Course Description. This course is the capstone class for Political Science majors. This course begins with an overview of the research process, followed by a segment on professional development, and ultimately culminates with students producing an original research paper. Students will have an opportunity to apply the summary of skills, knowledge, and abilities learned in the major by the end of the course.

Learning Objectives
At the end of the semester you will be able to:
1. Design and conduct an independent research project.
2. Communicate effectively in written and verbal form.
3. Analyze, interpret, and present empirical data.
4. Prepare the appropriate materials for a job or graduate school application.
5. Demonstrate advanced knowledge in one of the major areas of political science: American institutions, American political behavior, International/comparative politics, and political theory.

Major Course Requirements
10%: Class Participation - demonstrated by attendance and thoughtful class discussion; random attendance taken throughout the semester.
10%: Participation in the Major Field Test (MFT) - exit exam for Political Science majors scheduled towards the end of the semester; allows students to gauge their progress relative to their peers at other institutions across the United States; time and registration TBD.
10%: Professional Profile - This assignment is focused on producing a resume or CV, as well as a cover letter for either an entry-level professional position or graduate school. More details regarding the expectations of this assignment will be given in class.
10%: Annotated Bibliography/Paper Outline - This assessment requires you to analyze and provide a summary of (5) empirical journal articles relevant to your research paper. You will provide an evaluation of these articles and breakdown the major themes and elements of their research design, as well as provide an outline demonstrating how you will build on these articles to produce an original research paper. You will provide an outline for your paper for my review noting the research problem, research question(s), literature review, and possible data sources and will receive constructive feedback. More details regarding the expectations of this assignment will be given in class.
10%: Empirical Debates - Students will work in groups of (3) and use empirical data from the scholarly literature to debate and defend a position on a public policy issue. More details regarding the expectations of this assignment will be given in class.
40%: Original Research Paper - each student will generate an original research paper on a topic within one of the major sub-fields of Political Science (Due date, on or before the university approved final exam period). Specific details forthcoming.
10%: Final Exam

Attendance policy:
You should attend every class. Poor attendance will impact your participation grade considerably.

Required Readings
Students must have access to the Pollock books that were assigned in your Contemporary Political Analysis course, which is a prerequisite for this class. Required readings will be available in your course Blackboard shell.

The Essentials of Political Analysis, 5th Edition, Pollack
An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis, 5th Edition, Pollack

Optional Software Purchase: SPSS (information on purchasing SPSS is on Blackboard)

Class Schedule:
Segment I: Review of the Field and Research Process

Week 1: Introduction (1/18)
Introduction to the Class

Week 2: Political Science as a Discipline (1/23 & 25)
Overview of the field
*Read Article #1

Week 3: Generating Research Ideas (1/30 & 2/1)
Finding sources, data, and coming up with research topics
*Read Article #2

Week 4: Understanding Empirical Research (2/6 & 2/8)
Overview of the research process
*Read Articles 3 & 4
*Annotated Bibliography assignment distributed on 2/9 and due in the BB dropbox by 5:00 PM on 2/18. Late penalty after 5:00 PM - 10 points per day.

Week 5: Research Workshop-Generating Paper Ideas (2/13 & 2/15)
Monday-in class workshop for first ½ of class
Wednesday-in class workshop for second ½ of class
*Read Articles 5 & 6

Segment II: Professional Development, Careers, and Graduate Programs

Week 6: Graduate Programs and Law School (2/20 & 2/22)
Discussing career options with a Political Science degree
*Read Article 7, 8, 9

Week 7: Create a Professional Profile (2/27 & 3/1)
Professional Profile assignment distributed on 3/2 and due on 3/11 in the BB dropbox by 5:00 PM; late penalty - 10 points per day.
*Read Articles 10, 11, 12

Week 8: Research Workshop- Securing a Data Set (3/6 & 3/8)
Monday-in class workshop for first ½ of class
Wednesday-in class workshop for second ½ of class
*Read articles 13, 14, 15

Week 9: Spring Break-No Class! (3/13 & 3/15)
(No readings)

Segment III: Generating Original Research

Week 10: Research Workshop-Final Research Designs (3/20 & 3/22)
Monday-in class workshop for first ½ of class
Wednesday-in class workshop for second ½ of class
*Read Articles 16, 17, 18

Statistical modeling and interpreting data
*Read Articles 19, 20, 21

Week 12: Analyzing and Interpreting Data Part 2 (4/3 & 4/5)
Using a software program

Week 13: Final Research Workshop-Analyzing your Data (4/10 & 4/12)
Monday-in class workshop for first ½ of class
Wednesday-in class workshop for second ½ of class

Week 14: Empirical Debates (4/17 & 4/19)
Monday, 4/17: Group 1
Wednesday, 4/19: Group 2

Week 15: Empirical Debates (4/24 & 4/26)
Monday, 4/24: Group 3
Wednesday, 4/26: Group 4

Week 16: Wrapping up
Monday, 5/1: TBD

Finals Week:
Wednesday, 5/10: 1:45 p.m. - 4:15 p.m

Student Responsibilities. TURN OFF CELL PHONES!! Pay attention during class. Private conversations, sleeping, and reading non-class related material will not be tolerated. Learn something! Participate in class discussions.

Grade Appeals Process: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures (available at http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C2.01_student_grade_appeal_procedure.pdf). For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-
resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s Office.

**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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call (361) 825-3466.

**Disability Services:** 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 Corpus Christi Hall, Room #116. 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.

**Statement of Academic Continuity.** In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Academic Honesty.** 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, forgery, or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) If unsure of what honesty entails or if for more information regarding the penalties for academic dishonesty, please refer to the University Catalog. Instances of plagiarism will be handled on an individual basis, but generally speaking the first offense will result in a zero for the assignment; subsequent plagiarism will result in failing the course and/or reporting chronic plagiarism to the university administration for disciplinary action. Reuse of previous work, even if that work is original, is known as academic recycling; such work is not accepted in this course and instances of recycling will receive the same treatment as plagiarism.