

POLS 2010-08: Scope and Methods of Political Science
Spring 2022
Tuesday and Thursday 8:00AM-9:15AM
Norman Mayer 118

Instructor Andres Sandoval
Office: Norman Mayer Building 318
Office Hours: Thursdays 10:00AM -12:00PM (noon) or previous appointment
Email: asandov3@tulane.edu

Recurring Zoom Meeting Link: <https://tulane.zoom.us/j/97067493709>

Objectives:

This course is an introduction to research in political science. Its goal is to familiarize you with the scientific study of politics. We will apply a scientific approach to questions about political phenomena, instead of the more familiar approaches taken by politicians, interest groups, and popular media. We will learn why we ask empirical questions about politics (the “scope” part), and how to answer these questions scientifically using the appropriate types of evidence (the “methods” part). We also cover how to clearly convey our arguments to others. The course topics will include the logic of the scientific method, the measurement of political concepts, research design and methods of data collection, statistical techniques for analyzing data, and various quantitative and qualitative practices in the field of political science. At the end of the course, you should be comfortable reading and critiquing arguments about real world political problems. Learning to think scientifically in this manner is a skill that you will find useful in other political science courses and in your career (and life!). No background in statistics or mathematics beyond high school algebra is assumed. There are no prerequisites other than a desire to think about political problems in a systematic and critical fashion.

Learning Outcomes:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and explain different the purpose of research in political science.
2. Compare the merits and drawbacks of different evaluative approaches to political science and make informed choices about how to best pursue scholarly research in topics of interest to them.
3. Synthesize a literature review, hypothesis, argument, and research methods in a semester-long research design project.
4. Apply critical perspectives to methods used in various political science papers discussed in class.
5. Identify and apply norms of ethical research.

Required Materials:

1. Brancati, Dawn. 2018. *Social Science Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

There are also quite a few other required articles and texts – all of these can be found via the library or on Canvas. Do the readings before the class in which they are assigned.

Course Requirements:

Homework: 20%

Research proposal paper: 25% (10% draft + 15% final)

Midterm: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

Participation: 10%

Grading:

This course will be graded according to the following scale

| | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| A >= 93 | B+ 87-89 | C+ 77-79 | D+ 67-69 | F = 59 and below |
| A- 90-92 | B 83-86 | C 73-76 | D 63-66 | |
| | B- 80-82 | C- 70-72 | D- 60-62 | |

1. Homework 20%

There will be four written exercises relating to the research paper during the course of the class, each worth 5% of the final grade. **These are due to Canvas before class on the date indicated in the syllabus. No late assignments are accepted.** The exercises are designed to help you hone skills, organize your thoughts, and come up with a research question and testable hypotheses for your paper. These assignments are collectively worth 20% of your grade in total.

2. Research proposal paper 25%

Students will complete a 10-15 pages research proposal, consisting of a research question, literature review, data plan, and appropriate methodologies. While I do not expect students to carry out independent data analysis for this course, the assignments and paper should be thought of as everything *but* the data collection and analysis.

Students will select a political science topic of their choosing, after consultation with the instructor. All changes in research question must be also consulted with the instructor. Using the topic you chose at the beginning of the semester, you will do a literature review, you will define testable hypotheses and identify in detail the procedure for collecting and analyzing the data (qualitative and/or quantitative).

Although there is no limit on the number of citations, each literature review must include no fewer than TEN scholarly works. A “scholarly work” includes anything that is published in a scholarly book or journal.

A draft of the proposal is due on March 17th on Canvas. This draft must include the following elements: abstract, introduction and literature review. The draft is worth 10% of the final grade. Students will also submit an additional (anonymous) copy of the draft to be submitted for peer review. **Student must revise their draft per the comments you receive from your peers and submit a final version on May 3rd.** The final product is worth the remaining 15%. The final product should look something like this:

1. Abstract (1 page)
2. Introduction and the research question (1 page)
3. Revised literature review that sets up the main theory or theories & hypotheses (4 pages)
4. Data collection: what type of data? How would you collect it? What questions would you ask? What problems might you encounter? Are you sure all you need is available? (1 pages)
5. Methodology: which techniques will you use and why? (2 pages)
6. Conclusion (1 page)

3. Midterm (20%) and Final (25%) Exams:

There are two exams in the course. Mid-term exam will cover all material from the first half of the course. The final exam will not be comprehensive and only cover the second half of the course.

The final exam will take place on Sunday, May 8th at 7pm (Date subject to confirmation from registrar's office). There will be more information about all the exams as they approach in the semester.

You are required to be present for all scheduled exams. The only allowable exception to this policy is a documented medical or other emergency (proof of medical visit or excuse from the Dean's office) or if **prior** arrangements are made with the instructor.

4. Active Class Participation 10%

All students are expected to attend class, prepare to discuss the reading, and actively participate. Note that participation is a function not only of attendance, but also the quality of contributions. If absences, tardiness, or under-preparation becomes a problem, your grade will suffer.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Late Work:

Late assignments will not be accepted. On your literature reviews and your final research paper, for each day the assignment is late, one letter grade is deducted from the final grade on the assignment *up to five days late*. After that point, the papers will not be accepted. I strongly encourage you to discuss any problems with me *before* the papers are due.

Academic Dishonesty:

Academic honesty is expected of all students at Tulane. Your responsibilities as a Tulane student include being familiar with the honor code and the plagiarism policy. Cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Board. I have a strict ZERO TOLERANCE policy for plagiarism. For a definition of plagiarism, see <http://www.tulane.edu/~jruscher/dept/plagiarism.html>.

Other Classroom Rules:

1. Turn cell phones off before you come to class. I will give you advance warning of class sessions when laptops will be permitted.
2. I do not accept e-mailed papers or assignments. Please turn in papers on Canvas.

Learning During a Pandemic

We find ourselves in exceptional circumstances in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Course expectations have been adjusted accordingly. Your health (physical, mental, emotional) should take priority. If you are dealing with illness, sick family members, increased anxiety, or any other issue please reach out to me, your academic advisor, or another trusted authority at Tulane. We are all in this together.

In order to keep ourselves safe, faculty and students must comply with University policies on COVID-19 testing and isolation, which are located here [<https://tulane.edu/covid-19/health-strategies>]. The university is currently requiring that everyone, regardless of their vaccine status, wear masks while inside campus buildings. If you cannot attend class for any reason, you are responsible for communicating with me to make up any work you may miss. Online options for class participation will be provided, and unless a student is seriously ill, they are expected to use this option. The University Health Center will provide documentation verifying a student is ill, as well as verification that a student may return to class. With the approval of the Newcomb - Tulane College dean, an instructor may have a student who has excessive absences involuntarily withdrawn from a course with a WF grade after written warning at any time during the semester.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for Students with Special Needs: Any students with disabilities or other needs, who need special accommodations in this course, are invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor and should contact Goldman Center for Student Accessibility: <http://accessibility.tulane.edu> or 504.862.8433.

Code of Academic Conduct: The Code of Academic Conduct applies to all undergraduate students, full-time and part-time, in Tulane University. Tulane University expects and requires behavior compatible with its high standards of scholarship. By accepting admission to the university, a student accepts its regulations (i.e., [Code of Academic Conduct](#) and [Code of Student Conduct](#)) and acknowledges the right of the university to take disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion, for conduct judged unsatisfactory or disruptive.

One Wave Resources: As “One Wave,” Tulane is Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at allin.tulane.edu. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either “Confidential” or “Private” as explained in the chart below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am mandated by the university to report to the Title IX Coordinator, as Tulane and I want to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. You do not need to respond to outreach from the university if you do not want. You can also make a report yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at tulane.edu/concerns. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either “Strictly Confidential” or “Mostly Confidential” as explained in the chart below.

| | |
|--|--|
| Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one's self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission. | Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons. |
| Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) (504) 314-2277 | Coordinator of Violence Prevention (504) 314-2161 |
| Student Health Center (504) 865-5255 | Tulane University Police (TUPD) (504) 865-5911 |
| Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE) (504) 654-9543 | Office of Institutional Equity (504) 862-8083 |

| EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION SYSTEM: TU ALERT | | RAVE GUARDIAN |
|---|--|----------------|
| <p>In the event of a campus emergency, Tulane University will notify students, faculty, and staff by email, text, and phone call. You were automatically enrolled in this system when you enrolled at the university.</p> <p>Check your contact information annually in Gibson Online to confirm its accuracy.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Download the RAVE Guardian app from the App StoreCommunicate with dispatchers silently by selecting “Submit Tip” feature in the appUse the Safety Timer feature to alert your “guardian” (TUPD, family, friend) when travelling alone at night | |
| ACTIVE SHOOTER / VIOLENT ATTACKER | | SEVERE WEATHER |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">RUN – run away from or avoid the affected area, if possibleHIDE – go into the nearest room that can be locked, turn out the lights, silence cell phones, and remain hidden until all-clear message is given through TU ALERTFIGHT – do not attempt this option, except as a last resort <p>For more information on Active Shooter emergency procedures or to schedule a training, visit emergencyprep.tulane.edu</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Follow all TU Alerts and outdoor warning sirensSeek shelter indoors until the severe weather threat has passed and an all-clear message is givenDo not attempt to travel outside if weather is severeMonitor the Tulane Emergency website (tulane.edu/emergency/) for university-wide closures during a severe weather event | |


Tulane University
EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS
& RESPONSE

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1:

- Tuesday Jan 25:** Class Introduction, course syllabus and canvas site
Thursday Jan 27: Is political science a science?
Brancati chap.1

WEEK 2: Research Questions

- Tuesday Feb 1:**
Brancati Chap 3.
Thursday Feb 3:
Baglione, Chap 2.

WEEK 3: Concepts and measurement.

- Tuesday Feb 8:**
Brancati Chap. 5
Dahl, R. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Chapters 1-2.
Homework#1 DUE: Write 3 research questions
Thursday Feb 10:
Coppedge, M. et al. 2011. Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach. *Perspectives on Politics* 9: 247-267.

WEEK 4: Literature review an hypotheses

- Tuesday Feb 15:**
Brancati chap. 4
Knopf, Jeffrey. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review". PS: Political Science & Politics.
Thursday Feb 17: Academic writing workshop
Raff, Jennifer. 2016. "How to Read a Scientific Paper". LSE Blogs. URL:
<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2016/05/09/how-to-read-and-understand-a-scientific-paper-a-guide-for-non-scientists/>

WEEK 5: Causal Inference

- Tuesday Feb 22:**
Mostly Harmless econometrics. Chap 1, 2
Thursday Feb 24:
Brancati Chap. 6.
"10 Things to Know About Causal Inference." EGAP Methods Guide. <http://egap.org/methods-guides/10-things-you-need-know-about-causal-inference>
Homework #2 DUE: Literature review

WEEK 6:

- Tuesday Mar 1: MARDIGRAS!!**
Thursday Mar 3: Exam Review

WEEK 7: Qualitative Methods I

Tuesday March 8:

EXAM!

Thursday March 10: Case Selection

Brancati Chap 9

Geddes, B. (2003). "How the cases you choose affect the answers you get". In *Paradigms and Sandcastles*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

WEEK 8: Qualitative Methods I

Tuesday Mar 15: Comparative method

Brancati Chap 14

Thursday Mar 17: Comparative method

Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529–45.

WEEK 9: Qualitative methods II

Tuesday Mar 22: Interviews and Ethnography

Brancati Chap 10

Wadeen, Lisa. 2009. "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science". *Annual Reviews of Political Science* 2010.13:255–72.

Thursday Mar 24: Process tracing

Brancati chap 13

First Draft of Research Proposal Paper DUE!!

WEEK 10: SPRING BREAK

WEEK 11: Quantitative methods I

Tuesday Apr 5: Quantitative Data Basics

Brancati chap. 16

Brancati Chap 20

Thursday Apr 7: NO CLASS due to Academic Conference

Homework #3: Peer Review DUE!!

WEEK 12: Quantitative Methods II

Tuesday Apr 12: Regression workshop

Long, "10 Things to Know About Reading a Regression Table." URL: <https://egap.org/resource/10-things-to-know-about-reading-a-regression-table/>

Ross, Michael L. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53(3): 325–361.

Thursday Apr 14: Surveys/Public Opinion

Brancati Chap 18

Bartels, Larry M. 2005. "Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind." *Perspectives on Politics* 3 (01).

WEEK 13: Experimental research and mixed methods

Tuesday Apr 19: : Experiments

Brancati chap.19

Mutz, D., and B. Reeves. 2005. "The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust". American Political Science Review 99(1): 1-15.

Acemoglu, D. Johnson, S. and J. Robinson. 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development". American Economic Review 91: 1369-1401.

Homework #4: Interpreting regression table DUE!

Thursday Apr 21: Mixed Methods

Brancati chap.8

Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." Political Analysis 14 (3): 227-49.

WEEK 14: Research Ethics

Tuesday Apr 26: Research Ethics, Positionality

Brancati Chap. 2

Busby, J. (2018). Dear Political Science, it is time for a SELFREFLEXIVE turn!

<https://www.duckofminerva.com/2018/12/dear-political-science-it-is-time-for-a-self-reflexive-turn.html>

Thursday Apr 28: Replication and Open Data

Is there a reproducibility crisis in science? - Matt Anticole. TED-Ed.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpCrY7x5nEE>

Miguel, E., Camerer, C., Casey, K., Cohen, J., Esterling, K. M., Gerber, A., ... & Van der Laan, M. (2014). Promoting transparency in social science research. *Science*, 343(6166), p. 1-6

WEEK 15:

Tuesday May 3:

Review for Final Exam

Research Design DUE!!

FINAL EXAM: Sunday, May 8th