

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGNS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

POLS 3310/5310

025 UH, 9:30-10:50 TTr

<http://www.dalestory.org>

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

Dale Story
Spring 2015

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Office Hours (by appointment): TTr, 11am-1pm

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

Students are expected to do any readings as well as attend class. No textbooks have been ordered for this class. All readings/videos/etc. listed on the web-site for this course (including outlines and any other links) are required (unless otherwise announced).

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.

Unless you select otherwise, for undergraduate students (non-Honors) the exams will be objective tests (multiple choice questions). Example: What is a difficulty in predicting political behavior— followed by 4-5 answers and you select the correct answer. For problem questions, you will need to work the problem and find the correct answer—than select the correct answer from a list of 4-6 answers. You will need the appropriate ScanTron form and a #2 pencil. Graduate students and Honors students will take an “essay” exam. Example question: Explain fully the four characteristics of behavioralism. For problem questions, you will need to show all your work neatly and in an organized fashion. You will need a blue book. Finally, any student has the option of taking the essay exams. If you prefer the essay exams (all three exams must be the same and you may not change your mind), you need to email me by **the end of the second week of classes.**

The final grade for the course is normally based on three exams and a statistical project. The three exams are weighted 30% each and the statistical project is weighted 10%. Each exam (including the “Final” Exam—or Exam 3) covers only the material since the preceding exam. Points may be deducted for not following directions, procedures, or policies of the class.

Graduate and Honors' students will have one additional individual statistical project. They must take the “essay” exams, and must submit an “additional” statistical project. The final grade will be determined by the following weightings: the three exams, 27% each; “regular” statistical project, 10%; and “graduate/honors” statistical project, 9%. 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: 20% A, 35% B, 30% C, 5% D, and 10% F. Failing grades are usually a function of students not taking tests, completing the work, or coming to class. The final score averages in the upper-70s.

Essential Expectations

All students are expected to: (1) attend class at all times (much critical information and many important announcements will only be made in class); (2) arrive in class on-time (preferably early); (3) always remain respectful of class environment; (4) never leave class before they are dismissed; (5) never leave class during an exam; (6) take extensive notes on class lectures and all assigned readings, videos, and the like; (7) pay attention and follow directions; and (8) devote at least two hours studying outside of class for every hour of scheduled class time. If you are not prepared to fulfill all of these expectations, the probability of your performing poorly in this class is very high.

General Policies

All requirements, exam dates, and deadlines are 99.5% firm. Any deviations will be due to highly extenuating circumstances, such as cancelled class due to inclement weather. These deviations will be announced in class and provided to the students in written form. Cancellations due to inclement weather are University decisions and will be posted on the UTA web site. 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. If any adjustments are made to grades, they will be made equally to all students—and will be based on a quantitative analysis of mean, median, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum.

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 essay tests, be neat and show all work! 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 essay exams. Ten points will be deducted on your exam if you do not have an 8.5x11” blue book for an essay exam. You should purchase a blue book well in advance of your test.

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. Write your last name in the upper right-hand corner of each page. Do not discard any of your notes until after the conclusion of the class.

You do not need to bring your text book(s) to class—but always bring your notes (class and outside readings) to class.

If it would be of any assistance, I would be glad to provide any student feedback regarding their notes from this class. Obviously, I am not going to criticize your particular approach, but I will certainly provide you with some opinions as to whether you are covering the correct information, enough information, etc.

All exercises, research projects, and the like must have the following information displayed upfront: 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). Assignments submitted via email should have the subject line as stipulated in class.

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.

Last Name

You should always write your last name first on any tests, projects, etc. that you submit to me. Your last name is defined as the last name officially recognized by UTA. Be sure to notify me if you officially change your last name with the UTA Registrar.

Retain Originals

All students should submit copies of papers, projects, assignments, etc.—and retain their originals. Many assignments will be submitted electronically—obviously, you will retain your file.

Exams, etc. Retained for One Long Semester

Any exercises or exams not returned will be retained for the following long semester.

Timed Exams

All exams must be completed by the end of the class. Some tests might be timed and must be finished by the end of a particular time period (before the end of the class).

Progress Reports.

All Progress Reports will show a grade of “I.” You will have all exams returned in a timely manner; and thus should have an excellent estimate of your grade. If not, please contact Professor Story.

Academic Calendar

You will find many important University dates in the Academic Calendar on the UTA web site. These dates include first day of class, drop deadline, “vacation” days, last class day, and final exam dates and times.

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 (NCS Form 4521—8.5x11, blue form) when you arrive for a test. Points will be deducted for any multiple choice exams that must be graded by hand (i.e., no pencil, no Scantron Form, unreadable Scan Form, etc.). No erasures on the Scantron Form. No stray marks. Make heavy black marks that fill the circle/box completely. Note that the appropriate bubble is below each A (1); B (2); C (3); D (4); and E (5). You must write your last name first on the form. The UTA equipment used to grade Scantrons is assumed to be completely accurate. You should purchase optical scantron forms well in advance of your tests.

Prerequisites

Any 3-4000 courses are advanced courses for undergraduate Political Science majors, though non-Political Science students are welcome to take these classes. 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 and Statistics), 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. POLS 2311 does not have any prerequisites.

Students Should Know Their Grades

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

If you are interested in “projecting” a possible grade given existing grades and expectations of future grades, simply use the percentages described in the Syllabus. As an example, assume that the Mid-Term is worth 40 percent, the Final is worth 40 percent, and daily quizzes are worth 20 percent. If you have your grade for the Mid-Term, multiply that by 0.40. If you have half of your daily quiz grades, project what you might expect to be your final grade on daily quizzes and multiply that by 0.20. Project what you might expect to be your Final grade to be and multiply that by 0.40. Add the three numbers for a projected final average.

Make-up Exams, Extra Credit, Optional Tests, etc.

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. This make-up exam will be given on the last class day of the particular course (in the regular classroom and the normal class time). There is no make-up exam for the make-up exam. Make-up exams are only to make-up an exam that you missed. Unless otherwise stated, make-up exams are essay exams.

I may send an email asking for which students who missed an exam intend to take the make-up exam. If a student intends to take the make-up, they will need to respond to that email.

Unless the Syllabus explicitly states otherwise, there are no re-takes of tests, no extra credit, and no optional tests.

Incompletes will only be granted if a student is called to Active Duty after the Drop Date. A student may take a make-up for a missed Final Exam with a note from a doctor stating they were medically unable to attend the scheduled Final Exam (but a grade of F will be assigned for the Final until the make-up).

“Final” Exam Schedule

Consult the UTA Web Site (typically under “Current Students”) for the complete schedule for “Final Exams.” Many of my classes have a “last” exam (but not comprehensive). For example, I might have three exams (Exam 1, Exam 2, and Exam 3). And Exam 3 is the “last” exam of the course, but only covers material since the preceding exam. That exam would be considered the “final” exam, and will occur at the date and time noted for the class in the UTA Schedule for Final Exams.

All of Professor Story’s finals are in the same classroom as the regular class (unless otherwise stated).

Any projects due in the last week of classes (or any make-up exams) will be graded parallel with the final exam. I will be glad to provide you with general feedback about a project before the deadline, but I will not grade your project before you submit your final draft.

My schedule and availability after the last day of classes is very unpredictable, due to grading, end-of-semester paperwork, and research.

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.

The professor is not responsible for reminding students of appropriate University and course policies. Enrollment in the course stipulates that you understand and will remember all policies and procedures for this course and any applicable University policies.

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.

[Start Strong First Year Student Tutoring Program](#)

This tutoring program provides up to six (6) hours of free tutoring in selected courses offered during the spring semester for all first-time and returning freshmen. Go to the link above for information (including deadline and process for registering).

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. Your UTA email is a necessity for this class, probably other classes,

and definitely UTA business. If your UTA email ever becomes dysfunctional, you need to contact this professor immediately to arrange alternative means for email.

All cell phones must be turned off and put away. No lap tops or tablets are allowed—unless you have a specific academic need related to this class to use a lap top. In which case, you will need to have Professor Story’s permission. Whenever you email Professor Story, use only your UTA email and write the following in the subject line: your last name (e.g., *Story*); course number and section number (e.g., *3310-001*); and a brief description of the content or attachments (e.g., *Statistical Project*).

I am not able to reply to requests for verification receipt of a particular email. I have complete confidence in the UTA email system. You should be sure to save your sent copy as evidence if any questions arise.

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.

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.

Dropping a course is a decision a student must make for themselves. However, I would recommend that if a student has missed 6 or more classes, they should consider dropping the course--as it will be very challenging to be successful if you have missed that many classes.

Excused Absences.

“Excused” Absences are recognized in only three cases.

1. The student has a memo from the Provost that they were absent due to a University activity.
2. The student has a note from their doctor stating explicitly the dates in which the student was medically unable to attend class.
3. Students who are suddenly called to active duty in the armed services.

Students may take the make-up exam for any tests other than the final exam no matter if their absence is excused or not. However, they may take the make-up exam for the final exam only when their absence is excused.

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.

Receipt for submitted exam

I maintain that I have never lost a hard-copy exam submitted to me. However, if you would like assurance that you submitted your exam, please ask for a receipt when you give me your exam.

Use SPSS only in a UTA computer lab

If this class requires utilizing SPSS, I strongly recommend that you access SPSS only in a UTA computer lab. You can find the lists with software available in each at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/computerlabs/software/index.php>

Other Academic Policies and Regulations

All University 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, unless otherwise stated in the Syllabus. In any case, if a student comes to class, they must 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 policies, procedures, and directions for this class—and for any 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.

The Official Syllabus is found only on Professor Story's web site

Professor Story's web site has syllabi, outlines, possible review questions (particularly in 3310), announcements, and other relevant info.

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

All students should also confirm their official enrollment in this class.

Do not enroll in a class unless you are certain that you can always arrive on time. If for any reason you cannot always arrive on time, you should select a different class which fits your schedule.

Significant points will be deducted for failure to follow any policies, procedures, or directions.

Questions

If you ever have any questions, do not hesitate to email me.

COURSE OUTLINE

Each student should become familiar with the basic elements of "writing a research paper in Political Science." In addition to topics discussed in class, each student is recommended to pace themselves during the semester in perusing the following:

- Lisa Baglione (B), *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science* (2nd Ed., CQ Press). Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9
- On my web page [Resources for Writing a Political Science Research Paper](#)
 - [Basic Elements of a Research Paper](#)
 - [Writing Political Science Papers](#)

The final exam will include a question(s) regarding the basic elements of a research paper.

I. Politics as Science

Week(s) of:
Jan. 20 & 27

- II. Graphs, Linear Equations, Tables, Explanations, Hypotheses, Concepts, Relations, & Theories Feb. 3
- III. Research Design Feb. 10 & 17

TEST ONE, FEB. 19 (THURS.)

- IV. Measurement Feb. 24
- V. Survey Research March 3 & 17
- VI. Univariate March 24 & 31
- VII. Data Processing (if time) March 31

TEST TWO, APRIL 2 (THURS.)

- VII. Data Processing (if necessary) April 7
- VIII. Bivariate (Crosstabs) April 14
- IX. Inferences (Chi Square) April 14
- X. Bivariate (Measures of Association) April 21 & 28
- XI. Bivariate (Regression) April 28
- XII. Multi-variate May 5

MAKE-UP EXAM, LAST DAY OF THIS CLASS, IN CLASS, REGULAR TIME MAY 7, THURS.

FINAL EXAM (same room as the regular classroom)—per the Final Exam Schedule (UTA web site—Academic Calendar).

All Projects are due via email by the beginning time of class on the last day of this class. However, you should finish earlier to avoid a deduction for late submission. Professor Story will not be available for assistance after the final day of class.