

Pols/Soci 433: Data Analysis in Social Science

Fall 2026, 2:30PM-3:45PM Tuesday and Thursday, Langner 112

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Student Office Hours: Tuesdays 8:15-9:15 and 1:15-2:15, Thursdays 1:15-2:15
Shared Folder: <https://pols.tiny.us/433fall2026>
Syllabus Updated: August 27, 2026

Course Description: Attorneys need to prepare logical arguments. Diplomats must write clearly. Social workers use evidence to back up their claims. As political scientists and sociologists, we will be working through the research process to develop your critical thinking, research, and writing skills for you to both understand and analyze existing scholarship and its public policy implications as well as for you to study a particular political or social problem and to make a policy recommendation based on sound research methods. Our goal will be to develop your skills as a social scientists so that you can easily interpret ongoing political and social events, think critically about how these events are portrayed and analyzed, and communicate analytic thinking in a logical manner. These skills will be critical to better understanding the world, to supporting your role in helping address public policy problems, and to fostering critical thinking and analysis skills that are key in many future courses and professions.

Prerequisites: Psyc 271.

Text: None. See readings on Brightspace.

Software: You will need R and R Studio for this course. Both are free and work across platforms. Start to install them as soon as possible. See "handout" section in the shared folder for help. The software is also available in the Langner 112 computer lab.

Catalog Description: The application of scientific methods to political and sociological research, with an emphasis on hands-on design and conduct of surveys, and analysis of data using multiple regression. The course includes a study of the psychology of public opinion.

Student Learning Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand different social science research methods and identify key elements pertaining to each method.
2. Characterize and demonstrate the ability to complete the steps in the research article writing process.
3. Communicate social science concepts, theories, methods, and results in writing.
4. Identify major design, methodological, and ethical issues in the social sciences and be able to suggest possible solutions to these issues.
5. Understand and apply basic statistical analysis both in theory and using statistical software.
6. Independently gather, analyze, interpret, and present results of your own data analysis.
7. Develop policy relevant solutions to political and social problems.

Assignments:

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Social Annotations	As indicated (15 times)	156
R Code	As indicated (5 times)	50
Progress Self-Assessments	October 27, Final Exam	40
Class Notes	October 8, December 3	100
Qualitative Project		
Research Design and Interview Protocol	November 5	80
Infographic	November 5	40
Research Article		
Research Question	September 1	34
Sources Annotated	September 10	34
Literature Review	September 22	66
Theory	October 13	100
Research Design	November 12	120
Research Article	December 8	180

Letter Grade Distribution:

A \geq 895; B 795 – 894; C 695 – 794; D 600 – 694; F \leq 599; Satisfactory \geq 695

Course Philosophy:

This is an experiential learning course where we will work through the social science research process together. For you and your fellow social scientists to succeed, you must participate in class and spend a significant time working on your research article outside of class. This course will likely be the most challenging course you take in college, but you can and will succeed!

A note: I am trained as a political scientist, though I also study research questions more traditionally asked in sociology. You are free to explore any social science research question in this course.

I expect that we will all work to maintain a positive classroom environment. While we often use data and models to provide evidence, social scientists do not have definitive answers to any question. Thus, we will work to understand others' perspectives in a constructive and respectful manner. During the course, we will be discussing topics that may be sensitive in nature for some students. Treat these topics with care and ground your comments in theories and methods from social science.

I am always looking to work on research with students. If you are excited by the research article you write during this course and want to continue working on research during your time at TLU, please let me know. I am happy to continue to support your individual research projects and/or to work collaboratively on a research project.

Topics and Readings: Below is the schedule of reading and assignments for each class. I may change the course outline, but I will give you plenty of prior notice.¹

- “Methodology Focus” is the methods topic we will talk about on the day indicated related to the assigned reading. Take note of the methodology focus when doing the reading and be ready to think about it during class.
- Some days have multiple readings. Those readings have been combined into a single PDF for you to annotate on Perusall.

Unit 1: Situating Yourself in Social Science Research

August 25: Research Questions

- Methodology Focus: What makes for an interesting research question?

August 27: Literature Search

- Methodology Focus: How do we find relevant scholarly sources?
- Reading Due (annotations due): Baglione, Ch. 1 and 2.
- Assignments Due: Beginning of semester survey. You must complete the survey before you can access the reading.
- E-mail me before our class August 27 with a picture of your favorite cute animal for extra credit!

September 1: Literature Reviews

- Methodology Focus: What purpose does previous work serve in research articles?
- Reading Due: Baglione, Ch. 3 and 4.
- Assignments Due: Research Question and paragraph.

September 3: Literature Reviews

- Reading Due: None.

September 8: Informational Interviews and Resumes

- Reading Due (annotations due): Wehde, Ch. 4 and 5.
- Assignments Due:
 - Access the handout in the shared folder about downloading R and RStudio. Download both R and RStudio following the instructions for your operating system.
 - Watch and take notes on these two tutorial videos:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYv_UjKwQ3I and
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Dqdxknp-dk>
 - Submit your notes for the two tutorial videos to Brightspace. I highly encourage you to try to follow along with the tutorial videos in RStudio. We will practice with R and RStudio during subsequent classes.

¹ I have made a conscious effort to represent gender and ethnic/regional diversity of scholarship in these readings.

September 10: Working with Data in R

- Methodology Focus: How are datasets created?
- Assignments Due: Sources Annotated.

Unit 2: Building an Argument

September 11: Available Datasets

- Methodology Focus: Finding and accessing data for your research.
- Reading Due: None.

September 17: Theory

- Methodology Focus: How can you construct a novel theoretical argument?
- Reading Due (annotations due):
 1. Baglione, Ch. 5.
 2. Franco, Ch. 4 (Sections 4.1-4.3)

September 22: Available Datasets and Qualitative Project Proposal

- Methodology Focus: Planning qualitative research.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Literature Review.
- Note: Complete qualitative project proposal in class.

September 24: Operationalization

- Methodology Focus: What are approaches to creating new variables?
- Reading Due (annotations due):
 1. Vachuska, Karl. 2022. "Neighborhood Racial and Economic Composition Predicts Incidence of Various Emergency Service Responses." *Socius* 9: 1-15.
 2. Franco, Ch. 4, Section 4.4 and Ch. 5.

September 29: Qualitative Research Introduction

- Methodology Focus: How can qualitative data be used to test hypotheses?
- Reading Due (annotations due):
 1. Franco, Ch. 7.
 2. Weiss, Robert. 1994. *Learning from Strangers*. New York: Free Press. Ch. 4.

October 1: Qualitative Interviews

- Methodology Focus: Qualitative research procedures.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due:
 - Upload your progress on your revised literature review to Brightspace.
 - Complete CITI training and upload your certificate to Brightspace. Go to <https://about.citiprogram.org> and click "register." Type "Texas Lutheran University" in the "Organization Affiliation" box. Once you have created an account, take the "Human Subjects Research --- Principal Investigator" course.

The course typically takes between 2 and 4 hours to complete. If you have already completed this course for another class (i.e., Psyc 271), just upload your certificate. You will earn a 0 on the qualitative project if you fail to upload your certificate.

October 6: Descriptive Statistics (and some R)

- Methodology Focus: How can descriptive statistics provide answers to research questions?
- Reading Due (annotations due):
 1. Liu, Amy H., Anand Edward Sokhey, Joshua B. Kennedy, and Annie Miller. 2014. "Immigrant Threat and National Salience: Understanding the 'English Official' Movement in the United States." *Research & Politics* 1(1): 1-8.
 2. Wehde, Ch. 6.
- Assignments Due: R code for Wehde, Ch. 6. See description below and in the reading on Perusall.

October 8: Descriptive Statistics in R

- Methodology Focus: Implementing descriptive statistics in R.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Class Notes. Optional mid-semester survey.
- Note: We will complete the class notes self-assessment in class.

October 13: Research Design

- Methodology Focus: Explaining different research design options.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Theory.

October 20: Research Design

- Methodology Focus: What is the best way to test your theory?
- Reading Due (annotations due):
 1. Franco, Ch. 6.
 2. Baglione, Ch. 6 and 7.

Unit 3: Research Methods

October 22: Probability

- Methodology Focus: How can we use probability to inform our knowledge of society?
- Reading Due (annotations due): Wehde, Ch. 7 and Ch 8.1.

October 27: Probability and Surveys

- Methodology Focus: How do we interpret survey results?
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Progress self-assessment.

October 29: Inference

- Methodology Focus: What is the purpose of testing hypotheses?
- Reading Due (annotations due):
 1. Claassen, Christopher. 2014. "Who Participates in Communal Violence? Survey Evidence from South Africa." *Research & Politics* 1(1): 1-8.
 2. Wehde, Ch. 8.2-8.4.

November 3: Inference in R

- Methodology Focus: Figuring out inference in R.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: R code for Wehde, Ch. 8.2-8.4. See description below and in the reading on Perusall.

November 5: Qualitative Project

- Methodology Focus: Sharing the importance of qualitative research.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Qualitative Project.

November 10: Association

- Methodology Focus: What are associational tests used for?
- Reading Due (annotations due): Wehde, Ch. 9.
- Assignments Due: R code for Wehde, Ch. 9. See description below and in the reading on Perusall.

November 12: Results

- Methodology Focus: Turning analysis into written results.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Research Design.

November 17: Linear Regression

- Methodology Focus: How can regression support associational results?
- Reading Due (annotations due):
 1. Sevenans, Julie, Stefaan Walgrave, and Debby Vos. 2015. "Political Elites' Media Responsiveness and Their Individual Political Goals: A Study of National Politicians in Belgium." *Research & Politics* 2(3): 1-7.
 2. Wehde, Ch. 10 and 11.
- Assignments Due: R code for Wehde, Ch. 10 and 11. See description below and in the reading on Perusall.

November 19: Linear Regression in R

- Methodology Focus: Figuring out linear regression in R.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Upload the R code you have been working on to analyze the data for your research article.

Unit 4: Beyond Observational Data

November 24: Introduction, Abstract, and Conclusion

- Methodology Focus: How do you sell your research article?
- Reading Due (annotations due): Baglione, Ch. 9.

December 1: Experiments

- Methodology Focus: Are experiments a “gold standard” for research?
- Reading Due (annotations due): Zhang, Nan, Johanna Gereke, and Delia Baldassarri. 2022. “Everyday Discrimination in Public Spaces: A Field Experiment in the Milan Metro.” *European Sociological Review* 38: 679-693.

December 3: Rational Choice and Formal Theory

- Methodology Focus: What is formal theory?
- Reading Due (annotations due): O’Brochta, William. 2026. *Grievance to Nowhere: Formal Institutions Delivering Government Services*. Chapter 2 excerpt.
- Assignments Due: Class Notes (class notes self-assessment during class).

December 8: Legal Analysis

- Methodology Focus: What are ways to apply these methods to legal careers?
- Assignments Due: Research Article.

Final Exam Period (December 14 from 1:30-4:30):

- We will present during class. Nothing to do to prepare.
- Assignments Due: Progress self-assessment and end-of-semester survey.

Description of Assignments:

Social Annotation (156 points; 13 points each)

Completing and engaging with course material and other students is essential to your success in this course. We will be using Perusall (linked on Brightspace) for social annotation. The idea behind social annotation is that you can engage with other students in the course while reading the required content. This will help you to read in a more active and engaged way, to come to class more prepared for our discussions, and to generate ideas that you would like to raise in class. My motivation in asking you to do social annotations is to help you read efficiently. This is a skill that you *can* develop.

For each assigned reading where annotations are due, complete the following:

- Go to Brightspace and click on the link for an assigned reading. You must access Perusall through Brightspace for your annotations to be saved.
- You will be randomly assigned to different “reading groups” where you see annotations and comments from only selected students to reduce comment overload.

- Read the text. I recommend skimming through the entire text once, marking any points of confusion, and asking clarification or definition questions. These are not substantive annotations that count toward your grade, but they will help you read more effectively.
- Return to the text later and read it again. While doing so, **make at least five substantive annotations**. Examples of substantive and not substantive annotations follow.
- Reading and completing the annotations for a particular class period should take you no less than 1 hour and no more than 2 hours. If you find yourself spending more time on an assignment, refer back to the Hoover Green piece on reading effectively. Feel free to come talk to me if you are having any difficulty. This assignment is not meant to take up too much time.

How to write a substantive annotation:

1. Find a part of the reading that is interesting, surprising, or about which you would like to make an annotation.
2. Highlight the relevant text and leave an annotation or, if someone else has already highlighted the text, leave a comment responding to their annotation.
3. In your annotation, go beyond agreeing with or re-stating what the reading is saying. Discuss how you have thought about and processed the information you read. Make connections to concepts from your notes or that you learned in class. Discuss how the reading relates to you personally or to current events. Provide depth by writing at least three sentences per annotation.
4. Complete at least five substantive annotations, spread throughout the reading.

Non-exhaustive examples of substantive and not substantive annotations:

Notice that the substantive comments go far beyond a single sentence and focus on explaining and making connections.

	Not substantive	Substantive
Definition	This term means [description of term].	This term means [description of term]. By introducing this concept, the authors [describe why the concept is important]. In addition, we discussed this concept in class [describe how].
Upvote	[Student uses the green checkmark to upvote another student's comment]	[Upvote comment] This makes a lot of sense to me because [describe why]. But, I can also see how [introduce a different point of view].
Question	What are the impacts of [describe something]?	What are the impacts of [describe something]? I think that the impact is [describe impact] because [describe reason]. This is important because [describe why].
Agreement	I agree.	I agree because [describe why]. [Tell story about experience you have had related to the concept being discussed].
Example	This is true today.	This is true today because [describe specific instance]. I know people impacted by [describe topic and how people are impacted].

Clarification	What does this mean?	What does [describe phrase] mean? My interpretation is that it probably means [describe possible meaning], but I also found a source online [list source] that says [describe what the source says]. Clarifying this definition is important because [describe why].
Interesting	This is interesting. I had not thought about this before.	This resonated with me because I have had [describe some experience]. I also see [describe the topic] mentioned frequently in the news like in a recent story [describe story].

Submission and Evaluation: You should submit annotations for the indicated readings. **Your three lowest annotation grades will be dropped (this includes any annotations you do not turn in, so feel free to skip when you are busy).** Be sure to check your annotation grades frequently, as simply completing five annotations will not get you credit if those annotations are not substantive.

If you experience some problem completing annotations in Perusall, you can e-mail me your annotations by the time they are due.

I evaluate annotations in the following way:

- I will engage with you in Perusall by responding to questions and annotations.
- After annotations are due, I count the number of annotations you submitted to ensure you submitted at least five annotations. I then check to ensure that your annotations are substantive. This is not an exact science, which is why I drop your three lowest annotation grades. You will receive an evaluation of:
 - Complete (100%): Spends an appropriate amount of time reading the text. Excellent annotations: at least five substantive annotations; material is engaged well. Substantive annotations are typically at least three sentences each.
 - Incomplete (0%): Unsatisfactory annotations: poor quality annotations (only short responses or not substantive responses) or fewer than five substantive annotations. Or does not spend an appropriate amount of time reading the text to make substantive annotations. Or no submission/submitted late.
 - Each individual annotation grade is only a small part of your overall course grade. Missing one annotation will not impact you much, but missing many will.

R Code (50 points; 10 points each)

At the end of the semester, you will be responsible for analyzing data for your research article using R. The Wehde textbook walks you through the kinds of analysis you will be doing for your article. But reading and annotating the textbook is not as effective as writing and running the R code. Therefore, I will ask you to submit R code 5 times throughout the semester. Each time you submit, you should submit a .R file with the code and comments (using the #) indicating what each line of code does.

Evaluation: Turn in your R code on Brightspace. The code should be in a .R file. This is strictly an activity to help you practice. As such, it will be graded as complete or incomplete with no

additional feedback provided. We will have time in class to work with R where you can ask questions to me or other students (but you still must submit the code before class).

- Complete (100%): R code submitted in .R file with # comments.
- Incomplete (0%): No submission or incomplete code or missing # comments.

Progress Self-Assessment (40 points; 20 points each)

You will complete two progress self-assessments during the semester.

Assessment 1 will occur in the middle of the course. For this assessment, describe your process for working on your research article so far. What has gone well? What needs improvement? How are you going to improve your work? Your reflection should be specific and detailed and be 500+ words in length.

Assessment 2 will occur as the final exam for the course. The assessment will ask you to complete the end-of-semester survey, to complete a career plan, and to upload a resume.

Evaluation: Submit each progress self-assessment when it is due.

- Complete (100%): Self-assessment meets the criteria.
- Incomplete (0%): No submission or incomplete assessment.

Class Notes (100 points)

You need to know and understand all of the research design and statistical concepts in this course. This requires taking **detailed** notes during class. It really does, I promise. These notes can be geared toward your research article (e.g., you talk about your own sampling strategy when we discuss sampling).

To complete your class notes, take notes either in a physical notebook or in a computer file. I encourage you to take notes by hand, as doing so improves retention.² The dates when the class notes are to be submitted are clearly marked on the syllabus. If you are taking notes in a physical notebook, you should create an electronic copy of your class notes (scan or take pictures) to submit on the indicated class days. In order to earn an “A,” your class notes must meet all of the self-assessment criteria listed below.

Please remember that your class notes must be your own work. If you are absent, talk to a friend about what happened in class, view the slides, and create your own notes for that class period. You are free to collaborate with other students as long as you wrote the entirety of your class notes. Copying notes from other students without appropriate attribution is plagiarism.

Students often struggle to organize their notes and ask for suggestions to help. There is no one-size-fits all organizational method or process. I recommend the following process:

² Smoker, Timothy J, Carrie E. Murphy, and Allison K. Rockwell. 2009. “Comparing Memory for Handwriting versus Typing,” *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting* 53(22):1744-1747.

1. Create a header for each class section before class.
2. As class starts, list the day's objectives.
3. Begin taking notes in the notes section. Each topic, discussion, or activity should have its own item in a numbered list. Fill in detailed notes --- phrases, ideas, and descriptions --- as class proceeds.
4. **Important!** After class is over, go back to your notes and the slides from the class. Fill in key terms, additional notes that you missed, and write a brief reflection. This process should take about 15 minutes per class.

Following this process will result in notes that meet the criteria and will look like this template:

August 27: Introductory Class

Objectives: [bulleted list of objectives]

Key Terms: [bulleted list of at least two key terms from class]

Notes: [numbered list with each topic/discussion/activity from class followed by detailed notes]

Reflection: [two sentence reflection on that day's class]

Evaluation: Twice during the semester, I will ask you to submit your class notes. Those dates are marked on the topics and readings. Your class notes should be submitted to Brightspace before class.

We will conduct an in-class activity with your class notes where you will complete a self-assessment; if you are not in class on that day, you must complete the self-assessment before class time. I will read your self-assessment and reserve the right to adjust the grade you give yourself. Your self-assessment will include the following questions exactly as written. This means that your class notes should meet all of the criteria listed below.

1. I have notes for each and every class period (including any I have missed). Count the number of classes for which you have notes and write that number here. Each class day must be labeled with a heading to do this. If you are missing notes for classes, at most you can earn the fraction of the points for which some notes are present.
2. My class notes are my own work. Copying notes from other students without appropriate attribution is considered plagiarism.
3. My class note entries are complete and sufficiently detailed and include notes from each class (including any I may have missed). Taking good notes involves summarizing, paraphrasing, and re-stating in your own words. My notes entries contain enough detail that a friend who is not in the class could use them to study for a quiz or test (and get a good grade!). Each entry should be 200+ words.
4. If you were to evaluate your class notes on a grading scale from A to F based on the "complete and sufficiently detailed" criterion, what grade would you assign and why? Please provide your self-assigned grade and a few sentences of explanation.

Qualitative Project (120 points)

Qualitative research is a critically important part of empirical social science. One excellent way to utilize qualitative research is to deeply understand community needs and problems. Qualitative interviews particularly provide rich data on questions of importance to communities that are often not cataloged in other ways. The qualitative project is meant to give you some initial exposure to conducting qualitative research. The core of the project involves conducting interviews related to a common topic that the class selects.

This project will work as follows:

1. Class topic: You will be assisting in facilitating interviews or focus groups about vocational discernment.
2. Group assignment: Everyone in the class will divide into groups. We will all try to optimize group size and the cohesiveness of groups.
3. Each student is responsible for conducting two thirty-minute interviews with TLU students, faculty, or staff related to the class topic (or, if we conduct focus groups, recruiting participants for two focus groups). You must take detailed notes during these interviews. You will then work with your group to synthesize the results.
4. Project proposal: Your group will meet during class and produce a project proposal stating the specific research question your group is investigating related to the class topic, background research you have conducted, and a brief plan for how you will organize the interviews.
5. Completing the project:
 1. Each student is required to complete the CITI training and to upload your certificate by the date listed on the syllabus. Failing to do so results in a zero for all components of the project.
 2. Each student is responsible for conducting two thirty-minute interviews that align with the group's focus (or, if we conduct focus groups, recruiting participants for two focus groups).
 3. Complete the project documents with all relevant data from interviews.
6. Project documents:
 1. Research design and interview protocol: Each group will turn in one research design and interview protocol. The research design will include the research question your group is investigating related to the class topic, a description of the people you are recruiting for the focus group and why these people are the most appropriate individuals to speak to answer your research question. Your group will also attach an interview protocol that lists the format for each interview/focus group, focus group procedures, and your proposed interview questions. Finally, your group will attach notes from each focus group with the notes from each group member. **The document should be at least 2,000 words, not including references or your interview notes.**
 2. Infographic: Each group will create one infographic (11 inches by 17 inches in size). You can use infographic creation sites like Canva to help. Your infographic should communicate the research question, describe the research design, state your results, and draw conclusions as well as public policy implications.
 3. Self and peer evaluation: Each student will complete a self and peer evaluation detailing how your group worked together during the project.

Evaluation: The project proposal will be completed and turned in during class. A complete project proposal must be submitted or else the group cannot continue working on the project. The research design and interview protocol is worth 80 points and the infographic is worth 40 points. I reserve the right to use your self and peer evaluation to adjust individual grades up or down if there is evidence of wide discrepancies in the division of labor.

Research Design and Interview Protocol Grading Rubric

80 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Research Design			
Has an informative title	2		0
Describes the research question and rationale for choosing it within the context of the class topic	10 8	6 4	2 0
Describes background research into the topic needed to prepare for the interviews	5 4	3 2	1 0
Explains interviewee selection in detail	5 4	3 2	1 0
Explains both advantages and challenges of using a qualitative design to investigate your research question	10 8	6 4	2 0
Interview Protocol			
Describes interview settings	4	2	0
Provides background information about interviewees	5 4	3 2	1 0
Lists expected interview questions	4	2	0
Provides a thorough description of the purpose of each interview question	10 8	6 4	2 0
Interview questions are appropriately worded and well-constructed	10 8	6 4	2 0
Discusses ethical concerns of interviewing	5 4	3 2	1 0
Interview Notes			
All interview notes are included and are easy to read and to understand the full interview	10 8	6 4	2 0

Infographic Grading Rubric

40 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Informative title	2		0
Clear research question related to class topic	4	2	0
Describes interview participants	4	2	0
Describes interview results	10 8	6 4	2 0
Results are displayed in a visually appealing manner	5 4	3 2	1 0
Conclusions are stated and appropriate	5 4	3 2	1 0

Public policy implications are clear and meaningful	5 4	3 2	1 0
Visually appealing overall design	5 4	3 2	1 0

Research Article (534 points)

If you have taken one of my courses before, you may have written a research proposal or a research memo. So what is different now that we will be writing a research article? Are the requirements not the same? Well, yes and no. Social scientists develop skills conducting research by practicing over time and in different contexts. Think of prior research writing assignments as building up to writing a research article in this course. What is different this time is that you are analyzing data for a results section, you are expanding your work to a full-length research article, and you know the basics of social science research so that you can refine your skills. The benefits for you are developing a much deeper understanding of the writing, research, and critical thinking skills involved in being a social scientist. These advanced level skills will prepare you well for a wide range of careers.

Though many of the components listed in the rubrics for the research article are the same or similar to research memo or research note assignments you may have previously completed, my expectations for the quality of your work are significantly higher in this course.

Research Question (34 points)

Your research article will address a research question: a problem that you feel needs to be addressed or a puzzle you have discovered. You will use this research question to write all the other components of your research article, though it is perfectly okay if your question shifts slightly as the course progresses. You can pose any research question in social science. Your research question and article must be different from any research questions you have used in previous courses.

For this assignment, write a *one sentence* research question followed by a 250-word description of your question. In the description, include why you think the question is interesting and how the question relates to contemporary issues in social science.

Evaluation: Your research question and paragraph description will be evaluated based on the following rubric.

Research Question and 250-Word Paragraph Grading Rubric

34 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Research Question			
Is concise	2	1	0
Presents a puzzle/addresses a debate in the field or in public policy	5 4	3 2	1 0
Sets up a project that is falsifiable, not descriptive	5 4	3 2	1 0
Can plausibly be tested empirically	2	1	0
Description			
States why the question is relevant and important (at least 4 sentences)	10 8	6 4	2 0

Describes how the question fits into contemporary political discourse	10 8	6 4	2 0
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Sources Annotated (34 points)

Upload PDF copies of at least ten peer reviewed social science journal article or book sources that you plan to use in your research article to Perusall to the submission upload box with your name on it. For each source, provide 5+ substantive annotations.

Evaluation: Your sources annotated on Perusall to will be evaluated based on the below rubric.

Sources Annotated Grading Rubric

34 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Source Selection			
Uploads at least ten sources	5	2	0
Includes a range of publication years	2		0
Sources are canonical and/or closely related to the research question (only journal articles or academic books are cited, no websites or news stories)	5 4	3 2	1 0
Sources are peer reviewed social science pieces	10 8	6 4	2 0
Annotations			
Each source is accompanied by 5+ substantive annotations	12 10	8 4	2 0

Literature Review (66 points)

A literature review focuses readers' attention on research that directly attempts to answer your research question. For this assignment, construct a 1,500 word literature review that contextualizes your research question within existing literature and includes a references list in APSA format at the end. **Literature reviews of fewer than 1,500 words will earn a 0.**

Evaluation: Your literature review will be evaluated based on the below rubric.

Literature Review Grading Rubric

66 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Has an appropriate title	4	2	0
Begins with an introduction summarizing the "schools" and distinguishing your research question from them	5 4	3 2	1 0
Does not summarize cited work	5 4	3 2	1 0
Sources are grouped into "schools" depending on the theoretical arguments and empirical findings	10 8	6 4	2 0
Themes are clearly identified under each school, and sources are synthesized for each theme using	10 8	6 4	2 0

the funnel model with in-text citations as shown in class			
Your research question is clear and clearly differentiated from prior work	10 8	6 4	2 0
No direct quotations are used	5 4	3 2	1 0
Ends with a conclusion discussing how your research question builds on the literature	5 4	3 2	1 0
Uses APSA citation style	10 8	6 4	2 0
Includes a word count (including only the literature review, not references) at the top of the first page of the article	2		0

Theory (100 points)

A theoretical argument provides justification for your hypothesis. We will work to develop a hypothesis backed by a theoretical argument.

Your theory paper will begin with a cover page called a change sheet that lists the changes you made to your literature review since you last submitted it. Please be detailed and list changes in either bullet or paragraph form.

You should then include a revised literature review. You should include a theory paper of at least 1,500 words that meets the below requirements. Finally, you should include a references list in APSA format. **Theories of fewer than 1,500 words not including the literature review or references will earn a 0.**

Evaluation: Your theory will be evaluated based on the below rubric.

Theory Grading Rubric

100 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Change sheet is detailed	10	5	0
Revisions to Literature Review	10 8	6 4	2 0
Theory Section			
Has an informative title	4	2	0
Transitions well from the literature review	5 4	3 2	1 0
Begins with a summary paragraph stating the hypothesis and describing the steps that connect the theoretical argument	10 8	6 4	2 0
Uses a “flow diagram” and inserts an image of the diagram	10 8	6 4	2 0
Connects each box of the flow diagram to the next one using sources and logical reasoning	14 12	10 8	4 0
Sources are appropriate and are cited as evidence, not summarized	10 8	6 4	2 0

Addresses alternative mechanisms from the flow diagram and explains why they are unlikely	5 4	3 2	1 0
Concludes by restating your argument and how it is distinct from past explanations	5 4	3 2	1 0
Hypothesis			
Follows “if/then” format	5 4	3 2	1 0
Is clear and concise	5 4	3 2	1 0
Is falsifiable	5 4	3 2	1 0
Includes a word count (including only the theory section, not references or the literature review) at the top of the first page of the article	2		0

Research Design (120 points)

The research design section describes how you plan to test your hypothesis. You are responsible for following through with the plan you articulate in your research design. Social scientists use many different research designs, and we will discuss a multitude of methodological approaches in this class.

For your research design part of your research article, you must propose analyzing existing empirical data. Doing so may not be the absolute best research design strategy (i.e., you might need to conduct an original survey or experiment to best test your question). If this is the case for your research article, you should describe the best strategy in the robustness checks section of your research design. However, since one objective of this course is to learn and practice quantitative research methods, the primary method of analysis that you should use in your research design is some form of regression using existing data. You will have the opportunity to think about qualitative research methods in the qualitative project.

Your research design paper will begin with a change sheet that lists all the changes you made to your theory section since you last submitted it. You should then include your literature review and a revised theory section. You should include a research design paper of at least 2,000 words that meets the below requirements. Finally, you should include a references list in APSA format. **Research designs of fewer than 2,000 words not including the literature review, theory, or references will earn a 0.**

Evaluation: Some of what you will include in the research design section depends on the research methods you choose to employ, but most students will include these two units of analysis, one as their primary research design and one as an alternative research design.

- **Geographic Area Unit of Analysis:** Identify datasets with the independent and dependent variables you will use, and discuss how these variables measure the concepts you are interested in. Identify control variables and justify their inclusion. Discuss the best regression method to use based on the structure of your data (see me if you need help). Mention potential problems with your dataset in terms of its coverage, quality, and availability. If you find that the variable you need does not exist in a dataset, choose the

variable that makes the most sense and justify how this variable is a decent proxy for the variable you really need to measure.

- Individual Unit of Analysis: In addition to the criteria described above, you should describe the target survey or experimental group, the sampling strategy, and the survey or experimental protocol. Describe the survey in detail and relate your protocol back to your hypothesis. Discuss ethical concerns with using human subjects for research.

Research Design Grading Rubric

120 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Change sheet is detailed	10	5	0
Revisions to Theory Section	10 8	6 4	2 0
Research Design			
Has an informative title	4	2	0
Transitions well from the hypothesis section	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes the methodological approach. Discusses empirical strategy you are taking and why it is appropriate; compare to other strategies	10 8	6 4	2 0
Explains case selection by establishing criteria and describing how selected cases meet the criteria	10 8	6 4	2 0
Precisely describes data sources, why they were chosen, and how you are using them	10 8	6 4	2 0
Lists independent and dependent variables explicitly	4	2	0
Describes how IV and DV measure parts of your hypothesis	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes precision, accuracy, validity, and reliability for the IV and DV	10 8	6 4	2 0
Considers and describes control variables	10 8	6 4	2 0
Discusses robustness checks that you will conduct in your results section	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes how well your research design can test causation with specific examples	10 8	6 4	2 0
Addresses weaknesses of your design and alternative research designs	10 8	6 4	2 0
Concludes by arguing why your design is preferable	5 4	3 2	1 0
Includes a word count (including only the research design section, not references or literature review or theory) at the top of the first page of the article	2		0

Research Article (180 points)

Your research article will begin with a change that lists all the changes you made to your research design section since you last submitted it. You should then include your literature review, theory, and a revised research design. To these sections, you will add your results

section, plus an introduction, conclusion, and abstract. You will also attach your R code as an appendix. The final research article should be at least 7,000 words not including references or the R code in the appendix. A good upper bound is 8,000 words, though there is no strict maximum length. **Research articles of fewer than 7,000 words not including references will earn a 0.**

Evaluation:

- Results: Unlike other sections of a research article where there is a relatively straightforward “formula” you can follow, the results section is highly dependent on the research design you choose and the theory you are testing. The rubric for the results section asks you to present descriptive statistics, at least one figure, and at least one regression model.

The “provides sufficient evidence to test the hypothesis, given available data and time constraints” criterion in the rubric refers to the depth of your analysis. If you have a simple hypothesis, that may warrant only one main model and a robustness check model. However, if you are trying to measure a difficult concept (for example civil war), then you might need three models (one each for incidence, intensity, and duration). The number of regression models and the depth of your analysis is partially dictated by the question you ask and the research design you propose (as well as the data you have available given the time constraint). Just present as much analysis as you can and you should do well.

- R Code: You must attach a complete copy of the R code you used to conduct the analysis. Put the appendix at the end of your article, following the references section.
- Abstract: Provide a cohesive 150 word summary of your article that states the research question, identifies a gap in the literature, describes your hypothesis and methods, and briefly states your main result (that you expect to find if you did the analysis) and contribution.
- Introduction: Begin your introduction with a compelling case study or question that frames the reason why the paper is important. Devote subsequent paragraphs to summarizing each section of your paper including the literature review, theory and hypothesis, research design and methods, results, and conclusions/implications.
- Conclusion: Briefly restate the research question, your hypothesis, and your findings. Discuss why these findings are important. You can bring in your public policy implications from your briefing paper if you like. Describe any limitations to your study, and discuss future possibilities for research related to your topic.

Research Article Grading Rubric

180 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Change sheet is detailed	5		0
Revisions to Research Design	10 8	6 4	2 0
Results			
Has an informative title	2		0
Begins with a paragraph summarizing the results and the methods used to obtain the results	5 4	3 2	1 0

Uses appropriate statistical terminology	5 4	3 2	1 0
Presents a table of descriptive statistics	2		0
Interprets each descriptive statistic correctly and draws implications relevant to the hypotheses from the descriptive statistics	10 8	6 4	2 0
Presents at least one main regression model	2		0
Explicitly describes the regression method used and how it works	10 8	6 4	2 0
Interprets each regression coefficient correctly and relates them to the hypotheses being tested	10 8	6 4	2 0
Describes the substantive significance of each regression coefficient	10 8	6 4	2 0
Presents and interprets at least one additional regression model as a robustness check	10 8	6 4	2 0
Presents at least one figure	2		0
Describes the figure in detail and how the figure relates to the hypothesis	10 8	6 4	2 0
Concludes by reviewing the evidence and whether the hypotheses were supported	5 4	3 2	1 0
R Code			
R code is provided as an appendix	5 4	3 2	1 0
R code is easy to understand (use the # symbol to put text comments in your code to help readers understand what you are doing)	5 4	3 2	1 0
Article Title			
Is informative about the entire research project	5 4	3 2	1 0
Is appealing and interesting	5 4	3 2	1 0
Abstract			
Is under 150 words	4	2	0
Contains a motivating puzzle or purpose for performing the research	5 4	3 2	1 0
Has a clear research question	2		0
Follows the order of the major sections of the paper	4	2	0
Contains simple sentences, avoids technical jargon	4	2	0
Conclusion			
Reminds the reader of the topic, literature, hypothesis and theory, and methods	5 4	3 2	1 0
Discusses avenues for future research	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes why your finding is interesting and relevant for policymakers and scholars	5 4	3 2	1 0
Considers the generalizability and external validity of your expected results	5 4	3 2	1 0
Introduction			
Begins with an anecdote, question, surprising case/fact to capture the reader's attention	5 4	3 2	1 0

States the research question clearly	2		0
Discusses the importance of the research question and its relevance given previous literature	5 4	3 2	1 0
Provides an overview of the entire paper	5 4	3 2	1 0
Does not contain material copied from elsewhere in the article	4	2	0
Includes a word count (not including cover sheet, references, or R code) at the top of the first page	2		0

Course Policies:

- General:
 - You agree to the provisions in the Common Syllabus, available on Brightspace.
 - All assignments are to be turned in on Brightspace and are due at class time on the date indicated unless otherwise noted.
 - You are responsible for ensuring that your assignments submit to Brightspace successfully and that the file you submitted can be displayed. All file submissions except the class notes must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF format. Files in other formats --- including Google Docs --- cannot be read by Brightspace.
 - Should you have an accommodation, please meet with me during the first two weeks of classes, either during office hours or by appointment, to discuss.
- Plagiarism:
 - Citations must be in American Political Science Association (APSA) style. Use of this style is important, as it governs the writing of professional political science. The APSA style manual is posted on Brightspace.
 - Book format: Grace, Philip. 2016. *Affectionate Authorities: Fathers and Fatherly Roles in Late Medieval Basel*. London: Routledge.
 - Journal article format: Walsh, Germaine Paulo. 2002. "Is Jane Austin Politically Correct? Interpreting Mansfield Park." *Perspectives on Political Science* 31(1): 15-26.
 - In-text citation format: Professors at TLU are doing interesting research (Grace 2016; Walsh 2002).
 - Plagiarism, including inappropriate attribution, is an Academic Honesty Violation and is grounds for failure from the course.
 - Always cite your sources. If you are unsure if you are paraphrasing, rewrite to use either a direct quotation or paraphrase differently. Feel free to talk to me if you are unsure whether or how to cite a source.
 - You can use the Turnitin draft coach on Word Online to run a Turnitin report.
 - Wikipedia is not an appropriate academic source.
 - Artificial intelligence tools will be of little help in this course. Only tools that assist with brainstorming concepts or basic spelling and grammar are allowed in this course. If you use one of these tools, you must cite it. All work must be wholly your own, and sentences must be constructed without assistance. All other uses are Academic Honesty Violations.

- Student Office Hours:
 - Student office hours are a time for you to come by to speak with me without an appointment. Please come by to see me early in the semester. I am happy to discuss your progress in the course, political science topics, and potential career paths. These student office hours are for you; please do not feel like you are imposing by stopping by. If you want to come by but don't know what to ask, ask me about my favorite ice cream flavor!
- Technology:
 - We will use technology in class. As a result, you are expected to bring a laptop, tablet, or smartphone to each of our class sessions (laptop or tablet preferred). If you will not have regular access to one of these devices, you can borrow a laptop from the library, use a classmate's laptop, or speak with me and we will work out an alternative approach.
 - You are expected to use your devices for class purposes only. Using your device in other ways is distracting to other students, and I reserve the right to deduct up to 10% of your final grade or to drop you from the class in serious cases.
 - Taking photos, recording audio/video of class, or distributing any class materials is not permitted.
- Attendance:
 - I understand that there are reasons that you may need to be absent from class. I expect that you will be responsible and attend class as much as possible. Accordingly, **you do not need to let me know when you will be absent** unless it is a university sponsored absence. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to learn what we did from someone else in class, to review all material on Brightspace, and to come speak with me during student office hours if you have questions.
 - Attending class is the biggest key to success in this course. **It is best to limit absences to 3 or fewer during the semester. 6 or more absences result in automatic failure from the course.**
- Late Work:
 - All assignments in this course are most relevant to you and to the rest of the students if they are turned in the day that they are due. As such, assignments will only be accepted late if prior arrangements for an extension have been made.
 - Extensions will only be given in extraordinary circumstances. Feel free to speak with me if numerous assignments are due around the same time; we can develop a plan together to help you complete everything on time. To request an extension, you must e-mail me at least 48 hours before the assignment is due with the reasons behind your request. We can then work together to figure out how you can turn the assignment in on time or make alternate arrangements in extraordinary circumstances.
- Grading:
 - Everyone can succeed in this course, and it is my goal to help you do so! Coming to class prepared, completing assignments on time, working hard, and doing your best are the biggest tickets to doing well.

- Grades will only be changed if I made an arithmetic error or mistake. If you feel that this happened to you, please send me an e-mail no later than three days after the assignment is returned detailing the error.
- If you are concerned about a grade you receive, please discuss it with me. I am happy to discuss how you can improve in future work.
- I do not give incomplete grades unless there is a documented medical crisis or documented emergency late in the semester and you have communicated about this to me when the incident occurs.
- There is no extra credit offered.
- **Checking Your Grade:**
 - You can always check your grade in the course by looking at the Grades tab. Be sure to view all rubric feedback on graded items.
 - The course grade reflects the points you have earned thus far in the course (starting at 0 points). You can calculate your estimated final grade using the grade estimator spreadsheet on Brightspace.
- **Contacting Me:**
 - E-mail is the best way to contact me outside of student office hours. Please do not use Brightspace Messages, as I am unlikely to see your message promptly. You can call my office phone, but my e-mail response time is likely to be quicker.
 - I will respond to your e-mails promptly. In general, you can expect a response within 24 hours and that e-mails will be answered between 9AM and 5PM, Monday through Friday. While I understand students work outside of these hours, please plan ahead to give me time to respond.
 - Be sure to check the syllabus before e-mailing; questions answered in the syllabus will not be answered via e-mail.
 - Often, e-mail is best used to set-up an individual meeting. It is easier for us to understand each other in a meeting rather than via lengthy e-mail exchanges.
 - Please treat e-mails as professional correspondence. E-mails may only come from your tlu.edu e-mail address and should include a salutation (e.g., Dear Dr. O'Brochta), a clear message, and a signature with your name and the class you are enrolled in.