Course Description. This course is the capstone class for Political Science majors. This course begins with an overview of the research process, followed by students producing an original research paper, and a segment on professional development. 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% 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. FMI visit https://testing.tamucc.edu/major_field_tests/index.html.

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% Presentations - Students will present their capstone projects. More details regarding the expectations of this assignment will be given in class.

50% 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

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

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)

Course Policies

Attendance/Tardiness: Consistent attendance is essential if students are to succeed in POLS 4303 because of the frequent class workdays. Students are allowed three unexcused absences for the semester. After that, students will lose 50 points off of their point total for each unexcused absence.

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

Assistance: Please visit during office hours; make an appointment, call, or e-mail to visit about class. The Center for Academic Success and Achievement (CASA) will offer Supplemental Instruction for State and Local Politics. Details are forthcoming. Visit CASA's website at http://casa.tamucc.edu/ for additional services.
Incompletes: Incompletes will only be given in the event of medical or family emergencies. In addition, incompletes will only be given if there is appropriate documentation.

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: 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. April 10, 2020 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.C0.03, 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.C0.03, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught or the Office of the Provost. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.c0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf.

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.
Class Schedule:

Segment I: Review of the Field and Research Process

Week 1: Introduction (1/22 & 1/24)
Introduction to the Class

Week 2: Political Science as a Discipline (1/29, 1/30, 1/31)
Overview of the field
*Week 2 Reading

Segment II: Generating Original Research

Week 3: Understanding Empirical Research (2/3, 2/5 & 2/7)
Overview of the research process and SPSS
Writing Center Workshop
*Week 3 Readings

Week 4: Generating Research Ideas (2/10, 2/12 & 2/14)
Finding sources, data, and coming up with research topics
*Week 4 Readings

Week 5: Research Workshop-Generating Paper Ideas (2/17, 2/19, & 2/21)
*Week 5 Readings

Week 6: Research Workshop-Final Research Designs (2/24, 2/26 & 2/28)
*Week 6 Readings

Week 7: Analyzing and Interpreting Data Part 1 (3/2, 3/4 & 3/6)
Statistical modeling and interpreting data
*Week 7 Readings

Spring Break 3/9-3/13

Week 8: Analyzing and Interpreting Data Part 2 (3/16/, 3/18, & 3/20)
Week 8 Readings

Workshopping

Segment III: Professional Development, Careers, and Graduate Programs

Week 10: Create a Professional Profile (3/30, 4/1, & 4/3)
Week 11 Readings

Week 11: Graduate Programs and Law School (4/6, 4/8 & 4/10)
Discussing career options with a Political Science degree
Last day to drop a class
**Week 11 Readings

Segment IV: Presentations

Week 12: Presentations (4/13, 4/15, & 4/17)
Monday, 4/8: Presentation Workshop
Wednesday, 4/10: Presentation Workday

Week 13: Presentations (4/20, 4/22, & 4/24)
Capstone Presentations

Week 14: Presentations (4/27, 4/29, & 5/1)
Capstone Presentations

Week 15: Presentations (May 4 & May 6)
Capstone Presentations

Finals Week:
TBD