

PSCI 3300.003: Political Science Research Methods

Spring 2026

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Office: 152 Wooten Hall
Office Hours: Tue/Thurs, 12:30-2pm

Class Time and Location: Tue/Thurs, 11:00-12:20pm at Matt 109

1. Course Description

Political scientists are interested in research puzzles. Discovering a good puzzle and designing ways to explore it requires scientific knowledge and expertise. This course aims to equip students with the tools to conduct scientific research in political science. We will begin the class by explaining the logic of scientific inquiry and the basis of research design, and then dive into the quantitative methods that political scientists often use in conducting their research. You will learn how to work with large datasets, describe data effectively, and conduct statistical tests to analyze data. You will also learn SPSS, a widely used statistics software package. After this class, you are expected to know how to produce empirical research, how to conduct data analysis, and how to read published political science research.

2. Pre-requisites

None

3. Course Objectives

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

- Formulate research questions and hypotheses
- Design a research project involving data analysis
- Interpret descriptive statistical results
- Employ basic statistical methods to test hypotheses about politics

This course fulfills the CLASS requirement for Communication and Digital Skills. At the end of this course, students should be able to demonstrate effective communication using a digital technological platform and do at least two of the following: 1. Demonstrate the ability to communicate a central idea effectively using appropriate organization/structure. 2. Demonstrate the ability to develop content at an advanced level using a combination of effective supporting materials. 3. Demonstrate the ability to engage in verbal and nonverbal communication behaviors that are appropriate for the audience and adhere to the conventions of the medium selected (written, oral, or visual).

4. Required Textbook

Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3rd ed. Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9781108131704

5. Requirements & Evaluation

3 exams	40%
4 data analysis assignments	40%
In-class exercises	20%

- Exams There will be **three (non-cumulative) in-class exams during the semester**. Each exam was composed with multiple-choice questions and short answers. The lowest one will be dropped, and each of your two best exams will count as 20% of the total grade. Since you have one exam to drop, **makeup or rescheduled exams will not be given except in most extreme and unusual circumstances** (not for, say, illness or other issues that have been reported to the Dean of Students). The instructor has the discretion to decide whether and when a makeup exam will be granted. Please inform me of this as soon as you can, and not the day the exam is due or afterwards. If you arrive significantly late for an exam, your exam score will be penalized.
- Data analysis assignments There will be **four data analysis assignments**, and each will count as 10% of the total grade. The details and requirements of the assignment will be available on Canvas. Late submissions will be penalized. Submissions will be closed seven calendar days after the due date. Technical malfunctions (e.g., computer viruses, disk crashes) do not necessarily constitute acceptable excuses for lateness. Always be sure to save your work, make backups, and leave yourself enough time to deal with unexpected problems. **Make sure to install the software into your laptop before the first assignment (Feb 17)**. If you do not have a laptop, you can borrow one from the library or use the computer in GAB330.
- SPSS or PSPP software Data analysis assignments will require the use of SPSS statistical software, which is installed in many UNT computer labs, such as GAB330. You can find the SPSS installation on **Canvas** under “**Files**.” There is also a free statistical package called PSPP, which is very similar to SPSS and can be used for all homework assignments. This can be downloaded freely for Mac, Windows, and Linux platforms. If you are using this on a Mac, please follow the instructions in the support note from Apple that PSPP links to (<https://support.apple.com/en-us/102445>), which explains how to install software not downloaded from Apple's official App Store. You can also find the PSPP installation instructions on **Canvas** under “**Files**.”
- In-class exercises There will be an undetermined number of unannounced in-class exercises during the semester. All exercises are composed of short quizzes or calculations. Three lowest exercises will be dropped; there will be **no makeup exercises**. You will need a calculator to complete some of the exercises, so it is recommended that you **bring a calculator** (or a phone with a calculator function) to every class meeting. During the exercises, you can check your class notes.
- Extra credits No additional extra credit assignments will be offered to individual students.

Grading Scale	A	90-100%
	B	80-89%
	C	70-79%
	D	60-69%
	F	0-59%

* 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, etc).

6. Rules and Advice

- This syllabus is not a contract, I reserve the right to alter both dates and assignments by providing you with reasonable notice (typically 48 hours) of changes in class and on Canvas.
- Course information will be disseminated through the class webpage (canvas.unt.edu). You are responsible for checking the class webpage on a regular basis for class updates, information, and announcements.
- Generally, I will respond to emails sent through my university email address within 24 hours of receiving them during weekdays. However, it may take me up to 48 hours during weekends.
- It is okay to discuss assignments with others, but all final work must be your own.
- Although this course is not graded on attendance, beware of unannounced in-class exercises. Seeing and hearing the course material in person, being part of the class discussion of this material, and participating in the review of recent topics that begin each class period makes a huge difference in learning and in grades.
- If you miss a class for whatever reason, be sure to obtain the notes from a classmate.
- You have one exam to drop. But it is advised to save it for an emergent event.
- Disruptive behavior is not tolerated. All students must treat the instructor, the other students, and the classroom setting with respect. Phones must be muted during the class. Following departmental policy, any student engaging in unacceptable behavior may be directed to leave the classroom. Additionally, the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated UNT's Code of Student Conduct (which may be found at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/dean-of-students/>).
- All work turned in for this course must be your own original work. Using material written by generative AI/chatbots like ChatGPT and presenting it as your own is considered a violation of academic integrity. The evidence of plagiarism or any unethical practice will result in getting an F, and you will be reported to the university.

7. Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 13, 15):

Tue Course introduction
Thur The scientific study of politics (Read: KW Ch1)

Week 2 (Jan 20, 22):

Tue Causal inference (Read: KW Ch3)
Thur Experimental research (Read: KW Ch4.1 & Ch4.2)

Week 3 (Jan 27, 29):

Tue Observational research (Read: KW Ch4.3)
Thur Structure of a research paper

Week 4 (Feb 3, 5):

Tue Measurement & Variables (Read: KW Ch5)
Thur Descriptive statistics (Read: KW Ch6)

Week 5 (Feb 10, 12):

Tue Exam Review session & SPSS introduction
Thur **Exam 1**

Week 6 (Feb 17, 19):

Tue Sampling (Read: KW Ch7); **Assignment 1 due**
Thur Confidence intervals

Week 7 (Feb 24, 26):

Tue Hypothesis testing (Read: KW Ch8.1-8.3)
Thur One-sample significance test

Week 8 (Mar 3, 5):

Tue One-sample significance test, continued
Thur Chi-Square (Read: KW Ch8.4.1)

Spring Break!

Week 10 (Mar 17, 19):

Tue Chi-Square, continued
Thur Exam Review session

Week 11 (Mar 24, 26):

Tue **Exam 2**
Thur class canceled (travel for conference)

Week 12 (Mar 31, Apr 2):

Tue Difference of means (Read: KW Ch8.4.2); **Assignment 2 due**
Thur Type of Association

Week 13 (Apr 7, 9):

- Tue Correlation (Read: KW Ch8.4.3)
- Thur Bivariate regression (Read: KW Ch9.1-9.2)

Week 14 (Apr 14, 16):

- Tue Bivariate regression, continued (Read: KW Ch9.3-9.4)
- Thur Multivariate regression (Read: KW Ch10); **Assignment 3 due**

Week 15 (Apr 21, 23):

- Tue Multivariate regression, continued (Read: KW Ch11)
- Thur SPSS session

Week 15 (Apr 28, 30):

- Tue Advanced methods (Read: KW Ch12); **Assignment 4 due**
- Thur Final exam review session

Final Exam: May 5 (Tue), 10am-12pm

A. UNT Policies

1. Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences. According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

2. ADA Policy

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. **I can not grant you an accommodation that you did not discuss with me before the assignment in question was due.** For additional information see the [ODA website](https://disability.unt.edu/) (<https://disability.unt.edu/>).

3. Prohibition of Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation (Policy 16.004)

The University of North Texas (UNT) prohibits discrimination and harassment because of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law in its application and admission processes; educational programs and activities; employment policies, procedures, and processes; and university facilities. The University takes active measures to prevent such conduct and investigates and takes remedial action when appropriate.

4. Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

5. Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to

view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

6. Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's [Code of Student Conduct](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

7. Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail [Eagle Connect](https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect) (<https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect>).

8. Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during weeks 13, 14 and 15 [insert administration dates] of the long semesters to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Students should look for the email in their UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the [SPOT website](http://spot.unt.edu/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

9. Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-5652648.

10. Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses Federal Regulation

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the [Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website](http://www.ecfr.gov/) (<http://www.ecfr.gov/>). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

(G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

University of North Texas Compliance

To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in an on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student's responsibility to do the following:

- (1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.
- (2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Student and Scholar Services Office. ISSS has a form available that you may use for this purpose.

Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, s/he should contact the UNT International Student and Scholar Services Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email internationaladvising@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

11. 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>).

12. Use of Student Work

A student owns the copyright for all work (e.g. software, photographs, reports, presentations, and email postings) he or she creates within a class and the University is not entitled to use any student work without the student's permission unless all of the following criteria are met:

- The work is used only once.
- The work is not used in its entirety.
- Use of the work does not affect any potential profits from the work.
- The student is not identified.
- The work is identified as student work.

If the use of the work does not meet all of the above criteria, then the University office or department using the work must obtain the student's written permission.

Download the UNT System Permission, Waiver and Release Form

Transmission and Recording of Student Images in Electronically-Delivered Courses

1. No permission is needed from a student for his or her image or voice to be transmitted live via videoconference or streaming media, but all students should be informed when courses are to be conducted using either method of delivery.
2. In the event an instructor records student presentations, he or she must obtain permission from the student using a signed release in order to use the recording for future classes in accordance with the Use of Student-Created Work guidelines above.
3. Instructors who video-record their class lectures with the intention of re-using some or all of recordings for future class offerings must notify students on the course syllabus if students' images may appear on video. Instructors are also advised to provide accommodation for students who do not wish to appear in class recordings.

Example: This course employs lecture capture technology to record class sessions.

Students may occasionally appear on video. The lecture recordings will be available to you for study purposes and may also be reused in future course offerings.

No notification is needed if only audio and slide capture is used or if the video only records the instructor's image. However, the instructor is encouraged to let students know the recordings will be available to them for study purposes.

B. Academic Support & Student Services

1. Student Support Services

a) Mental Health

UNT provides mental health resources to students to help ensure there are numerous outlets to turn to that wholeheartedly care for and are there for students in need, regardless of the nature of an issue or its severity. Listed below are several resources on campus that can support your academic success and mental well-being:

- [Student Health and Wellness Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center>)

- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [UNT Care Team](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care>)
- [UNT Psychiatric Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center/services/psychiatry>)
- [Individual Counseling](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services/services/individual-counseling>)

b) Chosen Names

A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let the instructor know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT.

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [UNT Email Address](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

**UNT euIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.*

c) Pronouns

Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in-person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns.

You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](#) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)
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d) Additional Student Support Services

- [Registrar](https://registrar.unt.edu/registration) (<https://registrar.unt.edu/registration>)
- [Financial Aid](https://financialaid.unt.edu) (<https://financialaid.unt.edu>)
- [Student Legal Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services>)
- [Career Center](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center) (<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center>)
- [Multicultural Center](https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center) (<https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center>)
- [Counseling and Testing Services](https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
(<https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services>)
- [Pride Alliance](https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance) (<https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance>)

- [UNT Food Pantry](https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources/food-pantry>)
- - 2. **Academic Support Services**
- [Academic Resource Center](https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources) (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- [Academic Success Center](https://success.unt.edu/asc) (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- [UNT Libraries](https://library.unt.edu/) (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- [Writing Lab](http://writingcenter.unt.edu/) (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)