Introduction to Political Research
PSCI 2300-001, Fall 2017
Monday & Wednesday 1:00-2:20 PM, Gateway 141

INSTRUCTOR:
Professor Regina Branton
138 Wooten Hall, (940) 565-4960
branton@unt.edu
Office Hours: M/W 11:00pm-12:30pm, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course will introduce students to the methods of social science inquiry, focusing on
building theoretical arguments, organizing and analyzing data, and interpreting and 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 OBJECTIVES
By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- Formulate research questions and hypotheses
- Design a research project involving data analysis
- Employ basic statistical methods to test hypotheses about politics.

Teaching Assistant (TA): 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! Ron McGauvran will be
your TA. His email is: RonaldMcgaevran@my.unt.edu His office is located in Wooten Hall
Room 140. His office hours are: M/W 2:30-3:30.

REQUIRED MATERIAL:

Readings Archived on Course Blackboard. You are responsible for accessing the readings
in the “Readings” section of Blackboard.

RECOMMENDED MATERIAL:
Reef Polling: Engagement, participation and interaction are important elements of the learning process. To that end, we will be using REEF Polling, so each student must be registered to REEF and have a device (computer, smartphone or tablet) for polling responses for this course. Because REEF is flexible across devices, you may participate by choosing one of the two options below:

1. REEF Polling app: You may use your own smartphone or tablet by downloading the REEF app available for iOS and Android

2. REEF Polling website app.reef-education.com for browser-based use

With either option, you will create an account with REEF, enter your EUID (your Blackboard login ID) in the Student ID (optional) space, select University of North Texas as your institution, and search for each course in which you will use REEF. Licenses for REEF at UNT-Denton are provided for your use at no cost to you.

Academic Dishonesty and Reef: To addresses issues of academic dishonesty, I have created a unique security code that will be embedded in each lecture. You are required to enter this security code to receive REEF credit and to verify that you are physically in class. If you are caught participating in REEF polling but are not physically in the classroom you will be in violation of the Academic Integrity policy. Additionally, if you are caught transmitting the security code to other students you will be in violation of the Academic Integrity policy. Further, if anyone witnesses a student using more than one device to respond to Reef polling, the student will immediately be removed from class. Responding for another student is a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. The first time a student is found to violate the Academic Integrity Policy involving Reef Polling s/he will receive a “0” on the Reef assignment and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. The second time a student is found to violate the Academic Integrity Policy involving Reef Polling s/he will automatically receive an “F” in class and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Reef Polling (10% of course grade): This course relies on Reef Polling to encourage interaction during class periods. The first Reef question is given within the first 5 minutes of class and the last one during the closing segment. Your grade for this section is a percentage of times you “click” in. We use Reef polling every day in this course for public opinion polls
and questions about assigned material. If you have registered it properly for the first two weeks of classes, you receive EXTRA CREDIT! You must register on-line. **MISSING Reef QUESTIONS CANNOT BE MADE UP.** Do not ask for credit if you are in class but do not have access to your Reef account. I do not give credit for missed questions.

**Problem Sets (worth 15%):** There will be approximately 3 to 4 problem sets. 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. Student 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.** 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-8pm. Email: helpdesk@unt.edu.

**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.**

**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 BB.

**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 2 pages 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 18th and counts as 5% of your final grade. **Late assignments will not be accepted.**

**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 10-12 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 your 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)
and upload the final paper to your account on or before December 6\. 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 6\. The paper counts for 20% of your final grade. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Course Grading Scale:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>100-90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>89.9-80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>79.9-70</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69.9-60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60%</td>
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Accommodations (ODA/ADA)
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. The Political Science Department cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Please present your written accommodation request on or before the add/drop deadline. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Department of Political Science–POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNTs policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and sabotage). Academic Integrity is defined in the UNT Policy on Student Standards for Academic Integrity. Any suspected case of Academic Dishonesty will be handled in accordance with the University Policy and procedures. Possible academic penalties range from a verbal or written admonition to a grade of F in the course. Further sanctions may apply to incidents involving major violations. You will find the policy and procedures at: http:// facultysuccess.unt.edu/academic-integrity Violations of academic integrity in this course will addressed in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy. Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT The UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16 “Student Standards of Academic Integrity.”

Department of Political Science–POLICY ON CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM
The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines cheating and plagiarism as the use of unauthorized books, notes, or otherwise securing help in a test; copying others’ tests, assignments, reports, or term papers; representing the work of another as one’s own; collaborating without authority with another student during an examination or in preparing aca-
ademic work; or otherwise practicing scholastic dishonesty. Normally, the minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is a grade of “F” in the course. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course, or by the field faculty in the case of departmental exams.

**Blackboard**
A Blackboard conference is maintained for this course at www.learn.unt.edu. Students are responsible for checking Blackboard for assignments and notices. You should check Blackboard at least every 48 hours to ensure that you are up to date on all class related information. Quizzes and assignments (discussed in more detail below) will be submitted on Blackboard and student grades will be posted on Blackboard.

**Communication and E-mail**
When e-mailing the course personnel, please include the course number (PSCI 2300) 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 Mr. McGauvran”) Please articulate the content of your message clearly—do not use text message or instant message speak. Finally, before you e-mail the TA or the instructor, you should review the syllabus and the course’s Blackboard page—it is very likely that you can find an answer to your question(s) by examining the course materials. I strongly encourage you to e-mail from your UNT EagleConnect account to ensure that your message is not caught by a spam filter.

If I need to contact you by e-mail, I will send e-mail to your UNT EagleConnect account. Each student MUST check their UNT email account regularly or set-up email forwarding so you will receive all course-related messages. It is your responsibility to ensure that you receive any and all messages I send to the class.

**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 classroom 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.

Please refrain from using cell phones, iPhones, iPods, and the like, talking during lectures (unless recognized by the instructor), reading newspapers, falling asleep, etc. If you need a cell phone for emergency purposes, leave it on vibrate. If you use a laptop/ipad, please be sure the audio is off. I reserve the right to revoke the privilege of using devices if it interferes with the classroom environment or if it disrupts other students. Any student creating substantial
disruption will be asked to leave. For repeat offenders, potential sanctions include dropping you from the class or giving you an “F” for the course. If you bring food or drink to class with you, be sure to dispose of it properly and do not make a mess for your classmates!

REQUIRED READING:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 28</td>
<td>The Scientific Study of Politics</td>
<td>“Intro to the Class”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug 30</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>K&amp;W Ch 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>The Scientific Study of Politics</td>
<td>Labor Day</td>
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<td>Sept 6</td>
<td>No Class</td>
<td>K&amp;W Ch 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 11-13</td>
<td>Theory Building</td>
<td>K&amp;W Ch 2</td>
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<td>Sept 18-20</td>
<td>Causal Relationships</td>
<td>K&amp;W Ch 3</td>
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<td>Sept 25-27</td>
<td>Research Design &amp; Measurement</td>
<td>K&amp;W Ch 4, Pollock Ch 1</td>
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<td>Oct 2-4</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Wheelan Chapter 2-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 9-11</td>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
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<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>EXAM 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>Wheelan Ch 7-10</td>
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<td>Oct 23-25</td>
<td>Bivariate Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>Wheelan Ch 4, 11-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 30-Nov 1</td>
<td>Bivariate Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>Pollock Ch 7</td>
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<td>Nov 6-8</td>
<td>Multivariate Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>J&amp;R 538-568</td>
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<td>Nov 13-15</td>
<td>Multivariate Hypothesis Testing</td>
<td>J&amp;R 538-568</td>
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<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 22-Dec 6</td>
<td>Lab Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Written Assignment #2 DUE</td>
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Revision to Syllabus
I reserve the authority to change requirements by providing you with a 48 hour notice in class and on Blackboard. You are responsible for any changes that occur during the semester.