



POLS 2010: SCOPE & METHODS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
COURSE SYLLABUS – FALL 2018

When: Monday / Wednesday / Friday (2:00PM – 2:50PM)
Where: 104 Boggs Center

**CONTACT
INFORMATION**

Professor: Scott N. Nolan (snolan4@tulane.edu)
Prof. Office: 119 Norman Mayer Building
Prof. Office Hours: Mon. / Wed. / Fri. (11:00AM – 2:00PM) & Appt.

Teaching Assistant: Jenaro A. Abraham (jabraha3@tulane.edu)
TA Office: 318 Norman Mayer Building
TA Office Hours: Mon. & Appt. (12:00PM – 2:00PM)

**COURSE
DESCRIPTION**

This course is an introduction to research in political science. Its goal is to familiarize you with the scientific study of politics. We will apply a scientific approach to questions about political phenomena, instead of the more familiar approaches taken by politicians, interest groups, and popular media. We will learn how to ask empirical questions about politics, how to answer these questions scientifically using the appropriate types of evidence, and how to clearly convey our arguments to others. The course topics will include the logic of the scientific method, the measurement of political concepts, research design and methods of data collection, statistical techniques for analyzing data, and various quantitative and qualitative practices in the field of political science. At the end of the course, you should be comfortable reading and critiquing arguments about real world political problems. Learning to think scientifically in this manner is a skill that you will find useful in other political science courses and in your career (and life!). No background in statistics or mathematics beyond high school algebra is assumed. There are no prerequisites other than a desire to think about politics in a systematic and critical fashion.

**LEARNING
OUTCOMES**

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and explain different subfields in political science, dominant research designs used in the field, and diverse methods of inquiry.
- Compare the merits and drawbacks of different evaluative approaches to political science and make informed choices about how to best pursue scholarly research in topics of interest to them.
- Synthesize a literature review, hypothesis, argument, and research methods in a semester-long research design project.
- Apply critical perspectives to methods used in various political science papers discussed in class.
- Identify and apply norms of ethical research, including the use of humans as research subjects.

OBJECTIVES To achieve the goals listed above by attending lectures, participating in classroom discussions, and the evaluation of student assignments including taking quizzes, completing homework assignments, writing a research paper, and taking a comprehensive final exam.

GENERAL NOTES This syllabus is the first place you should look if you have questions about your responsibilities or the structure of this course. If you do not find the information that you are looking for in this syllabus, please email me with any and all questions (snolan4@tulane.edu).

Information contained in the syllabus, especially regarding scheduling, is subject to change at my discretion during the semester. I will announce, in advance, any changes that are made via e-mail and/or announcements on the course website.

The best way to ensure that you are aware of any changes is to check your Tulane e-mail and course website regularly. Students are required to check their Tulane e-mail on a regular basis, as I may distribute important course information by e-mail and/or through the course website.

- **Your first [non-graded] assignment will be agreeing that you have read this syllabus in its entirety and understand its terms. If you do not complete the Syllabus Assignment as soon as you begin the course, then I will not grade your subsequent coursework.**

TEACHING ASSISTANT The TA is the point person for this course. If you have questions or concerns about course material, class absences, your performance, or any other class-related issue, you should first go to the TA. In most cases, they will be able to help you with any issue that arises, particularly as it relates to class material and performance. You can go to Prof. Nolan if you are unable to resolve the issue with the TA. If you go to Prof. Nolan first, you will be asked to go back to the TA.

ACCESS TO PROFESSOR I am normally available to students Monday – Friday, 9:00am-5:00pm, and I generally respond to e-mails from students within one (1) business day. If you do not receive a reply within three (3) business days, please send me an e-mail reminder. I sometimes respond to e-mails from students during evenings and weekends, and/or from my cell phone, but I do not always do so. Keep this in mind, and don't wait until the last minute if you have a question or need help.

PARENTS AND PEERS Due to privacy laws, I do not take questions from, or take meetings with, any student's parent(s). Please do not have parents, significant others, classmates, friends, etc. contact me on your behalf; the sole exception is if you have been injured, hospitalized, or are otherwise physically unable to contact me – and I will forward them to university administration for help.

**STUDENT
ACCESSIBILITY**

If you have any kind of special circumstances, such as a disability, illness or handicap, or if you are involved with a university activity that requires you to miss class, then let me know as soon as possible. This information is confidential. All students attending Tulane University with documented disabilities are eligible and encouraged to apply for services with the Goldman Center for Student Accessibility (GCSA). Students needing accommodations must provide me with a Course Accommodation Form and if applicable, an Exam Request Form (“blue sheet”) in order to schedule an exam to be taken at GCSA. Accommodations involving exams must be requested to me at least four days before a test or seven days before a final exam. Any student receiving an exam-related accommodation should plan to take the exam at GCSA. Please alert me to your request as soon as possible because accommodations are not made retroactively. See further: <https://accessibility.tulane.edu/>

**ACADEMIC
INTEGRITY**

Academic honesty is expected of all students at Tulane. Your responsibilities as a Tulane student include being familiar with the honor code and the plagiarism policy of the university. See further: <http://tulane.edu/college/code.cfm>

PLAGIARISM

Cases of cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Honor Board, and may result in a failing grade for the class, academic probation, or expulsion. Ignorance is not a valid excuse. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following actions:

- presenting another’s work as if it were one’s own;
- failing to acknowledge or document a source even if the action is unintended (i.e. plagiarism) (this includes copying & pasting material from the internet);
- giving or receiving, or attempting to give or receive, unauthorized assistance or information in an assignment or examination;
- submitting the same assignment in two or more courses without prior permission of the respective instructors;
- having another person write a paper or sit for an examination (including using online paper-mills); and/or
- using tests or papers from students in prior semesters.

**CLASSROOM
ETIQUETTE**

Many discussions in this course will focus on how politics works in the United States. I will at times ask students for their opinions on various controversial social, political, and legal topics. As in political systems, classrooms work best when people participate. You are encouraged to express your thoughts, but you are expected to do so in a thoughtful and respectful manner. The political opinions of your classmates are based on their unique experiences, personalities, and backgrounds. Be mindful of your words. Any student who is exceedingly disruptive or disrespectful towards the instructor, guests, and/or other students may be asked to leave the classroom or withdraw from the course altogether, at my discretion.

USE OF ELECTRONICS

During weeks 1-4 and 10-15 you may take notes with pen, paper, notebook, and/or on a laptop. Note-taking on portable electronics and/or laptops is allowed, but they tend to distract you and your classmates. People abusing electronics may lose those privileges at my discretion. No photos, audio, or video recordings of any kind are allowed without my written consent. Please email me if you want to record my lectures for your personal use.

You are required to bring your laptop (with SPSS installed) to every class during weeks 5-9. When class starts you should have your laptop on, SPSS opened, and the day's dataset (displayed on the projector) open.

As a courtesy to me and your classmates, please silence all electronics and do not text or take or make calls in class. If you absolutely must take a call, then quietly excuse yourself into the hall. Use good judgment.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments will be submitted on Canvas or via hard copy. It is your responsibility to ensure you have internet access, access to your Tulane email account, and the course Canvas page for the duration of the course. I recommend that you access the course Canvas site in an environment where internet service interruptions are at a minimum. "My internet was down" is never a valid reason for missing an assignment or deadline. The sole exception to this rule will be if natural events (like hurricanes) suspend access for all of us.

If I ask for an assignment in an electronic format, then you must use either Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). Do not upload Mac "Pages" files because Canvas cannot read them. Similarly, please include your name, the course number, and title of the assignment at the top of the first page – this will help keep things organized and get you credit.

If you have technical issues with Canvas, email, attachments, etc., then please let me know as soon as possible. Please note that the university Computer Help Desk is the first place you should go with technical questions since they are the experts.

- **For all written work, use one inch (1") margins; Calibri, Arial, or Times New Roman 12-point font; double-spaced lines; numbered pages; and fully-justified margins. (I deduct points for these issues.)**

GRADING SCALE

Your final grade is assigned as follows:

100-94=A; 93-90=A-; 89-87=B+; 86-84=B; 83-80=B-; 79-77=C+; 76-74=C; 73-70=C-; 69-67=D+; 66-64=D-; 63-60=D-; and 59-0=F

(Examples: 93.49 = A-; 93.50 = A; 89.49 = B+; 89.50 = A-)

GRADING SYSTEM

Your final grade in this course is computed as follows:

Attendance and Participation (15% of Final Grade)

You will sign a class roster that I pass around every class. You are given three (3) unexcused absences per semester, after which there is a penalty. After 4 missed classes, your final grade will go down 2%. After 5 classes, down 5%. After 6 classes, down 10%. After 7 classes, down 15%. After 8 classes, down 20%. At 9 missed classes, you fail the course. **Excused Absences** require sending the TA a note from a nurse, doctor, clinic, or hospital, or a schedule / itinerary from a campus group's faculty advisor or coach. Please do not email the TA regarding your attendance without documentation attached. If you have a family/personal emergency, then contact Student Affairs, they will email me, and I will tell the TA.

Quizzes (10% of Final Grade; 4 Quizzes x 2.5% Each)

You will take four (4) reading comprehension quizzes in the first portion of the course. They contain a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and/or short answer questions derived from the assigned reading for that specific day or prior week. These quizzes are taken on Canvas and should be taken after you have finished the assigned reading(s) for the week.

Homework (25% of Final Grade; 5 Assignments x 5% Each)

Five (5) homework assignments will be posted on Canvas and a printed copy will be handed out in class. Type up your answers and turn in your homework on Canvas by Sunday per the reading schedule below. No late homework will be accepted without appropriate documentation provided to the TA, Student Affairs and/or the Goldman Center.

Quantitative Research Design/Paper (40% of Final Grade)

You will write a paper approximately twenty (20) pages in length, not including the cover page and reference pages. A rubric will be distributed later in the semester. The paper is due in several parts, on Canvas, over several weeks, per the schedule below. The annotated bibliography is worth 5% of the final grade, the literature review and research design are worth 5% of the final grade, the expected results section is worth 5% of the final grade, and the complete paper is worth 25% of the final grade. If the final paper is late, the penalty is one letter grade per day late.

Final Exam (10% of Final Grade)

A short comprehensive final exam will be given during the final exam period. The exam will contain a combination of true/false, multiple choice, and/or short answer/essay questions drawn from the material covered in class during the science, statistics software, and paper writing portions of course. No makeup exams are allowed without appropriate documentation provided to the TA, Student Affairs and/or the Goldman Center.

TEXTBOOKS

There is a **bundle** of required textbooks and software available for purchase at the campus bookstore, containing:

1. Philip H. Pollock III. 2016. **The Essentials of Political Analysis. Fifth Edition.** Sage / CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1506305837
2. Philip H. Pollock III. 2016. **An IBM SPSS Companion to Political Analysis. Fifth Edition.** Sage / CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1506305790
3. **IBM's SPSS 23.0 Software (Student Version) on a USB Stick**

There is another **unbundled** required textbook, also at the bookstore:

4. Baglione, Lisa. 2016. **Writing a Research Paper in Political Science. Third Edition.** Sage / CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1483376165

Any additional required reading materials will be distributed in class, via e-mail and/or the Canvas page.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As such, Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination including sexual and gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence like sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or is experiencing these types of behaviors, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available: you can learn more at titleix.tulane.edu. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either "Confidential" or "Private" as explained in the chart below. Please know that if you choose to confide in me I am mandated by the university to report to the Title IX Coordinator, as Tulane and I want to be sure you are connected with all the support the university can offer. You do not need to respond to outreach from the university if you do not want. You can also make a report yourself, including an anonymous report, through the form at tulane.edu/concerns.

- **Strictly Confidential**
Student Health Center | 504-865-5255
Counseling & Psychological Services | 504-314-2277
Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education | 504-654-9543
- **Mostly Confidential**
Case Management & Victim Support Services | 504-314-2160
Tulane University Police (TUPD) | 504-865-5911
Title IX Coordinator | 504-314-2160

| WEEK / DATES | LECTURE TOPIC | READ <u>BEFORE</u> CLASS |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| The Science Portion of the Course | | |
| Wk. 1: 08-27-18 | Syllabus & Course Overview | Lecture Only |
| Wk. 1: 08-29-18 | Measurement, Reliability, & Validity | <i>Pollock</i> : Intro & Chapter 1 |
| Wk. 1: 08-31-18 | Types of Variables | <i>Pollock</i> : Chapter 2 |
| Wk. 1: 09-02-18 | Reading Comp. Quiz # 1 Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Labor Day / Holiday | | |
| Wk. 2: 09-03-18 | Labor Day / Holiday | No Reading |
| Wk. 2: 09-05-18 | Operationalization of Variables | <i>Pollock</i> : Chapter 2 |
| Wk. 2: 09-07-18 | From Theories to Hypotheses | <i>Pollock</i> : Chapter 3 |
| Wk. 2: 09-09-18 | Reading Comp. Quiz # 2 Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Wk. 3: 09-10-18 | Experimental Designs & Control | <i>Pollock</i> : Chapter 4 |
| Wk. 3: 09-12-18 | Crosstabs & Controlled Comparisons | <i>Pollock</i> : Chapter 5 |
| Wk. 3: 09-14-18 | Sampling, Errors, & Distributions | <i>Pollock</i> : Chapter 6 |
| Wk. 3: 09-16-18 | Reading Comp. Quiz # 3 Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Wk. 4: 09-17-18 | Significance & Measuring Association | <i>Pollock</i> : Chapter 7 |
| Wk. 4: 09-19-18 | Yom Kippur / Holiday | No Reading |
| Wk. 4: 09-21-18 | Linear & Logit Regressions | <i>Pollock</i> : Chapter 8 & 9 |
| Wk. 4: 09-23-18 | Reading Comp. Quiz # 4 Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| The SPSS / Statistics Software Portion of the Course | | |
| Wk. 5: 09-24-18 | SPSS: Using Datasets | <i>Workbook</i> : Chapter 1: #7-15 |
| Wk. 5: 09-26-18 | SPSS: Descriptive Statistics | <i>Workbook</i> : Chapter 2: #17-37 |
| Wk. 5: 09-28-18 | SPSS: Graphing Descriptive Data | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 5: 09-30-18 | Homework #1 Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Wk. 6: 10-01-18 | SPSS: Transforming Variables | <i>Workbook</i> : Chapter 3: #39-57 |
| Wk. 6: 10-03-18 | SPSS: Using Crosstabs & Means | <i>Workbook</i> : Chapter 4: #59-88 |
| Wk. 6: 10-05-18 | SPSS: Graphing Relationships in Data | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 6: 10-07-18 | Homework #2 Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Wk. 7: 10-08-18 | SPSS: One-Sample T-Tests | <i>Workbook</i> : Chapter 6: 117-123 |
| Wk. 7: 10-10-18 | SPSS: Independent Sample T-Tests | <i>Workbook</i> : Chapter 6: 123-130 |
| Wk. 7: 10-12-18 | Fall Break / Holiday | No Reading |
| Wk. 7: 10-14-18 | Homework #3 Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Wk. 8: 10-15-18 | SPSS: Primer on Linear Regression I | <i>Workbook</i> : Chapter 8: 149-158 |
| Wk. 8: 10-17-18 | SPSS: Primer on Linear Regression II | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 8: 10-19-18 | Interpreting Linear Results | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 8: 10-21-18 | Homework #4 Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |

| | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Wk. 9: 10-22-18 | SPSS: Primer on Logit Regression I | <i>Workbook</i> : Chapter 9: 187-210 |
| Wk. 9: 10-24-18 | SPSS: Primer on Logit Regression II | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 9: 10-26-18 | Interpreting Logit Results | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 9: 10-28-18 | Homework #5 Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| The Research Paper Portion of the Course | | |
| Wk. 10: 10-29-18 | Writing an Empirical Research Paper | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 1: #1-12 |
| Wk. 10: 10-31-18 | Finding a Broad Topic / Puzzle | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 2: #15-26 |
| Wk. 10: 11-02-18 | Finding a Specific Question | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 2: #26-38 |
| Wk. 11: 11-05-18 | Qualitative vs. Quantitative Writing | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 8: #155-171 |
| Wk. 11: 11-07-18 | Doing Research & Finding Sources | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 3: #41-55 |
| Wk. 11: 11-09-18 | Writing an Annotated Bibliography | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 3: #55-69 |
| Wk. 11: 11-11-18 | Annotated Bibliography Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Wk. 12: 11-12-18 | Writing a (Short!) Literature Review | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 4: #75-88 |
| Wk. 12: 11-14-18 | Finetuning a Literature Review | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 12: 11-16-18 | The Thesis, Models, & Hypotheses | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 5: #93-104 |
| Wk. 12: 11-18-18 | Lit. Review & Research Design Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Wk. 13: 11-19-18 | Writing Your Research Design | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 7: #121-148 |
| Wk. 13: 11-21-18 | Thanksgiving / Holiday | No Reading |
| Wk. 13: 11-23-18 | Thanksgiving / Holiday | No Reading |
| Wk. 14: 11-26-18 | Results Write-up: Model-Stage 1 | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 14: 11-28-18 | Results Write-up: Model-Stage 2 | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 14: 11-30-18 | Results Write-up: Comparing Models | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 14: 12-02-18 | Design and Results Write-Up Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Wk. 15: 12-03-18 | Writing Substantive Results | Download Slides & Canvas § |
| Wk. 15: 12-05-18 | Writing the Intro & Conclusion | <i>Baglione</i> : Chapter 9: #175-188 |
| Wk. 15: 12-07-18 | Tiding Up, Formatting, Cover, Table of Contents & Vita | |
| Wk. 15: 12-09-18 | Final Draft of Paper Due on Canvas by Sunday at 11:59pm | |
| Wk. 16: 12-10-18 | Comprehensive Final Exam 8:00AM-12:00PM | |

Canvas § = Check Canvas for Supplemental Readings in “Files” Section