SYLLABUS  
Spring 2012

POLS 3303.001
Instructor: Dr. Jo Marie Rios
TR 2 – 3:15 pm
Office: BH 3.02
Room: TBD
Office Hours: M 1 - 3 pm; TR
Spring 2012
12:30 – 2 pm
361-825-2387
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Contemporary Political Analysis

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Analysis of current problems in national and international politics. Emphasis is on methods of analysis, particularly the use of computers. Satisfies university computer literacy requirement.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This is a required course for the Political Science major. This course is intended to show the relevance and application of research methods and statistical techniques, the scientific method, to political and social problems. This course examines the statistical techniques used by political scientists to include descriptive and inferential statistics. This course will target the use of computer applications for statistics. The SPSS computer program will be used to analyze secondary data sources. Interpretation and presentation of the data is emphasized.

1. To employ the appropriate methods, technologies and data that social scientists use to investigate the human condition, especially political behavior.
2. To develop and communicate alternative explanations or solutions for contemporary social issues.
3. To acquaint students with empirical methods and statistical concepts essential to understanding contemporary research in political science.
4. To conduct political science research by using secondary data sets and interpret the results of this date.
REQUIRED TEXTS:


COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

Quantitative methods coursework can be very demanding, especially as you become familiar with the statistical package. Students are expected to keep up with all the assigned readings and be prepared to participate in the computer lab.

Class attendance is an essential element in order to fully grasp the concepts of statistical methods.

Homework assignments will be given for statistics and computer applications. The univariate treatment involves mathematical computations while the bivariate statistics are computed via the statistical software package. These assignments are due at the beginning of the class period for full credit. **Ten points** will be deducted for late assignments. You will need a statistical calculator for this course. I recommend the **TI-30Xa** (under $10).

Three computer projects will be assigned in order to test your statistical abilities. In addition, you will write a research paper based on a political science or public policy topic. This research paper should be based on the secondary data derived from the data sets provided with your texts. Guidelines are provided separately.

Finally, your final exam will consist of an in-class computer exercise.

GRADING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework (5 * 5%)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test 2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer assignments (3*10%)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research paper 20%
Final exam 10%

**GRADING STRUCTURE**

A = 90 – 100
B = 80 – 89
C = 70 – 79
D = 60 – 69
F = below 60

**Class Attendance:**
All students are expected to attend EVERY class. The major valid excuses for missing a class are illness and death. Notes and grades are available through Blackboard.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism.**
University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one's own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a grade of F.

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. April 1, 2011 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.
Classroom/professional behavior
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

Academic Etiquette:
There are certain rules that apply to my classes. It is difficult to learn in an environment that is not conducive to learning. Such activities include: talking to neighbors during class, reading newspapers, walking in late, napping, walking out of class prior to being dismissed. It is disrespectful to me and to the class. If you do not abide by these rules, you will be asked to leave my class. Please turn off your cell phones during my class.

Incompletes:
A grade of incomplete will be given only for extreme emergencies and will necessitate appropriate documentation. You must request a grade of “incomplete” and sign a form agreeing to the terms for a grade of I. However, you must have completed 75% of the coursework.

*Notice to Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Driftwood 101.
If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.

**Academic Advising**: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

*** Grade Appeal Process. As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.
PROVISIONAL
COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1:

Introduction
- Syllabus and other expectations
- Overview
- SPSS lab

Week 2:

The Measurement of Concepts

The emphasis of this section includes:

- Conceptualization of variables
- Data sources, dependent and independent variables, types of measures, empirical and secondary data sources
- Data entry – Lab

Pollock, Text, Chapter 1
Pollock, SPSS, Chapters 1

Homework assignment

Weeks 3 -4:

Describing Variables

This section includes:
- Describing variables
- Comparting variables
- Graphing relationships and describing patterns
Pollock, Text, Chapter 2
Pollock, SPSS, Chapters 2, 3, 4

Homework assignment

Week 5 - 6:
Workshop on research papers

Explanations and Hypotheses

This section includes:

- From variable to explanation
- From explanation to hypothesis
- From hypothesis to test

Pollock, Text, Chapter 3

Homework assignment

Week 7   Test 1   February 23rd

Weeks 8 – 9
Making Controlled Comparisons

This section includes:

- Controlling for variables
- Making controlled comparisons

Pollock, Text, Chapter 5
Pollock, SPSS, Chapters 5

Homework assignment

SPRING BREAK – MARCH 12 – 16

Weeks 10 - 11:
Sampling and Inference

This section will include:
- Random sampling
- Normal Distribution
- T-distribution
- Sample proportions

Pollock, Text, Chapter 6
Pollock, SPSS, Chapter 6

Homework assignment

Test 2 March 22\textsuperscript{nd}

Research paper abstract due. See guidelines for instructions.
Pollock, SPSS, Chapter 11

Weeks 12 – 13:
Tests of Significance and Measures of Association

This section will include:
- Statistical significance
- Measures of Association

Pollock, Text, Chapter 7
Pollock, SPSS, Chapter 7

Computer project on Chi-square due

Weeks 14 – 15:
Correlation and Linear Regression

This section will include:
- Correlation
- Bi-variate regression
- R-Square
- Dummy variable regression
Pollock, Text Chapter 8
Pollock, Chapters 8, 9

Two computer projects on correlations and regression

Week 16:
Research paper presentations

Research paper due on April 26th

Final Exam – TBD