

POLS 5300: Scope & Methods

FALL 2022

Mark Owens

mowens@uttyler.edu (903) 566-6281

Course Time: Wed
6:00 p.m. – 8:45 p.m.
Classroom: CAS 257

Office Hours: 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Mondays
4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Wednesdays
Office: CAS 123

Course Description & Objectives

This course provides a survey of social science and includes experiences to gain rigorous research experience. A different problem is explored each week to learn the best method to describe a particular phenomenon or trend. Students showcase their comprehension through in-class assignments, class discussions, conducting their own research, and presenting a plan to conduct original research.

Learning Objectives

The course is designed with the objective that by the end the semester each student has the ability to:

- Build an argument to answer a falsifiable question by gathering observations and building on existing knowledge.
- Understand how data is generated and develop a research design that mirrors the real-world process.
- Recognize the limitations of what a research method can be used to explain - especially given the unit of analysis.
- Gain experience in conducting rigorous social science through multiple different methods including estimating empirical results and archival research.
- Annotate content from primary resources.
- Interpret the results of a linear regression model and describe the probability that a finding may be significant.
- Defend an argument in public, by understanding the results based on the method of research and observations that tell the story.

Required Books

Gerring, John and Dino Christensen. 2017. *Applied Social Science Methodology: An Introductory Guide*. Cambridge University Press.

Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan and Anthony Fowler. 2021. *Thinking Clearly with Data: A Guide to Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis*. Princeton University Press.

Student Evaluation *Expectations for all work*

All work must be original - including only direct quotes without any analysis will result in a 0. Work that largely summarizes or only paraphrases work from other sources will not receive more than a B-. A papers must synthesize arguments and facts to build justifications for the author's main point (or argument).

All missed in-class activities will be counted as a zero, *if not excused beforehand*.

Should it be necessary for a student to make up either of the first two exams, that will be done toward the end of the term.

All out of class assignments are due at the beginning of the class. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will result in a penalty of one letter grade per day. Assignments not received within two days of the deadline will no longer be accepted.

All readings are expected to be completed before class. Although not all readings will be discussed in class, this does not negate your responsibility to know the assigned material.

I. *Assignments & Participation*: 200 points

There will be four assignments throughout the semester to make up 150 points (50 each & lowest is dropped). Each activity will correspond with the research method and question we are covering that week. Some work will be done in class - the rest of the assignment will be done on your own time. All work must be original - responses that only give the answer, without showing work or providing a description will not receive a satisfactory grade. Note: *All missed assignments will be counted as a zero.*

Field Research, 50 points

The UT Tyler Center for Opinion Research conducts regular polls of Texas voters to help understand what kinds of policies the public wants to see. We also look at their reactions to major events. Part of our class breaks from morning meetings to allow you the flexibility to work afternoons and evenings in the call center. This offers experience in how polls are conducted and lets you interact with voters across the state without leaving Tyler. All students in the class are eligible to be hired as a Research Assistant. Students will work 20 hours per semester in the call center to fit with campus-wide standards for service-learning.

2. *Research Prospectus*: 100 Points

The first component of this assignment is for each student to complete a prospectus for a future research project. A research design outlines the question you are interested in addressing, sets the scope of what we know, what research needed to completely answer that question, and sells the audience on why the project is likely to be successful. The paper should be a maximum of 10 pages in length (typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, using 12 point Times New Roman font, and citing all relevant research with the American Political Science Association Style <http://www.apsanet.org/Portals/54/APSA%20Files/publications/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf>). Within those 10 pages, each paper should present an Introduction, Literature Review, a well developed theory, description of Research Methods and Data. You may discuss early findings from a pilot study and add an appendix of the code (or notes) that you used.

In the literature review, focus on what has been written on the question you chose. Also identify how past scholars have found answers to similar questions.

Students are allowed to choose the topic of their project, as long as it is related to political science and chosen by September 21. The paper is due Wednesday December 7. *Early views will be accepted on November 16.*

Exams: 200 points

Two exams will be given for a total of 200 points (or 100 points each). The tests will ask you to draw connections across topics covered throughout the class. Each exam will offer different types of multiple choice, short-answer and essay questions. Some questions may draw from exercises that will require students to apply techniques discussed in class. Each question will hold different point values.

Missing an exam without the confirmation of an alternative test date, before the exam date, will result in a zero. The alternative test will only count when written documentation for missing the exam is provided.

Grading¹

Class Assignments & Participation	200 points
Research Design Paper	100 points
Exam I	100 points
Exam II	100 points
<hr/> TOTAL	<hr/> 500 points

Student Conduct

I have high expectations for each student in this class, which are based on your academic performance to get to this point and my belief that you will treat each of your fellow classmates with respect. My goal is to facilitate a supportive and engaging class experience for everyone and one part of that is eliminating disruptive behavior. Using technology in a way that distracts others and demonstrates a lack of respect for the instructor is unacceptable.

Academic Honesty

It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The University of Texas at Tyler Policies and Procedures for Student Affairs will be strictly followed and can be found here at: <http://www.uttyler.edu/mopp/documents/8Student%20Conduct%20and%20Discipline.pdf>. Tests and assignments are designed to assess your understanding of the material—do not reference another student’s answers.

Violations of academic integrity are serious and will have a negative consequence on your classroom performance. In each instance a violation occurs, a failing grade will be assigned for the assignment or the course, require work to be redone, and have you identify what the cause of the violation was. The matter will be referred to the Dean of Students if institutional action is necessary. Reference the rights and responsibilities of students: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>.

¹Should the class schedule need to be amended, I will advise the class in advance by email and via the course page

Class Schedule

- Aug 24** Introduction and Overview
- Sept 1** Framework for Inference *Arguments*
Readings: Chapters 1 & 2
- Sept 7** Survey Experience
- Sept 14** *Matching measurement to concept*
Readings: Chapters 3 – 6
- Sept 21** Experimental and Observational Designs, + Ethics!
Readings: Chapters 7 & 8, 16
Assignment:
Outline Research Plan (*Tip: Identify Topic for Prospectus*)
- Sept 28** Case Study & Diverse Tools
Readings: Chapters 9 & 10
Assignment:
Choose a published article and break down how it is structured.
Present your work as an outline. Due Oct 19.
- Oct 5** **Exam I**
- Oct 12** Survey Experience
- Oct 19** How to write a research paper
Readings: Chapters 11 – 14
Objectives: 1) Find a Question
2) Synthesize the literature
3) Recognize an appropriate theory and apply it
4) Identify and apply a method for observation
5) Set the scope for the study and your conclusions
- Oct 26** Analyzing Quantitative Information
Readings: Chapters 18 – 20
- Nov 2** Quantitative Reasoning – IDing relationships
Readings: Thinking Clearly, Ch. 4–8
- Nov 9** Quantitative Reasoning – Determine Causality
Readings: Thinking Clearly, Ch. 9–10

Nov 16 Let Data Inform

Readings: *Thinking Clearly, Ch. 15–17*

Nov 30 Is there a Methodology Divide? Use the Benefits of Each tool

Readings: Wawro, Gregory and Ira Katznelson. 2014. “Designing Historical Social Inquiry.” *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2): 526-546.

Deadline: Intensive Research Assignment Due

Dec 7 Final Exam / Research Prospectus Due

Student Conduct

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT MUST APPEAR IN EACH COURSE SYLLABUS

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

- i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:
 - copying from another student's test paper;
 - using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
 - failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
 - possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
 - using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
 - collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
 - discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
 - divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
 - substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
 - paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
 - falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
 - taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
 - misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
- ii. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.
- iii. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
- iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- [UT Tyler Writing Center](mailto:writingcenter@uttyler.edu) (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- [UT Tyler Tutoring Center](mailto:tutoring@uttyler.edu) (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](tel:903.566.7254) (903.566.7254)