Instructor: Lee W. Payne  
Email: paynelee@sfasu.edu  
Office: Liberal Arts North 138  
Department: Government

Office Hours:  
T/Th 8-9AM & 2-3PM  
W Noon-1PM (online)  
Telephone: 936-468-2183

Course Description

Introduction to research methods in political science emphasizing research design and quantitative/qualitative methods of analysis. Required for all political science majors and second major. Prerequisites: Political Science 141 and 142.

COVID-19

Masks (cloth face coverings) must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times in this class and appropriate physical distancing must be observed. Students not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be asked to leave the class. All incidents of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Students who are reported for multiple infractions of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing may be subject to disciplinary actions.


Course Expectations

First, you are expected to attend class. I will not take attendance but you will not be allowed to take missed pop-quizzes or turn in homework assignments late if you miss class. Second, you are expected to read the assigned material before class. Which brings me to my third point – you are expected to discuss the assigned readings in class. You will be graded on class participation. By “discuss” I mean to engage in active, in-depth, conversations with your classmates and me over the assigned readings.

You should stay informed on current political events by reading the paper, watching the news, browsing political websites, etc. It is sometimes easier to understand political concepts and theories when you can relate them to current political activities. Therefore, we will discuss current events in class as well.
On Liberty: Of the Liberty of Thought and Discussion – “[T]he peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race …. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth produced by its collision with error” (76).

Please feel free to voice your opinions. Opinions generate class discussions and class discussions generate knowledge. This class does not have to be boring but participation is needed to keep it from being so. Therefore, how boring this class is depends on you.

**Required Books & Software**


Stata/IC 16: [https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/](https://www.stata.com/order/new/edu/gradplans/student-pricing/)

You are required to obtain a copy of Stata/IC 16, a program for statistical computing, to install on your home computer (see Stata site for system requirements). In order to obtain the student version of Stata, you will need to submit a copy of your SFA student ID to service@stata.com or fax it to 979-696-4601 before your order can be processed. The six-month license ($48) will be sufficient for the purposes of this class. However, if you can afford it, I recommend the perpetual license ($225). This will give you access to the program for your capstone class and beyond. I am requiring Stata/IC, instead of Stata Small, because most data sets we will use contain more than 99 variables.

**Course Grading Policy**

Grades for this course will come from six sources: mid-term exam (20%), final exam (20%), homework assignments (20%), research paper, proposal, and annotated bibliography (20%), class participation (10%), and paper presentation (10%).

**Mid-Term & Final Exams:** The mid-term and final exams will consist of short answers, term definitions, method analyses, and mathematical computations (have a calculator!). The mid-term and final will be taken via Zoom for all students. This is necessary because those taking exams on Zoom might have an advantage in that they may find a way to access notes while those in class would not be able to. That said, while taking the exams, student *must* have their cameras on (no profile pictures) and point their cameras at themselves so I can observe you while you
take the exams. Exams must be submitted as a Word document – no PDFs. Do not put your name anywhere on your exam. I want to grade your exams blind. To this end, save your Word document as your SFA Student ID number before submitting it to the D2L Dropbox.

Make-up exams will be given only in the case of documented illness, documented emergencies, or University related absences – documentation must be time stamped prior to the time class started on the exam date. Make-up exams will be different than the exams given to the class on exam day. If you miss an exam, it is your responsibility to inform me as to the nature of your absence and provide the necessary documentation. If the absence is excused, we will schedule a time to take the make-up exam. No exams will be given early. You are required to bring a large Bluebook with no identifying marks on it to each exam. Tentative dates for these exams are listed below.

Research Paper, Proposal, and Annotated Bibliography: You are required to write a minimum 2800-word research paper that utilizes the research and statistical methods learned in this course. Research papers will be submitted to the D2L Dropbox 11:00 AM on the date specified below. Save your research paper as your last name, underscore, first initial. For example, my research paper would be saved as Payne_L. I will not accept late papers without proper documentation that excuses the absence on the due date. Also, I reserve the right to deduct ten (10) points for each formatting mistake made in your papers. You will turn in a paper proposal (saved as last name, underscore, first initial) on the date specified below, to the D2L Dropbox, that will be reviewed, and returned to you with comments for you to revise and resubmit. This is not optional! Your proposal will constitute five (5) percent of your paper grade. I will not accept late proposals or late papers. You are also required to turn in a ten (10) source annotated bibliography (saved as last name, underscore, first initial), to the D2L Dropbox, on the date specified below. Again, not optional! Your annotated bibliography will constitute five (5) percent of your paper grade. Finally, when you email your research paper, email a .do file (saved as last name, underscore, first initial) that contains all the Stata statistical analyses you ran to create your methods and results. Again, not optional! You are adults and it’s time to learn how to meet a deadline. Detailed instructions on the proposal guidelines and paper requirements are located on pages seven through ten of this syllabus.

Presentations: You will also be required to present your paper to the class in brief (five minute) presentations. PowerPoint presentations are required. Paper presentation dates will be decided at a later time. Submit your PowerPoint to the D2L Dropbox before class on the date you are assigned to present. Save your PowerPoint presentation as your last name, underscore, first initial. Again, not optional! Unexcused absences on presentation dates will result in ten (10) points being deducted from your presentation grade for each day missed.

Homework Assignments: You will have ten (10) homework assignments that will require you to access data, code data, run statistical analyses, and interpret statistical results. You will need the Stata software, Essentials of Political Analysis, and Stata Companion textbooks to complete the assignments. Not having these required materials is not an excuse for not turning in the assignments! Get the books and software before September 8th, which is when we will start using Stata. I will not accept late homework! Homework assignments will be submitted to the
proper, D2L Dropbox on the dates specified below at the beginning of class. Again, save each of your homework assignments as your last name, underscore, first initial. I will allow two mistakes on how your saved homework is named before I start deducting points for not following directions. All of your Stata homework assignments are to be turned in as a Word document, no PDFs. You do not need to write out the homework questions. But you must clearly number and sub-number (many questions have multiple answers, as in Question 1, A, B, C, etc.) your answers. And, if the assignment requires a table or chart, you will copy it from Stata and insert it the Word document where it is requested in the question – do not put all your tables and graphs at the end of your document.

Attendance: Attendance will not be taken, except during presentations. That said, I will not allow homework to be turned in or pop-quizzes to be made up if your absences is unexcused. It is your responsibility to inform me of, and provide evidence of, excused absences.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Definition of Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

Learning Outcomes

Program Learning Outcomes: Students will utilize research skills including developing hypotheses, identifying sources of data and appropriate methods and analyzing political problems relevant to social science research.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will complete a series of assignments in PSC 303 that require each student to develop hypotheses; identify variable levels of measurement; measures of central tendency; measures of dispersion, and measures of association; identify levels of statistical significance; identify reliability and validity issues; recode and create data; running regression analyses; and interpreting coefficients.
Additional Points

- Be on time! If you arrive late for class, *quietly* take a seat at the back of the room.
- Be polite! Do not talk over your classmates or me.
- Turn off your cell phones, etc. If your cell phone goes off in class or I catch you texting, you will be required to perform an embarrassing task in front of the class (hint: learn the words and motions to “I’m a Little Teapot”).
- During tests, please place all items at the front or sides of the classroom (book bags, phones, etc.).
- During tests no electronic devices will be permitted at your desk except a calculator.
- I reserve the right to eject any student who violates these or other rules.

Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy: Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Students with Disabilities: To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations.

For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).
**Tentative Class Schedule**

**Week 1**  
Aug. 25  General Introduction and Writing for Political Science (Zoom Class)  
Aug. 27  Chps. 1, 2, and 3 (RP)

**Week 2**  
Sep. 01  Chps. 4, 5, and 6 (RP)  
Sep. 03  Chps. 7, 8, and 9 (RP)

**Week 3**  
Sep. 08  Chp. 1 (PA)  
Sep. 10  Chp 1 (SC)

**Week 4**  
Sep. 15  Chp. 2 (PA)  
Sep. 17  Chp. 2 (SC)  
Chp. 1 Homework due

**Week 5**  
Sep. 22  Chp. 3 (PA)  
Sep. 24  Chp. 3 (SC)  
Chp. 2 Homework due  
Paper proposal due

**Week 6**  
Sep. 29  Chp. 4 (PA)  
Oct. 01  Chp. 4 (SC)  
Chp. 3 Homework due

**Week 7**  
Oct. 06  Chp. 5 (PA)  
Oct. 08  Chp. 5 (SC)  
Chp. 4 Homework due

**Week 8**  
Oct. 13  Mid-Term Review  
Oct. 15  Mid-Term Exam  
Chp. 5 Homework due

**Week 9**  
Oct. 20  Chp. 6 (PA)  
Oct. 22  Chp. 6 (SC)  
Annotated Bibliography due

**Week 10**  
Oct. 27  Chp. 7 (PA)  
Oct. 29  Chp. 7 (SC)  
Chp. 6 Homework due

**Week 11**  
Nov. 03  Chp. 8 (PA)  
Nov. 05  Chp. 8 & 9 (SC)  
Chp. 7 Homework due
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| Week 16 | Final Exam – Thursday, December 10: 10:45 - 1:15 |                   |

**Note:** I may assign additional reading sources throughout the semester.

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**Paper Proposal Guidelines**


The purpose of these proposals is for you to show me that you are thinking about your papers in terms of what we have been studying in class and that you are looking at the Stata datasets. Remember, the only constraints are that the topic must be political in nature; you can use data sets other than the ones that came with your textbook but I must approve outside data before you can use it. The following examples all come from the text-supplied data:

- Comparative issues of civil liberties and political rights
- State issues of aid for the poor
- Effects of political information on participation
- Attitudes on abortion, capital punishment, or sexual equality
- The effects of education on tolerance

The proposals should be about one page double-spaced and must include the following information:

- First Paragraph:
  - Tell me your research concept (what you want to study and why) and provide a conceptual definition of the concept
  - Tell me what dataset you’re using (NES, GSS, States, etc.) and how the data was collected (survey, case study, content analysis, etc.)
  - Tell me the unit of analysis of your study (individuals, states, etc.)
- Second Paragraph:
  - Tell me your dependent variable(s), what level of measurement it/they is/are (nominal, ordinal, etc.), and how it/they are operationalized
  - Tell me your independent variable of interest, what level of measurement it is, and how it is operationalized
  - Tell me the independent variables you plan to control for, what level of measurement they are, and how they are operationalized
- Third Paragraph:
  - Tell me your research hypothesis (the relationship you expect to find between your dependent variable(s) and independent variable of interest) and your null hypothesis.

This proposal should be quality work! Check your spelling; check your grammar; do not use contractions! Show me that you know how to write!!!
Your annotated bibliography must include ten (10) sources, none of which can be internet sites. You should write one paragraph for each source that includes the follow:

- the author’s thesis;
- how the authors define concepts that relate to your topic;
- what data the authors are using;
- what methods the authors are using;
- how the author operationalizes and measures the dependent and independent variables;
- what unit of analysis the author specifies;
- and what the author’s finding are.

The annotated bibliography should be quality work! Check your spelling; check your grammar; do not use contractions! Show me that you know how to write!!!
This paper is meant to be a serious attempt at political science research. The topic is yours to choose with a couple of stipulations. First, the topic must be political in nature. For instance, you can write a paper dealing with comparative issues of civil liberties and political rights; state issues of aid for the poor; effects of political information on participation; attitudes on abortion, capital punishment, or sexual equality, to name a few. Second, you must use one of the datasets that came with your textbook or I must approve an outside dataset. These data provide numerous research possibilities. All of the previously mentioned topics were pulled from the Stata datasets.

Your research paper must include an introduction with a research and null hypothesis, a literature review, a section describing your data and methods, a section discussing your statistical results, and a conclusion. Do not panic!! These requirements will make more sense as we progress through the semester.

Your research paper must include a minimum of ten (10) cited sources; none of which can come from the Internet (your Pollock text is an expected source when discussing the data, methods, and results). Books, journals, reputable magazines, or any written source is acceptable. You must properly cite all references in parenthetical citation format and provide a “Works Cited” page at the end of your paper (not counted in the 2800 words). When citing sources within your paper, use guidelines for parenthetical citations detailed below.

Parenthetical Citations

When you do not use the author(s) name in the sentence and use an exact quote, put the exact quote in quotation marks and reference the author(s), publication date, and page number(s) in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

Example:
Public opinion for their analyses was generated from 250 interviews with “individuals randomly selected to reflect the geographic and racial compositions of each city” (Drori and Yuchtman-Yaar 2002: 281).

When you use the author(s) name in the sentence and use an exact quote, put the exact quote in quotation marks and reference the publication date and page number(s) in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

Example:
Drori and Yuchtman-Yaar speculate that “although Israel is relatively developed technologically and economically, the major concern of its public is with existential, ‘materialistic’ issues, such as security, economic growth, and immigration” (2002: 283).

When you do not use the author(s) name in the sentence and paraphrase the author(s), reference the author(s) and publication date in parentheses at the end of the sentence.
Example:
Americans are concerned about environmental issues and they do support policies and programs designed to improve environmental conditions (Dunlap and Scarce 1991).

When you use the author(s) name in the sentence and paraphrase the author(s), reference the publication date in parentheses immediately following the author’s name(s).

Example:
Fiorina (1973) found that Americans are willing to contribute to improving the environment through paying higher prices on goods.

When using a block quote (block quotes are used when the exact quote takes up more than four lines of text) indent the block by .5” on both sides, reduce the font to size to 11 point, and single space the quote; do not use quotation marks. Provide the author(s), publication date, and page number(s) in parentheses at the end of the block quote.

Example:
Across East Central Europe, public concern about environmental issues declined remarkably quickly after the fall of communism. By October 1990 the percentage of Czechs and Slovaks who saw the environment as the most important public issue had dropped to 40%, from 83% in February of the same year. As the pain of economic transition set in, public concern declined further – in early 1993 the environment ranked seventh among important issues in the Czech Republic. (Horak 2001: 137)

When referencing a book, use the following format on your “Work Cited” page.

Example:

When referencing a journal or magazine article, use the following format on your “Work Cited” page.

Example:

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE!!!! I cannot stress the seriousness of plagiarizing enough. If you plagiarize, you will fail the class and be turned over to the Department and University for further disciplinary action.

Paper Format:
• Use 1” margins on the top, bottom, and both sides of your paper.
• Use Times New Roman, 12-point font (except block quotes).
• Double-space your text (except block quotes).
• Include a cover page with your name, paper title, class number, and date (not counted in the 2800 words).
• Include a Bibliography or Works Cited page at the end of your paper (not counted in the 2800 words).
• Insert your last name in the page header on the right.
• Insert page numbers in the page footer on the right.
• Indent the first line of each paragraph .5” (one click of the “Tab” button).
• Differentiate the sections of your paper (Introduction, Literature Review, Data and Methods, Results, Conclusion, and Work Cited) with the section title centered and bolded at the start of each section.

Additional points – do not use contractions in academic/research papers. The use of don’t, can’t, won’t, etc. is unacceptable. Instead, do not, cannot, will not, etc. is the proper wording for academic/research papers. Also, use proper English, spelling, and grammar. Slang has no place in academic/research papers. Use your word processing program to check your spelling and grammar. These programs are useful but they cannot pick up context specific mistakes, e.g., there, their; here, hear; to, too, two; etc. Proof read your papers carefully!

If you finish your paper early and would like for me to proof read it for you, I will be happy to. No rough drafts though. If you take me up on this offer, you must give me a quality, completed paper. I will not proof read incomplete papers. Also, if you have any additional citing questions/concerns that I did not cover above, please ask me for clarification. Happy writing!

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**Paper Elements**

**Introduction**

_____ Introduce your topic/research concept
Discuss the problem as you see it
Briefly discuss your results
State your research and null hypothesis/hypotheses

**Literature Review**
Introduce relevant literature that focuses on your topic/research concept
Utilize at least 8 reputable sources (no internet sources)
Tie the literature to your topic/research concept

**Data & Methods**
Tell me where your data comes from
Tell me about your dependent variable(s) – level(s) of measurement
Operationalize your dependent variable(s)
Present your dependent variable(s) in a summary table
Tell me about your independent variables – levels of measurement
Operationalize your independent variables
Present your independent variables in a summary table
Tell me which regression analysis you will utilize and why

**Results**
Explain, in detail, results of the statistical analysis/analyses you ran
Present tables of your measures of association – include coefficients and levels of significance
Discuss whether your results are consistent with your research hypothesis/hypotheses

**Conclusion**
Sum up your research paper
What conclusions can you make
Is further research needed
Tell me what you’ve learned