Angelo State University  
Department of Political Science and Philosophy  

Spring 2020  
POLS 4391: Scope and Methods of Political Science  

Section D10  

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Location: RAS 220  

Course Synopsis  
The aim of this course is to introduce you to different methods for conducting scientific research in political science, and to guide you through the various stages of the research process. This process begins with identifying an interesting political concept and question and then advances to setting up a valid and constructive approach to investigating possible answers to that question. We will also be exploring the nature and psychological demands of scientific inquiry in the political arena, as well as the strengths and limitations of prevailing methodological approaches in political science research. We will review some of the current trends in the discipline. The course culminates in your presenting and submitting a finalized version of your own sophisticated research paper that applies lessons learned throughout the course.  

Required Text  
*The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 6e, Pollock (EPA)  
Additional readings will be posted on the course Blackboard  

Course Goals  
There are 4 Student Learning Objectives listed on p. 7 of this document that have been developed by the political science program and will be assessed in this capstone course. These focus on development of (1) skills relating to political science, (2) awareness of ethical dilemmas in political science research, and (3) comprehension of political phenomena. Your progress towards these objectives will be assessed through your performance on the end of chapter exercises, the oral presentation, and final paper (see below). Importantly, assessment score data is *collected for program development* and *does not factor into your course grade*. 
Course Format and Expectations

Readings and Exercises: Our main task during class time will be to work through the first 8 chapters of EPA. Three additional readings have been assigned that will help us connect what is going on in the textbook to the broader discipline of political science. The course can be divided into two halves, before and after spring break. Before spring break, we will work through the basics of political analysis with little time spent on statistics. We will move into the basics of statistical inference after spring break, finishing with basic regression analysis as it is presented in Chapter 8 of EPA. There will be end of chapter exercises assigned from these chapters.

Blackboard Discussion. Please post a 2 paragraph reflection on each week’s assigned readings by Friday evening of every week, and post your answers to any questions I have posed to you in my responses to your previous weeks’ reflections.

Exams: There are no exams in this course.

The Research Paper: For each student, the fruit of this course is a sophisticated research paper that clearly identifies and investigates an interesting political question. Before spring break I will ask you to submit several (small) sections of this paper. After spring break, if your sections are approved, you will be tasked with taking your paper to the next level -- conducting a literature review, integrating and revising all sections of your paper.

Presentations: The second-to-last week of class we will have research presentations, during which you will record yourself giving a presentation of the current stage of your research paper.

Assignments and Grading

Grade Distribution

- Blackboard discussions 10%
- 4 Paper Sections @ 2% each 8%
- 4 Exercise Assignments @ 10% each 40%
- Research Presentation 8%
- Final Paper 34%

Grading Scale
A 100-90
B 89-80
C 79-70
D 69-60
F 59 & below
Academic Honesty
This class strictly adheres to the university’s policy on academic honesty. Please consult the following website for guidelines on the proper citation of sources and for avoiding plagiarism: http://www.angelo.edu/student-handbook/code-of-student-conduct/misconduct.php. Sanctions for a violation of Academic Policy can include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and a notation on the academic record, and suspension from the university.

Title IX at Angelo State University:

The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance.

Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at:

Michelle Boone, J.D.
Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator
Mayer Administration Building, Room 210
325-942-2022
michelle.boone@angelo.edu

You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.

If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345.

For more information about Title IX in general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

Religious Observances
Every effort will be made to accommodate all forms of religious observance in compliance with ASU OP 10.19. Students who require additional arrangements to be made should make these known in good time in order that arrangements can be made.

Students with Disabilities
Students that feel that they may need special assistance for any reason should contact the Student Life Office, Rm 112 University Center.
Readings, Assignments, and Due Dates

Week 1 – What is political knowledge?
13-Jan Intro to the course
15-Jan Intro to qualitative method
17-Jan “Seeing Things Politically”

Week 2 – What is political science?
20-Jan MLK day -- no class
22-Jan “Science as a Vocation”
24-Jan “Science as a Vocation”

Week 3 – Does modern political science produce political knowledge?
27-Jan “Science as a Vocation”
29-Jan Discuss reading of, reflections on, Strauss and Weber
31-Jan EPA, Intro

Week 4 -- Concepts, EPA Chapter 1
3-Feb Discuss reading
5-Feb Discuss reading
7-Feb Practice exercises

Week 5 -- Variables, EPA Chapter 2
10-Feb Discuss reading
12-Feb Discuss reading
14-Feb Practice exercises
Chapter 1 and 2 exercises due
Concept Assignment due

Week 6 – Research example: TBD
17-Feb Discuss reading
19-Feb Discuss reading
21-Feb Discuss reading

Week 7 -- Hypotheses, EPA Chapter 3
24-Feb Discuss reading
26-Feb Discuss reading
28-Feb Practice exercises

Week 8 -- Research Design, EPA Chapter 4
2-Mar    Discuss reading
4-Mar    Discuss reading
6-Mar    Chapter 3 and 4 exercises due
          Research Question and Hypothesis Assignment due
          
          Spring Break

Week 9 -- Controlled Comparisons, EPA Chapter 5
16-Mar    Discuss reading
18-Mar    Discuss reading
20-Mar    Practice exercises

Week 10 -- Foundations of Statistical Inference, EPA Chapter 6
23-Mar    Discuss reading
25-Mar    Discuss reading
27-Mar    Engaging with the literature
          Research design assignment due
          Chapter 5 and 6 exercises due

Week 11 -- Tests of Significance and Measures of Association, EPA Chapter 7
30-Mar    Discuss reading
1-Apr     Discuss reading
3-Apr     Practice exercises

Week 12 -- Continue from previous week
6-Apr     Discuss reading
8-Apr     Practice exercises
          Literature Review Assignment due
          Chapter 7 exercises due
10-Apr    Spring Holiday -- no class

Week 13 -- Correlation and Linear Regression, EPA Chapter 8
13-Apr    Discuss reading
15-Apr    Practice exercises
17-Apr    No class

Week 14 -- Presentations
20-Apr    Group A
22-Apr    Group B
24-Apr    No class
Week 15  Workshop Final Papers
27-Apr  Workshop
29-Apr  Workshop
1-May   Workshop

**Final Paper due Wednesday,
May 6th @ 12:30pm**

Political Science Program Student Learning Objectives

(SLO 1) Students will demonstrate critical reading and critical writing skills relating to Political Science subjects.

(SLO 2) Students will demonstrate technical and analytic skills that are appropriate to Political Science and applicable to their future academic and career aspirations.

(SLO 3) Student will demonstrate awareness of ethical and moral dilemmas relating to Political Science.

(SLO 4) To demonstrate comprehension of significant political phenomena at either the sub-national, national, or inter-national level.