POLS 3103: Introduction to Political Inquiry
Fall 2020
Asynchronous Online Course

Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Joshua Jansa
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Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 3:30-5:00 via Zoom, or by appointment
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II. Course Overview

This is an online course about the basics of the scientific method as used by political scientists. Doing so will help students become better informed citizens because they will be better consumers of data, information, and research. Students will also practice skills such as quantitative reasoning, clear and concise writing, and applied statistical analysis. These are useful job skills in today's information-based economy, whether the student works in politics, policy, business, agriculture, education, sports, etc.

III. Canvas

All lecture videos, readings, activities, and announcements are accessed entirely online through Canvas. To access Canvas, go to https://canvas.okstate.edu and sign-in with your okstate email and password. You should have automatic access to POLS 3103 on Canvas just by registering for the course. Start by reading this syllabus, which can be found under the Syllabus module. Many of your questions about the course will be answered by the syllabus. If you have any problems accessing the course site, please let me know as soon as possible!

IV. Communication & Office Hours

Email is the best way to contact me. I will only respond to emails from your okstate.edu email address.

You are also encouraged to connect during virtual office hours using Zoom.

Instructor's Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 3:30-5:00 via Zoom.

- Join Zoom Meeting using this link:
  https://zoom.us/j/96800371469?pwd=MWx0RFRnTVdtbEx3NFlUSTJPSnp6UT09
- Or by using this meeting ID: 968 0037 1469
- And passcode: 243814

If you cannot get ahold of the instructor but need immediate assistance, please contact Ms. Cindy Hutchinson, Political Science Administrative Assistant, 201 Social Sciences & Humanities, cindy.hutchinson@okstate.edu, 405-744-1098.

V. Student and Instructor Responsibilities

I will work hard to be prepared, enthusiastic, fair, and respectful of every student. I will provide interesting and important readings, videos, and activities that will help you better understand the subject. I will respond to all student inquiries within 48 hours. I will do my best to return graded materials with feedback (if applicable) within two weeks of the assignment due date.

You are expected to actively engage with course material, to read all assigned material, and complete assignments on time. You are expected to keep up with announcements, grades, and instructions as they are posted to the course Canvas site. It is expected that you are checking in to Canvas and checking your email at least three times per week in order to complete coursework and keep up on announcements. If anything is unclear, you are expected to seek the answer in the syllabus or instructions provided. If still unclear, you are expected to communicate your question or concern with me. You are also expected to ask questions about the material when necessary; it is much better to ask when the material is presented than to wait till after exams and activities are due.

VI. Assignments and Grading

Your grade for the course will be determined through a points system. The points are distributed as follows:

Quizzes	50 points
Final Exam	100 points
Research Proposal	100 points
Activities	150 points
Total	400 points

Grade scale
The following grading scale will be used for assigning final letter grades.:
A =   360 – 400 points, or 90.00 – 100.00%
B =   320 – 359 points, or 80.00 – 89.99%
C =   280 – 319 points, or 70.00 – 79.99%
D =   240 – 279 points, or 60.00 – 69.99%
F =   0 - 239 points, or 0 – 59.99%

Note: There will be no rounding up of final course grades, nor a grade curve. There will also be no additional extra credit opportunities given at the end of the semester.

Quizzes

You will be given quizzes about every two weeks to assess your comprehension of the material. Quizzes will be given online. The questions on the quizzes will come in various formats, such as multiple choice, fill in the blank, identification, matching, true-false, and short answer. Each quiz will contain material covered since the last quiz was taken (i.e. the quizzes are not comprehensive). There will be a total of 7 quizzes worth 10 points each. The 2 lowest quiz grades will be dropped. This means the quizzes are worth a total of 50 points, or about 12.5% of your total course grade. The due dates for the quizzes can be found on the course schedule below.

Activities

The emphasis of the course is to practice research skills, including developing good questions, conducting literature reviews, proposing hypotheses, designing appropriate tests, and conducting tests using data analysis. In order to practice these skills, you will have 13 activities to complete throughout the semester. These are worth 15 points each. The three lowest activity grade will be dropped. This means the activities are worth a total of 150 points, or about 37.5% of your course grade. The due dates for the activities can be found on the course schedule below.

Final Exam

The purpose of the final exam is to test your comprehension of the material learned throughout the semester. The final exam will be given over a 48 hour window the week after Thanksgiving Break. It will take place online and it will be due by Dec. 5th at 11:59 PM. The exam will be a mix of multiple choice, fill in the blank, identification, matching, true-false, short answer, and essay questions. You may also be asked to read and comprehend relevant tables and graphs. The exam is comprehensive – material will appear from the entirety of the course. But, much of the material you will have seen before from quizzes and activities. The final exam is worth 100 points, or about 25% of your course grade.

Research Proposal

As a final project in the course, students will prepare a 5-page research proposal that can be used as the basis for a possible Senior Capstone project in POLS 4903. This assignment exposes students to the process of thinking critically about the relationship between two concepts, like a social scientist. In the paper, you will hypothesize a relationship between two variables. The paper should specify which variable is the dependent variable and which is the independent variable, as well as identify the unit of analysis, explore what the literature says about this (or similar) relationships, discuss why understanding this relationship is important, and propose how you would test the relationship.

The proposal will incorporate work completed by students in the activities, as well as additional materials, and you will have plenty of opportunity for feedback from me throughout the semester. More information on the specific requirements for the project, including a grading rubric, will be provided early in the semester. The final research

proposal is due December 11th at 11:59 PM, and is worth 100 points or 25% of the final course grade.

Extra Credit

You can earn extra credit by completing all 13 activities and all 7 quizzes. If you complete all 13 activities, I will take the average score you earned on the 3 dropped (i.e. lowest) scores and add it as extra credit onto your total points for the course. If you take all 7 quizzes, I will take the average score you earned on the 2 dropped (i.e. lowest) scores and add it as extra credit onto your total points for the course in addition to any extra credit you may have earned on the activities.

VII. Late Work

Activities, exams, and quizzes are due on Canvas **by 11:59 PM** on the due date.

If any assignment is not turned in at this time it will be considered late. Late assignments will be discounted a full letter grade each day it is late. After 5 days, the assignment will be scored a 0. I also cannot accept any work after December 11th at 11:59 PM (the end of finals week) because final course grades are due soon after to the University.

The late penalty will apply unless you have a documented, unforeseen, extraordinary circumstance that prevented you from completing an assignment on time. I should be notified as soon as possible of the circumstance. I will work with students experiencing such circumstances on a case-by-case basis to come up with the best plan for getting the work done well and in a timely manner.

VIII. Academic Honesty

You must always adhere to OSU's academic integrity standards. Violations of academic integrity, including unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, cheating on examinations, helping another person cheat, and unauthorized advance access to examinations, will result in severe penalty. Penalties include: receiving a failing grade on an assignment, examination or course, receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript, and being suspended from the University. You can learn more at http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu.

IX. Additional Course Policies

Please see the Oklahoma State University Syllabus Attachment for all other policies in effect and resources available to you for this course.

X. Required Readings

The following books are required for the course:

1. Howard, Christopher. 2017. *Thinking Like a Political Scientist: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.*

2. Monogan, James E. 2015. *Political Analysis Using R*. New York: Springer.**

*print copy on reserve at OSU Edmond Low Library
**e-copy available from OSU Edmond Low Library

Any additional required readings will be provided to you on Canvas.

XI. Course Schedule

The course schedule is presented below. I reserve the right to change the course schedule at any time, but I will let you know with ample time before hand.

Dates	Topic	Assignments	Due Date
8/17-8/22	Course Introduction	Read Syllabus; Watch Intro Video; Take Quiz 1	8/22 at 11:59 PM
8/23-8/29	Asking Research Questions that Matter	Read Howard Ch. 1; Watch Lecture 1; Complete Activity 1	8/29 at 11:59 PM
8/30-9/5	Literature Reviews: Joining the Scholarly Conversation	Read Bonica et al 2020; Watch Lecture 2; Complete Activity 2; Take Quiz 2	9/5 at 11:59 PM
9/6-9/12	Defining & Measuring Concepts	Read Howard Ch 2; Watch Lecture 3; Complete Activity 3	9/12 at 11:59 PM
9/13-9/19	Theorizing About Politics	Read Howard Ch. 3; Watch Lecture 4; Complete Activity 4; Take Quiz 3	9/19 at 11:59 PM
9/20-9/26	The Logic of Research Design	Read Howard Ch. 4; Watch Lecture 5; Complete Activity 5	9/26 at 11:59 PM
9/27-10/3	Qualitative Evidence	Read Howard Ch. 5; Watch Lecture 6; Complete Activity 6; Take Quiz 4	10/3 at 11:59 PM
10/4-10/10	Quantitative Evidence	Read Howard Ch. 7; Watch Lecture 7 Complete Activity 7	10/10 at 11:59 PM

10/11-10/17	Collecting & Managing Data	Read Monogan Ch. 1 & 2; Watch Lecture 8; Complete Activity 8; Take Quiz 5	10/17 at 11:59 PM
10/18-10/24	Measures of Central Tendency	Read Stepan and Linz 2011 and Monogan Ch. 4.1; Watch Lecture 9; Complete Activity 9	10/24 at 11:59 PM
10/25-10/31	Measures of Variance	Read Collins et al 2015 and Monogan Ch. 4.2; Watch Lecture 10; Complete Activity 10; Take Quiz 6	10/31 at 11:59 PM
11/1-11/7	Significance Tests & Correlations	Read Monogan Ch. 5; Watch Lecture 11; Complete Activity 11	11/7 at 11:59 PM
11/8-11/14	Regression	Read Monogan Ch. 6; Watch Lecture 12; Complete Activity 12; Take Quiz 7	11/14 at 11:59 PM
11/15-11/21	Understanding Results & Visualizing Data	Read Monogan Ch. 3; Watch Lecture 13; Complete Activity 13	11/21 at 11:59 PM
11/22-11/28	Thanksgiving Break	N/A	N/A
11/29-12/5	Review & Exam	Take final Exam	12/5 at 11:59 PM
12/6-12/11	Research Proposal	Complete Research Proposal	12/11 at 11:59 PM