San José State University
Political Science
POLS 100M Fall 2022

Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Kristina Mitchell
Email: Kristina.mitchell@sjsu.edu
Class Days/Time: T/R 1:30
Classroom: HGH 149A
Office Hours Tuesdays 11-1

Course Description (Required)

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. Notes: Should be taken junior year.

Course and GE Learning Objectives (CLOs and GELOs):

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
1) Compare and contrast the ways social scientists study phenomena. (Weekly Assignments)
2) Develop hypotheses, conceptualize and measure variables. (Weekly Assignments)
3) Match best-suited research methods to research questions. (Weekly Assignments)
4) Construct a research design for an original social science research project. (Final Paper)
5) Interpret original social science research. (Final Paper)

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 and Disciplinary Methods: Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
3) 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.
4) 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.

Textbook

Course Requirements and Assignments (Required)

Weekly Assignments:
Each student will submit a weekly assignment on Thursday by 11:59pm. There are no late assignments accepted! These assignments will be submitted online through Canvas. One assignment will be dropped. Some of the assignments will be completed in class during the lab section, but don’t count on having class time to finish assignments.

Exams
There will be two midterms and one final exam. The exams will be online in Canvas. They are open note, open book, but you must cite sources (do not engage in plagiarism). They are individual assignments, and should not be worked on with other students. On exam days, you will not attend class. Use class time to complete the exam. However, it is still due on Thursday at 11:59pm.

Paper:
Students will be expected to an 8-10 page paper using quantitative analysis to examine a political or social science phenomenon and provide a suggested policy response based on this empirical evidence. This is makes up 35% of your course grade, and will be completed in parts throughout the course of the semester.

The research paper will be evaluated on the following components:
- Research Question
- Literature Review
- Description of Data & Variables
- Data analysis/Results
- Conclusion & policy recommendation

No late papers will be accepted!

Grade Distribution
The grading breakdown for the course assignments is as follows:
- Weekly assignments: 50%
- Exams – 25% (12.5% each)
- Final Paper – 25%

You can use this grade distribution to calculate what is possible for you based on your grades on assignments. Please note the weighting of each assignment and keep it in mind as your complete your work.

Final Grade Determination
97 & above: A plus
92-96: A
90-91: A minus
87-89: B plus
82-86: B
80-81: B minus
77-79: C plus
72-76: C
70-71: C minus
67-69: D plus
62-66: D
60-61: D minus
59.99 & below: F

I do not have a policy of rounding grades. Rounding and curving decisions are made by the professor after all final grades are calculated. Even an 89.999 can be considered a B plus. Grades are not assigned based on individual need.

• Do not contact me with a question or request for your final grade to the rounded, curved, or increased.
• Do not contact me asking for extra credit that has not been specifically offered to the whole class via email announcement.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Classroom Protocol

Course Rules

1. Always maintain professional and respectful language, in class, in emails and in your coursework.
2. Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior will result in a loss of credit for the assignment and possibly a referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Racism, sexism, homophobia, or any other forms of bigotry are not acceptable in this class.
3. You are responsible for all information and announcements made in the course. Prepare to log onto Canvas every day to check for updates, changes, or new information. Read the course home page thoroughly and check announcements daily. Course rules, schedule, and day-to-day are subject to change, please pay close attention to course announcements.
4. Late work will not be accepted for any reason. To be clear, late work will not be accepted for any reason whatsoever.
5. Students may not print, save, photograph, or make any record of graded content in this course.

Professionalism

Here is a quick-start on professionalism in your communication with your professors:
• Don't ask a question that you could have answered yourself. Read all information and instructions in Canvas before you send an email.
• Use an appropriate Subject Line that identifies yourself and your concern (don't just say, "HELP")
• Address the recipient by his or her professional title, such as Professor, Dr., Mr., or Ms. (NOT Mrs. or Miss unless instructed otherwise)
Your first sentence should introduce yourself and include your course and section number. Be specific about what your request is. Demonstrate that you have read and understood course information and instructions. Use proper grammar and spelling. Punctuate and capitalize. Proofread. Allow 24 hours for a response to your email during the week. Do not expect email responses on weekends. Do not send multiple emails on the same topic within a 24 hour period without waiting for a response. If you send an email that does not follow these guidelines, don't be surprised if you get a response that states, "Please revisit the Professionalism section of your course home page and email again."

University Policies (Required)
Per University Policy S16-9 (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs’ Syllabus Information web page at http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/” Please be sure to go over these policies.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – August 23rd and 25th
Class introduction
Political Science as science
Johnson text Chapter 1
No assignment this week

Week 2 – August 30th and 1st
Political Science as Science
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 2

Week 3 – Sept 6th and 8th
Building Blocks of Social Science – Variables & Measurement
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 4
Working in Excel: The Basics
Meet in lab September 8th

Week 4 – Sept 13th and 15th
Data Collection
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 10
Working in Excel: Playing with Data & Variables
Meet in lab September 15th

Week 5 – Sept 20th and 22nd
Exam review
First exam Sept 22nd

Week 6 – Sept 27th & 29th
Research Design – Establishing Causation
Building Blocks of Social Science – Research Questions & Topics
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 3 & 6

Week 7 – Oct 4th and 6th
Building Blocks of Social Science – Research Questions & Topics
Meet in lab October 6th

Week 8 – Oct 11th and 13th
Working in Excel: Answering Research Questions with Data
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 11
Descriptive statistics
Meet in lab October 13th
Week 9 – Oct 18th & 20th
Hypothesis testing

Meet in lab October 20th

Week 10 – Oct 25th & 27th
Describing Research Questions & Variables in a Research Paper
Exam review

Week 11 – Nov 1st and 3rd
2nd exam November 1st
Informing Our Research by Writing a Lit Review

Week 12 – Nov 8th & 10th
Working in Excel: Correlation Coefficients
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 13
Meet in lab November 10th

Week 13 – Nov 15th & 17th
Regression
Johnson Chapter 14
Meet in lab November 17th

Week 14 – Nov 22nd
Independent study

Week 15 – Nov 29th and Dec 1st
Putting It All Together/Working on Research Paper
Meet in lab BOTH DAYS

Week 16 – Dec 6th
Working on Research Paper
Paper Due Dec 6th

Final Exam (Online) due December 14th