

POLS 3600 Syllabus: Research in Political Science

Spring 2024

Basic Course Info

Class Meeting Place: Liberal Arts Building 403

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

Professor Information

Dr. Marcos Menchaca

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Office: Benedict Hall 308

Office Hours: Mon & Tues 12:00-1:30pm

TA Information

Lydia Torres

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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. 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)
- Llaudet and Imai, Data Analysis for Social Science (DASS)

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
01/17	Intro to the class	Syllabus posted online
01/22	Getting Acquainted with R	1. DASS 1
01/24	Introduction to Political Science	1. EPA Intro
01/29	Defining and Measuring Concepts HOMEWORK 1 TARGET	1. EPA 1
01/31	Measuring and Describing Variables	1. EPA 2 2. DASS 2

02/05	Building Theory	1. EPA 3
02/07	Framing Hypothesis	1. BF 7
02/12	Research Design	1. EPA 4 2. Harbridge and Malhotra, <i>Electoral Incentives from Survey Experiments</i>
02/14	Statistical Control HOMEWORK 2 TARGET	1. EPA 5
02/19	Controlled Comparisons	1. EPA 5
02/21	EXAM 1	
02/26	Foundations of Statistical Inference	1. EPA 6
02/28	Foundations of Statistical Inference	1. DASS 7
03/04	Foundations of Statistical Inference	1. EPA 7
03/06	Linear Regression HOMEWORK 3 TARGET	1. EPA 8
03/18	Linear Regression	1. DASS 4
03/20	Linear Regression PAPER PROPOSALS DUE	
03/25	Linear Regression PEER REVIEW DUE	
03/27	Logistic Regression	1. EPA 9
04/01	Logistic Regression HOMEWORK 4 TARGET	
04/03	Logistic Regression	
04/08	Writing a Research Paper	1. Baglione 1
04/10	Research Questions	1. Baglione 2
04/15	Literature Review HOMEWORK 5 TARGET	1. Baglione 4 2. The APSA Style Manual
04/17	The Thesis and Paper Revising	1. Baglione 5-6

04/22	The Thesis and Paper Revising	
04/24	Qualitative Analysis	1. Williamson, The Tea Party and the Remaking of Republican Conservatism
04/29	Review PROJECTS DUE	
05/01	EXAM 2 1:00-2:20pm	

Exams

The Exam 1 will cover the material in the previous classes. Exam 2 will cover the material since Exam 1. You will not need to know any R code for either of these exams, although you will need to know (especially for Exam 2) the statistical concepts that we will study in the Lab Notes.

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. I have provided target dates in this syllabus. The actual due dates will be on the homework prompt.

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.

Grading

CRITERION	PORTION	GRADING SCALE GRADE PERCENTAGE
1. Paper Project	15%	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	30%	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.

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 Piros, 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.