

Introduction to Political Research
PSCI 3300-001, Fall 2020
Course will be held online

INSTRUCTOR:

Professor Regina Branton

branton@unt.edu

Zoom Office Hours: M/W 1:00pm-2:20pm, and by appointment

COMMUNICATION EXPECTATION

The primary tool of communication is Canvas via the messaging and Announcement tools. The Instructor and TA will communicate with students via your UNT EagleConnect account. Each student **MUST** check their UNT email regularly or set-up email forwarding so you will receive all course-related messages. It is your responsibility to ensure that you receive all messages sent to the class. Further, I will email the class each Monday throughout the semester to clarify expectations for the week. The expectations are also clearly outlined in the “Learning Objectives” section of each module.

If you have course-related questions, before you e-mail the TA or the instructor, 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. If you cannot find the answer on the syllabus or on Canvas, you should reach out first to the TA for help with your questions. When e-mailing the course personnel, please include the course number (PSCI 3300) in the subject line of your message. A note on etiquette: please sign your messages with your first and last name, and include an appropriate salutation. (Hint: you can’t go wrong with “Hi Professor Branton” or “Hi X”) Please articulate the content of your message clearly—do not use text message or instant message speak. Finally, I strongly encourage you to e-mail from your UNT EagleConnect account to ensure that your message is not caught by a spam filter.

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 semester, 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. The length of the semester is 15 weeks. There are total of 12 modules you must complete over the course of the semester. Each module (except

for Module 12) is associated with 1 week. In other words, you are required to complete one module per week. Module 12 is comprised of three weeks of “lab work” in which you will complete the research project. Module 12 will be offered synchronously, meaning the Instructor and TA will be available during the original course time-slot: M/W 1-2:20pm. We will be available via Zoom to interact with students needing assistance with data collection and statistical analysis. Using the “Zoom” application integrated into Canvas, during Module 12 the Instructor and TA will host our own “Zoom” meeting on M/W from 1-2:20pm.

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

Teaching Assistant (TA): The TA for this course is Makito Takei. The TA is critical for your success in this class. His job is to help you with grade issues, class policies and procedures, and substantive material about the course. The TA is your first line of defense in this course. He will help with everything! **CONTACT THE TA FIRST** and if you do not hear back within 72 hours, send a second message and include me so I can follow-up. **DO NOT EMAIL THE INSTRUCTOR UNLESS YOU HAVE CONTACTED THE TA FIRST!** X will be your TA. His email is: undefinedmakitotakei@my.unt.edu His Zoom office hours are: M/TH 9-10:30.

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. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma. You can download the full text here: <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/536>

Trochim, William. 2020. *Research Methods Knowledge Base*. You can download the full open source text here: <https://conjointly.com/kb/>

RECOMMENDED MATERIAL:

Salkind, Neil. *Excel Statistics: A Quick Guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Press. Available at online venues.

Kellstedt, Paul and Guy Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. London: Cambridge Press.

TEACHING APPROACH:

My approach to this online course is to provide you will 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. Each student will be assess on each of these marketable skills as part of UNT’s Career Connect initiative. The course requires you to learn basic data management and statistical tools to complete a full research paper. It is your responsibility to do the work: read the required material, view each lecture, engage with your colleagues 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
- Microphone
- Plug-ins
- 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., or if in doubt use Mr. or Ms.
- 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.
- Avoid using the caps lock feature AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETTED AS YELLING.
- Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like :) or .
- 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 others).
- 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 tips on “How to Succeed as an Online Student”:
<https://clear.unt.edu/teaching-resources/online-teaching/succeed-online>

Getting Help

Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

UIT Help Desk: <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

Email: helpdesk@unt.edu

Phone: 940-565-2324

In Person: Sage Hall, Room 130

Walk-In Availability: 8am-9pm

Telephone Availability:

- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm

Laptop Checkout: 8am-7pm

For additional support, visit Canvas Technical Help (<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC->

10554-4212710328)

Student Support Services

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

Other student support services offered by UNT include

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

Academic Support Services

- Academic Resource Center (<https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources>)
- Academic Success Center (<https://success.unt.edu/asc>)
- UNT Libraries (<https://library.unt.edu/>)
- Writing Lab (<http://writingcenter.unt.edu/>)
- MathLab (<https://math.unt.edu/mathlab>)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Two Exams (worth 25% each): There will be two exams in this class: a midterm (25% of your grade) and a final (25% of your grade). **Make-up exams will not be given without a verified excused absence.**

Weekly Assignments (worth 15%): Each week you will be required to complete a quiz

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 and enable you to perform well on the research paper. Students will be required to analyze data with the techniques covered in class. You are welcome to work together on the problem sets; however, you must write up your problem set on your own, and run the code yourself. Simply copying another students work is **not** permitted and will be treated as academic dishonesty. **NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED without a verified excused absence. You must call the Help Desk FIRST if you are having computer or technology issues.** The helpdesk will issue a “remedy ticket number”. Always have the desk fill out a remedy ticket so we can trace your call in the system. UIT Helpdesk Phone: (940) 565-2324 Mon.-Th. 8am-midnight; Fri. 8am-8pm; Sat. 9am-5pm; Sun. 8am-midnight. In person: Sage Hall (Rm 130) Mon.-Fri. 8am-8 pm. Email: helpdesk@unt.edu.

Weekly Discussions (worth 10%): Each module contains a group discussion. This is an opportunity to pose questions to each other, the TA, and the instructor about the material. 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.

Some discussion assignments involve a small group of students. These discussion groups are randomly assigned and include other members of the class. When you navigate to a discussion forum, you will automatically be taken to your group’s instance of that discussion and to your group’s space within the course.

While the Discussion assignments are asynchronous (not real time), you will be expected to make an initial posting by 5:00 pm Wednesday of each Module and to respond to at least two other students position by 5:00 pm Friday of each module; continued participation throughout the remainder of the week is highly encouraged. **NO LATE PARTICIPATION IN WEEKLY DISCUSSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED without a verified excused absence.**

Two Writing Assignments (worth 25%, more on this below): There are two assignments. Each must be typed and double-spaced. You must cite all work that is not your own. You must carefully proof-read each written assignment. Both writing assignments must be submitted to Turnitin via the course Canvas.

Written Assignment 1: In this writing assignment, you must formulate a theory about a particular political phenomenon that interests you by going through the steps of theory building. For the empirical steps, instead of actually collecting data and testing your hypothesis, think about how you would proceed. This assignment should not exceed two pages. The typed and double-spaced paper must be 1 page in length. Write in full paragraphs that communicate your ideas. You cannot use “turnout” of “the outcome of U.S. Presidential Elections” as your dependent variables for this assignment. This assignment is due at the

beginning of class on **October 21st** and counts as 2% of your final grade. **Late assignments will not be accepted without a verified excused absence.**

Written Assignment 2: Research paper. Throughout this class we will discuss the expectations for this assignment in greater detail. The typed and double-spaced paper must be 14-15 pages in length (not including tables and figures). You must propose and test multiple theories with a single regression model. You cannot use “turnout” or “the outcome of U.S. Presidential Elections” as you dependent variable for this assignment. As part of this project, you are **required** to open an ePortfolio account (which is provided for free by UNT), upload the final paper to your account on or before December 3rd, and complete the reflections section of the ePortfolio assignment. There will be more details on this aspect of the project during class in the first week. If you do not complete this portion of the assignment, you will be docked one letter grade. This assignment is due on **December 3rd** at 5pm. The paper counts for 23% of your final grade. **Late assignments will not be accepted without a verified excused absence.**

Course Grading Scale:

A	B	C	D	F
100-90%	89.9-80%	79.9-70	69.9-60%	<60%

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 during the last three weeks of the semester. I will announce when SPOT opens and closes via Canvas.

COURSE POLICIES

Module Structure

The course is structured such that there are 12 modules. Each module (except for the 12 module) represents an academic week. For example, Module 1 reflects the week of August 24-28 and Module 2 reflects the week of August 31-September 4. 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 or problem set

You are required to visit each section for each module in order to complete the module. **For each module, you are required to complete the readings by Tuesday, view the lecture video by Wednesday, participate in class discussions beginning no later than Wednesday and complete participation by 5pm Friday, and complete the quiz or problem set by 5pm Friday.**

The module quizzes are located, as noted above, in each module. Modules including a quiz contain a section labeled “Module X: Quiz.” The quizzes are multiple choice and true/false. The quizzes will be automatically graded in canvas. The problem sets will be posted in a pdf document. 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 either be a quiz or a problem set required for each module. The module quiz or problem set is due by 5pm 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.

Instructor Responsibilities and Feedback

- Help students grow and learn
- Provide clear instructions for projects and assessments
- Answer questions about assignments
- Identify additional resources as necessary
- Provide grading rubrics
- Review and update course content
- Respond to emails within 48 hours
- Respond to discussion board posts at the end of each module
- Offer assignment feedback at the end of each module

Late Work

As noted previously, I will not accept late work. Given the online nature of this course, it is imperative that students comply with the clearly stated deadlines. That said there may be times when a student is unable to attend class due to emergency situations, health or the death of a loved one. The Dean of Students Office is available to assist you with documenting your absence. Students must provide the Dean of Students with official and verifiable documentation related to the reason for absence. Once the absences have been verified the decision to allow a student to make up course work is left to the discretion of the course

instructor. If the absence is verified by the instructor, the make-up of missed work will be due by 5pm the following Friday. The make-up work will involve an alternative assignment.

Attendance Policy

This is an largely an asynchronous online course, except for Module 12. For Modules 1-12, you are required to complete the modules as scheduled. 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.

UNT Policies

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.

ADA Policy

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You

may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323.

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 Blackboard for contingency plans for covering course materials.

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 Blackboard 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 students 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.

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>).

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/>) or email spot@unt.edu.

Sexual Assault Prevention UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit 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. UNTs Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victims compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

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/>). 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

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>).

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 students 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 students 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.

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.

Canvas

A Canvas conference is maintained for this course. Students are responsible for checking Canvas for assignments and notices. You should check Canvas at least every 24 hours to ensure that you are up to date on all class related information. Quizzes and assignments will be submitted on Canvas and student grades will be posted on Canvas.

Online Classroom conduct

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 class and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities 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. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr.

COURSE SCHEDULE & TOPICS:

Module	Week	Topic
Module 1	8/24-8/28	Scientific Study of Politics
Module 2	8/31-9/4	Theory Building
Module 3	9/7-9/11	Causal Relationships
Module 4	9/14-9/18	Research Design & Measurement
Module 5	9/21-9/25	Descriptive Statistics I
Module 6	9/28-10/2	Descriptive Statistics II
Oct 5		REVIEW–Preferred Real-Time
Oct 7		EXAM 1
Module 7	10/12-10/16	Bivariate Hypothesis Testing I
Module 8	10/19-10/23	Bivariate Hypothesis Testing II
Module 9	10/26-10/30	Bivariate Hypothesis Testing III
Module 10	11/2-11/6	Multivariate Hypothesis Testing
Nov 9		REVIEW–Preferred Real-Time
Nov 11		Exam 2
Module 11	11/16-12/3	Research Paper: Lab Work
Dec 3		Written Assignment #2 DUE