

Course Syllabus

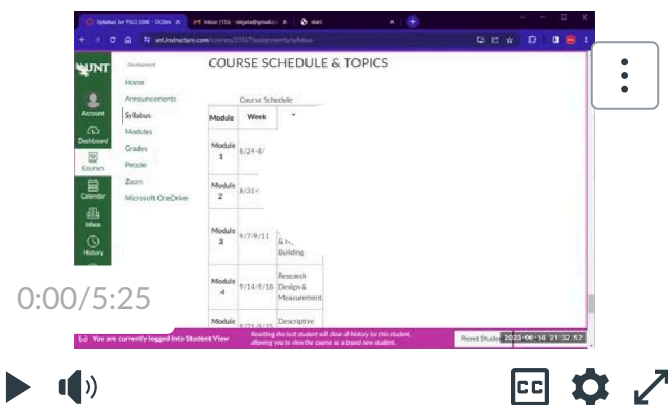
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PSCI 3300

Political Science Research Methods

- Instructor: Dr. Ko Maeda (pronounced: koh mah-eh-dah)
- Teaching Assistant: Ms. Madeline Silver

When you want to contact the instructor, please **use the Canvas Inbox** instead of UNT email, and add **both the instructor and the TA** as the recipients so that either of us can respond quickly.



COMMUNICATION EXPECTATION

The primary tool of communication is Canvas via the messaging and Announcement tools. You are required to check Canvas announcements regularly so you will receive all course-related messages.

If you have course-related questions, before contacting the instructor, please review the syllabus and the course's Canvas page---it is very likely that you can find an answer to your question(s) by examining the course materials.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This online course will introduce students to the methods of social science inquiry, focusing on building theoretical arguments, organizing and analyzing data, and interpreting and evaluating research hypotheses developed in the social sciences. This course uses a concept-driven approach to learning introductory statistics. Although you will need to learn formulas and know how to compute various statistics by hand, the vast majority of what you will do in this course will involve statistical software, real data, and actual data analysis. By the end of the term, you should be able to construct a theoretical argument, have a firm grounding in the rudiments of statistical theories and concepts, be able to competently utilize Excel to analyze real world data as well as interpret and communicate research findings.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is an online course. There are total of 10 modules you must complete over the course of the term. Each module is associated with one week. In other words, you are required to complete one module per week. Each week, you will need to complete the work by 11:59pm on Friday. Then, the next week's materials will be unlocked in early Saturday morning.

Some students have asked, "Can you open up the modules early so that I can finish the whole course in less than 10 weeks?" The answer is no. There will be discussion boards in which you will engage in discussions with your classmates. Although this is an online course, you will not study alone! The whole class will work on the same materials and move together.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Develop a theoretical argument about a causal relationship
- Formulate research questions and hypotheses
- Distinguish among different types of social science methodologies
- Describe the logic of the experimental method
- Compile data to conduct empirical analysis of your research question
- Interpret basic descriptive statistical results
- Employ basic statistical methods to test hypotheses about politics
- Explain and apply multivariate OLS regression
- Interpret the results of the empirical analysis
- Draw conclusions about your hypotheses

REQUIRED MATERIAL

There are two required reading materials. They are both open source, which means FREE! In each of the modules posted on Canvas, I will clarify the specific chapter (via a hyperlink) of each open source text you are required to read.

Jenkins-Smith, Hank, et al. 2017. ***Quantitative Research Methods for Political Science, Public Policy and Public Administration*** [↗\(https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/536\)](https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/536). (PDF) Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma. (Licensed under **CC BY 4.0**. [↗\(https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0).)

Trochim, William. 2020. ***Research Methods Knowledge Base*** [↗\(https://conjointly.com/kb\)](https://conjointly.com/kb). (HTML).

TEACHING APPROACH

My approach to this online course is to provide you with a variety of tools to develop skills to conduct your own research. These tools include the required readings and lectures. Additionally, I seek to promote peer learning by incorporating required discussions among students about the materials. Further, the course will assist you

in developing key marketable skills--digital skills and written communication. The course requires you to learn basic data management and statistical tools. It is your responsibility to do the work: read the required material, view each lecture, engage with your classmates about the materials, and complete assignments. It is my responsibility to provide the tools necessary for students to excel in learning how to conduct their own research. I will achieve this by providing lectures that complement and enhance the required readings, providing lectures that focus on the practical application of statistical tools using Excel, participating in class discussions, and offering prompt feedback on assigned materials.

Technical Requirements & Skills

Minimum Technology Requirements

- Computer
- Reliable internet access
- Speakers
- Microsoft Office Suite

Computer Skills & Digital Literacy

- Using Canvas
- Using email with attachments
- Downloading and installing software
- Using Excel
- Using presentation and graphics programs

Rules of Engagement

Treat your instructor and classmates with respect in email or any other communication.

- Always use your professors' proper title: Dr. or Prof.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Remember that all communication should have correct spelling and grammar (this includes discussion boards).
- Avoid slang terms such as "wassup?" and texting abbreviations such as "u" instead of "you."
- Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or sound offensive.
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and other's).
- Do not send confidential information via e-mail.

SUCCESS IN AN ONLINE COURSE

While the online classroom shares many similarities with the face-to-face classroom, success in online education requires certain skills and expectations that students may not be aware of. Here is a link to a document with tips on ``[How to Succeed as an Online Student](https://clear.unt.edu/teaching-resources/online-teaching/succeed-online)'' [↗](https://clear.unt.edu/teaching-resources/online-teaching/succeed-online) (https://clear.unt.edu/teaching-resources/online-teaching/succeed-online)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Two Exams (worth 40% of the course grade): There will be two exams in this class, and each is worth 20% of your grade.

Quizzes/Problem sets (worth 20%--but your lowest will be dropped): At the end of each module, you will be required to complete a quiz and/or problem set. The quizzes will be multiple choice and true/false. The problem sets will be a mix of analytical and computer-based problems. The goal of the problem sets is to help you learn the material. **You should contact the [Help Desk](https://techsupport.unt.edu/students.html) [↗](https://techsupport.unt.edu/students.html) (https://techsupport.unt.edu/students.html) first if you are having computer or technology issues.** Helpdesk Phone: (940) 565-2324.

Discussion Boards (worth 10%--but your lowest will be dropped): Most modules contain a discussion board. Your posts and responses to others are considered your class participation and represent a unique opportunity for you to exchange views with your classmates, share ideas, and ensure your understanding of the course material.

You will be expected to make an initial posting by 11:59 pm Wednesday of each week and to respond to at least two other students by 11:59 pm Friday.

Each discussion board assignment will be graded on a 4-point scale--2 from your initial post and 2 from your responses.

Three Writing Assignments (worth 30%; 10% each): There are three assignments. Each must be typed and double-spaced. You must cite all work that is not your own. You must carefully proof-read each writing assignment.

Late submission Policy: Generally, late submissions are accepted for 7 calendar days, but you will lose 10% each day. Submissions will not be accepted after 7 days except in extremely unusual circumstances. Late submission are not accepted for the assignments of Module 10 since students' grades must be finalized.

COURSE GRADING SCALE

- A: 90-100%
- B: 80-89%
- C: 70-79%
- D: 60-69%

- F: 59 and below

Note that 89.5 will be rounded up to 90, but 89.4999 is still a B, and the same rounding rule applies to other letter grades (79.4999 and etc).

Extra Credit: No additional extra credit assignments will be offered to individual students. Please don't even ask.

COURSE EVALUATION

Student Perceptions of Teaching (SPOT) is the student evaluation system for UNT and allows students the ability to confidentially provide constructive feedback to their instructor and department to improve the quality of student experiences in the course. The link to participate in SPOT will be available later in the term.

COURSE POLICIES

Module Structure

The course is structured such that there are 10 modules. Each module represents a week. Each module contains information on four key components on the student learning objective, required materials, activity discussion and the module quiz or problem set.

Assignment Policy

Each module includes four key items:

1. Student learning objectives
2. Required materials
3. Activity discussion
4. The module quiz and/or problem set

You are required to visit each section for each module in order to complete the module.

The module quizzes are located, as noted above, in each module. The quizzes will be automatically graded in Canvas. Modules including a problem set contain a section labeled "Module X: Problem Set." You are to enter the responses in the Canvas problem set response located in each module. Some of the responses to the problem sets will be automatically graded in Canvas, while others will require "hand grading." There will be a quiz and/or a problem set required for each module. The module quiz or problem set is due by 11:59pm on Friday.

UNT is committed to providing a reliable online course system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will extend the time windows and provide an appropriate

accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and contact the UNT Student Help Desk: helpdesk@unt.edu or 940.565.2324 and obtain a ticket number. The instructor and the UNT Student Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Attendance Policy

This is an asynchronous online course. You are required to complete each activity as scheduled.

Class Participation

This online course requires participation in the form of discussion as part of each module. You are required to address each discussion assignment in a thoughtful and informed manner. You are required to respect the instructor, TA, and your classmates in these online discussions. You will be graded in this portion of the class based on the degree to which you actually engage the discussion.

Syllabus Change Policy

I reserve the authority to change requirements by providing you with a 48 hour notice in class and on Canvas. You are responsible for any changes that occur during the semester.

University of North Texas Policies

For UNT policies, review the Start Here module, as well as those listed below.

Student Verification

UNT takes measures to protect the integrity of educational credentials awarded to students enrolled in distance education courses by verifying student identity, protecting student privacy, and notifying students of any special meeting times/locations or additional charges associated with student identity verification in distance education courses.

See [UNT Policy 07-002 Student Identity Verification, Privacy, and Notification and Distance Education Courses](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002). [↪ \(https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002\)](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-002)












COURSE SCHEDULE & TOPICS












Schedule











Module	Week	Topic
Module 1	5/18-5/22	Scientific Study of Politics
Module 2	5/25-5/29	Theory Building

Module 3	6/1-6/5	Causal Relationships & Hypothesis Building
	6/5	Writing Assignment #1 DUE
Module 4	6/8-6/12	Research Design & Measurement
Module 5	6/15-6/19	Descriptive Statistics I
Module 6	6/22-6/26	Descriptive Statistics II
	6/26	Exam 1 (80 minutes)
Module 7	6/29-7/3	Bivariate Hypothesis Testing I
	7/3	Writing Assignment #2 DUE
Module 8	7/6-7/10	Bivariate Hypothesis Testing II
Module 9	7/13-7/17	Multiple Regression
	7/17	Writing Assignment #3 DUE
Module 10	7/20-7/24	Multivariate Hypothesis Testing
	7/24	Exam 2 (80 minutes)

Course Summary:

Date	Details	Due
Wed May 20, 2026	 Meet Your Instructor & Introduce Yourself! Reply to Topic (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017516)	due by 11:59pm
	 Module 1: Discussion Reply to Topic (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017519)	due by 11:59pm
Fri May 22, 2026	 Meet Your Instructor & Introduce Yourself! Required Replies (2) (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017516)	due by 11:59pm
	 Module 1: Discussion Required Replies (2) (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017519)	due by 11:59pm
	 Module 1: Quiz (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017493)	due by 11:59pm
Wed May 27, 2026	 Module 2: Discussion Reply to Topic (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017513)	due by 11:59pm
	 Module 2: Quiz (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017492)	due by 11:59pm
Fri May 29, 2026	 Module 2: Discussion Required Replies (2) (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017513)	due by 11:59pm
	 Module 3: Discussion Reply to Topic (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017510)	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jun 3, 2026		
Fri Jun 5, 2026	 Module 3: Discussion Required Replies (2) (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017510)	due by 11:59pm
	 Module 3: Quiz (https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017491)	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
Wed Jun 10, 2026	 Writing Assignment #1 https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017524	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jun 10, 2026	 Module 4: Discussion Reply to Topic https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017507	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jun 12, 2026	 Module 4: Discussion Required Replies (2) https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017507	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jun 17, 2026	 Module 4: Quiz https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017488	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jun 17, 2026	 Module 5: Discussion Reply to Topic https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017504	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jun 19, 2026	 Module 5: Discussion Required Replies (2) https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017504	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jun 19, 2026	 Module 5: Quiz https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017486	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jun 26, 2026	 Exam 1 https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017489	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jun 26, 2026	 Module 6: Problem Set 1 https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017497	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jul 1, 2026	 Module 6: Quiz (Review the 3rd video of Module 5 before you begin!) https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017523	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jul 1, 2026	 Module 7: Discussion Reply to Topic https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017501	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jul 3, 2026	 Module 7: Discussion Required Replies (2) https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017501	due by 11:59pm

Date	Details	Due
	 Module 7: Quiz https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017487	due by 11:59pm
	 Writing Assignment #2 https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017525	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jul 10, 2026	 Module 8: Problem Set 2 https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017496	due by 11:59pm
Wed Jul 15, 2026	 Module 9: Discussion Reply to Topic https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017498	due by 11:59pm
	 Module 9: Discussion Required Replies (2) https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017498	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jul 17, 2026	 Module 9: Quiz https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017490	due by 11:59pm
	 Writing Assignment #3 https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017526	due by 11:59pm
	 Exam 2 https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017495	due by 11:59pm
Fri Jul 24, 2026	 Module 10: Problem Set 3 https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017494	due by 11:59pm
	 Module 10: Quiz (Review the Module 9 videos before you begin!) https://unt.instructure.com/courses/144865/assignments/3017522	due by 11:59pm