Pols 345: Scope and Methods in the Social Sciences
Winter 2023, 2:00PM-3:50PM Tuesday and Thursday, GTM 129

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Student Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 8AM-11AM,
                                        Tuesday and Thursday 11:50AM-1:50PM

Course Description: Lawyers need to prepare logical arguments. Diplomats must write clearly. Government employees use evidence to back up their claims. As political scientists, we will be working through the research process in order to develop your critical thinking, research, and writing skills in order for you to both understand and analyze existing scholarship and its public policy implications as well as for you to study a particular political problem and to make a policy recommendation based in sound research methods. Our goal will be to develop your skills as a political scientists so that you can easily interpret ongoing political 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 political 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: Pols 201. Pols 302 strongly recommended.

Texts: Baglione, Lisa. 2016. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*. Los Angeles: CQ Press. See our Moodle page.
- Franco, Josh, Charlotte Lee, Kau Vue, Dino Bozonelos, Masahiro Omae, and Steven Cauchon. 2020. *Introduction to Political Science Research Methods*. El Cajon, CA: California Community Colleges. Available for free at http://www.ipsrm.com.
- Wehde, Wesley, Hank Jenkins-Smith, Joseph Ripberger, Gary Copeland, Matthew Nowlin, Tyler Hughes, Aaron Fister, and Josie Davis. 2020. *Quantitative Research Methods for Political Science, Public Policy, and Public Administration for Undergraduates*. Johnson City, TN: East Tennessee State University. Available for free at https://dc.etsu.edu/etsu-oer/5/.[1]

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 on December 13 Moodle for help.

Course Objectives:
At the completion of this course, students will be able to:
1. Understand different political 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 political science concepts, theories, methods, and results in writing.

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[1] Because the latter two books are open source, there are some typos! However, these typos do not impact the meaning of the text and, after all, these books are free.

4. Identify major design, methodological, and ethical issues in political science 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 science problems.

Assignments:

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage
Social Annotations	As indicated (most classes)	12%
R Code	As indicated (6 times)	5%
Class Engagement	Each class	7%
Class Notes	January 24, February 28	10%
Qualitative Project		
Research Design and Interview Protocol	January 26	6%
Infographic	January 26	6%
Research Article		
Research Question	December 8	4%
Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography	December 20	10%
Theory	January 17	10%
Research Design	February 2	12%
Research Article	February 28	18%

Letter Grade Distribution:
A ≥ 89.50; B 79.50 – 89.49; C 69.50 – 79.49; D 60.00 – 69.49; F ≤ 59.99; Satisfactory ≥ 69.50

Course Philosophy:
This is an experiential learning course where we will work through the political science research process together. In order for you and your fellow political 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 political science course you take in college, but you can and will succeed!

I expect that we will all work to maintain a positive classroom environment. While we often use data and models to provide evidence, political 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 political 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 Tech,

please let me know. I am happy to continue to support your individual research projects and/or to work collaboratively on a research project.

Course Policies:

- General:
    - o All assignments are to be turned in on Moodle and are due at class time on the date indicated unless otherwise noted. Your community engaged project poster must be printed/hard copy as well as submitted on Moodle.
    - o You are responsible for ensuring that your assignments submit to Moodle successfully and that the file you submitted can be displayed. All file submissions except the project poster and class notes must be in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or PDF format. Files in other formats --- including Google Docs --- cannot be read by Moodle.
    - o 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 Moodle.
        - ▪ Book format: Thompson, V. Elaine. 2014. *Clinton, Louisiana*. Lafayette, LA: University of Louisiana at Lafayette Press.
        - ▪ Journal article format: Chi, Guangqing and Jamie Boydstun. 2017. "Are Gasoline Prices a Factor in Residential Relocation Decisions?" *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 37(3): 334-346.
        - ▪ In-text citation format: Professors at Tech are doing interesting research (Chi and Boydstun 2017; Thompson 2014).
    - o Plagiarism, including inappropriate attribution, is an Honor Code Violation and is grounds for sanctions, a referral to the Director of Student Conduct, and failure of the course.
        - ▪ If you are unsure if you are plagiarizing, 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 have the ability to submit assignments early on Moodle to obtain a Turnitin report. You can also use the Turnitin plugin on Google Docs to check your work.
        - ▪ Wikipedia is not an appropriate academic source.
- Student Office Hours:
    - o Student office hours are a time for you to come by to speak with me <u>without an appointment</u>. Please come by to see me early in the quarter. 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.
    - o This course requires individual consultations, and as such you must come by to meet with me during office hours. Please come by as early as you can during the quarter.
- Technology:
    - o We will be using technology every day during class. As a result, you must bring a laptop to each of our class sessions. If you will not have regular access to a laptop,

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.
- o 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.
- o Taking photos or recording audio/video of class is not permitted without the instructor's permission.
- **Attendance:**
  - o Louisiana Tech University expects students to attend all of their classes, and faculty are required to keep attendance records in all of their classes for administrative and institutional purposes. I will check attendance during class.
  - o I understand that there are reasons that you may need to be absent from class. I expect that you will be responsible in attending class as much as possible. Accordingly, **you do not need to let me know when you will be absent**. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to learn what we did from someone else in class, to review all material on Moodle, and to come speak with me during student office hours if you have questions.
  - o You will be graded on your class engagement and your class notes. Attendance directly impacts your ability to complete these assignments.
  - o Attending class is the biggest key to success in this course. **It is best to limit absences to 3 or fewer during the quarter. 6 or more absences result in automatic failure from the course.**
- **Late Work:**
  - o 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.
  - o 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:**
  - o 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.
  - o 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.
  - o I grade and return assignments promptly. You can expect feedback on your assignments shortly after you submit it to me. Though I will work quickly, I ask for your patience, as I teach hundreds of students per quarter, and providing actionable feedback takes time. Some daily or frequently occurring assignments --- including social annotations --- are graded for completion, so you will know that you received credit if you turned in a complete assignment. I will update your grades for these assignments at the end of each main unit in the course.

- o I do not give incomplete grades unless there is a documented medical crisis or documented emergency late in the quarter and you have communicated about this to me when the incident occurs.
- Checking Your Grade:
  - o You can always check your grade in the course by looking at the Gradebook found under the "Course Dashboard" on our class Moodle page.
  - o When you click on an assignment to view a grade, be sure to scroll all the way to the right to view the rubric comments and to use the "plus" button at the bottom of the rubric to view all the feedback.
  - o The course grade reflects the percentage you have earned thus far in the course (starting at 0%). You can calculate your estimated final grade using the grade estimator spreadsheet on Moodle.
- Feedback:
  - o I will ask you to provide me with frequent evaluations of the course so that I can work to improve it for you and for future students.
- Contacting Me:
  - o E-mail is the best way to contact me outside of student office hours. Please do not use Moodle 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.
  - o 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 in order to give me time to respond.
  - o Be sure to check the syllabus before e-mailing; questions answered in the syllabus will not be answered via e-mail.
  - o Often, e-mail is best used to set-up an individual meeting, either in person or virtually. It is easier for us to understand each other in a meeting rather than via lengthy e-mail exchanges.
  - o Please treat e-mails as professional correspondence. E-mails may only come from your latech.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.

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.[2]

- "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 together into a single PDF for you to annotate on Perusall.

Unit 1: Situating Yourself in Political Science Research

December 1: Introduction and What is Political Science Research?
- Goal: Introduction to the course.
- Assignments Assigned: Beginning of quarter survey.

December 5: Research Questions
- Methodology Focus: What makes for an interesting research question?
- Reading Due:
    1. Hoover Green, Amelia. 2013. "How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps."
    2. Baglione, Ch. 1 and 2.
- Assignments Due: Beginning of quarter survey.

December 8: Literature Search and Literature Reviews
- Methodology Focus: How do we find relevant scholarly sources? What purpose does previous work serve in research articles?
- Reading Due: Baglione, Ch. 3 and 4.
- Assignments Due: Research Question and paragraph.

December 13: Working with Data in R
- Methodology Focus: How are datasets created?
- Reading Due: Wehde, Ch. 4 and 5.
- Assignments Due: Research Question Peer Review. Access the handout about downloading R and RStudio on Moodle and download the software following the handout by class time. We will practice with R during class.

Unit 2: Building an Argument

December 15: Theory
- Methodology Focus: How can you construct a novel theoretical argument?
- Reading Due:
    1. Baglione, Ch. 5.
    2. Franco, Ch. 4 (Sections 4.1-4.3)

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

2. Note: Complete qualitative project proposal in class.

December 20: Available Datasets
- Methodology Focus: Finding and accessing data for your research.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography.
- Note: I promise that this class session is worth attending!

January 5: Operationalization
- Methodology Focus: What are approaches to creating new variables?
  Reading Due:
    1. Dimitrova-Grajzl, Valentina, Jonathan Eastwood, and Peter Grajzl. 2016. "The Longevity of National Identity and National Pride: Evidence from Wider Europe." *Research & Politics* 3(2): 1-9.
    2. Franco, Ch. 4, Section 4.4 and Ch. 5.
- Assignments Due: Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography Peer Review.

January 10: Qualitative Research
- Methodology Focus: How can archival data be used to test hypotheses?
- Reading Due:
    1. Franco, Ch. 7.
    2. Weiss, Robert. 1994. *Learning from Strangers*. New York: Free Press. Ch. 4.

January 12: Descriptive Statistics
- Methodology Focus: How can descriptive statistics provide answers to research questions?
- Reading 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.

January 17: Research Design
- Methodology Focus: What is the best way to test your theory?
- Reading Due:
    1. Franco, Ch. 6.
    2. Baglione, Ch. 6 and 7.
- Assignments Due: Theory.

Unit 3: Research Methods

January 19: Probability and Surveys
- Methodology Focus: How can we use probability to inform our knowledge of politics?

- Reading Due: Wehde, Ch. 7 and Ch 8.1
- Assignments Due: Theory Peer Review.

January 24: Inference
- Methodology Focus: What is the purpose of testing hypotheses?
- Reading 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.
- Assignments Due:
    o Class Notes due with entries through January 19.
    o R code for Wehde, Ch. 8.2-8.4. See description below and in the reading on Perusall.
    o Optional mid-quarter survey.
- Note: We will complete the class notes self-assessment in class.

January 26: Qualitative Project
- Methodology Focus: Sharing the importance of qualitative research.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Qualitative Project.

January 31: Association
- Methodology Focus: What are associational tests used for?
- Reading Due: Wehde, Ch. 9.
- Assignments Due: R code for Wehde, Ch. 9. See description below and in the reading on Perusall.

February 2: Results
- Methodology Focus: Turning analysis into written results.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Research Design.

February 7: Linear Regression
- Methodology Focus: How can regression support associational results?
- Reading 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:
    o Research Design Peer Review.
    o R code for Wehde, Ch. 10 and 11. See description below and in the reading on Perusall.

Unit 4: Beyond Observational Data

February 9: Experiments
- Methodology Focus: Are experiments a "gold standard" for research?
- Reading Due: Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey, and Derva Moehler. 2015. "Moderation from Bias: A Field Experiment on Partisan Media in a New Democracy." *The Journal of Politics* 77 (2): 575-587.
- Assignments Due: Upload the R code you have been working on to analyze the data for your research article.

February 14: Rational Choice and Formal Theory
- Methodology Focus: What is formal theory?
- Reading Due: O'Brochta, William, and Patrick Cunha Silva. 2021. "Signaling Democratic Progress with Electoral System Reform." *Political Research Quarterly* Online First.

February 16: Introduction, Abstract, and Conclusion
- Methodology Focus: How do you sell your research article?
- Reading Due: Baglione, Ch. 9.

February 23: Career Planning
- Methodology Focus: How do you carry your ideas and skills from this class forward?
- Reading Due: None.

Graduating Seniors: All assignments are due on February 27th by 5PM so that I can grade them in time to submit your grades on February 28th. This includes your research article, class notes, class notes self-assessment, and end-of-quarter survey.

February 28: Research Article Roundtable
- Methodology Focus: Presenting your research to scholars.
- Reading Due: None.
- Assignments Due: Research Article. Class notes.
- Note: We will complete the end-of-quarter survey in class and conduct the class journal self-assessment.

Description of Assignments:

Social Annotation (12%)

Completing and engaging with course material and other students is essential to your success in this course. We will be using Perusall (linked on Moodle) 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 Moodle and click on the link for an assigned reading. You must access Perusall through Moodle 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 form 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 two 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:

- o Complete (100%): Excellent annotations: at least five substantive annotations; material is engaged well.
- o Incomplete (0%): Unsatisfactory annotations: poor quality annotations (only short responses or not substantive responses) or fewer than five substantive annotations. Or no submission.
- o 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 (5%)

At the end of the quarter, 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 quarter. 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 Moodle. 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 on the day that the code is due to work with R where you can ask questions to me or other students.

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

Class Engagement (7%)

I hope that class time will be a productive space to discuss readings, work in groups to complete activities, teach your peers, and relate the course to your life experiences. Class engagement goes beyond simply showing up for class, though being in class is definitely an important component.

I will evaluate class engagement based on the following criteria: Listen respectfully, ask respectful questions, and actively participate. You play a critical part in maintaining an inclusive classroom climate. You must participate both during class and during the work we do outside of class (annotations, projects, et. cetera); if you feel uncomfortable participating, please reach out to me so we can figure out a way for you to be engaged.

Evaluation: The final class engagement grade will be assigned at my discretion based on a holistic evaluation of your performance. If you have concerns about your engagement, please discuss them with me during the quarter. We can work together to help you do well in this component of the course.

Class Notes (10%)

You need to know and understand all of the research design and statistical concepts in this course. This requires taking <u>detailed</u> notes during class. 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.[3] 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:
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:

December 1: 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 quarter, 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 Moodle before class.

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[3] 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.

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. My class notes are organized. Each class day is labeled with a heading, and I have used a consistent system to organize my notes.
2. My class note entries are complete. They include the main ideas from each class (including any I may have missed). I could refer back to my class notes and describe the terms, concepts, and activities that took place during class to a friend who was not there.
3. My class note entries are sufficiently detailed. 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!). While there is no set length requirement for entries, in general, each entry should be a few hundred words.
4. My class notes are my own work. Coping notes from other students without appropriate attribution is considered plagiarism.
5. If you were to evaluate your class notes on a grading scale from A to F based on how well they fulfill the above listed criteria, what grade would you assign and why?

Qualitative Project (12%)

Qualitative research is a critically important part of empirical political 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. Each group will then choose a particular research question related to that common topic, and each group member must lead at least one interview. You are welcome to go to interviews in small groups, but each group member must lead at least one interview.

This project will work as follows:
1. Class topic choice: The class will choose a topic. Each group is responsible for constructing a research question closely related to the chosen topic. The class can choose any topic of direct and significant importance to Ruston or Northern Louisiana. The topic should be specific enough to produce meaningful insights that can be communicated to local community leaders. For example, technology is not a specific topic, but the impact of city-owned broadband on political engagement might be.
2. Group assignment: Everyone in the class will divide into groups based on their interests in the topic that the class chose. We will all try to optimize group size and the cohesiveness of groups.
3. 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 of who you plan to interview (to ensure no overlap between groups).

4. Project:
    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 interviewing and why these people are the most appropriate individuals to speak to in order to answer your research question. Your group will also attach an interview protocol that lists the format for each interview, interview procedures, and interview questions. Finally, your group will attach notes from each interview. **The document should be at least 1,500 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: You 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 6% of your grade, and the infographic is worth 6%. 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

98 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Research Design			
Has an informative title	4	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	10 8	6 4	2 0
Explains interviewee selection in details	10 8	6 4	2 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	5 4	3 2	1 0
Provides background information about interviewees	10 8	6 4	2 0
Lists expected interview questions	4	2	0
Provides a short 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

63 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Informative title	4	2	0
Appropriately sized	4	2	0
Clear research question related to class topic	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes interview participants	10 8	6 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	10 8	6 4	2 0
Public policy implications are clear and meaningful	5 4	3 2	1 0
Compelling writing style	5 4	3 2	1 0
Visually appealing overall design	5 4	3 2	1 0

Research Article (54%)

If you have taken one of my courses before, you may have written a research note 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. Political 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 political 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 political 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 higher in this course.

Research Question (4%)
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 political 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 political science.

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

Research Question Grading Rubric

21 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	2	1	0
Can plausibly be tested empirically	2	1	0
Description			
States why the question is relevant and important (at least 4 sentences)	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes how the question fits into contemporary political discourse	5 4	3 2	1 0

Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography (10%)
A literature review focuses readers' attention on research that directly attempts to answer your research question. For this assignment, create an annotated bibliography by collecting at least ten scholarly sources that you cite in APSA format with a two-sentence explanation of how each source addresses your research question. Then, construct a 1,500 word literature review that contextualizes your research question within existing literature. **Literature reviews of fewer than 1,500 words not including the annotated bibliography will receive a 0.**

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

Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography Grading Rubric

122 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Source Selection			
Uses APSA citation style	10 8	6 4	2 0
Cites at least ten sources	4	2	0
Includes a range of publication years	4	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 grouped into "schools" depending on the theoretical arguments and empirical findings	10 8	6 4	2 0
Each school has a meaningful name	4	2	0
There are several sources for each school	4	2	0
Descriptions			
Each source is summarized in several sentences	10 8	6 4	2 0
Each source has a description of how you plan to use the work in your article in several sentences	10 8	6 4	2 0
Literature Review			
Has an appropriate title	4	2	0
Begins with an introduction summarizing the "schools" and distinguishing your research question from them	10 8	6 4	2 0
Does not summarize cited work	5 4	3 2	1 0
Only includes relevant sources for identifying a theoretical gap in the literature and building your theoretical argument	10 8	6 4	2 0
Each paragraph is directly related toward contextualizing and describing the importance of your research question	10 8	6 4	2 0
Your research question is clear and clearly differentiated from prior work	10 8	6 4	2 0
Minimal 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
Includes a word count (including only the literature review, not references or annotated bibliography) at the top of the first page of the article	2		0

Theory (10%)
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 all of 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 (but not the annotated bibliography). 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 receive a 0.**

<u>Evaluation</u>: Your theory will be evaluated based on the below rubric.

Theory Grading Rubric

95 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	5 4	3 2	1 0
Explicitly walks through each step of the "flow diagram" with appropriate justification	14 12	10 8 6	4 2 0
Sources are appropriate and are cited as evidence, not summarized	10 8	6 4	2 0
Addresses alternative mechanisms 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

<u>Research Design (12%)</u>
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. Political 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 of 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 receive 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

110 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 you are taking and why it is appropriate	10 8	6 4	2 0
Explains case selection in detail with strengths and weaknesses	10 8	6 4	2 0
Precisely describes data sources	10 8	6 4	2 0
Lists independent and dependent variables explicitly	4	2	0
Describes how variables measure parts of your hypothesis	5 4	3 2	1 0
Addresses validity and measurement issues with your variables	5 4	3 2	1 0
Considers and describes control variables	5 4	3 2	1 0
Discusses robustness checks or supplementary analyses	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes how well your research design can test your hypothesis, particularly causation	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 the literature review or theory) at the top of the first page of the article	2		0

Research Article (18%)

Your research article will begin with a change that lists all of 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 6,000 words not including references or the R code in the appendix. A good upper bound is 7,000 words, though there is no strict maximum length. **Research articles of fewer than 6,000 words not including references will receive 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 within the word limit 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 paper 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

259 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Change sheet is detailed	10	5	0
Revisions to Research Design	10 8	6 4	2 0
Results			
Has an informative title	4	2	0
Transitions well from the research design section	5 4	3 2	1 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	5 4	3 2	1 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	5 4	3 2	1 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	5 4	3 2	1 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	10 8	6 4	2 0
Provides sufficient evidence to test the hypothesis, given available data and time constraints	14 12	10 8 6	4 2 0
R Code			
R code is provided as an appendix	10 8	6 4	2 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)	10 8	6 4	2 0
Article Title			
Is informative about the entire research project	5 4	3 2	1 0
Is appealing and interesting	4	2	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	5 4	3 2	1 0
Follows the order of the major sections of the paper	4	2	0
Contains simple sentences and 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	10 8	6 4	2 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	5 4	3 2	1 0
Discusses the importance of the research question and its relevance given previous literature	10 8	6 4	2 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
Cohesiveness, Creativity, and Effectiveness	14 12	10 8 6	4 2 0
Includes a word count (not including the cover sheet or references) at the top of the first page of the article	2		0

University Policies and Resources:

- Coronavirus Policies:
  - This course is occurring during the coronavirus pandemic. I understand that the pandemic may impact you and your family. If coronavirus impacts you, please communicate with me as soon as possible and follow all statewide, systemwide, and university-wide coronavirus-related policies and regulations.
  - The classroom is designed to be a safe environment where everyone can learn. I ask for your help in maintaining this environment by following university guidelines.
  - Students who miss face-to-face class for COVID-19 related reasons, and have followed University protocol, will have access to course materials on Moodle and the opportunity to turn in work completed during class with no penalty. The Dean of Students office will inform me if you have followed the appropriate reporting protocols.
  - If I become ill or need to self-quarantine following potential exposure to COVID-19, I will communicate with you as quickly as possible. We will arrange to meet via Zoom or I will arrange for another faculty member to cover my class if necessary.
  - Students can access COVID-19-related information, guidelines, FAQs, and policies at Louisiana Tech's website: https://www.latech.edu/coronavirus/.
  - Students who are feeling ill with COVID-19 symptoms, have been exposed to, or have tested positive for COVID-19 should not come to class and should contact Stacy Gilbert, Dean of Student Services and Academic Support (stacyc@latech.edu). If experiencing symptoms, please contact Tech Care at 318-257-4866 or your family physician for an appointment.
  - The direct link to the reporting protocol for students exposed to, displaying symptoms of, or testing positive for COVID-19 is located at https://www.latech.edu/coronavirus/return-to-campus-plan/. Students must reach out to Stacy Gilbert, Dean of Student Services & Academic Support, at stacyc@latech.edu for help with accommodations and additional information. Accommodations may not be granted until proper University protocol has been followed. Short-term COVID-19 accommodations are not disability accommodations.
  - Failure to comply with the Safety Protocols listed in the Back to Campus Culture of Caring booklet, latech.edu/documents/2020/07/covid-return-book.pdf/, specifically states on pages 5-7 about masks and social distancing, could result in students being in violation of the Classroom Behavior Policy listed on page 123 of the Student Handbook latech.edu/documents/2018/09/student-handbook.pdf.
- Accommodations: Students needing testing or classroom accommodations based on a disability are encouraged to discuss those needs with me as soon as possible. Please plan to make your request to me at the beginning of the quarter (during the first two weeks of classes) either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Testing and Disability Services Office is needed. Disability information is confidential. Information for Testing and Disability Services may be obtained in Wyly Tower 318

- or https://www.latech.edu/current-students/student-advancement-affairs/disability-services/.
- Academic Honor Code: Students pledge the following: "Being a student of higher standards, I pledge to embody the principles of academic integrity" https://www.latech.edu/current-students/student-advancement-affairs/student-conduct-integrity/.
- Hazing: In compliance with Acts 635, 637, and 640 of the 2018 Regular Session and Act 382 of the 2019 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature and the 2019 Board of Regents Uniform Policy on Hazing, the System reaffirms its policy that any form of hazing of any student enrolled at any institution of the System is prohibited. Violations of this Policy can result in both disciplinary action imposed by the organization and/or institution as well as criminal charges.
- Emergency Notification System: All Louisiana Tech students are strongly encouraged to enroll and update their contact information in the Emergency Notification System. It takes just a few seconds to ensure you are able to receive important text and voice alerts in the event of a campus emergency. For more information on the Emergency Notification System, please visit https://www.latech.edu/current-students/student-advancement-affairs/university-police/emergency-notification-system/.
- Moodle: We will use Moodle throughout the quarter. As part of the University's Disaster Recovery Plan, all courses at Louisiana Tech will be making use of Moodle during any emergency that closes the University. It is your responsibility to monitor course announcements and assignments on Moodle during a natural disaster or other emergency event. Direct all Moodle questions/problems to the Computing Center Help Desk at https://helpdesk.latech.edu, helpdesk@latech.edu, or 318-257-5300.
- Title IX: Please note that faculty are not confidential reporters for sexual misconduct. As a faculty member, I promise to keep all discussions with students as private and confidential as legally allowed. You may make a non-confidential report of sexual misconduct directly to the Title IX Compliance Director Mortissa Harvey (mharvey@latech.edu, 318-257-5911). You may obtain confidential support from the Counseling Center (counseling@latech.edu, 318-257-2488, Keeny 310).
- Counseling Center: The Counseling Center provides a variety of services for students with personal, educational, and career concerns; these services are free and are provided by licensed professional counselors. More information may be found at https://www.latech.edu/counseling-services/.
- Writing Center: All students are encouraged to take advantage of free writing help offered by the writing center. Please go to the Writing Center! They can help you with many writing issues. Information can be found at https://www.latech.edu/current-students/barc/writing-center/
- Campus Food Pantry: All students welcome Monday to Thursday 12PM-3PM. https://www.latech.edu/food-pantry
- Graduation: All degree candidates must register for graduation early in the quarter. More information can be found at https://www.latech.edu/current-students/registrar-office/graduation/. If you are graduating this quarter, see the topics and readings for when all remaining assignments in the course are due.