

**PS 5307 Scope & Methods in Social Sciences
Fall 2024
Sul Ross State University**

Instructor: Dr. Yen-Hsin Chen

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Office hours:

- Monday & Wednesday: 10:00 AM-12:30 PM
- Tuesday & Thursday: 10:45 AM- 11:45 AM

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 examine various political phenomena with appropriate approaches. This course covers research design, causal inference, hypotheses and variables, measurement, data collection, and basic statistical techniques to attain this goal. This course will enable students to be better consumers of political science. Thus, you can 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 conduct ethical research properly
- 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

<p style="text-align: center;">Public Administration</p> <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 style="text-align: center;">Political Science</p> <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.
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Marketable Skills

<p style="text-align: center;">Public Administration</p> <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. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Political Science</p> <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.
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Assignments and Grading

- **Homework** (20% of your grade, 5% for each of the four assignments):
 There are 4 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 before the due date. A student who does not turn in an assignment on time will receive a zero for the assignment.
- **Group project (Research Proposal)** (40% of your grade):
 Students of this course will be assigned into separate groups, and each group will write an original research project.
 This paper will describe the project to be conducted and include sections covering the literature review, theory/hypotheses, data, and methodological approach used in the project. This paper must be at least ten but less than 15 double-spaced pages and is due **December 5th**. The due dates and the percent of your final research project grade 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 9**
 2. Literature review (5 points): **October 7**
 3. Theory and hypothesis (5 points): **October 28**
 4. Research design (5 points): **November 18**
 5. Final manuscript (10 points): **December 5**
 6. Virtual presentation (10 points): **December 5**
- **Exams** (40% of your grade, 20% for each exam)
 Two exams will be given during this course. The exams will include multiple-choice questions and short essays on topics covered in the course. The first exam will be held during the week of 9/23, and 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 quiz scores will be added to your grade as extra points.

Grade Scale

Your course 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:

1. Creswell, John W, and J. David Creswell. 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th ed. ISBN: 9781506386690
2. Shively, W. Phillips. 2010. *The Craft of Political Research*. 8th ed. ISBN: 9780205791200

Attendance and Participation

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

Course Schedule

Below is a tentative schedule of topics and reading assignments for the course.

Week 1 (8/26): 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 (9/2): The Empirical Approach to Political Science

- J&R Chapters 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.

Week 3 (9/9): 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.
- **Problem Statement due on 9/9 at 11:59 PM**

Week 4 (9/16): Measurement

- J&R Chapter 5

Week 5 (9/23): Midterm Exam Week

- Midterm exam will be available from 9/21 to 9/25

Week 6 (9/30): Survey Research and Data Analysis 1

- J&R Chapter 11

Week 7 (10/7): Data Analysis 2

- J&R Chapters 10 and 11
- **Literature Review due on 10/7 at 11:59 PM**

Week 8 (10/14): Sampling 1

- J&R Chapter 7

Week 9 (10/21): Statistical Inference 1

- J&R Chapter 12

Week 10 (10/28): Sampling 2

- J&R Chapter 12
- **Theory and hypothesis due on 10/28, 11:59 PM**

Week 11 (11/4): Statistical Inference 2

- J&R Chapter 13

Week 12 (11/11): Bivariate Analysis 1

- J&R Chapter 13

Week 13 (11/18): Bivariate Analysis 2

- J&R Chapter 13
- **Research design due on 11/18 at 11:59 PM**

Week 14 (11/25): Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15 (12/2): Presentation

- **Final Manuscript and Virtual Presentation due on 12/5 at 11:59 PM**

Week 16 (12/9): Final Exam Week

- **Final exam will be available from 12/6 to 12/10.**

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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.