Contemporary Political Analysis - POLS 3303.001 Fall 2018, CCH 204

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Course Description
This course is an introduction to political analysis and research methodology. The central objective of this course is to teach students to think probabilistically and give them the tools they need to analyze and communicate empirical relationships among political phenomena. Throughout the semester, we will cover research design elements, including concept construction, variable measurement, and hypothesis framing. We will also learn the logic of control in relationships among variables and how to make comparisons. Finally, we will cover the foundations of statistical inference, exploring sampling, tests of statistical significance, correlations, and multivariate analyses. Students will demonstrate their mastery of the course with an original research analysis using survey data.

Learning Objectives
1. Describe data in statistical terms.
2. Analyze patterns and correlations among variables.
3. Communicate data analysis in written form.

Major Course Requirements

Quizzes: 8 x 35 points  280
3303 Project (4 components x 125 points)  500
SPSS Exercises 10 x 12 points  120
Final Exam  100
Participation Points (see "Participation" section in syllabus)  1000 points (plus any participation points)

Total 1000 points (plus any participation points)

Points/Grade Breakdown
1000-900 = A; 899-800 = B; 799-700=C; 699-600 = D; 599 or less = F

Class Discussions
Class discussions have an important role for the course. Important concepts and information are discussed in class. Regular and consistent class attendance is essential for students wishing to do well in the course.

Quizzes
The purpose of giving quizzes is to provide a framework for arriving at a common understanding of the basic concepts and relationships contained in the assigned reading. Some of the material to be covered in this class can be confusing and hard to grasp at first. It is therefore absolutely critical that everyone involved comes to class prepared. The course will have 10 quizzes, consisting of approximately 5-10 (multiple-choice, true/false, or fill-in-the-blank) questions. One or two of the questions may refer to material from a previous lesson. Only 8 quizzes will count towards your grade because your lowest 2 quiz grades are dropped.

These quizzes are worth 35 points each. Students will be given an opportunity to ask questions or clarify any material from the readings before taking the quiz. Students will find that the pre-quiz discussions often answer many of the quiz questions. After the discussion, the quiz is taken individually. Following the individual quiz, students are randomly assigned to groups in class and asked to retake the quiz together. A modified quiz policy will be implemented if any “social loafing” or “free riding” is detected in the groups.

Finally, the whole class will discuss the quiz as a group and construct an answer key. Each student’s quiz grade will be the average of twice their individual score plus their group score. If a student’s group grade is lower than the individual grade, the individual grade will be counted instead of the group grade.

POLS 3303 Project
Each student will engage in an empirically based research project. The project will be in the area of American Political Behavior. The project will require the students to develop a research question grounded in political science research. A research design using survey data (that comes with the textbook) will be developed for empirically testing the research question. Empirical data will then be analyzed and interpreted to address the research question.

The project will be broken up into 4 separate components.

- Component 1. Research Topic and Hypothesis
- Component 2. Research Design
- Component 3. Empirical Analysis
- Component 4. Interpretation and Conclusions

Each component will be worth 125 points for a total value of 500 points. Due dates for the components are listed in the “Provisional Course Outline” section of the syllabus. The project components will be graded on an accept/resubmit basis. That is, students will receive 125 points once their component has been accepted. If the component is deemed unacceptable, the student has an opportunity to resubmit the component after making necessary revisions.

The opportunity to resubmit work is a privilege. Students who do not demonstrate a good effort at the assignment will forfeit the privilege of resubmitting their work. Additionally, the Components are sequential. A student cannot have component 3 accepted if they have not had component 2 accepted.
SPSS Exercises
Students will receive 10 short exercises on using SPSS throughout the semester. These exercises are worth 12 points each for a total of 120 points. They will include tasks in SPSS such as running frequencies, recoding variables, and data analysis techniques. SPSS is available in CCH201 and in other CCH labs on the weekends. A schedule of dates when the class meets in a computer lab is forthcoming.

Conferences
Student Conferences with the professor are offered throughout the semester to offer support for student research. At these conferences students will provide updates on their research and have opportunities for questions and receiving guidance.

Final Exam
Students will have a comprehensive final exam over key concepts from the semester.

Participation
Throughout the semester there may be participation assignments. If a student participates, then they will receive 1 point. Furthermore, negative participation in the political science class (disruptive behavior) will lead to a loss of 1 participation point per citation. A student can earn a negative value for participation points if they are consistently disruptive.

Required Textbook:
- 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)

Blackboard: Students in this class will use Blackboard accounts. Blackboard is used for assignments, communication, announcements, class materials, and grade posting. (iol.tamucc.edu)

Announcements: All class announcements are made via Blackboard.

Course Policies

Attendance/tardiness
Unlike many political science classes, POLS 3303 is sequential, with each chapter building on the previous chapter. Consistent attendance is essential if students are to succeed. Students are allowed two unexcused absences for the semester. After that, students will lose 50 points off of their point total for each unexcused absence. Students that choose not to attend are responsible for material discussed in class.

Late work and Make-up Quizzes
Late work of any kind will not be accepted without a valid reason (special circumstances with advance notification and documentation) for full credit. Students will lose 50 points per class day a Project Component (including a resubmit) is late. Late SPSS Exercises will not be accepted. There are no make-up quizzes.

Extra Credit
Extra credit work will not be assigned nor allowed under any circumstances.

Preferred methods of scholarly citations
American Political Science Association Style Manual.

Freedom of Expression: Universities are exciting environments of learning and ideas. It is inevitable that at times, subjects are going to be discussed and ideas introduced that students are either unfamiliar with or perhaps disagree with. However, in the university environment it is important that different factual viewpoints are expressed. In this context, students need to feel free to factually express themselves in class with questions and comments and to do so without fear of reprisal. Class discussion (when it is relevant to the class) makes for a better class and students are encouraged to ask questions and express thoughtful informed opinions. Additionally, to allow all students an opportunity to participate in discussions, students will be limited to two comments per class.

iPhone, iPad, iCopy, Cell Phone/Electronic Device Usage: A learning environment free from distractions will be maintained always during this class. Silence your phones, put these devices away during class, and refrain from Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram and other social media. Laptops can only be used for class work, and students using laptops are asked to sit at the back of class or along the exterior aisle seats.

Disabilities Accommodations: 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 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.

Academic Advising (for students with a major in the College of Liberal Arts): 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.
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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. 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. November 9, 2018 is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

Grade Appeals: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at:
http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf
For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

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 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 course grade of “F.”

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.

Provisional Course Outline
(Updates will be posted on Blackboard)

| Week 1 | Aug. 28 | Welcome and overview |
| Week 1 | Aug. 30 | Article Analysis & Topic Selection (article is available on Blackboard) |
| Week 2 | Sept. 4 | Essentials Ch. 1 |
| Week 2 | Sept. 6 | SPSS Companion Ch. 1 |
| Week 2 | Sept. 6 | Quiz 1 (Essentials Ch. 1) |
| Week 3 | Sept. 11 | Essentials Ch. 2 |
| Week 3 | Sept. 13 | Quiz 2 (Essentials Ch. 2) |
| Week 3 | Sept. 13 | Essentials Ch. 2 |
| Week 3 | Sept. 13 | SPSS Companion Ch. 2 |
| Week 4 | Sept. 18 | Essentials Ch. 3 |
| Week 4 | Sept. 20 | Quiz 3 (Essentials Ch. 3) |
| Week 4 | Sept. 20 | Essentials Ch. 3 |
| Week 4 | Sept. 20 | SPSS Companion Ch. 3 |
| Week 5 | Sept. 25 | Essentials Ch. 4 |
| Week 5 | Sept. 27 | Quiz 4 (Essentials Ch. 4) |
| Week 5 | Sept. 27 | Essentials Ch. 4 |
| Week 5 | Sept. 27 | SPSS Companion Ch. 4 |
| Week 5 | Sept. 27 | Component 1 Due Date (8 AM via Blackboard) |
| Week 6 | Oct. 2 | Essentials Ch. 5 |
| Week 6 | Oct. 5 | Quiz 5 (Essentials Ch. 5) |
| Week 6 | Oct. 5 | SPSS Exercises 1-3 deadline |
| Week 7 | Oct. 9 | Essentials Ch. 5 |
| Week 7 | Oct. 11 | SPSS Companion Ch. 5 |
| Week 7 | Oct. 11 | Component 2 Work Day |
| Week 7 | Oct. 11 | Career Services Presentation (required attendance) |
Week 8  Oct. 16  Essentials Ch. 6
Oct. 18  Essentials Ch. 6
Quiz 6 (Essentials Ch. 6)
SPSS Companion Ch. 6

Week 9  Oct. 23  Essentials Ch. 7
Oct. 25  Essentials Ch. 7
Quiz 7 (Essentials Ch. 7)
Component 2 Due Date (8 AM via Blackboard)
SPSS Companion Ch. 7

Week 10  Oct. 30  Essentials Ch. 8
Nov. 1  Essentials Ch. 8
Quiz 8 (Essentials Ch. 8)
SPSS Companion Ch. 8

Week 11  Nov. 6  Essentials Ch. 9
Nov. 8  Essentials Ch. 9
Quiz 9 (Essentials Ch. 9)
SPSS Exercises 4-8 deadline
SPSS Companion Ch. 9

Week 12  Nov. 13  Essentials Ch. 10
Nov. 15  Essentials Ch. 10
Quiz 10 (Essentials Ch. 10)
SPSS Companion Ch. 10

Week 13  Nov. 20  Work Day
Nov. 21  Reading Day (no classes)
Nov. 22  Thanksgiving Holiday!

Week 14  Nov. 27  Project Presentations
Nov. 29  Project Presentations
(8 AM via Blackboard)
Component 4 Due Date

Week 15  Dec. 4  Project Presentations
Dec. 5  Deadline for all student work (5 PM)

Week 16  Dec. 11  Final Exam 1:45 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.