

POLS 209: Introduction to Political Science Research  
Section 905  
Spring 2019  
Texas A&M University

Class Time: MWF 10:55 am - 11:45 am

Class Location: 1015 Allen (for lab sessions: 2068 Allen)

Instructor: Yohan Park

Email: [yohan.park@tamu.edu](mailto:yohan.park@tamu.edu)

Office: 2106 Allen

Office Hours: T/R 10:00 am - 11:00 am, or by appointment

## Course Description

The course is designed to introduce students to the process of engaging in political science research - with an emphasis on research using quantitative methods. Students will learn how to raise a research question, generate theory-driven hypotheses, operationalize concepts, construct valid and reliable measures, conduct multiple types of empirical tests, and interpret the results of the empirical tests. Most of our classes will be lectures, but I will schedule lab sessions during our multiple regular class days. The lab sessions focus on introducing students to data management and analysis using R.

## Course Objectives

- Develop an understanding of the general processes of political science research.
- Learn how to read, interpret, and assess political science research.
- Learn basic statistical concepts.
- Develop an understanding of multiple analytical tools for political science research.
- Expose students to basic statistical programming using R.

## Textbooks

- Kellstedt, Paul, and Guy Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research, 3rd Edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN:9781316642672
- Li, Quan. 2018. *Using R for Data Analysis in Social Sciences: A Research Project-Oriented Approach*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780190656225

## Software

Students analyze data using R (a programming language for statistical computing) in RStudio (a free and open-source integrated development environment for R). Students are expected to use RStudio software in order to do their statistics assignment and take-home exam. Students can use RStudio from computers in the labs of political science department or install it on their own personal computer (free to download at <https://www.rstudio.com/products/rstudio/download/>).

## Grade Distribution:

Class Attendance (pop quizzes)	10%	
Writing Assignments	60%	WA#1 (10%) WA#2 (20%) WA#3 (30%)
Research Proposal Presentation	10%	
Homework Assignment	5%	
Quizzes (3)	15%	5% for each

## Course Assignments

- **Class Attendance (Pop Quizzes) (10%):**

Attendance is essential part of this course. To encourage students' attendance, there will be multiple unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. Each pop quiz asks a single simple question directly related to the contents we have covered in the class. The only 5 highest pop quiz grades will count toward each student's final grade for attendance. If a student is not in class on pop quiz day and has not made an arrangement acceptable to me before class, he/she will receive a zero for that quiz, unless his/her absence is excused by university policy.

- **Homework Assignment (5%):**

There will be one homework assignment that includes questions from problem sets at the end of the book chapters and exercises in which students apply what they learned from lab sessions. Please see the course outline below for the due date and time.

- **Quizzes (15%):**

There will be 3 in-class quizzes throughout the semester. Each quiz accounts for 5% of final grade. The quizzes include multiple choice, short answer, and true-false questions. The quizzes require students to know the contents from the assigned readings, exercises, and concepts we cover in the class. Solving problem sets at the end of the textbook chapters would be a good prep. Please see the course outline below for the scheduled date.

- **Writing Assignments (60%):**

This is a university-designated W course, which means it is writing intensive. As

such, this course is intended to improve your writing skills. There will be 3 writing assignments throughout the semester. Students will develop their own research paper proposal throughout the 3 assignments. Comprehensive rubrics for each assignment will be provided at a future date.

– **WA#1 (10%): Research Question & List of Previous Studies**

Students 1) choose a research topic, 2) formulate a research question, and 3) list the papers that previously addressed the research question. This assignment should not exceed 2 pages in length (except for the pages of references). Due is February 6th.

– **WA#2 (20%): Literature Review & Theory**

Students will build off of the first writing assignment. Among the list of papers that you chose in the first writing assignment, find at least 5-6 articles that most closely answered your research question. More specifically, discuss how these studies answer the question, what their answers are, and evaluate their answers. In addition, based on your review of the previous studies, suggest your theoretical argument and explanation. This assignment should be roughly 5-6 pages in length (except for the pages of references) and its due is March 8th.

– **WA#3 (30%): Final Paper: Research Proposal**

Students will build off of the second writing assignment. Based on your theory, suggest how you will test the theoretical argument. This is your final paper, research proposal, including sections for research question, literature review, theory, and research design. This assignment should be roughly 10-12 pages in length (except for the pages of references) and its due is May 1st.

• **Student Research Presentation (10%):**

Students will present their research proposal in Week 14 & 15. Comprehensive rubrics for each assignment will be provided at a future date.

- **Readings:** Students are expected to read the assigned readings prior to class sessions. Lectures will only supplement the readings rather than cover everything in the readings.

## Letter Grade Distribution:

$\geq 89.50$	A
79.50 - 89.49	B
69.50 - 79.49	C
59.50 - 69.49	D
$\leq 59.49$	F

## Course Policies:

- **Quizzes**

- Make-up quizzes will be given only if the student has a university excused absence and follows university guidelines for excused absences. (See <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>) Plan to provide documentation. In such a case, contact the instructor, Yohan Park, in advance of the scheduled exam.
- All quizzes are closed book and closed notes.

- **Assignments**

- All writing assignments must be double-spaced and use 12 font size and 1 inch margins.
- All writing and homework assignments must be typed and submitted as PDF files.
- All writing and homework assignments must be submitted to a TurnItIn folder on ecampus by due date and time.
- **Late Assignments:**  
Papers and assignments turned in late, without a University-approved absence, will be penalized 10 points for each day the assignment is late.

- **Attendance and Absences**

- Attendance is expected and unannounced pop quizzes replace attendance check. You are allowed to miss **2** classes during the semester without penalty. Any further absences will result in point and/or grade deductions following the rubric below. For example, if a student missed 3 out of total 8 pop quizzes, he/she loses 20 points from the total score earned in the pop quizzes.
- **Attendance Deduction Rubric** (out of 100 points):

0-2	recorded absences	0 points
3	recorded absences	-20 points
4	recorded absences	-40 points
5	recorded absences	-60 points
6	recorded absences	-80 points
7 or more	recorded absences	-100 points

- Absence is only acceptable in cases of university excused absences. It is the responsibility of the student to be present in class on dates when teams for the Budget Allocation Group Exercise is selected. The Department of Political Science supports the Texas A&M University commitment to diversity, and welcomes individuals from any racial, ethnic, religious, age, gender, sexual orientation, class, disability, and nationality. See <http://diversity.tamu.edu/>. In the spirit of this vital commitment, in this course each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute to all discussions. Everyone is expected to respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by fellow students and the instructor,

and will engage in reasoned discussion that refrains from derogatory comments about other people, cultures, groups, or viewpoints. Disrespect for diversity will not be tolerated.

- Students are responsible for all missed work, regardless of the reason for absence. It is also the absentee’s responsibility to get all missing notes or materials.

- **Email:**

To make sure that your email does not go missing, please include [POL209] in the subject line of your email. Otherwise there is no guarantee that your email reaches the inbox. In addition, please write your email in a professional manner.

### **Statement about 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 contact Disability Services, in Cain Hall, Room B118, or call 845-1637. For additional information visit <http://disability.tamu.edu>.

### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism Statement:**

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.” As commonly defined, plagiarism consists of passing off as one’s own the ideas, words, writings, etc., which belong to another. In accordance with the definition, you are committing plagiarism if you copy the work of another person and turn it in as your own, even if you should have the permission of the person. Plagiarism is one of the worst academic sins, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the latest issue of Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section “Scholastic Dishonest” or see the web site, <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu>.

### **University Writing Center (UWC):**

University Writing Center (UWC), located in 214 Evans Library and 205 West Campus Library, offers one-on-one consultations to writers. UWC consultations are highly recommended but are not required. Help is available with brainstorming, researching, drafting, documenting, revising, and more; no concern is too large or too small. UWC consultants will also help you improve your proofreading and editing skills. If you visit the UWC, take a copy of your writing assignment, a hard copy of your draft or any notes you may have, as well as any material you need help with. To find out more about UWC services or to schedule an appointment, call 458-1455, visit the web page at [writingcenter.tamu.edu](http://writingcenter.tamu.edu), or stop by in person.

## The materials used in this course are copyrighted:

In addition, the materials used in this course are copyrighted. By “materials,” I mean anything generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, presentations, web pages, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials review sheets, and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission.

## Cheating :

Aggie Honor Code: *”An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”*

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## Course Outline:

Below is the schedule for topics to be covered, reading assignments from the book corresponding to those topics, and dates for assignments, quizzes, and take-home exam. Generally speaking, exams will cover material from the assigned readings and the lectures with an emphasis on the latter. Topics covered on exams will usually cover materials covered prior to the exams, but I will likely make adjustments. Please note that I reserve the right to alter the following schedule at any point in the semester as it depends on the progress of the class. If such changes are needed, I will make an announcement in class.

Week	Content
Week 2	<b>Scientific Study of Politics</b>
	<b>Jan. 21(M)</b> No Class: Martin Luther King Jr. day
	<b>Jan. 23(W)</b> Syllabus K&W Ch. 1
	<b>Jan. 25(F)</b> K&W Ch. 1
Week 3	<b>Theory Building</b>
	<b>Jan. 28(M)</b> K&W Ch. 2
	<b>Jan. 30(W)</b> K&W Ch. 3
	<b>Feb. 1(F)</b> Lab #1: Li Ch. 1 (at 2068 Allen)

Week 4	<b>Causal Relationship</b> Feb. 4(M) K&W Ch. 3 Feb. 6(W) K&W Ch. 4 <b>WA #1 due by 5pm</b> Feb. 8(F) Lab #2: Li Ch. 1 (at 2068 Allen)
Week 5	<b>Measurement</b> Feb. 11(M) <b>Quiz #1</b> Feb. 13(W) K&W Ch. 5 Feb. 15(F) Lab #3: Li Ch. 2 (at 2068 Allen)
Week 6	<b>Measurement</b> Feb. 18(M) K&W Ch. 6 Feb. 20(W) K&W Ch. 7 Feb. 22(F) Lab #4: Li Ch. 2 (at 2068 Allen)
Week 7	<b>Statistical Inference</b> Feb. 25(M) K&W Ch. 7 Feb. 27(W) K&W Ch. 8 Mar. 1(F) <b>Quiz #2</b>
Week 8	<b>Hypothesis Tests</b> Mar. 4(M) K&W Ch. 8 Mar. 6(W) K&W Ch. 9 Mar. 8(F) Lab #5: Li Ch. 2 (at 2068 Allen) <b>WA #2 due by 5pm</b>
Week 9	<b>No Class: Spring Break</b>
Week 10	<b>Simple Regression</b> Mar. 18(M) K&W Ch. 9 Mar. 20(W) K&W Ch. 9 Mar. 22(F) K&W Ch. 9
Week 11	<b>Multiple Regression</b> Mar. 25(M) K&W Ch. 10 Mar. 27(W) K&W Ch. 10 Mar. 29(F) Lab #6: Li Ch. 3-4 (at 2068 Allen)

	<b>Multiple Regression</b>	
Week 12	<b>Apr. 1(M)</b>	<b>Quiz #3</b>
	<b>Apr. 3(W)</b>	K&W Ch. 10
	<b>Apr. 5(F)</b>	<b>No Class:</b> Reading Day
	<b>Apr. 8(M)</b>	Group Discussion
Week 13	<b>Apr. 10(W)</b>	K&W Ch. 11
	<b>Apr. 12(F)</b>	Lab #7: Li Ch. 5 (at 2068 Allen) <b>Homework Assignment due by 5pm</b>
Week 14	<b>Student Presentation</b>	
Week 15	<b>Student Presentation</b>	
	<b>Apr. 29(M)</b>	<b>No Class:</b> Reading Day
Week 16	<b>May 1(W)</b>	<b>Final Paper(WA #3) due by 5pm</b>