

**San José State University**  
**Political Science**  
**POLS 100M Fall 2022**

**Course and Contact Information**

Instructor:	Dr. Kristina Mitchell
Email:	<a href="mailto:Kristina.mitchell@sjsu.edu">Kristina.mitchell@sjsu.edu</a>
Class Days/Time:	T/R 1:30
Classroom:	HGH 149A
Office Hours	Tuesdays 11-1

**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 Thursday by 11:59pm. There are no late assignments accepted! These assignments will be submitted online through Canvas. One assignment will be dropped. Some of the assignments will be completed in class during the lab section, but don't count on having class time to finish assignments.

### **Exams**

There will be two midterms and one final exam. The exams will be online in Canvas. They are open note, open book, but you must cite sources (do not engage in plagiarism). They are individual assignments, and should not be worked on with other students. On exam days, you will not attend class. Use class time to complete the exam. However, it is still due on Thursday at 11:59pm.

### **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 & Variables
- Data analysis/Results
- Conclusion & policy recommendation

No late papers will be accepted!

### **Grade Distribution**

The grading breakdown for the course assignments is as follows:

- Weekly assignments: 50%
- Exams – 25% (12.5% each)
- Final Paper – 25%

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](#) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> Please be sure to go over these policies..

### Course Schedule

Week 1 – August 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>

Class introduction  
Political Science as science  
Johnson text Chapter 1  
No assignment this week

Week 2 – August 30<sup>th</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>

Political Science as Science  
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 2

Week 3 – Sept 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>

Building Blocks of Social Science – Variables & Measurement  
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 4  
Working in Excel: The Basics  
**Meet in lab September 8<sup>th</sup>**

Week 4 – Sept 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>

Data Collection  
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 10  
Working in Excel: Playing with Data & Variables  
**Meet in lab September 15<sup>th</sup>**

Week 5 – Sept 20<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>

Exam review  
**First exam Sept 22<sup>nd</sup>**

Week 6 – Sept 27<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>

Research Design – Establishing Causation  
Building Blocks of Social Science – Research Questions & Topics  
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 3 & 6

Week 7 – Oct 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>

Building Blocks of Social Science – Research Questions & Topics  
**Meet in lab October 6<sup>th</sup>**

Week 8 – Oct 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>

Working in Excel: Answering Research Questions with Data  
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 11  
Descriptive statistics  
**Meet in lab October 13<sup>th</sup>**

Week 9 – Oct 18<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>  
Hypothesis testing  
**Meet in lab October 20th**

Week 10 – Oct 25<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>  
Describing Research Questions & Variables in a Research Paper  
Exam review

Week 11 – Nov 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>  
**2<sup>nd</sup> exam November 1<sup>st</sup>**  
Informing Our Research by Writing a Lit Review

Week 12 – Nov 8<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup>  
Working in Excel: Correlation Coefficients  
Johnson & Reynolds Chapter 13  
**Meet in lab November 10<sup>th</sup>**

Week 13 – Nov 15<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>  
Regression  
Johnson Chapter 14  
**Meet in lab November 17<sup>th</sup>**

Week 14 – Nov 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Independent study

Week 15 – Nov 29<sup>th</sup> and Dec 1<sup>st</sup>  
Putting It All Together/Working on Research Paper  
**Meet in lab BOTH DAYS**

Week 16 – Dec 6<sup>th</sup>  
Working on Research Paper  
**Paper Due Dec 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Exam (Online) due December 14<sup>th</sup>**