

POLI3000-001: Introduction to Political Science Research

Spring 2022 | MWF 1:00 PM – 1:50 PM | Haley 2206

Instructor: Brian Ezeonu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Email: bie0002@auburn.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Politics affect our everyday lives, hence, why it is important to understand political systems and behavior which is the focus of most Political Science courses.

So what is “science”? Science offers a rigorous, systematic way to satisfy our curiosity about the natural world. Political scientists in particular work to offer explanations for how or why particular phenomena occur (why do countries go to war? why do people vote? who do they vote for?), and the scientific method helps to ensure that those explanations are developed and tested in such a way that gives us the best evidence about how the world works.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Adequate understanding of research design and methods.
- Develop the ability to critically analyze scholarly research in political science.
- Literate in basic statistics and statistical tools that enable the previous two objectives.

PREREQUISITES

Any of POLI 1090, POLI 1093, POLI 1097, PHIL 1090, PHIL 1093, or PHIL 1097 with a minimum grade of C.

REQUIRED TEXT

Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research* (2nd Edition). Cambridge. ISBN: 978-1-107-62166-4.

The textbook is available at the Auburn University Bookstore, as well as the internet. There are older and newer editions of this textbook. I will teach from the second edition. There will be additional readings posted to Canvas. Some of them are not outlined in the syllabus, but they will be posted online and announced in class. You are responsible for reading the assigned textbook reading and any other assigned reading by the Monday of that week of class.

You must obtain a copy of R (available from <https://cran.revolutionanalytics.com/>). You will probably hate, then maybe learn to love, using R. We will use it because it is (a) free, (b) flexible enough to test most theories of political science, and (c) widely popular in both public service and private industry. We will devote an extensive amount of class time to learning to use R effectively.

EXPECTATIONS AND COURSE FORMAT

This course will be taught mostly in-person. There will be some class sessions where I will provide a pre-recorded lecture in lieu of an in-person class; you will be notified when this occurs. Your performance in this course is somewhat dependent on attendance to classes because a lot of the class sessions will involve coding in statistical software. Attendance to class will enhance your performance on your research paper and exams. The thoughts and ideas of every student are extremely important, and I strongly encourage and expect all students to have done all assigned readings before coming to class. I expect that all students maintain classroom decorum and avoid distracting behaviors such as gaming, streaming videos, texting or interacting with social media. I also expect all cell phones to be on silent mode during class. Any student who continues to engage in distracting behavior will be removed from the class meeting. Please read more on the Auburn University Classroom Behavior policy using this link: tinyurl.com/au-st-pol. Class attendance is highly encouraged from every student as stated in the Auburn University policy.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Gather, synthesize, and interpret information to identify, understand, and address important questions and problems relevant to political science research.
- Ability to find, read and summarize political science research.
- Ability to use basic statistical methods and tools to test scientific theories.

STUDENT EVALUATION

Assignments

The course is divided into the following components:

Homework (4 assignments)	10%
Quizzes (five quizzes)	10%
Midterm examination	20%
Final examination	20%
Group paper	30%
<u>Group presentation</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

Assignments will be graded based on content as well as spelling, grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. Responses should be well thought out, clear, and concise. Formatting of all assignments should be double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman with 1" margins. One of the key components of this course is that students would work on a research paper. This research paper will be writing in groups and these groups would be formed in class. Papers must include a complete list of references used formatted according to the style manual for the [American Political Science Association](#).

Homework (10%)

Homework will be assigned in class. Due dates are outlined in the syllabus. They will include exercises in R, with datasets provided on Canvas that will require you to apply concepts and code learned in class to different data. Homework assignments must be typewritten, and they must look professional.

You should not simply copy and paste output from R, unless the assignment specifically requires that you do so

Quizzes (10%)

There will be five quizzes throughout the semester. Quizzes will be given in class, there will not be any makeup quizzes unless students have a university approved excuse. I will only be counting your top four quiz grades; your lowest score will be dropped.

Research Paper (30%)

Research Proposal (5%): The goal of this research proposal is to select a general topic that you find interesting and ask a question that intrigues you. Choose one that you feel could be answered by using either statistical or qualitative analysis. This is an important selection and will form the basis of your paper for this semester. The research proposal should be between 1-2 pages and include your overall question and why it is important. I will provide more detail in class.

Literature review (5%): The sections in this part of the research paper will vary depending on the question and the available literature. In this section, you are expected to summarize and synthesize the selected literature from your annotated bibliographies, identify themes and/or gaps, and describe how your research will contribute to the conversation on this topic/issue. The purpose is for you to communicate that you have a working knowledge of the major debates and ideas in the literature about your topic, and that you can use this (along with any other relevant literature) to develop a theory for your work.

Theory and Hypothesis (5%): The empirical theory is an account of the expected relationship(s) between the major concepts in your study. This will then culminate in a testable hypothesis.

Research Methodology (5%): Throughout the course of the semester, students will learn how to perform basic statistical and qualitative analysis. For the final course paper, students will design a research analysis, explain what data they would use, and what statistical analysis they would use to analyze said data. Additionally, in this final piece of their paper, students should explain what they hope their findings would be, as well as any obstacles they expect they might have. More detail to be discussed in class.

Data Analysis and Result (10%): This section will involve a basic data analysis and interpretation of the results from the analysis.

Presentation (10%)

Students will be presenting their research papers at the end of the semester. More detail to be discussed in class.

Exams (40%)

There will be two exams in this course, a midterm and a final exam. Make-up exams will only be given for university approved absences. Students should, if at all possible, notify the instructor of the conflict before the scheduled exam takes place.

Participation

I will not be taking attendance in this course. That said, you are highly encouraged to attend and fully participate in classes.

Your health and safety, and the health and safety of your peers, are my top priorities. If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, or if you discover that you have been in close contact with others who have symptoms or who have tested positive, you should not attend in-person classes. You will not be penalized for such an absence nor will you be asked to provide formal documentation from a healthcare provider. My hope is that if you are feeling ill or if you have been exposed to someone with the virus, you will stay home to protect others. I don't want the need for documentation to discourage you from self-isolating when you are at risk.

Late Assignments

Late assignments will receive a 10% penalty per day, unless the student contacts me **before** the day they are due. I completely understand life happens, especially in our current times, but I cannot help if you do not communicate with me. If there are any issues come talk to me.

Grading Scale

A	100-90.0%
B	89.9-80.0
C	79.9-70.0%
D	69.9-60.0%
F	Less than 60.0%

COURSE POLICIES AND UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Academic Integrity

Auburn University has adopted an Honor System proposed by its students and faculty to promote academic integrity and has enacted the following code:

“We, the faculty, instructors, and students of the State Government and Policy course pledge to fulfill our mutual responsibilities to each other and the academic community at large with honor and integrity in order to build and maintain a climate of respect and trust that will enhance our research, teaching, and learning. We will support the Honor System of the School, and will not tolerate activities that undermine academic integrity.”

Academic dishonesty is an offense that will be reported to the Academic Honesty Committee. Please refer to the following document for further information regarding academic honesty: [Auburn University Student Academic Honesty Code](#)

Accessibility

Students who need accommodations are asked to electronically submit their approved accommodations through AU Access and to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are immediately needed. If you need accommodations but have not established them, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 334-844-2096.

The Writing Center

The Miller Writing Center offers free, one-on-one consultation for all writers at Auburn University. The highly trained staff of undergraduate and graduate peer tutors will help you with any kind of writing, whether for class or otherwise, at any stage in the writing process.

Their goal is help you become a better writer. You can bring in any kind of assignment, including (but not limited to) lab reports, essays, research papers, PowerPoints, dissertations, theses, annotated bibliographies, scientific posters, cover letters, CVs/resumes, personal statements, ePortfolio—bring whatever you’re working on. You can be just developing your ideas, working on your first draft, putting finishing touches on your final version, or anywhere in-between.

Miller Writing Center
3434 RBD Library
334-844-7475
mwc@auburn.edu

Communication

Please use your Auburn University student email account to address questions or concerns pertaining to the course and for making appointments to speak with me outside of my regular office hours. I will make every effort to respond to student e-mails within 48 hours, except on weekends.

It is my expectation that you will send professional emails. Email subject lines must include the course number and the general reason for your email. Emails must contain an appropriate greeting, body (the purpose of your email) and closing. Please address me as Ms. Williams in all correspondence for this course.

Withdrawals and Incompletes

The deadline to withdraw from the class with no grade penalty, “W” assigned, is Friday November 19, 2021.

Requests for a Grade of Incomplete must be initiated by the student. The student must contact me through email or in writing prior to final course grade submission to request a letter grade of incomplete (IN) due to a documented reason (death in family, illness, etc.). To be eligible for a grade of IN the student must have successfully completed (and have passed) more than half of all class assignments for the semester.

Health and Well-Being Resources

These are difficult times, and academic and personal stress is a natural result. Everyone is encouraged to take care of themselves and their peers. If you need additional support, there are several resources on campus to assist you:

- COVID Response Team (www.ahealthieru.edu)
- Student Counseling and Psychological Services (<http://wp.auburn.edu/scs/>)
- AU Medical Clinic (<https://cws.auburn.edu/aumc/>)

If you or someone you know are experiencing food, housing or financial insecurity, please visit the Auburn Cares Office (<http://aucares.auburn.edu/>)

Course Expectations Related to COVID-19

Face Coverings: As a member of the Auburn University academic community you are required to follow all university guidelines for personal safety with face coverings, physical distancing, and sanitation. Face coverings are required in this class and in all campus buildings. Note that face coverings must meet safety specifications, be worn correctly, and be socially appropriate.

You are required to wear your face coverings at all times. If you remove your face covering or are non-compliant with the university's policy on face coverings, you will be instructed to leave the classroom and will be held to the protocols outlined in the Auburn University Policy on Classroom Behavior. Any student who willfully refuses to wear a face covering and does not have a noted accommodation may be subject to disciplinary action.

Course Attendance: If you are quarantined or otherwise need to miss class because you have been advised that you may have been exposed to COVID-19, you will be expected to develop a plan to keep up with your coursework during any such absences.

Technology Requirements: This course may require particular technologies to complete coursework. If you need access to additional technological support, please contact the AU Bookstore at aubookstore@auburn.edu.

Disruptive or concerning classroom behavior involving the failure to wear a face covering, as directed by Auburn University, represents a potential Code of Student Conduct violation and may be reported as a non-academic violation. Please consult the Classroom Behavior Policy.

Changes to the Syllabus

Your instructor reserves the privilege of making changes to the syllabus – including changes to the reading schedule, required reading, assignments (in and outside of the classroom), assignment expectations, and even grading structure.

Copyrighted Materials

The lectures, presentations (including slides), readings, and exams for this course are copyrighted, so you do not have the right to copy and distribute them. This includes recording class lectures.

Important Dates

- January 12 (Wednesday): No in-person class (Away for SPSA conference)
- January 14 (Friday): No in-person class (Away for SPSA conference)
- January 19 (Wednesday): Last day to add course.
- February 2 (Wednesday): 15th Class Day (last day to drop with no grade assignment).
- March 3 (Thursday): Mid-semester grades posted.
- March 7 - 11 (Mon-Fri): Spring break (no class).
- March 17 (Thursday): 41st Class Day (deadline to request moving final exam).
- April 29 (Friday): Last day to withdraw with no grade penalty (W).

	Topics and Readings	Important Notes
Week 1 Jan 12 - 14	<u>What is "Politics" or "Science"? How is Political Science "Scientific"?</u> K&W, Chapter 1. Hill, Kim Quaille. 2004. "Myths about the Physical Sciences and Their Implications for Teaching Political Science." PS: Political Science and Politics 37(3):467-471.	
Week 2 Jan 17 - 21	<u>Developing Theories, Testing Hypotheses, and Reading Research</u> K&W, Chapter 2 and 12 (just 12.1 and 12.2). "How to Read and Take Notes on a Scholarly Journal Article."	MLK Day 01/17
Week 3 Jan 24 - 28	<u>Research Design and Causality</u> K&W, Chapters 3 and 4. Feyrer, James and Bruce Sacerdote. 2009. "Colonialism and Modern Income: Islands As Natural Experiments." The Review of Economics and Statistics 91(2): 245-262.	Quiz 1 Research Proposal due 01/24
Week 4 Jan 31 – Feb 4	<u>Research Design and Causality (Again)</u> K&W, Chapters 3 and 4.	Homework 1 Due 01/31 Feb 2: Drop Day
Week 5 Feb 7 - 11	<u>Measurement</u> K&W, Chapter 5.	Quiz 2

	Buhaug, Halvard and Scott Gates. 2002. "The Geography of Civil War." <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 39(4): 417- 433.	
Week 6 Feb 14 - 18	<u>Probability, Inference, and Hypothesis Testing with Two Variables</u> K&W, Chapters 6 and 7.	Homework 2 Due 02/14
Week 7 Feb 21 - 25	<u>More Hypothesis Testing</u> K&W, Chapters 6 and 7.	Literature Review due 02/21
Week 8 Feb 28 – Mar 4	<u>Midterm Review and Midterm</u>	Midterm 03/02
Week 9 Mar 7 - 11	<u>Spring Break (No classes)</u>	
Week 10 Mar 14 - 18	<u>Surveys and the Beauty and Logic of Regression</u> K&W, Chapter 8. Ansolabehere, Stephen, Jonathan Rodden, and James M. Snyder, Jr. 2008. "The Strength of Issues: Using Multiple Measures to Gauge Preference Stability, Ideological Constraint, and Issue Voting." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 102(2 May): 215-232.	Homework 3 Due 03/14
Week 11 Mar 21 - 25	<u>Two Variable Regression and Model Fit</u> K&W, Chapter 8. Brady, Henry E., Sidney Verba, and Kay Lehman Schlozman. 1995. "Beyond SES: A Resource Model of Political Participation." <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 89 (2): 271-294.	Quiz 3
Week 12 Mar 28 – Apr 1	<u>Multiple Regression in Theory</u> K&W, Chapter 9. Smith, Kevin B. 2004. "The Politics of Punishment: Evaluating Political Explanations of Incarceration Rates." <i>Journal of Politics</i> 66(3): 925-938.	Quiz 4 Theory and Hypothesis due 03/28
Week 13 Apr 4 - 8	<u>Multiple Regression in Practice</u> K&W, Chapter 10.	Quiz 5
Week 14 Apr 11 - 15	<u>Practical Issues with Regression</u>	Homework 4 Due 04/11

<p>Week 15 Apr 18 - 22</p>	<p><u>Skepticism and Extensions</u></p> <p>K&W, Chapter 11.</p> <p>Grissom, Jason A., Jill Nicholson-Crotty, and Sean Nicholson-Crotty. 2009. "Race, Region, and Representative Bureaucracy." Public Administration Review 69(5): 911-919.</p>	<p>Research Methodology Due 04/18</p>
<p>Week 16 Apr 25 - 29</p>	<p><u>Presentations</u></p>	<p>April 29: Withdrawal Deadline</p> <p>Final Research Paper Due 04/25</p>
<p>Week 17 May 2 - 6</p>	<p><u>Final Exam</u></p>	<p>Final Exam 05/04</p>