

**This is a draft only—from an earlier semester.
The official syllabus for the current semester will be found on my web site.**

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGNS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLS 3310 (.001)/5310

8-9:20am; TTr, 001 UH

<http://www.uta.edu/faculty/story/>

The official syllabus is found only on Professor Story's web site

Dale Story
Spring 2011

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Course Description and Overview

This course is designed to introduce the Political Science student to behavioral methodology, social statistics, and computer applications in the social sciences. The first part of the course will focus on issues of philosophy of science, explanations and theories, research designs, measurement, and survey research. The second part of the course will cover basic statistical analysis (univariate, bivariate, and multivariate) and computer software (SPSS) for computing statistics.

Political research focuses on explaining and predicting political phenomenon. What influences the votes of a congressional representative? Why are some nations democratic and other nations authoritarian? The answers to these and other questions are sought through political research.

Thus, the objective of this course is to teach students how to design and carry out research in political science. Substantive issues are discussed only as examples of different methods of conducting research. The emphasis in this course is on the methods and techniques used in analyzing political events.

This course then exposes the student to the basic steps of political research: defining the problem or the question, formulating hypotheses, specifying a research design, operationalizing the measures, analyzing the data, and reaching conclusions. An interest in quantitative analysis is helpful, but no previous knowledge of research methods, statistics, or statistical software is required. The basic statistics and computer software will be fully explained in class and in the readings.

Student Learning Outcomes

- The students will be able to explain and discuss basic issues of philosophy of science;
- The students will be able to explain and discuss basic issues related to explanations, concepts, relationships, hypotheses, and theories;
- The students will be able to create and critique research designs;
- The students will be able to demonstrate and apply levels of measurement and types of measurement error;
- The students will be able to explain methods of conducting survey research and analyze sampling theory;
- The students will be able to create and analyze different data sets, utilizing univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistics.
- The students will be able to explain and employ statistical and methodological techniques to analyze information.

Course Requirements and Grading

All readings from the F-N&N book and the S book are highly recommended.. The amount of reading for this course is not particularly heavy. However, the reading assignments in this course could be critically important. Students are encouraged to read the appropriate chapters before the topics are introduced in class. Thus, the student will be better prepared to digest class lectures and ask questions for clarifying difficult points. Your instructor recognizes that the topics could be new to you. The expectation is that each student will make a sincere effort to assimilate the material and will not be reticent in asking questions of the instructor. In fact, much of the learning in this class will occur through discussion format (question and answer) and through individual help. All students are expected to attend class regularly and to seek the instructor's assistance whenever they have questions.

The textbooks available for purchase in local bookstores are:

1. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (F-N&N), *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* (7th Ed.). Recommended
2. Shively (S), *The Craft of Political Research* (8th Ed.). Recommended

Grades are based on: three exams (each worth 23%--covering only material since the previous exam—Exam 3 is the “Final Exam”); a statistical project (11%); and attendance, daily exams and special projects (20%). Attendance will be taken electronically (student response pads) at the very beginning of class. Daily exams will consist of a small number of questions answered electronically (student response pads) in class.

Graduate and Honors' students will have additional individual statistical project. Each exam will be worth 20%; the statistical project, 10%; attendance, daily exams, and special projects, 20%, and the additional statistical project, 10%. For the individual statistical project, students will need to pick their own topic, download their own data-set, develop their own hypotheses, and provide their own analysis. It should be of similar depth and breadth to the class statistical project.

Grade Distribution

This class has no “ideal” grade distribution. The grade distribution for this instructor and this class averages: 10% A, 45% B, 30% C, 5% D, and 10% F. The average final score is in the upper-70s.

General Policies

All requirements, exam dates, and deadlines are firm. No extensions will be given. Exercises/papers/projects are due by the beginning of class on the due date. Work submitted at any time after the precise deadline will receive an automatic deduction of 50 points. No excuses will be accepted. You are encouraged to submit your work early. Think: “Early is on-time; and on-time is late.”

Letter grades correspond to the following scales: 90+ = A; 80+ = B; 70+ = C; 50+ = D; and below 50 = F. Fractions are not rounded off, grades are not "curved," and the numerical minimums for letter grades are absolute and fixed. All students are treated equally, and grades are based on performance and not on need.

In answering essay questions in exercises or exams (describing, analyzing, discussing, explaining, identifying, etc.), always use complete sentences and paragraphs. Organize your answers. Be complete, but do not ramble. Diagrams, lists, graphs, and the like might be useful--but they should be within the structure of sentences and paragraphs. For statistical or quantitative problems and questions, show all work. Begin by writing the formula(s) and show all important steps in reaching your answer.

On all exercises and tests, be neat and show all work! Also, all exercises must be submitted complete and stapled. The staples must be flat (not protruding). Professor Story has a large stapler, if needed. Do not use any covers or binders for exercises or research papers. Use sentences and paragraphs

where appropriate. Submit only your final draft (clean copy--no corrections). Significant points will be deducted for presentation, organization, and general neatness.

You must bring 8.5x11" paper and a writing utensil to class. You also must bring an 8.5x11" blue book for all exams. Ten points will be deducted on your exam if you do not have an 8.5x11" blue book for an exam.

You should be taking extensive notes in this class—from class lectures and discussions and from your readings. You should always bring all of your notes to class.

All exercises, research projects, and the like that are submitted in hard copy must include a clean, white 8.5x11" cover sheet. Any assignments missing this cover sheet will have ten points deducted. This cover sheet should include: the student's last name followed by their first name (comma separating); course number (e.g., POLS 3310); and assignment name (e.g., Exercise Number 1).

If I cannot read or find your name on any assignment or test, you will receive a grade of zero for that assignment or test.

Retain Originals

All students should submit copies of papers, projects, assignments, etc.--and retain their originals.

Seating Chart

You will be notified if and when a seating chart will be established.

Optical Scan Form

If an optical scantron form is used in this class, you will need to always have a #2 pencil and the appropriate optical scantron form when you arrive for a test.

Student Response Pads

If Student Response Pads are utilized in this class, you will need to purchase them from the UTA Bookstore and enroll in this class immediately. Any student discovered with two or more pads in class will receive an automatic grade of F for the course. Students must keep both hands on their desktop whenever we are using the pads.

Prerequisites

This course is designed as an advanced course for Political Science majors, though non-Political Science students are welcome to take the class. All students should have completed the required core curriculum: 12 hours of English, 6 hours of History, 14 hours of Foreign Language, 6 hours of Math (College Algebra or above), 8 hours of Science, 3 hours of Fine Arts, 6 hours of Political Science, and 9 hours of Social Sciences. Problem-solving and mathematical skills appropriate for upper-level undergraduates are especially important.

Students Should Know Their Grades

Each student should keep an excel file (or other written record) with all grades (including attendance, assignments submitted, etc.).

Make-up Exams

Make-up exams are strongly discouraged. All students are expected to take the exams at the scheduled time. Only one make-up exam is allowed. No matter which regular exam is missed, all make-up

exams for regular exams are the same. This make-up exam will be a comprehensive final given on the last day of classes. There is no make-up exam for the make-up exam.

Student Responsibility (for the complete text: <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/general/academicreg>)

While University faculty and staff members give students academic advice and assistance, each graduate and undergraduate student is expected to take responsibility for his or her education and personal development. The student must know and abide by the academic and disciplinary policies given in this catalog, including rules governing quantity of work, the standard of work required to continue in the University, scholastic probation and dismissal, and enforced withdrawal. The student must also know and meet the requirements of his or her degree program, including the University's core education requirements; must enroll in courses appropriate to the program; must meet prerequisites and take courses in the proper sequence to ensure orderly and timely progress; and must seek advice from appropriate University representatives about degree requirements and other University policies when necessary. The student must also know and adhere to all University deadlines.

Americans With Disabilities Act

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

As a faculty member, I am required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty of their need for accommodation and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels. Information regarding specific diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability. Also, you may visit the Office for Students with Disabilities in room 102 of University Hall or call them at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity

It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University.

"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, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts." (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2)

Student Support Services Available

The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals. Your instructor should be your most important source of support.

E-Culture Policy

The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University email address as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of email, UT-Arlington is able to provide students with relevant and timely information, designed to facilitate student success. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation may be sent to students through email.

All students are assigned an email account and information about activating and using it is available at www.uta.edu/email. New students (first semester at UTA) are able to activate their email account 24 hours after registering for courses. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active as long as a student is enrolled at UT-Arlington. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly.

All cell phones must be turned off and put away. Usage of lap tops is acceptable, but is strictly limited to work relevant to the class (taking notes, looking at web sites being used, etc.).

Whenever you email Professor Story, write the following in the subject line: (1) course number and section number (e.g., 3310-001); your last name (e.g., Story); and a brief description of the content or attachments (e.g., *Statistical Project*).

Final Review Week

A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabi. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. Classes are held as scheduled during this week and lectures and presentations may be given.

No Incompletes, Unless...

No incompletes will be assigned, unless: (1) the student misses the final exam with a written excuse substantiated by a "third party"; and (2) the student is able to make-up the final exam at a specific time determined by Professor Story in the following semester.

Librarian to Contact

The UTA provides a highly qualified and motivated subject librarian in the Main Library. Please contact the Library for any assistance involving Library resources.

Grade Grievance Policy

Described in the Catalog at <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/general/academicreg.html> (scroll about halfway down).

Drop Policy

Described in the Catalog at <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/general/academicreg.html> (scroll about halfway down). Students are responsible for knowing all drop/withdrawal policies and deadlines. Students

should drop any class as a last resort—and need to visit the office of their major to drop. This instructor will not approve any requests for extending the deadline to drop.

Add Policy

Any student has the prerogative and right to add this class up to the last day of Late Registration (or the final date for students to add themselves in MyMav). However, I will not approve any adds beyond the class capacity, and I will not approve any adds beyond that last date for students to add themselves.

Other Academic Policies and Regulations

All academic policies and regulations can be found in the UTA Undergraduate Catalog, particularly in the section on Academic Regulations: <http://www.uta.edu/catalog/general/academicreg.html>.

Inclement Weather

In the event that weather or other conditions are such that normal campus operations could be impeded, the Vice President for Student Affairs is responsible for determining whether classes will be canceled or delayed and if University offices will be closed or open late. Such information will be provided to the local broadcast media, normally no later than 6:30 a.m. Information may also be obtained by dialing (972) 601-2049, by watching Arlington Comcast Cable Channel 76, or by reviewing the UTA website (www.uta.edu).

Work Load, Attendance, Behavior, and Prompt Arrival

It is expected that students will need to devote at least 2 hours per week outside of class for every one hour per week in class. All students should recognize that their education is a priority. Students are required to attend all classes and arrive on time. Students may not leave class early, unless they have notified Professor Story in advance. Students should not sleep in class. Non-disruptive behavior and academic honesty are required. Points may be deducted from exams or from final grades for not following directions, misconduct, or disruptive behavior.

Pace Yourself

Many projects and papers are not due until the end of the semester. However, students should make continual progress on these during the semester and not postpone all of the work until the end of the semester.

Many Grades are Frequently not Available until the End of the Semester

Students should recognize that many (sometimes most) of the grades are not available until the end of the semester/

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No incompletes are granted for the Honors paper

Posting Grades

Grades are not posted or given out over the phone. You are welcome to provide me with a self-stamped and self-addressed postcard or envelope, and I will mail your final grade to you.

Typographical Errors on Syllabus

Please notify the instructor if you ever notice any typographical errors, incorrect dates, or the like in this syllabus.

Any Student Enrolled in the Class Recognizes that they Understand all Syllabus Policies

COURSE OUTLINE

	<u>Week(s) of:</u>
I. Politics as Science Read: F-N&N, Ch. 1; S, Ch. 1	Jan. 18 & 25
II. Graphs, Linear Equations, Tables, Explanations, Hypotheses, Concepts, Relations, & Theories Read: F-N&N, Ch. 2, 3; S, Ch. 2, 3	Feb. 1
III. Research Design Read: F-N&N, Ch. 5, 6; S, Ch. 6	Feb. 8 & 15
TEST ONE, Tues., Feb. 22	
IV. Measurement Read: F-N&N, Ch. 7; S, Ch. 4, 5	Feb.24
V. Survey Research Read: F-N&N, Ch. 8, 10, 11; S, Ch. 7	March 1 & 8
VI. Univariate Read: F-N&N, Ch. 15	March 22
VII. Data Processing (if time) Read: F-N&N, Ch. 14	March 29
TEST TWO, Tues., April 5	
VII. Data Processing (if necessary) Read: F-N&N, Ch. 14	April 7
VIII. Bivariate (Crosstabs) Read: F-N&N, Ch. 16 (pp. 352-361); S, Ch. 10	April 7
IX. Inferences (Chi Square) Read F-N&N, Ch. 19	April 12
X. Bivariate (Measures of Association) Read: F-N&N, Ch. 16 (pp. 361-374, 380-382); S, Ch. 8, 9	April 19 & 26

XI. Bivariate (Regression)
Read F-N&N, Ch. 16 (pp. 374-380)

April 26

XII. Multi-variate

May 3

MAKE-UP EXAM, Thurs., May 5

FINAL EXAM, Tues., May 10, 8am-10:30am (verify date and time at UTA Website)