5-6
04/25	Editing Your Paper	
04/27	Editing Your Paper	

05/02	Qualitative Analysis	1. Williamson, The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism
05/04	Review PROJECTS DUE	
05/09	FINAL EXAM 1:00-3:45pm	

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 one 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. A paper 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. 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

Note

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