

POLS 3600:13689 Research in Political Science

Dr. Joseph Yingnan Zhou

Fall 2023

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Office Hours: by appointment

Office: Benedict Hall 305

Format: Hybrid, new lectures posted on Fridays
labs on Wednesdays

Telephone: (915) 747-6216

Lab sessions: W 1:30 pm-3:20 pm

Lab location: LART 403

Teaching assistant: XXX

Email: lntorres4@miners.utep.edu

Office hours: T&R 4:00 pm-5:30 pm

Course Description

This class introduces you to the basic principles and methods of political science research. Many of you chose to major in political science because you were interested in politics. However, the “science” part is what distinguishes a sophisticated researcher from a casual observer. Through lectures, assignments, and hands-on research projects, this course will take your analytical and research skills to the next level.

In this **hybrid** course, new lectures are posted on Blackboard on Fridays and face-to-face lab sessions meet from 1:30 pm to 3:20 pm on Wednesdays. Of course, there are a few exceptions to this general schedule. Please check the sections of Important Dates and Course Schedule.

To make lab sessions productive, I expect you to watch the lecture before the lab session that follows. Towards this goal, I embed quizzes in lecture videos. The deadline of each quiz is the beginning time of the next lab session. If you miss a deadline, you are still allowed to watch the video in a separate “Lectures w/o Quizzes” folder.

Required Texts

I required one textbook which can be purchased at University Bookstore or elsewhere.

- Paul M Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Cambridge University Press, New York, NY, 3rd edition, 2018

Other readings are available through Blackboard.

Computer Software

In this course, you will use R for statistical analysis. R is a programming language popular among statisticians and social scientists. It has the major advantages of being free and flexible. Thanks to RStudio, an integrated development environment (IDE), R has become much more user-friendly.

You need to install both R and RStudio on your computer. To get a complete tutorial, visit <https://posit.co/download/rstudio-desktop/>.

Course Objectives

- Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:
 - understand the fundamentals of political science research;
 - construct and manage datasets using R;
 - conduct basic statistical analyses
- UTEP EDGE experiences
 - problem-solving
 - communication
 - teamwork
 - critical thinking

Course Requirements

1. Reading Assignments

My lectures assume that you have completed the readings, so try your best to do that.

2. Lecture Videos

My lab sessions assume that you have watched the lecture videos. As an incentive, I have embedded quizzes in the lecture videos, which are worth 15% of your course grade. **Make sure that you take a quiz before the next lab session, by which time the quiz becomes unavailable.** You can still watch the lectures in the folder named "Lecture Videos w/o Quizzes," but you lose your opportunity to earn quiz points.

3. Lab Sessions

Lab sessions are face-to-face classes for you to review, reinforce, and practice lecture materials. They can also be a workshop for developing research ideas. Lab sessions meet on Wednesdays with a few exceptions (see class schedule). We take attendance (10% of course grade).

4. Homework Assignments

There will be homework assignments for you to practice statistical techniques (20% toward course grade). Instructions will be provided.

5. Exams

There will be a midterm exam on **October 11** and a final exam on **December 6**. Both are closed-book, held in the lab, and worth 20% of your course grade.

6. Research Paper

You will conduct a research project which includes writing a research paper. Your research paper is worth 20% of your course grade. One thing exciting about this project is that you will be given a hands-on opportunity to conduct research from scratch. You will collectively decide on a broad topic, and then design a survey and administer it among UTEP students. After the data are collected, you will analyze the data and write your research paper. Your survey will be broad enough to allow for many different research questions.

You will complete your research papers by two steps. By **Friday October 20**, you will submit part 1 of your paper, which includes a title, abstract, introduction, literature review, theory and hypotheses, and how you plan to analyze the data. By **Monday December 11**, you will submit your complete paper, which is equal to part 1 + data analysis + conclusion.

Below are the requirements of your research paper:

- 1-inch margins
- Times New Roman font, 12 point
- Double-spaced
- APSA style (a style manual is posted)
- 10-15 pages including the references
- At least 10 references from academic sources

Grading Policy

Your final grades are broken down as follows:

- 15%: Lecture quizzes
- 10%: Lab attendance
- 20%: Homework attendance
- 20%: Midterm exam
- 20%: Final exam
- 15%: Research paper

Your letter grade will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	
[90, 100]	A
[80, 90)	B
[70, 80)	C
[60, 70)	D
[0, 60)	F

Course Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another person's as one's own. And, collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Violations will be taken seriously and will be referred to the Office of Student Life for possible disciplinary action. Students may be suspended or expelled from UTEP for such actions. Refer to <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html> for further information.

Accommodations for Disabilities

Accommodations will be made for students with disabilities. Please discuss with me in person as soon as possible about any needs you might have. Or you may contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (phone: 5148, Email: cass@utep.edu) at 302 Union East within the first two weeks of classes.

Important Dates (We belong on your calendar!)

Wednesday 8/30: no lab

Wednesday 9/6: No lab but there is a lecture video

Wednesday 9/13: First lab

Friday 9/29: Homework 1 assigned, due the next Friday

Wednesday 10/11: Midterm exam during lab

Friday 10/20: Research paper part 1 due

Wednesday 10/25: Homework 2 assigned, due the next Friday

Wednesday 11/1: Homework 3 assigned, due the next Friday

Friday 11/17: Homework 4 assigned, due the Friday after Thanksgiving

Wednesday 12/6: Midterm exam during lab

Monday 12/11: Research paper due

Course Schedule

Week 0

- Friday 8/28: Course overview (lecture video)
 - Read the syllabus and mark your calendar for important dates

Week 1

- Wednesday 8/30: APSA conference (no lab)
- Friday 9/1: The scientific study of politics (lecture video)
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 1

Week 2

- Wednesday 9/6: Library resources, note-taking, bibliography software (lecture video)
- Friday 9/8: The Art of Theory Building (lecture video)
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 2

Week 3

- Wednesday 9/13: Research topic, research question, literature review, theory (lab)
- Friday 9/15: Causal relationships
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 3

Week 4

- Wednesday 9/20: Designing survey questionnaires (lab)
- Friday 9/22: Research design (lecture video)
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 4

Week 5

- Wednesday 9/27: Designing survey questionnaires (lab)
- Friday 9/29: Measuring concepts of interest (lecture video)
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 5
 - Homework 1 assigned, **due midnight next Friday 10/6**

Week 6

- Wednesday 10/4: Designing survey questionnaires and midterm Q&A (lab)
- Friday 10/6: Introduction to data (lecture video)
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 6

Week 7

- Wednesday 10/11: Midterm exam (lab)
- Friday 10/13: Data importation, cleaning, and re-coding (lecture video)

Week 8

- Wednesday 10/18: Introduction to data (lab)
- Friday 10/20: Evaluating measurement and variations (lecture video)
 - Research paper part 1 **due at midnight**

Week 9

- Wednesday 10/25: Evaluating measurement and variations (lab)
 - Homework 2 assigned, **due midnight Friday 11/3**.
- Friday 10/27: Probability and statistical inference (lecture video)
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 7

Week 10

- Wednesday 11/1: Probability and statistical inference (lab)
 - Homework 3 assigned, **due midnight next Friday 11/10**
- Friday 11/3: Bivariate hypothesis testing (lecture video)
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 8

Week 11, 10/30

- Wednesday 11/8: Bivariate hypothesis testing (lab)
- Friday 11/10: Bivariate regression models (lecture video)
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 9

Week 12

- Wednesday 11/15: Bivariate regression models (lab)
- Friday 11/17: Multiple regression I & II (lecture video)
 - Kellstedt and Whitten Ch. 10 & 11
 - Homework 4 assigned, **due midnight Friday 12/1**

Week 13

- Wednesday 11/22: Research paper part 1 due at midnight (no lab)
- Friday 11/24: Happy Thanksgiving (no lecture video)!

Week 14

- Wednesday 11/29: Multiple regression I and final exam Q&A (lab)
- Friday 12/1: Study for final exam (no lecture video)

Week 15

- Wednesday 12/6: Final exam (lab)
- Friday 12/8: Work on your research paper (no lecture video)

Week 16

- Monday 12/11: Research paper due at midnight