

San José State University
Political Science
POLS 100M Spring 2021

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Dr. Kristina Mitchell
Email:	Kristina.mitchell@sjsu.edu
Class Days/Time:	Tuesdays at 3pm
Classroom:	Online
Office Hours	Tuesdays at 1pm

Course Description (Required)

Introduction to the scope and methods of political science. Beginning with research design, measurement, and ethical considerations, and including a variety of research methods including surveys, experiments, interviews, fieldwork, content analysis, and an introduction to quantitative and qualitative analysis. Notes: Should be taken junior year. Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) (Required)

Course and GE Learning Objectives (CLOs and GELOs):

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Compare and contrast the ways social scientists study phenomena. (Weekly Assignments)
- 2) Develop hypotheses, conceptualize and measure variables. (Weekly Assignments)
- 3) Match best-suited research methods to research questions. (Weekly Assignments)
- 4) Construct a research design for an original social science research project. (Final Paper)
- 5) Interpret original social science research. (Final Paper)

The Political Science Department has the following objectives for its students:

- 1) Breadth: Students should possess a broad knowledge of the theory and methods of the various branches of the discipline.
- 2) Application and Disciplinary Methods: Students should be able to formulate research questions, engage in systematic literature searches using primary and secondary sources, evaluate research studies, and critically analyze and interpret influential political texts. Students should be able to apply these techniques to identify, understand, and analyze domestic and international political issues and organizations.
- 3) Communication Skills: Students should master basic competencies in oral and written communication skills and be able to apply these skills in the context of political science. This means communicating effectively about politics and/or public administration, public policy, and law.
- 4) Citizenship: Students should acquire an understanding of the role of the citizen in local, state, national, and global contexts and appreciate the importance of lifelong participation in political processes.

Textbook

Janet Buttolph Johnson, H.T. Reynolds and Jason D. Mycoff's Political Science Research Methods, 8th edition (Los Angeles: Sage, 2016, ISBN: 978-1-5063-0782-4)

Course Requirements and Assignments (Required)

Weekly Assignments:

Each student will submit a weekly assignment on Tuesday by the end of class. There are no late assignments accepted! These assignments will be submitted online through Canvas.

Paper:

Students will be expected to an 8-10 page paper using quantitative analysis to examine a political or social science phenomenon and provide a suggested policy response based on this empirical evidence. This makes up 35% of your course grade, and will be completed in parts throughout the course of the semester.

The research paper will be evaluated on the following components:

- Research Question
- Literature Review
- Description of Data
- Description of variables
- Data analysis
- Conclusion & policy recommendation

No late papers will be accepted!

Grade Distribution

The grading breakdown for the course assignments is as follows:

- Weekly assignments: 65%
- Final Paper – 35%

You can use this grade distribution to calculate what is possible for you based on your grades on assignments. Please note the weighting of each assignment and keep it in mind as you complete your work.

Final Grade Determination

97 & above: A plus

92-96: A

90-91: A minus

87-89: B plus

82-86: B

80-81: B minus

77-79: C plus

72-76: C

70-71: C minus

67-69: D plus

62-66: D

60-61: D minus

59.99 & below: F

I do not have a policy of rounding grades. Rounding and curving decisions are made by the professor after all final grades are calculated. Even an 89.999 can be considered a B plus. Grades are not assigned based on individual need.

- Do not contact me with a question or request for your final grade to be rounded, curved, or increased.
- Do not contact me asking for extra credit that has not been specifically offered to the whole class via email announcement.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Classroom Protocol

Course Rules

1. Always maintain professional and respectful language, in class, in emails and in your coursework.
2. Any disruptive or disrespectful behavior will result in a loss of credit for the assignment and possibly a referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Racism, sexism, homophobia, or any other forms of bigotry are not acceptable in this class.
3. You are responsible for all information and announcements made in the course. Prepare to log onto Canvas every day to check for updates, changes, or new information. Read the course home page thoroughly and check announcements daily. Course rules, schedule, and day-to-day are subject to change, please pay close attention to course announcements.
4. Late work will not be accepted for any reason. To be clear, late work will not be accepted for any reason whatsoever.
5. Students may not print, save, photograph, or make any record of graded content in this course.

Professionalism

Here is a quick-start on professionalism in your communication with your professors:

- Don't ask a question that you could have answered yourself. Read all information and instructions in Canvas before you send an email.
 - Use an appropriate Subject Line that identifies yourself and your concern (don't just say, "HELP")
 - Address the recipient by his or her professional title, such as Professor, Dr., Mr., or Ms. (NOT Mrs. or Miss unless instructed otherwise)
 - Your first sentence should introduce yourself and include your course and section number. • Be specific about what your request is. Demonstrate that you have read and understood course information and instructions.
 - Use proper grammar and spelling. Punctuate and capitalize. Proofread.
 - Allow 24 hours for a response to your email during the week. Do not expect email responses on weekends. Do not send multiple emails on the same topic within a 24 hour period without waiting for a response.
- If you send an email that does not follow these guidelines, don't be surprised if you get a response that states, "Please revisit the Professionalism section of your course home page and email again."

University Policies (Required)

Per University Policy S16-9 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant information to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. is

available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> Please be sure to go over these policies..

Course Schedule

Class/Lab Schedule

Semester Runs: 1/27-5/17

Week 1 – Feb 2nd

Class Introduction

Week 2 – Feb 9th

Political Science as Science
Johnson & Reynolds Chapters 1 & 2

Week 3 – Feb 16th

Working in Excel: The Basics

Week 4 – Feb 23rd

Building Blocks of Social Science – Variables & Measurement
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 4

Week 5 – Mar 2nd

Data Collection
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 10

Week 6 – Mar 9th

Working in Excel: Playing with Data & Variables

Week 7 – Mar 16th

Building Blocks of Social Science – Research Questions & Topics
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 3

Week 8 – Mar 23rd

Research Design – Establishing Causation
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 6

(no class March 30th)

Week 9 – Apr 6th

Working in Excel: Answering Research Questions with Data
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 11

Week 10 – Apr 13th

Describing Research Questions & Variables in a Research Paper

Week 11 – Apr 20th

Informing Our Research by Writing a Lit Review

Week 12 – Apr 27th

Describing Results of Descriptive Statistics in a Research Paper

Week 13 – May 4th

Working in Excel: Correlation Coefficients
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 13th

Week 14 – May 11th

Describing Results of Correlation Coefficients in a Research Paper

Week 15 – May 17th (no in person class this week)

Putting It All Together

Final Exam Week:

Paper due WEDNESDAY MAY 19th AT 5PM

No Final Exam