PSCI 597 Introduction to Research Methods

Section 01E

Professor Contact Information

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Spring 2013
Location: BA 243
Time: 12:30p-1:45p T/Th

Office Hours
T/Th 2:15-3:15 PM, W 10 AM – 1 PM

Course Description

In this course we will explore the important topic of research methods in political science. We will focus generally on three important and related topics: research design, data analysis, and statistical inference. Students will be exposed to a number of important topics from these three categories of subjects so that they can become informed consumers as well as novice producers of quantitative political science research.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will be able to understand the scientific method as it applies to political science

2. Students will understand the correct approaches to analyzing political science data.

Required Textbooks and Materials

There are three required textbooks for this class:


3. Johnson and Reynolds, Political Science Research Methods, 7th Edition

Older editions of the Agresti and Johnson texts are available. Students who choose to use earlier editions are responsible for ensuring that they obtain the correct homework assignments and any missing sections of the readings on their own. Additional reading assignments will also be distributed to the class.
Course Requirements

All students are required to meet the following expectations.

1. Students are expected to attend class having completed course readings for each class meeting, as assigned in this syllabus, and prepared to discuss the readings. Students are expected to complete the assigned practice problems even though they will not be collected or graded. Failure to do so will dramatically affect students’ abilities to perform well in the class.

2. Students are expected to attend class on a regular basis. Attendance will be taken during each class meeting, beginning on second day of class. Students who are marked absent for more than 3 class meetings will be administratively dropped from the class. There will be no “excused” absences aside for official university activities or documented medical issues.

3. This course is a blended course which means that some assessment and supplemental reading assignments will be distributed online through eCollege. Students will also be given practice assignments online. Students are expected to regularly check the course site to keep up to date. Students will comply with any and all eCollege technical requirements in terms of training, computer access, & Internet access.

4. Students must complete all of the elements listed under Grading and Evaluation.

5. Students should be respectful of their fellow classmates and the instructor by refraining from distracting behavior such as talking, eating, passing notes or using cell phones/pagers. Students who choose to use laptops in class should only use them for class related purposes such as note taking. For a first offense of these policies, students who display unruly behavior will be asked to cease and desist. For a second, the offending student will be asked to leave the classroom for the remainder of the day. For additional offenses, students will be referred to the Department Chair and/or Dean for possible disciplinary proceedings. For more information on this subject, please see the Student Guidebook.

6. All students will maintain the highest level of personal responsibility and academic honesty. Academic dishonesty affects all individuals at the University and accordingly will not be tolerated. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. In particular, passing off work as your own that was written by someone else, without proper citation or attribution, on either exams or discussion assignments will be considered an act of plagiarism. This holds true whether material comes from the textbook, another publication, an internet source, or another student. Any act of plagiarism on a midterm exam will result in score of 0 for the exam. Any act of plagiarism on a Discussion Assignment will result in a 0 for the entire semester's Discussion Assignment grade. Any act of plagiarism on a paper
will result in a 0 for the paper grade. Instances of academic dishonesty may also be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant administrative penalties.

7. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835 Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

Technology Requirements

Because this is web-enhanced course, all students must meet the following technology requirements to successfully complete this course.

- Regular access to a good quality computer
- Regular, high-quality Internet access, specifically, a high-speed internet connection, not dial-up or a cellular phone. Students should use the eCollege tutorial to test the quality and speed of their browser and ensure that it is compatible with the system.
- Students will need access to an Internet browser such as Internet Explorer
- Students will need access to word processing software such as MS Word.
- Students should have a calculator that can take square roots and calculate exponents

Access and Navigation

Student will access this course using eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. Students can access their online courses using through the myLeo portal or directly from the URL http://online.tamuc.edu. In order to login, students will need both their CWID and password to access the myLeo site. If you do not know what your CWID or password is, please contact Technology Services at 903-468-6000 or by e-mail, helpdesk@tamuc.edu.

eCollege Student Technical Support

Technical support for eCollege is provided around the clock (24 hours a day/7 days a week) so if students experience technical issues with the class page itself they should
contact the student help desk for assistance. Students can access support through one of three following methods:

1. Chat support: Students can access real-time chat support from within the course page by clicking on "Tech Support" in the tool bar and then clicking on "Chat Online.
2. Phone: Students can access phone support by calling the toll free phone number for eCollege, 1-866-656-5511.
3. E-mail: Student can request assistance by e-mail eCollege directly at helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. Please note that you might not receive a response for 24 hours if you use the e-mail option.

eCollege also has extensive help files available. These can be accessed by clicking the 'Help' button on the toolbar.

**Grading and Evaluation**

Student performance will be based upon 3 categories of graded elements: midterm examinations, quizzes, and class attendance.

**Exams:** Students will take two exams this semester, each worth 30% of the final grade. The first is a midterm exam and the second is a final exam. All exams will include material from the textbook, lecture, and homework assignments. Students who arrive 20 minutes after an exam has started may be denied the opportunity to take the exam and/or required to take the exam at an alternative time with a significant grade penalty. Such students will have to discuss the matter with the instructor.

**Homework** Students will receive 5 formal homework assignments through the class site. Students will have a week to complete the assignment and must submit their assignments online.

**Research Paper** Students will complete a 10-15 page research paper in which they will utilize the skills devoted over the course of semester to produce a research design with some descriptive data analysis of a political science phenomenon. A formal description of the assignment along with the paper due date will be provided later in the semester on the course site. Late papers will not be accepted except in the case of medical circumstances.
Grade Break Down

- Midterm Exam: 30%
- Final Exam: 30%
- Homework Assignments: 20%
- Research Paper: 20%

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Final Grade: 100%

Grading Schedule

Final grades will be based on a 100-point scale, using the following letter/number conversion.

- A: 90-100
- B: 80-89
- C: 70-79
- D: 65-69
- F: Below 65

Additional Course & Instructor Policies

Make-up exams: If a student misses an exam, that student will receive a grade of 0 for the exam. Make-up exams will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor. Any request for a make-up exam must be in writing and include documentation explaining why the absence was legitimate. Such a request must be received within 5 calendar days of the missed exam date, unless the student is physically unable to submit such a request. Legitimate reasons may include illness severe enough to require professional treatment, death in the immediate family, participation in University activities, and legal obligations. Please note, these reasons do not guarantee that a make-up exam will be given.

Extra Credit: Students can earn up to an additional 5% bonus on their final course grade for their attendance. Please note that the only way to earn extra credit is to be physically in class. Thus, regardless of the reason you missed class, any absences will detract from your extra credit points.
Student Conduct & Discipline

The University has rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the student handbook.

I expect all students to maintain the highest level of personal responsibility and academic honesty which is discussed in Texas A&M University-Commerce Procedures A13.12 Academic Honesty. "Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another and passing them off as one's own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material."

Academic dishonesty affects all individuals at the University and accordingly will not be tolerated. For this class, academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism, collusion and/or falsifying academic work. Any and all instances of academic dishonesty will be referred to the appropriate offices on campus and may result in significant penalties. If a student commits academic dishonesty on any paper, exam, or assignment, the instructor reserves the right to assign the student a 0.

Telephone and Email Use

The University prefers electronic mail as the primary means of communication between faculty, staff and students. Please use the e-mail address and telephone number provided on this syllabus for any and all correspondence. Based upon my personal reading of federal and state law, however, I will not correspond with students via e-mail or the telephone regarding grades. Such communication should occur in person, preferably during office hours.
# Reading Assignments and Academic Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>JR 1</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>JR 2</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>JR 3</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>JR 4</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>JR 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>AF 1, GS 1</td>
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<td><strong>Feb</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>AF 2; JR 6, GS 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>AF 3, JR 11, GS 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>19-26</td>
<td>AF 4, JR 7, GS 3-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td><strong>Midterm Exam</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mar</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>AF 5, JR 12, GS 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>AF 5, JR 12, GS 7</td>
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<td>12, 14</td>
<td><strong>Spring Break</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>19-21</td>
<td>AF 6, JR 12, GS 7</td>
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<td>26-28</td>
<td>AF 7, JR 13, GS 13</td>
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<td><strong>Apr</strong></td>
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<td>AF 7, JR 13, GS 13</td>
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<td>4-11</td>
<td>AF 8</td>
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<td>16-23</td>
<td>AF 9, JR 13, GS 11</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>AF 10, JR 14</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>AF 11, JR 14</td>
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<td><strong>May</strong></td>
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<td>AF 11, JR 14</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Final Exam, 10:30-12:30</td>
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AF refers to the Agresti & Finaly text, JR to the Johnson and Reynolds text, GS to the Gonick & Smith text.

***** Please note that the instructor reserves the right to change any part of this syllabus as needed over the course of the semester. Any and all changes will be announced in class.