San José State University
Department of Political Science
Pols 195A: Political Inquiry, Fall 2018

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Sergio Béjar-López
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Office Hours:	MW 10:30-11:45 AM, and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	MW 1:30-2:45 PM
Classroom:	HGH 116

Course Description

This course will introduce you to the scope and methods of political science. Specifically, it will help you to understand how political scientists develop their research projects (i.e. research design), and how they get their results (i.e. hypothesis testing). In addition, we will analyze the ethical considerations of social science research, and study a variety of research methods including surveys, experiments, interviews, fieldwork, content analysis, and an introduction to quantitative and qualitative analysis

This is an applied course. It draws on dozens of real political applications and research examples when introducing each concept and technique. The course emphasizes practice (e.g., choice of appropriate statistical procedure, diagnostics, interpretation) over theory (mathematical derivations and proofs). You do not need any more math background than high school algebra for this course, as we are primarily interested in the "WHY" rather than the "HOW" of research.

Communication and Office Hours

YOU MUST CHECK YOUR CANVAS PAGE ROUTINELY. Please feel free to contact me at sergio.bejar@sjsu.edu. I will respond to every email within 24 hours, and often sooner. Do not wait to contact me until the last minute to email me about a paper or an exam; I receive many, many emails before deadlines and exams, and may not be able to email you back immediately.

Office hours are a great opportunity for you to get additional feedback on your work or just continue a conversation that we began during class – please use them! My office hours are in Clark 402C, from 10:30 to 11:45 AM M & W.

Political Science Learning Outcomes

The Political Science Department has the following objectives for its students:

1. Breadth: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
2. Application: Students should be able to apply a variety of techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
3. Disciplinary methods: Students 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.
4. 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.
5. 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:

1. Compare and contrast the ways social scientists study political phenomena.
2. Develop hypotheses and measure and conceptualize variables.
3. Match best-suited research method to research question.
4. Construct a research design for an original social science research project.
5. Interpret original political science research.

Students will satisfy these requirements through a combination of class discussion, exams, and written papers.

Course Workload Expectations: Succeeding in a Four-Unit Course

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 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

Required readings

We will use the following textbooks, which you are required to purchase.

- Political Science Research Methods, 8th ed. (2016). Janet Buttolph Johnson, H.T. Reynolds, and Jason D. Mycoff. Sage/CQ Press. ISBN: 9781506307824

  The textbook is required and available for purchase in the Spartan Bookstore. You may use the textbook for this course.

I will make additional readings available to you via the Canvas page for the class.

Attendance

This is a challenging course. Attendance and punctuality are highly recommended. Attendance at lectures has always been a good predictor of a student's performance on exams. If you miss class, you are expected to get notes from a fellow student – 'private make-up lectures' with the professor will not take place.

Courtesy, active listening, and participation will make this course a more enjoyable and productive experience for you and for others. Please plan to dedicate your full attention to the discussion and activities of class.

Policy on Technology in the Classroom

1. This classroom is a tech-free zone. Laptops are not permitted unless you have an accommodation from AEC. If you want to refer to assigned readings during class discussions, bring hard copies of articles to class or notes that you've taken on assigned readings.
2. Students should not use text or use cell phones in class. Violations of this rule will result in a deduction in your participation grade for each observed incident.

Course Requirements

Grades in the course will be based on the following items:

- **20% Online Quizzes (10)**
- **15% Homework (5)**

- **30% Midterm Exams (2)**
- **25% Research Design Report**
- **10% Participation**

Online Quizzes (20%)

There will be a total of 10 online quizzes (CANVAS) throughout the semester. Each quiz will ask questions about a different set of readings (see below for details). Quizzes are due before class on the day listed.

Homework (15%)

There will be five (5) homework assignments during the semester. Their objective is to apply the concepts learnt in class. These assignments will be distributed in class and posted on CANVAS. Late submissions are not allowed under <u>ANY</u> circumstances. Please plan accordingly.

Two In-Class Midterm Exam (15% each)

The exams will take place on October 10th and December 5th. You must sit in the exam at the scheduled time. There will be <u>no make-up exams</u> unless you have a documented medical excuse. Make travel plans accordingly. The exams will include material presented both in the reading and in the lectures.

Research Design Report (25%)

The research paper assignment consists of a 10-page paper. The guidelines for the paper will be distributed separately. In brief, your paper will include the following items:

1. A statement of the research question and an explanation of its relevance
2. An explanation of your theory and a statement of the specific hypotheses to be tested
3. Descriptions of the sample and variables included in the analysis
4. Presentation of methods (i.e. how you plan to test your hypothesis)
6. Discussion and conclusions

Participation (10%)

Your participation in class discussions is expected. Students are required to read all of the assigned readings and be prepared to speak about the main arguments/points in the readings. A significant portion of your grade will be based on your participation in class discussions and demonstrated familiarity with the readings. You should feel free to express your opinions and make comments during class discussions, but students who score highly in this realm are able to effectively reference information presented in the readings.

If you come to class every day but never participate in class discussions or answer questions and/or if your name is called and you can't answer the question, you will receive a "zero" for your participation grade.

Grading and Written Work Policies

A+ = 97-100%; A = 93-96.9%; A- = 90-92.9%
B+ = 87-89.9%; B = 83-86.9%; B- = 80-82.9%
C+ = 77-79.9%; C= 73-76.9%; C- = 70-72.9%
D+ = 67-69.9%; D = 63-66.9%; D- = 60-62.9%
F = 59.99% - 0%

Policy on Submitting Written Work in this Course

I expect my students to submit written work that fits the grammatical, stylistic and citation expectations for college-level work in English. All written assignments in this course are therefore graded in two ways: both in terms of content (information in terms of logic, quality of evidence, etc.) and in terms of writing. If you are at all uncomfortable with writing at the college level, you need to take steps to rectify this.

Late Work

Missed exams may be re-taken under the following circumstances only:

1) Death in the immediate family (parent, spouse, sibling, or child) within 2 weeks before the exam.
2) Unforeseeable medical emergency affecting yourself, your spouse, or your child (something beyond feeling under the weather---car accident, major sickness, or the like).
3) Participation in an official SJSU-sponsored academic or sporting event.
In the case of reasons (1) or (3), you must give me at least 24 hours advance notice (such as an e-mail or phone call) that you will miss the exam or it may not be made up. I may require supporting documentation. Conflicts with a work schedule and leaving for a non-academic trip or vacation are not an excuse to miss an exam or any other assignment in this class; I suggest that you consult the course schedule in advance and drop the course if you cannot be present for the classes and assignments.

I will not accept late home-works.

Each day the research paper is late will result in a drop of 5 percentage points, e.g., 95% to a 90%, etc.

All work is late if submitted after the date and time specified as the due date, **even if only one minute late**. The number of days late is counted from the due date and time. To ensure fairness (particularly in a large class), this policy will be strictly enforced.

Extra-Credit

There will be NO extra-credit opportunities. If you are looking for a course that allows students to make-up points lost in exams or assignments, this class is not for you.

University Policies

Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs **maintains university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc.**"

You may find all syllabus related University Policies and resources information listed on GUP's Syllabus information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo

Disclaimer

All information in this syllabus may be subject to change with fair notice by the instructor, the Department of Political Science or San Jose State University.

Tentative Course Schedule

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics and Readings
1	Aug 22	**Overview and course requirements**
2	Aug 27	**Introduction** **Read**: JRM, chapter 1
2	Aug 29	**Empirical Approach to Political Science** **Read**: JRM, chapter 2 ** Quiz 1 due on CANVAS
3	Sep 3	**Beginning the Research Process 1 – Identifying interesting puzzles** **Read:** JRM, chapter 3
3	Sep 5	**Beginning the Research Process2– Research Questions & Literature Review**

Week	Date	Topics and Readings
		Read: JRM, chapter 3 ** Quiz 2 due on CANVAS
4	Sep 10	**Ethical Dilemmas in Social Science Research** **Read:** TBA
4	Sep 12	**Dealing with Human Subjects – IRB Procedures** NO CLASS MEETING TODAY – complete online exercises and quiz READ SJSU IRB Procedures: http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/ WATCH SJSU IRB Workshop, Part 1 only (online): http://www.sjsu.edu/research/irb/irb-video-tutorials/index.html *** Homework 1 due online (CANVAS)**
5	Sep 17	**Hypothesis, Concepts and Variables Part 1** **Read**: JRM, chapter 4
5	Sep 19	**Hypothesis, Concepts and Variables Part 2** **Read**: JRM, chapter 4. ** Quiz 3 due on CANVAS *** Homework 2 due on CANVAS**
6	Sep 24	**Putting the Pieces Together 1: Understanding a Research Article** **Assignment: Bring a research article to class**
6	Sep 26	**Putting the Pieces Together 2: Create Your Own Research Article** **Read**: Gary King, "Publication, Publication," PS: Political Science and Politics 36, 119-125. Available at: http://gking.harvard.edu/files/paperspub.pdf.
7	Oct 1	**Operationalization and Measurement 1** **Read**: JRM, chapter 5
7	Oct 3	**Operationalization and Measurement 2** **Read**: JRM, chapter 5 ** Quiz 4 due on CANVAS

Week	Date	Topics and Readings
8	Oct 8	**Review Midterm Exam 1**
8	Oct 10	**Midterm Exam 1**
9	Oct 15	**Research Design 1: Causal Inference and Experiments** **Read**: JRM, chapter 6
9	Oct 17	**Research Design 2: Casual Inference and Experiments** Read: JRM, chapter 6 **Quiz 5 due on CANVAS
10	Oct 22	**Sampling 1** Read: JRM, chapter 7
10	Oct 24	**Sampling 2** Read: JRM, chapter 7 ** Quiz 6 due on CANVAS
11	Oct 29	**Qualitative Methods 1: Firsthand Observation** **Read:** JRM, chapter 8
11	Oct 31	**Qualitative Methods 2: Content Analysis** **Read:** JRM, chapter 9 ** Quiz 7 due on CANVAS
12	Nov 5	**Reading Day**
12	Nov 7	**Qualitative Methods 3: Survey Research** **Read**: JRM, chapter 10 * Quiz 8 due on CANVAS
13	Nov 12	**Working with Data** **Read:** JRM, chapter 11
13	Nov 14	**Descriptive Statistics** Read: JRM, chapter 11

Week	Date	Topics and Readings
		**Quiz 9 due on CANVAS
14	Nov 19	**Statistical Inference 1** **Read:** JRM, chapter 12 ***Homework 4 due on CANVAS**
14	Nov 21	<u>**Thanksgiving. No Class!**</u>
15	Nov 26	**Statistical Inference 2** **Read:** JRM, chapter 12 **Quiz 10 due on CANVAS
15	Nov 28	**Relationship between Two Variables** **Read: JRM, chapter 13**
16	Dec 3	**Basics of Linear Regression** **Read**: JRM, chapter 14
16	Dec 5	**Midterm Exam 2** ***Homework 5 due in CLASS**
17	Dec 10	**Miscellaneous**
Final Exam		<u>**Final Draft of Research Report Due: Monday December 17th**</u>

<u>I reserve the right to make changes to the tentative schedule as needed. Any changes will be announced in class and through CANVAS.</u>