POLS 3500 – RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
MW: 9:00 – 11:20am in LART 403

INSTRUCTOR:	Dr. Rebecca Reid
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OFFICE:	307 Benedict Hall
OFFICE HOURS:	MWF 11:30 am-2:30 pm, or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will help students learn how to carry out research and write papers in political science. Topics include the scientific method, research design, data sources, statistics, and quantitative and qualitative research. The course introduces appropriate formats for papers in the discipline and reinforces writing skills. The purpose of this class is to make the student familiar with the basic research techniques employed not only by political scientists, but also many other social science disciplines. In this class, students will learn how to analyze a variety of quantitative data, prepare graphs and tables to summarize data, and how to utilize and interpret basic statistical techniques (including ordinary least squares regression).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Over the course of the semester students will have:

- An understanding of how to generate research questions and appropriate research designs, research techniques, data collection, and measurement/operationalization
- Learned how to summarize, describe, and depict data
- Learned to execute basic statistical analysis (including using statistical software)
- Developed their ability to digest and critically evaluate political science and social science research
- Developed original research ideas and execute original research, generating an original research paper (including analysis) at the college level

REQUIRED READING

- King, Gary, Robert R. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press

- Pollock, Philip H. 2015. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 5th Edition. CQ Press

- Pollock, Philip H. 2015. *An STATA Companion to Political Analysis*, 3rd Edition. CQ Press

RECOMMENDED READING

- Baglione, Lisa A. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. 2nd edition CQ Press
- Hamilton, Lawrence C. *Statistics with STATA*. Brooks/Cole Press.
- Reinhart, Alex. 2015. *Statistics Done Wrong: The Woefully Complete Guide*. No Starch Press.

- Gailmard, Sean. *Statistical Modeling and Inference for Social Science*. Cambridge University Press.
- Gill, Jeff. *Essential Mathematics for Political and Social Research*. Cambridge University.
- Brady, Henry, and David Collier. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Evaluation in this course will be based on the following components:

Quizzes	15%
Homework Assignments	15%
Peer Reviews	15%
Final Research Paper	20%
Midterm Examination	15%
Final Examination	20%

The grading scale is as follows:

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
59 and below	F

*Examinations***:** There will be 2 examinations during the course, a midterm and a final. The exams are closed book. All exams are **cumulative** and will cover material learned in the class lectures, quizzes, discussion, and the assigned readings. As a general rule, **make up exams will NOT be offered**; although make up exams will be permitted only under the gravest of circumstances, and I reserve the right to determine whether a make up exam is offered to individuals based upon their situation and timely request. I reserve the right to alter the questions for make up exams. **Grade challenges must be in written form and submitted within one week of taking the exam**.

Quizzes: Each chapter of the KKV textbook will include a quiz on the reading. As such, students are required to complete the readings prior to each deadline and must be prepared to be evaluated on the material. **There are no makeup quizzes, under any circumstances** (including class absence). The highest 5 quiz grades will be averaged to produce the final quiz score used to calculate the final course grade.

Weekly (Homework) Assignments: Each week, students are required to turn in their homework assignments based upon Pollock's *Companion*. While such assignments may be completed in a group setting, all assignments must be the individual student's original work. As such, students may not 'borrow,' copy, or plagiarize from other students' work. Any work that is plagiarized will receive a 0 on the assignment (see Academic Dishonesty below).

Peer Reviews: Throughout the semester, each student will turn in sections of their course research paper. These sections will be peer reviewed by fellow classmates. **Students must turn in two copies (typed, hard copy) of the peer review as well as the classmate's paper. One copy of the review will be submitted to me, along with the classmate's paper. The second copy of the peer review will be submitted to the classmate and should remain anonymous** (do not include your name on this copy). I will evaluate the quality of the peer review and the level of student comprehension and application of class material.

> Research Question Peer Review due **September 12th**
> Literature Review Peer Review due **September 28th**
> Methods Section Peer Review due **November 9th**

Research Question: Each student must submit to typed, hard-copy research question on September 7th. This research question must be falsifiable and testable using an appropriate dependent variable for OLS. Students should also include why this research question is important and thus worth examining. Students will revise this research question based upon the peer review feedback as well as my own.

Literature Review: Due on September 26th, students must submit a typed, hard-copy, 3-7 page literature review on the topic of their research paper. This literature review will be evaluated by classmates under peer review as well as by me based upon the level of research, understanding of the scholarship, and synthesis of previous work (as well as basic grammar, etc.) This literature review must include references. A literature review is designed to provide readers an overview of the relevant research in a specific area. As such, it provides readers the necessary background to understand and evaluate your research project (i.e. your final paper). Literature reviews therefore **organize and synthesize** existing research within the theoretical framework of your specific project. The best literature reviews do not simply list each individual research article (eg. Person1 said X. Person2 said Y. Person3 said Z.) Rather, literature reviews synthesize existing research to inform readers how each research relates to other research—especially your own. I recommend using peer-reviewed articles as examples of literature review (as we will discuss in class). As with all papers, literature reviews required multiple drafts and revisions, especially as your project conceptualizes. I welcome the submission of drafts to me prior to the deadline for revisions and feedback.

Methods Section: Due on November 7th, students must submit a typed, hard-copy version of their completed methods section (i.e. analyses must be complete). This methods section will be evaluated by classmates under peer review as well as by me. Methods sections will be evaluated on the completion and appropriateness of the statistical analysis employed. You must present the results in appropriate formats (i.e. do not copy and paste program output) and correctly interpret your results. I welcome the submission of drafts to me prior to the deadline for revisions and feedback.

Research Paper: Due on May 3rd, *students must submit a typed, hard-copy, 15-20 page research paper on original research. Students must submit their topics and research question by January 28th.* References must be included. This paper will be evaluated on clarity and specification of the research question and theoretical argument, the synthesis of the literature review, the appropriateness of the research design and methods, the quality of the statistical analysis, the proper interpretation of results, the presence and quality of diagnostic analyses, and writing quality, such as organization, clarity, spelling, and grammar. See rubric pages 7-8. I welcome the submission of drafts to me prior to the deadline for revisions and feedback.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to cass@utep.edu, or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at www.sa.utep.edu/cass. *CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.* Additionally, students with special needs **must** contact me in order to arrange appropriate accommodations.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Absolutely no form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. The University of Texas at El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence. In all matters of intellectual pursuit, UTEP faculty and students must strive to achieve excellence based on the quality of work produced by the individual. In the classroom and in all other academic activities, students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any form of scholastic dishonesty is an affront to the pursuit of knowledge and jeopardizes the quality of the degree awarded to all graduates of UTEP. It is imperative, therefore, that the members of this academic community understand the regulations pertaining to academic integrity and that all faculty insist on adherence to these standards.

Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP) and available in the Office of the Dean of Students and the homepage of The Dean of Students at www.utep.edu/dos, may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, a failing grade on the work in question, a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.

I expect all students to behave professionally in this class. You will be held responsible for all material covered in the textbooks, quizzes, articles, videos, and the class discussions. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for the content of that day's information. I will not tolerate disruptive behavior, including (but not limited to) reading newspapers, talking during lectures, using cell phones or pagers, and disrespecting classmates or the instructor. Additionally, I expect all students to attend class prepared and to show up on time. It is disrespectful to the instructor and the other students when individuals show up late or are not prepared to participate in the class discussion. I allow the use of laptops and phones for note-taking, research, and class assignment purposes only; however, should laptop usage become disruptive, I reserve the right to prohibit laptops and other electronic devices.

This class is designed to provide information and challenge students with new, sometimes controversial, ideas, and arguments. This class is designed to be a safe, open environment to express ideas, arguments, and opinions for learning purposes. This class is designed to initiate an open discussion based upon the required readings, encourage critical thinking and application to current events, and enable students to digest difficult material through these discussions. **This class DOES NOT give you knowledge—i.e. knowledge and understanding is not transfused to students by simply sitting in class. <u>Learning is an interactive process and one that is the primary responsibility of each student.</u>**

<u>Late assignments will receive no credit</u>.

All grades are earned and reflect your reflect the mastery of material through the adequate completion of assignments by their deadline. As such, they do not reflect level of effort, interest, or intention. **<u>I will not change final grades for the course under any circumstances</u>**, with the single exception of cases where an error occurred.

The following is a list of topics to be covered at each class meeting, and the readings which should be completed in order to fully participate in class that day. I *require* you to read the appropriate material prior to the class since you will be expected to participate in the discussion. Articles will be provided in Blackboard whenever possible. Exam material will consist of assigned readings and information covered during assignments and the class discussion. Finally, while I give specific days on which certain topics will be discussed, the calendar is subject to change. Any alterations to the course schedule will be clearly announced. (As a general rule the course will follow this order of topics, regardless of date changes, unless otherwise announced.)

August	22	Distribute Syllabus and Introduction (How to read research and the scientific method)
	24	Qualitative Research Readings:

         Downe, Pamela J. 1999. "Laughing When it Hurts: Humor and Violence in the Lives of Costa Rican Prostitutes."

         Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes on a Balinese Cockfight."

         Mahoney, James. 2001. "Path-Dependent Explanations of Regime Change: Central America in Comparative Perspective."

         Achen, Christopher, and Duncan Snidal. 1989. "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies."

	29	Qualitative Research (continued)
	31	The Science in Political Science Readings:

         KKV Chapter 1: The Science in Social Science (p. 3-32)

         Adcock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research."

September	**5**	**No class (Labor Day)**

7   Descriptive Analysis
            Readings:
                    KKV Chapter 2: Descriptive Inference (p. 34-66)

                    Fenno, Richard F. 1977. "U.S. House Members in
                    Their Constituencies: An Exploration."

            Due: Research Question

12   Causal Inference and Theory Building: An Introduction
            Readings:
                    KKV Chapter 3: Causality and Causal Inference
                    (p.75-113)

                    Fearon, James. 1991. "Counterfactuals and
                    Hypothesis Testing in Political Science."

            Due: Research Question Peer Review

14   Data Selection and Operationalization
            Readings:
                    KKV Chapter 4: Determining What to Observe
                    (p.115-149)

            Due: Research Question Revised

19   Common Problems and How to Avoid Them
            Readings:
                    KKV Chapter 5: Understanding What to Avoid
                    (p.150-206)

                    King, Gary. 1986. "How Not to Lie with Statistics:
                    Avoiding Common Mistakes in Quantitative
                    Political Science."

21   Readings:
                    KKV Chapter 6: Increasing the Number of
                    Observations (p.208-229)

	26	Readings: Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 1-2
		Pollock *Companion* Chapters 1-2
		Assignment: Companion Chapter 2
		Due: Literature Review
	28	Reading: Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 3 Pollock *Companion* Chapter 3 *Assignment: Companion Chapter 3* **Due: Pollock *Companion* Chapter 2 assignment**
		Due: Literature Review Peer Review
October	3	Reading: Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 4 Pollock *Companion* Chapter 4 *Assignment: Companion Chapter 4* **Due: Pollock *Companion* Chapter 3 assignment**
	5	Reading: Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 5 Pollock *Companion* Chapter 5 *Assignment: Companion Chapter 5* **Due: Pollock *Companion* Chapter 4 assignment**
	10	Starting to Put Things Together Reading: Bratton, Michael, and Eric C. Chang. 2006 "State-Building and Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa: Forwards, Backwards, or Together?" **Due: Pollock *Companion* Chapter 5 assignment**
	12	Review Midterm Exam
	17	**Midterm Exam**

19	Reading:	
		Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 6
		Pollock *Companion* Chapter 6
24	Reading:	
		Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 6
		Pollock *Companion* Chapter 6
	Assignment: Companion Chapter 6	
26	Midterm Exam Return and Review	
31	Reading:	
		Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 7
		Pollock *Companion* Chapter 7
	Due: Pollock *Companion* Chapter 6 assignment	

November 2   Reading:
                    Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 7
                    Pollock *Companion* Chapter 7
               Assignment: Companion Chapter 7

7   Reading:
           Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 8
           Pollock *Companion* Chapter 8
      Due: Pollock *Companion* Chapter 7 assignment

      Due: Methods Section

9   Reading:
           Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 8
           Pollock *Companion* Chapter 8
      Assignment: Companion Chapter 8

      Due: Methods Section Peer Review

14   Reading:
           Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 9
           Pollock *Companion* Chapter 9
      Due: Pollock *Companion* Chapter 8 assignment

16   Reading:
                    Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 9
                    Pollock *Companion* Chapter 9
            Assignment: Companion Chapter 9

21   Reading:
                    Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 10
                    Pollock *Companion* Chapter 10
            Due: Pollock *Companion* Chapter 9 assignment

23   Reading:
                    Pollock *Essentials* Chapter 10
                    Pollock *Companion* Chapter 10
            Assignment: Companion Chapter 10

28   Review
            Due: Pollock *Companion* Chapter 10 assignment

30   Final Exam Review
            Due: Final Research Paper


December   2   Dead Day

            7   **Final Exam 10:00am- 12:45 pm**

Research Paper Grading Rubric

	Below Expectations	**Acceptable**	**Exceeds expectations**	**Score**
Research Question	Author did not develop a suitable research question. Research question is either undeveloped and/or not clearly stated. **0 points**	Author developed a suitable research question. Research question is fairly well developed and articulated. **3 points**	Author developed an interesting and unique research question that is appropriate for a research paper. Research question is well developed and clearly articulated. **5 points**	____/5
Theoretical Argument	Paper lacks a clear theoretical argument **and/or** lacks clearly stated hypothesis **0 points**	Paper has fairly well developed theoretical argument **and** to some extent has clearly stated hypothesis **5 points**	Paper has a clear, well-organized, well-specified theoretical argument **and** has clearly stated hypothesis **10 points**	____/10
Literature review	Paper lacks a review of the literature **and/or** the literature reviewed is not clearly related to research question **0 points**	Paper has fairly well-developed literature review on relevant research **5 points**	Review of literature clearly synthesizes existing research within the theoretical framework **10 points**	____/10
Data	Data is insufficient or incorrect for research question and/or absent **0 points**	Data includes minor errors in cleaning, citation, completeness, or appropriateness **and/or** is not clearly described prior to analysis **3 points**	Data is complete, appropriate, cited, and cleaned for analysis **and** clearly described prior to analysis **5 points**	____/5
Research Design and Methods	Research design and methodology is not appropriate to evaluate research question and data **and/or** design is not correctly executed **0 points**	Research design and methodology is somewhat appropriate for research question and data **and/or** design is fairly well-executed **8 points**	Research design and methodology is clearly appropriate and well-justified for the research question and data **and** design is well-executed and replicable **15 points**	____/15

Statistical Analysis	Author fails to include appropriate statistical analysis **and/or** analysis is incorrectly executed or incomplete **0 points**	Statistical analysis is fairly well-executed with minor mistakes and/or omissions **8 points**	Statistical analysis is well-executed, complete, and clearly explained/justified, and replicable **15 points**	____/15
Graphs and Tables	Paper lacks appropriate figures and tables **and/or** they are unclear, not labeled, or incomplete **0 points**	Figures and tables are mostly clear and complete, with minor errors or omissions **5 points**	Figures and tables are professional, clear, labeled, complete, and appropriate depictions of data and results **10 points**	____/10
Interpretation of Results	Author fails to include results **and/or** fails to correctly interpret results **0 points**	Interpretation of results include minor errors or omissions **and/or** are unclear **5 points**	Author correctly and clearly interprets all relevant results in an organized, consistent manner **10 points**	____/10
Diagnostic Tests and Limitations	Author fails to include diagnostic tests **and/or** such diagnostic tests are incorrect or inappropriate **and/or** fails to discuss the limitations of the paper **0 points**	Author includes some diagnostic tests with few errors or omissions **and/or** provides only superficial discussion of the limitations of the paper **3 points**	Author includes all necessary, correctly executed diagnostic tests **and** presents the results of each **and** offers insightful and complete discussion of limitations of the paper **5 points**	____/5
References	Author fails to include appropriate references **0 points**	Author includes some references but is incomplete or inappropriate **3 points**	Author includes complete, formatted references **5 points**	____/5
Writing Quality	Paper lacks organization and clarity **and/or** includes several spelling and grammatical mistakes and typos **0 points**	Paper is somewhat organized **and/or** includes some minor spelling and grammatical mistakes or typos **5 points**	Paper is well-organized and clearly written **and** lack spelling and grammatical errors and typos **10 points**	____/10

Total score:_____

The Scientific Method
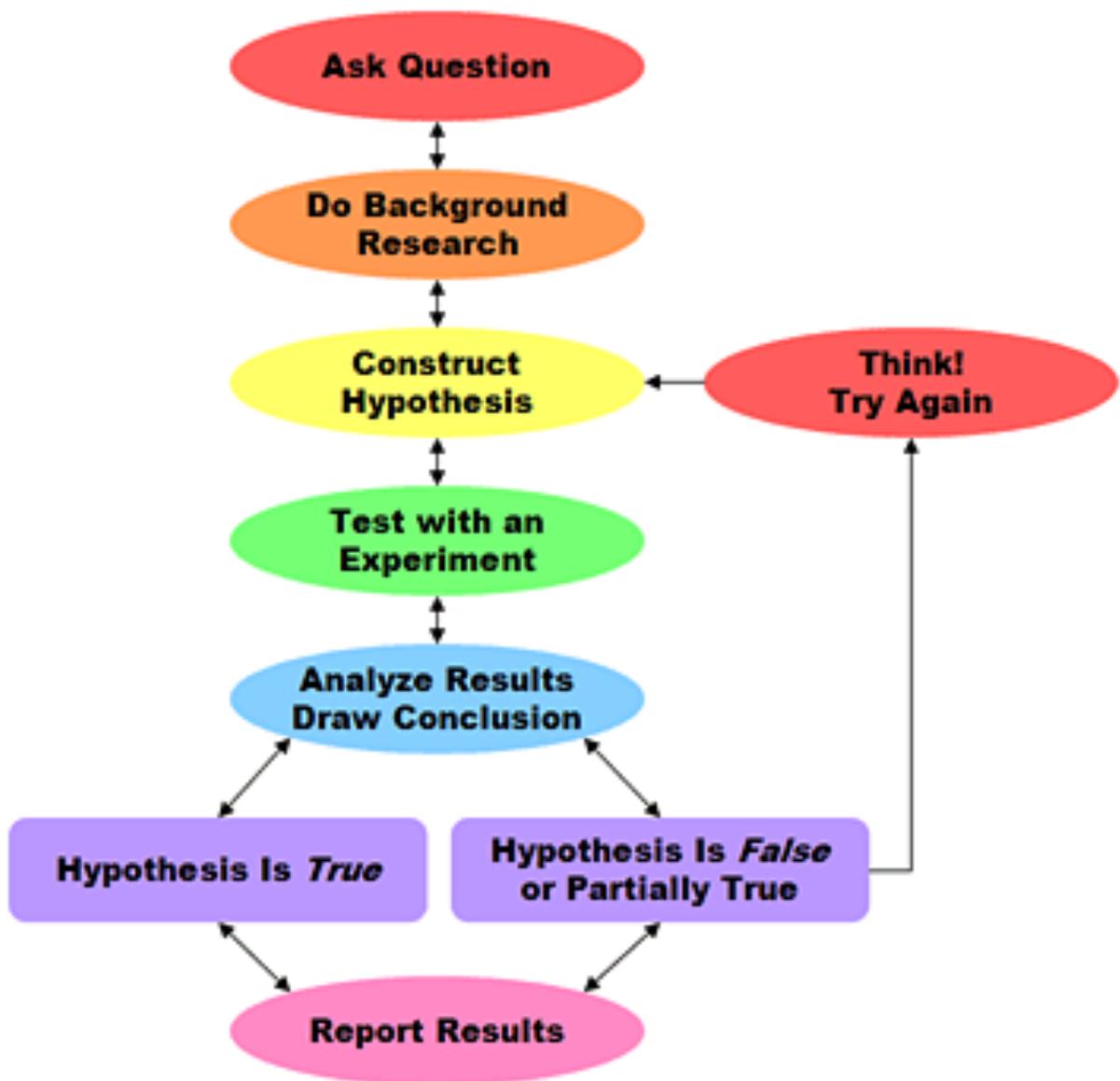
How to Read and Evaluate Research (Quick Tips)

1) What is the research question?
2) What is the theoretical argument and/or thesis?
3) What is the dependent variable?
4) What are the main independent variables?
5) Do the variables match the theory? Are they appropriate? Do they measure what the authors claim?
6) What data is utilized and is it appropriate?
7) Did the authors include all relevant variables and exclude irrelevant variables? Are there confounding variables? Are there omitted variables?
8) What method of analysis was employed? Qualitative or quantitative? Is this method appropriate for the research question?
9) What are the results? How strong are these results?
10) What are the limitations of the theory, methods, and results?
11) How generalizable are the results?
12) How persuasive is the article? Why?