

**PS 5307 Scope& Methods in Social Sciences
Fall 2023
Sul Ross State University**

Instructor: Dr. Yen-Hsin Chen

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Office hours: Monday 2PM-3PM, Wednesday 9:30AM-12:30PM, Tuesday & Thursday 11AM-2 PM,
and by appointment

Course Description

This course introduces the strategies and techniques of the scientific methods utilized in the study of political science. Students are expected to learn how to apply knowledge of scientific methods to the study of politics and to examine various types of political phenomena with appropriate approaches. To attain this goal, this course covers topics including research design, causal inference, hypotheses and variables, measurement, data collection, and basic statistical techniques. This course will enable students to be better consumers of political science – thus, you will be able to identify misleading or poorly conducted research, do original research in your classes, and become an informed participant in contemporary political debates.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will:

- Be able to describe the difference between a basic research paper and a research study
- Understand the main parts of a research study
- Understand how to formulate a research question and hypothesis
- Be aware of the different ways to approach a research study
- Understand the importance of ethics in research and how to properly conduct ethical research
- Be able to conduct a literature review of existing studies
- Be aware of existing data sources for research
- Be able to select the appropriate statistical test for their research design
- Be more aware of existing theories and how to apply them to research
- Know the steps to publish research in at least one scholarly journal
- Gain valuable experience presenting a research proposal

Program Learning Outcomes

Public Administration	Political Science
<p>The graduating student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to critique significant theoretical approaches of public administration. • Demonstrate the ability to evaluate domestic and international administrative processes. • Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate statistical tools for quantitative analysis. 	<p>The graduating student will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to analyze significant theoretical approaches of political science. • Demonstrate the ability to evaluate domestic and international political processes. • Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate statistical tools for quantitative analysis.

Marketable Skills

Public Administration	Political Science
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can organize and execute presentations relevant to public administration. • Students understand and can execute a program evaluation. • Students can conduct statistical analyses that are useful to the work of public administrators. • Students can read and interpret an organization budget. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can organize and execute verbal and written presentations of complex social issues. • Students can tackle social and political problems by acquiring relevant data and using insight and technical skills to analyze data and develop logical solutions. • Students understand the roles and responsibilities of institutional authority within local, state, national, and international communities. • Students understand and can execute a policy analysis.

Assignments and Grading

Homework (20% of your grade, 5% for each of the 4 assignments):

There are 6 homework assignments for students to complete. Assignments may include short essays on topics learned in the course, math exercises using statistical formulas, and computer-based exercises. Assignments will be given at least one week in advance of the due date. A student who does not turn in an assignment on time will receive a zero for the assignment.

Research Proposal & Presentation (40% of your grade):

Each student will design an original research project. This paper will involve a description of the project to be conducted, and will include sections covering the literature review, theory/hypotheses, data, and methodological approach used in the project. This paper is required to be at least 10 but less than 15 double-spaced pages in length, and is due on **December 3rd**. The due dates and the percent

of your final research project grade that is determined by each installment are as follows. Further details will be provided on a separate handout in the future.

1. Problem statement (5 points): **September 3rd**
2. Literature review (5 points): **October 1st**
3. Theory and hypothesis (5 points): **October 29th**
4. Research design (5 points): **November 19th**
5. Final draft (10 points): **December 3rd**
6. Presentation (10 points): **December 4th**

Exams (40% of your grade, 20% for each exam)

Two exams will be given during this course. Exams will include multiple choice questions as well as short essays on topics covered in the course. The first exam will be held **during the week of 9/25**. The final exam will be held during the final exam week.

Quiz (Extra credit): A number (to be determined by the instructor) of unannounced quizzes will be given occasionally. The score of the quizzes will be added to your grade as extra points.

Grade Scale

Your grade will be determined based on the following grading scale:

Points	Letter Grade
100- 90.0	A
89.9-80.0	B
79.9-70.0	C
69.9-60.0	D
59.9 or less	F

Assigned Reading

The required textbook for this course is:

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, H. T. Reynolds, and Jason D. Mycoff. 2019. *Political Science Research Methods*. 9th ed. Washington D.C.: CQ Press. ISBN: 9781544331430

- This text is referred to in the course schedule as J&R.

The two optional textbooks for this course are:

Creswell, John W, and J. David Creswell. 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th ed. SAGE. ISBN: 9781506386690

Shively, W. Phillips. 2010. *The Craft of Political Research*. 8th ed. ISBN: 9780205791200

Students are expected to have read the assigned chapters before coming to class. Should class need to be canceled due to illness or other unforeseen circumstances, the material scheduled for the missed class will be covered the next time the class meets.

Attendance and Participation

I do not take attendance, but I expect that you watch all lecture recordings. Also, I will occasionally give pop quizzes as extra points, so watching the recordings will improve your chances of being successful in this course.

Course Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule of topics and reading assignments for the course. Thus, items on this syllabus are subject to change per the discretion of the instructor. If I deem it necessary to make changes and/or modifications in the schedule, I will make an announcement in class.

Week 1 (8/28): Course Introduction

- J&R Chapters 1 and 2
- Lupia, Arthur. 2000. "Evaluating Political Science Research: Information for Buyers and Sellers," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33 (1): 7-13.

Week 2 (9/4): The Empirical Approach to Political Science

- J&R Chapter 2, 3, and 4
- Ansolabehere, Stephen, Shanto Iyengar, Adam Simon, and Nicholas Valentino. 1994. "Does Attack Advertising Demobilize the Electorate?" *American Political Science Review* 88 (4): 829-838.
- Niven, David. 2006. "A Field Experiment on the Effects of Negative Campaign Mail on Voter Turnout in Municipal Election." *Political Research Quarterly* 59 (2): 203-210.
- **Problem Statement due on 9/3 11:59 PM**

Week 3 (9/11): Causal Inference and Research Design

- J&R Chapter 6
- Diamond, Jared. 2010. "Intra-Island and Inter-Island Comparison." In *Natural Experiments of History*, eds. By Jared Diamond and James A. Robinson. Cambridge, M.A.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Banerjee, Abhijit, and Lakshmi Iyer. 2010. "Colonial Land Tenure, Electoral Competition, and Public Good in India." In *Natural Experiments of History*, eds. By Jared Diamond and James A. Robinson. Cambridge, M.A.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Week 4 (9/18): Measurement

- J&R Chapter 5

Week 5 (9/25): Exam Week

Week 6 (10/2): Survey Research and Data Analysis 1

- J&R Chapter 11
- **Literature Review due on 10/01, 11:59 PM**

Week 7 (10/9): Data Analysis 2

- J&R Chapters 10 and 11

Week 8 (10/16): Sampling 1

- J&R Chapter 7

Week 9 (10/23): Statistical Inference 1

- J&R Chapter 12

Week 10 (10/30): Sampling 2

- J&R Chapter 12
- **Theory and hypothesis due on 10/29, 11:59 PM**

Week 11 (11/6): Statistical Inference 2

- J&R Chapter 13

Week 12 (11/13): Bivariate Analysis 1

- J&R Chapter 13

Week 13 (11/20): Bivariate Analysis 2

- J&R Chapter 13
- Thanksgiving Holiday! Nov. 22-24
- **Research design due on 11/19, 11:59 PM**

Week 14 (11/27): Bivariate Analysis 3

- J&R Chapter 13

Week 15 (12/4): Presentation

- **Research proposal due on 12/3 11:59 PM**

Week 16 (12/11): Final Exam Week

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Other Course Policies & Resources

Academic Integrity

Intellectual development requires hard work. Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

The policy can be found at: <https://www.sulross.edu/about/administration/university-policies/> In addition, please note that plagiarism detection software will be used in this class for written assignments.

Course Blackboard Resources

There are several resources on the course Blackboard page. You are expected to review and familiarize yourself with the items in Blackboard in the first week of class.

Blackboard Technical Support

SRSU 24/7 Blackboard Technical Support Online Support Desk Contact Info: Toll Free: 888.837.6055. Email: blackboardsupport@sulross.edu

SUSR Library Services

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

The Southwest Texas Junior College (SWTJC) Libraries at Uvalde, Del Rio, and Eagle Pass offer additional access to library spaces and resources. Del Rio, Eagle Pass, and Uvalde students may also use online resources available through SWTJC website, library.swtjc.edu. The SWTJC Libraries serve as pick-up locations for Inter Library Loan (ILL) and Document Delivery from the Alpine campus.

SRSU Disability Services.

SRSU Disability Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Alpine students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mary Schwartz Grisham, M.Ed., LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Coordinator at 432-837-8203, or email mschwartz@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall – room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832.

Commitment to Diversity

I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

SRSU Distance Education Statement

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.