

**San José State University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**POLS195A, Political Inquiry, Section 1**  
**Spring 2018**



- Instructor:** Dr. Melinda Jackson
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- Office Hours:** Mon/Wed 9-11am, Tues/Thurs 11am-12pm & By Appointment
- Class Days/Time:** TR 9:00-10:15am
- Classroom:** CL303
- Course Web Page:** CANVAS course page accessible for registered students at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>

**Course description:**

This course provides an introduction to the scope and methods of political science. Beginning with research design, measurement, and ethical considerations, and including a variety of research methods including surveys, experiments, interviews, fieldwork, content analysis, and an introduction to quantitative and qualitative analysis.

While there is some discussion of statistics in this course, the emphasis is on the “Why” of research rather than merely the “How”. Beginning with the basic concepts of methodology, the course will move on to examine the strengths and weaknesses of various forms of analysis. The course will involve quizzes, homework assignments, exams, and a final research proposal paper that will help students synthesize the material. Several of these assignments will allow students to explore hypotheses of their own creation and to apply their knowledge of methodology to create a research design that will best suit their research question.

## **Political Science Program Learning Outcomes**

Upon completion of the Political Science major program, students should be able to demonstrate the following learning outcomes.

### **PSPLO1: Breadth**

Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.

### **PSPLO2: Application**

Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.

### **PSPLO3: Disciplinary methods**

Student should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, have competence in systematic data gathering using library sources, government documents, and data available through electronic sources, should be able to evaluate research studies, and should be able to critically analyze and interpret influential political texts.

### **PSPLO4: Communication Skills**

Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.

### **PSPLO5: Citizenship**

Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

## **Course Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

**CLO1:** Demonstrate an understanding of the scientific method and the process and purposes of political science research. (Assessed by: Quizzes, Exam 1, Homework Assignments, Research Proposal)

**CLO2:** Demonstrate a critical understanding of different political science research methods, including experimental research, survey research, field research, unobtrusive research, and evaluation research. (Assessed by: Quizzes, Exam 2, Homework Assignments, Research Proposal)

**CLO3:** Demonstrate a critical understanding of the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods in political science, and how they may complement each other in the study of political problems. (Assessed by: Exam 2, Homework Assignments, Research Proposal)

## Required Texts:

*Political Science Research Methods, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition* (2016), CQ Press

By Janet Buttolph Johnson, H.T. Reynolds & Jason D. Mycoff (abbreviated JRM in course schedule)

ISBN: 978-1-5063-0782-4

Available for purchase in the Spartan Bookstore.

Additional readings will be available on reserve on the course CANVAS site.

NOTE: There is a free website from the publisher with many online study resources for your textbook at <http://edge.sagepub.com/johnson8e>. I encourage you to take advantage of the helpful chapter summaries, eFlashcards, and practice quizzes provided there.

## Course Website (CANVAS)

Course materials including the syllabus, assignments, and grades will be posted on the CANVAS page accessible to registered students at: <http://sjsu.instructure.com>

## Accommodations

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with AEC (formerly DRC) to establish a record of their disability.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### University Credit Hours Requirement

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. Because this is a **four-unit course**, you can expect to spend a minimum of nine hours per week, in addition to time spent in class, on scheduled tutorials, assignments, or activities. This additional unit will allow for more in-depth investigation and engagement with course topics. Careful time management will help you keep up with readings and assignments and enable you to be successful in all of your courses. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

### 1. Quizzes

There will be an online quiz through CANVAS for each set of readings. Twelve quizzes are assigned and the lowest two quiz grades will be dropped, for a total of 100 points (10 @ 10 points each). Quizzes must be completed before class on the date listed – there will be no make-ups on quizzes. *Quizzes will make up 25% of your total grade.*

## 2. Homework Assignments

There will be a total of six homework assignments applying the assigned readings, practicing research skills, and working on various steps of your research proposal. Detailed instructions for these assignments will be given in class and posted on the CANVAS course site (CLOs 1-3). *Homework will make up 15% of your total grade.*

## 3. Exams

There will be two exams in this class. Generally speaking, each exam will cover the material learned in the most recent section of the course. The final exam may also ask you to reflect on themes from the entire course in a comprehensive fashion (CLOs 1-3). *Each exam will make up 12.5% of your total grade.*

## 4. Final Research Project Proposal

There will be a 10-page research project proposal due at the final exam period. Details about this paper assignment will be given in class and posted on the course website (CLOs 1-3). *The final paper is worth 25% of your grade.*

## 5. Class Participation

Participation – meaning coming to class and engaging in class discussion and activities – *will also count for 10% of your total grade.* So that you have plenty of opportunities to participate, expect to be “mobilized” (i.e., called on by name) in class. We will also frequently work in small groups in class.

## GRADING POLICY

Your grade will be calculated as follows. You may keep track of your grade in the class on the CANVAS course website.

	Points	Percentage of total
Quizzes (12@ 10 points each, lowest 2 dropped)	100	25%
Homework (6 @ 10 points each)	60	15%
Exam 1	50	12.5%
Exam 2	50	12.5%
Research Proposal - Final Paper	100	25%
Class Participation (discussion and activities)	40	10%
Total	400	100%

Final letter grades for the course will be assigned based on the following scale:

A = 92 – 100%	A- = 90 – 91%	B+ = 88 – 89%
B = 82 – 87%	B- = 80 – 81%	C+ = 78 – 79%
C = 72 – 77%	C- = 70 – 71%	D+ = 68 – 69%
D = 62 – 67%	D- = 60 – 61%	F = 59% or less

## Academic Integrity

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University's Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development.

The policy on academic integrity can be found at: <http://www2.sjsu.edu/senate/S04-12.pdf>.

The website for the Office of [Student Conduct and Ethical Development](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html) is: [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html)

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

## Classroom Policies and Protocol

Late papers or assignments will be penalized with lower grades.

No late papers will be accepted after the final exam.

Missed quizzes and exams may not be made up unless students are excused in advance.

Medical and family emergencies must be documented.

LATE ARRIVALS, EARLY DEPARTURES AND DISRUPTIONS OF CLASS IN ANY FORM ARE UNACCEPTABLE. CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE TURNED OFF AT ALL TIMES IN THE CLASSROOM (UNLESS REQUIRED FOR AN IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENT).

## University Policies

The Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs maintains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, including academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, etc. You can find all syllabus related university policies and resources information listed on GUP's web page at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>

## Other Useful Information

### Library Liaison

The library liaison for Political Science is available to answer questions and provide one-on-one help learning using the library for research.

His name and contact info is: Paul Kauppila  
University Librarian (Political Science Liaison)  
(408) 808-2042  
[Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu](mailto:Paul.Kauppila@sjsu.edu)

## **Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

## **SJSU Peer Connections**

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

## **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

### **Political Science Department Statement on Writing:**

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count!

Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks and a specific reference to the page in the source from which it was taken. Ideas from others must also be referenced although quotations marks are inappropriate. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct which carries with it serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at the library website at [http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info\\_comp/citing.htm](http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/citing.htm).

Arguably the best way to improve your own writing is to read quality material on a regular basis. To that end, students are encouraged to read articles from scholarly sources but also newspapers such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Financial Times*, *The New York Times*, and *The Economist*. These publications also contain articles of direct relevance to their political science classes.

### **ACCESS: Academic Counseling Center for Excellence in the Social Sciences**

All College of Social Sciences students and interested students are invited to stop by the ACCESS Center for general education advising, help with changing majors, academic policy related questions, meeting with peer advisors, and/or attending various regularly scheduled presentations and workshops. Looking for academic advice or maybe just some tips about how to navigate your way around SJSU? Check out the ACCESS Student Success Center! It's also a great place to study.

**Location:** Clark Hall Room 240

**Website:** <http://www.sjsu.edu/socialsciences/ACCESS/>

### **SJSU Counseling Services**

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

<b>POLS195A COURSE SCHEDULE – SPRING 2018</b>		
<i>Subject to change with fair notice – by class announcement or email</i>		
<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
1	Thurs, Jan 25	Introduction to course READ SYLLABUS Complete online plagiarism tutorial and quiz at: <a href="http://tutorials.sjlibrary.org/tutorial/plagiarism/index.htm">http://tutorials.sjlibrary.org/tutorial/plagiarism/index.htm</a> Be sure to follow the link to read the SJSU Academic Integrity Policy when taking this tutorial. UPLOAD YOUR PLAGIARISM QUIZ RESULTS TO CANVAS BY THURS FEB 1.
2	Tues, Jan 30	Introduction: What is Political <i>Science</i> ? READ JRM Ch.1
2	Thurs, Feb 1	The Empirical Approach to Political Science READ JRM Ch.2 QUIZ 1 (Chs. 1-2 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am) PLAGIARISM QUIZ RESULTS DUE ONLINE @ CANVAS (midnight)
3	Tues, Feb 6	Ethics in Social Research READ excerpts from Skloot, <i>The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks</i> , posted on CANVAS
3	Thurs, Feb 8	IRB Procedures NO CLASS MEETING TODAY – complete online exercises and quiz READ SJSU IRB Procedures: <a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/">http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/</a> WATCH SJSU IRB Workshop, Part 1 only (online): <a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/irb-video-tutorials/index.html">http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/irb-video-tutorials/index.html</a> READ Fujii (2012) - Posted on CANVAS (after online IRB Workshop) QUIZ 2 DUE on CANVAS by midnight
4	Tues, Feb 13	Beginning the Research Process: Identifying a Research Topic READ JRM Ch. 3 QUIZ 3 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)
4	Thurs, Feb 15	Developing Research Questions, and Reviewing the Literature HOMEWORK 1 DUE ONLINE @ CANVAS before class (9:00am)
5	Tues, Feb 20	The Building Blocks of Social Scientific Research: Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables READ JRM Ch. 4 QUIZ 4 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)



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5	Thurs, Feb 22	Summing it up: Evaluating a research article HOMEWORK 2 DUE ONLINE @ CANVAS before class (9:00am)
6	Tues, Feb 27	The Building Blocks of Social Scientific Research: Measurement READ JRM Ch. 5
6	Thurs, Mar 1	Example: Operationalizing social capital READ Robert Putnam (2000), <i>Bowling Alone</i> , Ch.1, on CANVAS QUIZ 5 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)
7	Tues, Mar 6	Operationalization and Measurement HOMEWORK 3 DUE ONLINE @ CANVAS before class (9:00am) Exam 1 Review
7	Thurs, Mar 8	EXAM 1 Bring T&E 200 SCANTRON FORM, small Exam Book, Pencil & Pen
8	Tues, Mar 13	Research Design: Making Causal Inferences, Experimental Research Example: The Kennedy/Nixon Debate READ JRM Ch. 6 (pp. 166-188) READ Druckman (2003) article – posted on CANVAS
8	Thurs, Mar 15	Research Design continued READ JRM Ch. 6 (pp. 188-211) QUIZ 6 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)
9	Tues, Mar 20	Sampling READ JRM Ch. 7
9	Thurs, Mar 22	Sampling – continued QUIZ 7 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)
10	March 26-30	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS
11	Tues, Apr 3	Making Empirical Observations: Firsthand Observation READ JRM Ch. 8 READ Fenno (1977) article – posted on CANVAS QUIZ 8 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)

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<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>
11	Thurs, Apr 5	Document Analysis/Content Analysis READ JRM Ch. 9 READ Winter article (1987) – posted on CANVAS QUIZ 9 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)
12	Tues, Apr 10	HOMEWORK 4 DUE IN CLASS GROUP DISCUSSION
12	Thurs, Apr 12	Survey Research and Interviewing READ JRM Ch. 10 (pp. 294-321)
13	Tues, Apr 17	Survey Research – continued READ JRM Ch. 10 (pp. 322-345) READ Aldrich, Sullivan & Borgida (1989) article – posted on CANVAS QUIZ 10 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)
13	Thurs, Apr 19	Online Survey Workshop HOMEWORK 5 DUE @ CANVAS before class (9:00am)
14	Tues, Apr 24	Making Sense of Data: First Steps READ JRM Ch. 11
14	Thurs, Apr 26	Introduction to Descriptive Statistics Application: Using Excel QUIZ 11 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)
15	Tues, May 1	Introduction to Statistical Inference READ JRM Ch. 12
15	Thurs, May 3	Data Analysis Day Meet in Computer Lab (TBD) for data analysis – NO MAKEUPS QUIZ 12 DUE on CANVAS before class (9:00am)
16	Tues, May 8	HOMEWORK 6 DUE IN CLASS
16	Thurs, May 10	EXAM 2 Bring T&E 200 SCANTRON FORM, small exam book, pencil & pen
FINALS	WED May 16	Final Research Proposal Paper DUE ONLINE @ CANVAS by 12:00pm