

# POLS 3302-001: Research and Analysis in Political Science

## Instructor Information

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Office hours: 2-3:30pm, Mondays and Wednesdays

## Course Description

This course seeks to introduce students to basic research design and methodology principles in political science. Some of the topics we'll cover include theory building, hypothesis testing, basic statistical concepts, specific qualitative and quantitative methods, and research ethics.

This course will focus on the foundations of political science research, both qualitative and quantitative. This course will provide a brief introduction to some of the more basic statistical models you might encounter in the wild but should not be seen as a comprehensive statistics course.

## Course Goals

After taking this course, you will:

- be able to critically evaluate existing research studies
- have a better understanding of how to use statistical analysis to help generate and answer questions in political science
- use appropriate mathematical and statistical language in oral, written, and graphical forms
- develop and practice quantitative reasoning and literacy skills
- be comfortable conducting independent quantitative or qualitative research
- understand and be able to apply the scientific method to political science research

Regardless of your career path or statistical/mathematical experience, there is something for you in this class.

## Course Objectives.

Upon completion of this course, students will have a greater understanding and appreciation of political science research, including:

- Theory formation and hypothesis testing

- Qualitative and quantitative methods
- Responsible interpretation and analysis of study results
- Key puzzles and debates in the broader political science literature

## Course Requirements

### Required Text.

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, H.T. Reynolds, and Jason D. Mycoff. Political Science Research Methods. (9th edition) (2020). ISBN (paperback): 9781544331430

### Software.

We'll be using the program Microsoft Excel in this course to store, manipulate, and analyze data. Microsoft Office applications are free to download for students (see the Blackboard course page for more information or contact the Help Desk at Ext. 4357).

## Grading

To calculate your grade at any point in this class, divide the number of points you currently have by the total possible points (as found in Blackboard).

There are **700** possible points available in this class. The points are broken down as follows:

- Homework assignments: 175 points possible
- Participation: 150 points possible
- Short reflection assignments: 100 points possible
- Research design project components: 100 points possible
- Final project: 100 points possible
- Project check-ins: 50 points possible
- Syllabus assignment: 25 points possible

**Participation.** Active and consistent participation is the key to success in this course. If you are present and able to actively and productively contribute to the weekly discussions, you can expect to earn your full points at the end of the semester.

**Homework.** Over the course of the semester, there will be a total of 8 homework assignments to complete. See the reading schedule and calendar for specific due dates.

**Research Design Components.** The final project you'll complete in this course will be a research design (RD). Building an entire research design or proposal from scratch can be daunting, so I've broken it down, piece by piece.

Over the course of the semester, you'll submit four different components of the RD. Please note that some of these components may be larger and more time-consuming than others, so be sure to budget your time accordingly.

**Research Design (Final Project).** At the end of the semester, you should be able to assemble a final, polished research design based on the pieces you've completed and submitted over the course of the semester. This final research design should represent an actionable project, waiting to be implemented (see Blackboard for examples). If you've stayed on top of the components and have paid attention to the feedback you receive, putting together your final research design should be a breeze.

**Project Check-Ins.** In order to keep you on track and address any issues or questions that might come up in your research design projects, you will complete two project check-ins. These short project check-ins will take place one-on-one during our normally scheduled classes, but you will need to submit an outline to Blackboard prior to.

**Reflection responses.** Over the course of the semester, you will complete ten short answer responses (in class). At the beginning of class, I will give a discussion prompt based on the week's reading(s)/topic. You will have ten minutes to write a response by hand. You are allowed to use the reading and/or your notes to help you answer the question.

**Syllabus assignment.** Everything you need to know about the course can be found in this syllabus. To ensure you've carefully read through and understand this syllabus, you'll complete a short syllabus quiz at the start of the semester.

## Classroom Policies and Procedures

### Late Work.

Staying on top of your work is one of the best ways to do well in the course. Late work will incur a 10% penalty each day it's late, up to two days after the due date; any work submitted after the second day will receive a 0.

Note that incorrect and/or corrupted files will be treated as missing and will receive a 0.

### Grade Appeals.

If you wish you to contest a grade, you must submit a written appeal over e-mail within one week logically explaining why you feel your assignment should be reviewed.

### Classroom Civility and Inclusivity.

Political science courses naturally generate topics for discussion and critical reflection. In-class discussions give students a chance to increase their understanding of the material and how it relates to their everyday lives. Everyone's unique lived experiences and

perspectives help provide for rich conversations and new insights into political, social, and economic phenomenon. These discussions represent an opportunity to explore new ideas in a welcoming environment. However, students who are not able to participate in an appropriate, productive, or polite manner may be asked to leave the class.

### Plagiarism and Cheating.

Students caught cheating or plagiarizing will receive a 0 for the assignment and may face further punitive actions from the University. I do not take this issue lightly and reserve the right to fail a student from the course for cheating and/or plagiarizing. For more information, please refer to the University's Student Handbook.

### *Use of Generative AI (Artificial Intelligence).*

Because writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are important learning outcomes of this course, all writing assignments must be prepared by the student and the student alone. Developing strong competencies in this area will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, AI-generated and/or assisted submissions<sup>1</sup> are not permitted in this course and will be treated as plagiarism.

Any student suspected of using AI to complete an assignment will be called in for an oral defense of their assignment.

### E-mail.

I respond to student e-mails within 24 to 36 hours on the weekdays, from around 9am to 5pm. You should feel free to e-mail me whenever your schedule allows, but note that I generally do not respond to e-mail on the weekends or after 5pm on the weekdays. Please stay in touch. Should extenuating circumstances arise that prevent you from completing your coursework please let me know as soon as you are able to so we can make arrangements. Do not wait until the end of the semester to reach out.

### General Course Rules

- You are responsible for ensuring your file submissions are correct (i.e. not the wrong file) and readable (i.e. correct format). Incorrect and/or corrupted files will be treated as missing.
- You should have a consistent, functioning internet connection to take this course. It is your responsibility to ensure that your computer and connection are functioning properly.
- Please do not try to complete coursework on a mobile phone, if possible.
- Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior will result in a loss of credit for the assignment and possibly a referral to the Office of Student Conduct.

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<sup>1</sup> Including, but not limited to: ChatGPT, Grammarly, Gemini, etc.

- You are responsible for all information and announcements made in the course. Prepare to log onto Blackboard at least 2 times a week to check for updates, changes, or new information. Read the course home page thoroughly and check announcements daily.

## University Policies

Refer to the current A&M University-San Antonio Student Handbook for helpful guidelines. You can find the complete listing of the University's policies and resources under the 'Syllabus and Course Calendar' link on the sidebar in Blackboard.

## Tentative Course Schedule

NOTE: this is a tentative reading and course schedule and is subject to change. I reserve the right to amend this schedule as necessary. I will notify students and post an updated syllabus should changes be made.

"Required reading" refers to the reading you need to have done in advance for that class. All graded work is due by 11:59pmCT of the indicated date. Any work submitted after this date will incur a 10% penalty each day it's late, up to two days.

### Unit 1: Introduction

#### *Week 1 (January 21) – Course introduction*

Reading: N/A

Assignments:

- Syllabus assignment (January 25)

#### *Week 2 (January 26, 28) – Finding, reading, and using political science scholarship*

Readings:

- 'How to read political science' (distributed in class)
- Chapter 1

Assignment:

- Homework #1 (February 1)

#### *Week 3 (February 2, 4) – The empirical approach to political science research*

Readings:

- Chapter 2

Assignments: N/A

## Unit 2: Building Blocks

### *Week 4 (February 9, 11) -Beginning the research process*

Reading:

- Chapter 3 (pay particular attention to pages 49-53)

Assignment:

- Homework #2 (February 15)

### *Week 5 (February 16, 18) -Building blocks of social scientific research*

Reading:

- Chapter 4 (pages 73-86)

Assignment:

- Research questions (February 22)

### *Week 6 (February 23, 25\*) – Measurement methods*

\*Check-in #1, in class

Reading:

- Chapter 4 (pages 86 - 100)

Assignment:

- Project check-in #1 outlines (February 24)
- Homework #3 (March 1)

## Unit 3: Causality and Relationships

### *Week 7 (March 2, 4) – Establishing causation*

Reading:

- Chapter 6

Assignment: N/A

### *Week 8 (Spring Break)*

No classes – enjoy your break!

*Week 9 (March 16, 18) – Testing relationships and theory formation*

## Reading:

- Chapter 12

## Assignment:

- Homework # 4 (March 22)

**Unit 4: Project Composition***Week 10 (March 23, 25) – Theory formation, continued*

## Reading: N/A

## Assignment:

- Theory section (March 29)

*Week 11 (March 30, April 1) – Literature reviews*

## Reading:

- Review chapter 3, pages 55-69

## Assignment:

- Annotated bibliographies (April 5)

*Week 12 (April 6, 8\*) – Data*

\*Project check-in #2, in class

## Reading:

- Chapter 11

## Assignments:

- Project check-in #2 outlines (April 7)
- Homework #5 (April 12)
- Data section (April 12)

## Unit 5: Quantitative Methods

### *Week 13 (April 13, 15) – Descriptive statistics*

Reading:

- OER text, pages 30-37

Assignment:

- Homework #6 (April 20)

### *Week 14 (April 20, 22) - ANOVA*

Reading:

- Chapter 13 (pages 299 – 304)

Assignment:

- Homework #7 (April 26)

### *Week 15 (April 27, 29) - OLS*

Reading:

- Chapter 14

Assignment:

- Homework #8 (May 3)

### *Week 16 (May 4)*

Reading: N/A

Assignment:

- Final projects (May 8)



## Texas A&M University San Antonio Important Policies and Resources



### TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SAN ANTONIO

#### University Email Policy and Course Communications

All correspondence between professors and students must occur via university email accounts. You must have your Jaguar email account ready and working. If it is not working, contact the help desk at [helpdesk@tamusa.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamusa.edu) or at 210-784-HELP (4357). If you don't hear back within 48 hours, contact them again. They have many requests during the first part of the semester, so you may need to follow up with them.

#### Academic Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to providing all students with reasonable access to learning opportunities and accommodations in accordance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, as amended, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, Disability Support Services is in the Central Academic Building, Suite 210. You can also contact us via phone at (210) 784-1335, visit us at the website or email us at [dss@tamusa.edu](mailto:dss@tamusa.edu). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their academic accommodation with Disability Support Services and their instructors as soon as possible.

#### Academic Learning Center

All currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio can utilize the Academic Learning Center for subject-area tutoring. The Academic Learning Center provides free course-based tutoring to all currently enrolled students at Texas A&M University-San Antonio. Students wishing to work with a tutor can make appointments through the Brainfuse online tutoring platform. Brainfuse can be accessed in the Tools section of Blackboard. You can contact the Academic Learning Center by emailing [tutoring@tamusa.edu](mailto:tutoring@tamusa.edu), calling (210) 784- 1307, or visiting the Central Academic Building, room 202. Online tutoring is also available for after hours and weekend assistance. While tutoring hours may change based on tutor schedules and availability, the current tutoring hours for MATH in the ALC are as follows:

| Day of the Week | Appointments Available | Walk-in Tutoring (no appointment needed) |
|-----------------|------------------------|--|
| Monday          | 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM      | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM                        |
| Tuesday         | 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM      | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM                        |
| Wednesday       | 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM      | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM                        |
| Thursday        | 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM      | 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM                        |
| Friday          | 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM      | 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM                       |

## Counseling/Mental Health Resources

As a college student, there may be times when personal stressors interfere with your academic performance and negatively impact your daily functioning. If you are experiencing emotional difficulties or mental health concerns, support is available to you through the Student Counseling Center (SCC). To schedule an appointment, visit our website, call 210-784-1331 or visit Madla 120 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM. All mental health services provided by the SCC are free and confidential (as the law allows). The Student Counseling Center provides brief individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, consultation, case management, and prevention services. Crisis support is available 24/7/365 by calling the SCC at 210-784-1331 or through the TELUS student support App.

The [TELUS Student Support App](#) provides a variety of mental health resources to include 24/7/365 support for in the moment distress, crisis support, an anonymous peer-to-peer support network, mental health screenings, podcasts, and articles to improve your mental wellbeing.

## Emergency Preparedness

JagE Alert is Texas A&M University-San Antonio's mass notification system. In the event of an emergency, such as inclement weather, students, staff and faculty, who are registered, will have the option to receive a text message, email with instructions and updates. To register or update your information visit the [Jag E Alert System website](#). You can access more information about [Emergency Operations Plan and the Emergency Action Plan on our website](#). Download the [SafeZone App](#) for emergencies or call (210) 784-1911. Non-Emergency (210) 784-1900.

## Financial Aid and Verification of Attendance

According to the following federal regulation, 34 CFR 668.21: U.S. Department of Education (DoE) Title IV regulation, a student can only receive Title IV funds based on Title IV eligibility criteria which include class attendance. If Title IV funds are disbursed to ineligible students (including students who fail to begin attendance), the institution must return these funds to the U.S. DoE within 30 days of becoming aware that the student will not or has not begun attendance. Faculty will provide the Office of Financial Aid with an electronic notification if a student has not attended by the published Census Date (the first week of class). Any

student receiving federal financial aid who does not attend prior to the published Census Date (the first week of class) will have their aid terminated and returned to the DoE. Please note that any student who stops attending at any time during the semester may also need to return a portion of their federal aid.

## Jaguar Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center (WLDCC)

The Jaguar Writing Center provides writing support to graduate and undergraduate students in all three colleges as well as faculty and staff. Writing tutors work with students to develop reading skills, prepare oral presentations, plan, draft, and revise their written assignments. Our language tutors support students enrolled in Spanish courses and students composing in Spanish for any assignment. Our digital studio tutors support students working on digital projects such as e-portfolios, class presentations, or other digital multimedia projects.

The Writing Center offers face-to-face, synchronous online, and asynchronous digital appointments. Students can schedule appointments with the Writing Center in JagWire under the **Student Services** tab. Click on **Writing, Language, and Digital Composing Center** to make your appointment. Students wanting to work in real time with a tutor can schedule an **Online Appointment**. Students wishing to receive asynchronous, written feedback from a tutor can schedule an **e-Tutoring appointment**. More information about what services we offer, how to make an appointment, and how to access your appointment can be found on the [Writing Center's website](#). The Writing Center can also be reached by emailing: [writingcenter@tamusa.edu](mailto:writingcenter@tamusa.edu).

## Meeting Basic Needs

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to [submit a CARE report for support](#). Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable them to direct you to available resources. The [General's Store is a food pantry](#) that is available on campus as well.

## Military Affairs

Veterans and active-duty military personnel are welcomed and encouraged to visit the Office of Military Affairs for any question involving federal or state VA Education Benefits. Visit the Patriots' Casa building, room 202, or to contact the Office of Military Affairs with any questions at [military.va@tamusa.edu](mailto:military.va@tamusa.edu) or (210)784-1397.

## Religious Observances

Texas A&M University-San Antonio recognizes the wide variety of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided with an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or course work requirements that may

be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes for regular session classes.

## The Six-Drop Rule

Students are subject to the requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 1231 passed by the Texas Legislature in 2007. SB 1231 limits students to a maximum of six (6) non-punitive course drops (i.e., courses a student chooses to drop) during their undergraduate careers. A non-punitive drop does not affect the student's GPA. However, course drops that exceed the maximum allowed by SB 1231 will be treated as "F" grades and will impact the student's GPA.

## Statement of Harassment and Discrimination

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is committed to the fundamental principles of academic freedom, equal opportunity, and human dignity. To fulfill its multiple missions as an institution of higher learning, A&M-San Antonio encourages a climate that values and nurtures collegiality and the uniqueness of the individual on our campus and within our state, nation, and world. All decisions and actions involving students and employees are to be based on applicable law and individual merit. Texas A&M University-San Antonio, in accordance with applicable federal and state law, prohibits discrimination, including harassment, based on race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or pregnancy/parenting status. Individuals who believe they have experienced harassment or discrimination prohibited by this statement are encouraged to contact the University's Civil Rights Officer at 210-784-2061 or [titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu). Texas A&M University-San Antonio faculty are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students and for the university. If you have experienced any form of sex discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic or dating violence, or stalking based on sex, know that help and support are available. A&M-San Antonio's Title IX Coordinator can support those impacted by such conduct in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, and more. The university strongly encourages all students to report any such incidents to the Title IX Coordinator. Please be aware that all A&M-San Antonio employees (other than those designated as confidential resources such as counselors and trained victim advocates) are required to report information about such discrimination and harassment to the university. This means that if you tell a faculty member about a situation of sexual harassment, sexual violence, or other related sex-based misconduct, the faculty member must share that information with the university's Title IX Coordinator ([titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu), 210-784-2061, CAB 439K). If you wish to speak to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting requirement, you can contact the Student Counseling Center at (210) 784-1331 or visit them in Madla 120.

## Pregnant/Parenting Students

Texas A&M-San Antonio does not require a pregnant or parenting student, solely because of that status or issues related to that status, to (1) take a leave of absence or withdraw

from their degree or certificate program; (2) limit the student's studies; (3) participate in an alternative program; (4) change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or (5) refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the University. The university will provide reasonable accommodation for pregnant students as it would be provided to a student with a temporary medical condition that is related to the health and safety of the student and the student's unborn child. These could include maintaining a safe distance from substances, areas, and activities known to be hazardous to pregnant individuals and their unborn child; excused absences because of illness or medical appointments; modified due dates for assignments; rescheduled tests/exams; taking a leave of absence; and being provided access to instructional materials and video recordings of lectures for excused absences, if these would be provided to any other student with an excused absence. Pregnant/parenting students are encouraged to contact the Title IX Coordinator with any questions or concerns related to their status ([titleix@tamusa.edu](mailto:titleix@tamusa.edu); 210-784- 2061; CAB 439K).

Texas A&M-San Antonio has also designated the Title IX Coordinator as the liaison officer for current or incoming students who are the parent or guardian of a child younger than 18 years of age. The Title IX Coordinator can provide students with information regarding support services and other resources. Young Jaguars can support parenting students with daycare if students meet this criteria: (1) must be enrolled in classes at Texas A&M-San Antonio in the current semester, (2) must be Pell eligible or a single parent, (3) child(ren) must be aged 3 to 12-years-old, and (4) child(ren) must be enrolled in Pre-K-3 through 6th grade. For more information, please contact Young Jaguars at [youngjaguars@tamusa.edu](mailto:youngjaguars@tamusa.edu) or call (210) 784-2636.

## Students' Rights and Responsibilities

The following statement of students' rights and responsibilities is intended to reflect the philosophical base upon which University Student Rules are built. This philosophy acknowledges the existence of both rights and responsibilities, which is inherent to an individual not only as a student at Texas A&M University-San Antonio but also as a citizen of this country.

### Students' Rights

1. A student shall have the right to participate in a free exchange of ideas, and there shall be no University rule or administrative rule that in any way abridges the rights of freedom of speech, expression, petition and peaceful assembly as set forth in the U.S. Constitution.
2. Each student shall have the right to participate in all areas and activities of the University, free from any form of discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sex, disability, age, and pregnancy/parenting or veteran status in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

3. A student has the right to personal privacy except as otherwise provided by law, and this will be observed by students and University authorities alike.
4. Each student subject to disciplinary action arising from violations of university students' rules shall be assured a fundamentally fair process.

### Students' Responsibilities

1. A student has the responsibility to respect the rights and property of others, including other students, the faculty, and administration.
2. A student has the responsibility to be fully acquainted with the published University Student Rules found in the Student Handbook, Student Code of Conduct, on our website, and University Catalog, and to comply with them, as well as with federal, state, and local laws.
3. A student has the responsibility to recognize that student actions reflect upon the individuals involved and upon the entire University community.
4. A student has the responsibility to recognize the University's obligation to provide a safe environment for learning.
5. A student has the responsibility to check their university email for any updates or official university notifications.

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#) or visit the resources available in the [OSRR website](#).

### Important Spring 2026 Dates

| Dates      | Event   |
|------------|---|
| January 13 | Tuition and Fee Payments deadline                         |
| January 19 | Marting Luther King Jr. Day – No Classes                  |
| January 20 | First Day of Class  |
| February 4 | Census Date   |
| March 6-23 | Midterm grading period                                    |
| March 9-14 | Spring Break  |
| April 3    | Study Day – No classes                                    |
| April 17   | Last day to drop with an automatic withdrawal             |
| May 1      | Last day to drop a course or withdraw from the university |

| <b>Dates</b> | <b>Event</b>           |
|--------------|------------------------|
| May 4        | Last Day of Classes    |
| May 5        | Study Day – No classes |
| May 6-12     | Final Exams            |
| May 19       | Commencement           |