POLS 209: Introduction to Political Science Research
Fall 2025 (Updated)

Professor	Ilayda B. Onder, Assistant Professor of Political Science
Office Hours	Mon. & Wed. 4:30-5:30 PM
Office	ALLN 3046
Email	ilaydaonder@tamu.edu

	Teaching Assistant	Office Hours	Office	Email
Sec. 900	Muge Acarlar	Fri 1:00-2:00 PM	ALLN 3030A	mugeacarlar@tamu.edu
Sec. 901	Zhishuo Fu	Fri 10:45–11:45 AM	ALLN 3067B	fuzhishuo@tamu.edu
Sec. 902 & 903	Erik Chi	Mon 10:00-11:00 AM	ALLN 3045	erikchi@tamu.edu
Sec. 904 & 905	Nathan McCoslin	Tue/Thu 2:00-3:00 PM	ALLN 3045	nathanmccoslin@tamu.edu
Sec. 908 & 910	Reshi Rajan	Mon 12:00-1:00 PM	ALLN 3105	rrajan@tamu.edu
Sec. 911 & 912	Jake Turner	Fri 2:30-4:30 PM	ALLN 3105	jaketurner@tamu.edu

Lectures

Date & Time	Mon. & Wed. 3-3:50 PM
Room	BLOC 102

Lab Sessions

Section 900	Friday 2:25-3:15 PM, ALLN 2002
Section 901	Friday 9:45-10:35 AM, ALLN 2002
Section 902	Friday 10:55-11:45 AM, ALLN 2003
Section 903	Friday 12:05-12:55 PM, ALLN 2003
Section 904	Friday 8:35-9:25 AM, ALLN 2002
Section 905	Friday 1:15-2:05 PM, ALLN 2003
Section 908	Friday 10:55-11:45 AM, ALLN 2002
Section 910	Friday 2:25-3:15 PM, ALLN 2003
Section 911	Friday 12:05-12:55 PM, ALLN 2002
Section 912	Friday 1:15-2:05 PM, ALLN 2002

Course Description

"Wait hang on. I'm studying politics... why do I need to know about scientific research and quantitative analysis?" "I just want to know why people vote or why some countries experience civil wars but not others or whether trade increases inequality." The reason why you need to know about quantitative analysis is that anything that we can observe can be turned into data and data can be analyzed quantitatively to help us learn about the world of politics. Hence quantitative data and statistics have become invaluable tools for social scientists.

The primary goal of this course is to teach you how to turn things into data, analyze them using statistics, and make inferences using statistical analysis about real-world issues. The syllabus lists some more specific course objectives below, but the "big picture" purpose of this course is to give you the foundational quantitative tools you may need to answer questions about the political and social scientific phenomena you are interested in.

We will spend part of the course discussing how to generate hypotheses and design research in a way that allows you to answer research questions using quantitative data. We will learn about various statistical techniques for analyzing data and testing hypotheses. Yes, that means we will do some math. And yes, that means we will use computer software (R and RStudio specifically) to visualize and analyze data as well. Throughout the semester, you will also design and carry out an independent research project to test your own theory about a topic of your own choosing. My goal is to help you develop a statistical literacy that will help you become a conscientious and critical consumer of news, political events, and scientific research. Hopefully, the skills you acquire in this class will also assist you to develop competency in the technical tools you may need to compete in an increasingly large-N, data-driven world.

The course material will not always be easy, but it also does not have to be scary either. You do not need a background in mathematics, statistics, or R (or any other coding language) to succeed in this class because we will go step by step. Your TAs will make sure to introduce you to the basics of statistics and R during your Friday meetings.

Course Prerequisites

Prerequisite/Corequisite(s): Political science majors must have completed POLS 209 before they enroll in their last 18 hours of 300- and 400-level POLS courses; may take no more than 6 hours of upper division (300- and 400-level courses) before completing POLS 209; political science majors.

Special Course Designation

ACST—OPEN—UWRT

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, the learner will be able to:

- Explain how political scientists use statistical methods to test theories.
- Analyze and critically evaluate the use of inferential statistics in applied settings.
- Think probabilistically about evidence for or against a hypothesis.
- Use data visualization and statistical techniques–including measures of central tendency and dispersion, hypothesis testing, linear regression, and logistic regression–to analyze data and answer questions about political phenomena.
- Interpret the results of statistical analyses to lay audiences both orally and in writing.
- Apply these techniques as part of an original study that tests a theory about some political phenomenon.

Textbook and/or Resource Materials

- (Required) Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3rd Edition. Hereafter referred to as "KW".

- (Recommended) Wheelan, Charles. *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data.* (This is a ridiculously casual and accessible way to learn about statistics, so it will be a useful supplement if the required chapter reading is too technical.)

In addition to these books, there are also journal articles in political science. We will be discussing the research design and methodological approaches of these articles. Focus on the research design and methodology sections of the articles, so there is no need to read all of the contents. These articles are available on Canvas. You can also access the readings beside KW via our course's GitHub repository at https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/tree/Readings

Additional Instructional Materials

Technology and Software

The course relies heavily on using the computer and software. I will provide tutorials to install and run the programs. The tutorials will be available on Canvas. In addition, your TAs will help you install and run these programs in your first Friday session.

- **Computer/Laptop:** You will use computers almost every day during your Friday meetings. Please do not forget to bring a computer to your Friday sessions with your TAs. You are welcome to bring your own laptop or rent one from the library.
- **R:** is the programming language we will use for our analyses. You can download it from: https://cloud.r-project.org/. Your TAs will help you download R to your computers in your first Friday meeting. If you run into any problem when downloading or installing R, let me know immediately after our first class meeting.
- **RStudio:** is the software that provides the interface to look at code output and visualization. You must install R before RStudio. You can download RStudio from: https://posit.co/download/rstudio-desktop/. Your TAs will help you download RStudio to your computers in your first Friday meeting. If you run into any problem when downloading or installing RStudio, let me know immediately after our first class meeting.

Other Resources

- Google is your friend. If you are stuck with an error or question, try googling first to find a guide online.
- If you google an issue, you may find questions for similar issues on Stack Overflow. This is a community for R users to help each other and provide guides to resolve issues. You can access Stack Overflow via https://stackoverflow.com.
- There are many free online tools to help you familiarize yourself with R and statistics. They can help you as a reference tool. Here are some examples:
  - https://ourcodingclub.github.io/tutorials.html
  - https://www.statmethods.net/r-tutorial/index.html
  - https://www.cyclismo.org/tutorial/R/input.html

- We will do assignments (lab reports) using pre-existing datasets. For each assignment, I will post GitHub website links that contain the data we will use on Canvas. You can easily download our data from GitHub. You can also access the GitHub repository via https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/branches.

Grading Policy

Most class periods have designated readings (see Schedule below) which largely come from the KW textbook. As we move further into the semester, you will also have some short academic articles to read. These academic articles typically exemplify the use of the statistics or methods we will discuss in that class period. Pay particular attention to the methods and results section in these papers and think about whether they are good choices for answering the research question the author poses. The assigned readings should be completed before the class day under which they are listed. They are required. Note, however, that in some cases I specify that a reading can just be "skimmed."

Your final grade will be based on 4 components: Lab Reports, Exams, Final Project, and Attendance.

Lab Reports (40%)

There are 5 lab reports for you to practice with real data. You will be allowed to work on your lab reports during Friday's lab sessions where TAs will be available to answer your questions. Lab reports are meant to assess your understanding of the material and allow you to ask questions and seek help from TAs or your peers before solving similar problems in exam settings. You will submit each lab assignment on Canvas. You can access the lab report assignments via our course's GitHub repository.

- Describing and Visualizing Data Labs will be held on September 19 (Friday) and September 26 (Friday).
  Lab Report Due on October 1 (Wednesday).
  https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/tree/Lab-Report-1

- Hypothesis Testing Lab will be held on October 10 (Friday).
  Lab Report Due on October 15 (Wednesday).
  https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/tree/Lab-Report-2

- Manipulating Data Lab will be held on October 31 (Friday).
  Lab Report Due on November 5 (Wednesday).
  https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/tree/Lab-Report-3

- Regression Labs will be held on November 7 (Friday) and November 14 (Friday).
  Lab Report Due on November 19 (Wednesday).
  https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/tree/Lab-Report-4

- Logistic Regression Lab will be held on November 21 (Friday).
  Lab Report Due on November 26 (Wednesday).
  https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/tree/Lab-Report-5

Exams (30%)

There will be two exams (15% and 15% respectively). I will provide further details later, but for now, they will involve the use of R. I will hold review sessions before each exam in class. The exams will have multiple choice and open answer questions and the second exam will not be cumulative.

- **Midterm Exam:** October 20 (Monday)
- **Final Exam:** TBD

Final Project (25%)

As we learn how to conduct quantitative political science research this semester, you will complete your own original research project. To help you get started and reduce the time and energy involved in topic selection and data collection, you will choose from a list of 15-20 political science research questions that I will provide. Each research question comes with a ready-to-use dataset, which you can analyze to test your own hypotheses. These topics span a wide range of substantive areas in political science, so you'll have the flexibility to select something that aligns with your interests. The research questions and their associated datasets are listed in the instructions for your "Final Project Checkpoint 1: Topic and Hypothesis" assignment, available at https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/blob/Final-Project/Final_Project_Checkpoint_1.pdf. This document also includes the download links for each dataset.

Throughout the semester, you will develop your research in stages, supported by structured checkpoints. You will complete three preliminary assignments submitted via Canvas by their designated due dates: 1) your topic/hypothesis; 2) a codebook and data description; and 3) a preliminary analysis. Your TAs will guide you through each of these steps during Friday lab sessions. Please note that you will not be writing a traditional research paper. Instead, your final deliverable will be a research poster, submitted online (no printing required).

More details about each of the three checkpoint assignments as well as a rubric for your final poster will be made available on Canvas and our course's GitHub repository at https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/tree/Final-Project. We will also go over the final grading rubric in class towards the end of the semester.

- **Topic and Hypothesis Due:** September 17 (Wednesday)
  https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/blob/Final-Project/Final_Project_Checkpoint_1.pdf
- **Codebook and Data Description Due:** October 29 (Wednesday)
  https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/blob/Final-Project/Final_Project_Checkpoint_2.pdf
- **Preliminary Analysis Due:** December 8 (Monday)
  https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/blob/Final-Project/Final_Project_Checkpoint_3.pdf
- **Final Poster Due:** December 11 (Thursday)
  https://github.com/ilaydaonder/POLS209/blob/Final-Project/Final_Project_Poster.pdf

Attendance (5%)

Consistent attendance to lectures is one way to help you master the materials more quickly. Attendance is important because you will be more likely to learn, understand, and retain material with which you are actively engaged. I will take attendance using very short quizzes on Canvas at the beginning of each lecture.

Grading Scale

A	90 to 100%
B	80 to 89.99%
C	70 to 79.99%
D	60 to 69.99%
F	below 59.99%

Note that the decimal points here are meaningful. An 89.98% is a B; it does not automatically round up to an A. I recognize that cutoffs are arbitrary, but I have to set them nonetheless, and they apply to everyone. If you are reading this, please send me an email by 5 pm on the first day of class with your name, your major, and how many years you have completed at Texas A&M, and I will award you an extra credit point.

Late Work Policy

Work submitted by a student as makeup work for an excused absence is not considered late work and is exempt from the late work policy (Student Rule 7).

Due Dates

All assignments are due by 5pm on the assigned due date unless stated otherwise. For now we will have all assignments uploaded to Canvas. If this turns out to be a disaster we'll change to something else.

Assignment Submissions

All assignments are to be submitted on Canvas. For R assignments, you must submit on Canvas both the code file (.R format) and the output file with the results produced and neatly presented. Points are deducted if you are missing the required files.

Late Assignments and Extensions

Assignments not submitted by the designated due date/time are late. Late submissions will be accepted but with a one-half grade (5%) per day (including weekends) penalty. All assignments must be completed to pass the course. Extensions will be granted in severe circumstances. If you feel you need an extension, please contact me at least 24 hours before the due date.

Long-term Absences

If you need to be away from class for an extended period either due to an illness or family matter, contact me.

Course Schedule

Below you will find a detailed list of class meetings, the topic we will cover, and assignments. You should complete reading and homework assignments before coming to class unless specifically listed otherwise. If any deviations from this schedule are necessary, I will let you know. In the table below, the rows for Friday's lab sessions are boxed for easier reference.

Date	**Topic and Readings**
August 25 (Mon)	Introduction Read: this syllabus.
August 27 (Wed)	Conducting Political "Science" (and social sciences in general) Read: Kellstedt & Whitten Textbook (KW) Chapter 1 (pages 1-21) Read: KW 2.5-2.6 (pages 33-41)
August 29 (Fri)	Downloading and Installing R and RStudio Read: Notes on R. Available on CANVAS. Install the following two programs on your computer: (1) R and (2) RStudio (in that order). **BRING YOUR COMPUTERS!**
September 1 (Mon)	**NO CLASS – Labor Day.**
September 3 (Wed)	Causation and Research Design I Read: KW Chapter 4 (pages 77-100)
September 5 (Fri)	Introduction to R **BRING YOUR COMPUTERS!**
September 8 (Mon)	Causation and Research Design II Read: KW Chapter 4 (pages 77-100)
September 10 (Wed)	Measurement Read: KW 5.1-5.3 (pages 104-115) Skim: Eck Kristine and Christopher J. Fariss. 2018. "Ill Treatment and Torture in Sweden." *Journal of Human Rights* 40: 591-604. Available on CANVAS.
September 12 (Fri)	Final Project Topic and Hypothesis Lab Think about a few research topics and what you hypothesize to find. You will discuss them with your TAs.

September 15 (Mon)	Data Collection and Operationalization Read: KW 6.1-6.2.3 (pages 125-129) Read: Wheelan Chapter 7. Available on CANVAS.
September 17 (Wed)	Central Tendency Read: Burden, Barry C., Yoshikuni Ono, and Masahiro Yamada. 2017. "Reassessing Public Support for a Female President." *Journal of Politics* 79: 1073-1078. Available on CANVAS. (Recommended) Skim: Wheelan Chapter 3. Available on CANVAS. **DUE (Final Project): Project Topic and Hypothesis**
September 19 (Fri)	Describing Data Lab Work on the first half of your first lab report with your TAs.
September 22 (Mon)	Dispersion Read: KW 6.2.4-6.6 (pages 130 - 140) (Recommended) Skim: Wheelan Chapter 3. Available on CANVAS.
September 24 (Wed)	Data Visualization
September 26 (Fri)	Data Visualization Lab Work on the second half of your first lab report with your TAs.
September 29 (Mon)	Introduction to Probability and Inference Read: KW Chapter 7 Read: Carl Zimmer. 2014. "Why We Can't Rule Out Bigfoot" Available at https://nautil.us/why-we-cant-rule-out-bigfoot-235033/
October 1 (Wed)	Confidence Intervals and One-Sample Tests Read: KW 8.3 (pages 163-166) and 8.4.2 (pages 173-178) Play with: "Central Limit Theorem" https://seeing-theory.brown.edu/probability-distributions/index.html#section3 Play with: "Confidence Intervals" https://seeing-theory.brown.edu/frequentist-inference/index.html#section2 **DUE (Lab Report 1): Data Description and Visualization Lab Report**
October 3 (Fri)	Open Lab Session Take some time to review your first lab report with your TAs. It's a great opportunity to better understand where points were lost and how to strengthen future reports.

October 6 (Mon)	Bivariate Hypothesis Testing and Statistical Significance Read: KW (pages 163-178) Read: Licklider, Roy. 1995. "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars." *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 681-690. Available on CANVAS.
October 8 (Wed)	Difference of Means and Statistical Significance Read: KW (pages 163-178) Read: Licklider, Roy. 1995. "The Consequences of Negotiated Settlements in Civil Wars." *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 681-690. Available on CANVAS.
October 10 (Fri)	Hypothesis Testing Lab Work on your second lab report with your TAs.
October 13 (Mon)	**NO CLASS – Fall Break.**
October 15 (Wed)	Midterm Review in Class **DUE (Lab Report 2): Hypothesis Testing Lab Report**
October 17 (Fri)	Midterm Review with TAs Ask your R-related questions to your TAs in preparation of the midterm.
October 20 (Mon)	**MIDTERM EXAM**
October 22 (Wed)	Correlation and Covariation Read: KW 8.4.3 (pages 178-184) Read: Inglehart, Ronald. 2003. "How Solid is Mass Support for Democracy–And How Can We Measure It?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 36: 51-57. Available on CANVAS.
October 24 (Fri)	Codebook and Data Description Lab Work on your final project's codebook and data descriptions with your TAs.
October 27 (Mon)	Bivariate Regression I Read: Wheelan Chapter 11. Available on Canvas
October 29 (Wed)	Bivariate Regression II Read: KW Chapter 9 (pages 188-212) Skim: Lyall, Jason. 2009. "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 53(3): 331-332. Available on CANVAS. **DUE (Final Project): Project Codebook and Data Description**

October 31 (Fri)	Manipulating Data Lab Work on your third lab report with your TAs.

November 3 (Mon)	Multivariate Regression Read: KW 10.1-10.6 (pages 215-228) and 10.8 (pages 233-236) Read: Canelo, Kayla S., Thomas G. Hansford, and Stephen P. Nicholson. 2018. "The Paradoxical Effect of Speech-Suppressing Appeals to the First Amendment." *Journal of Politics* 80: 309-313. Available on CANVAS.
November 5 (Wed)	Model Specification and Statistical Control Read: KW 10.7 (pages 228-233) and 11.1-11.3 (pages 246-258) **DUE (Lab Report 3): Manipulating Data Lab Report**

November 7 (Fri)	Regression Lab I Work on your fourth lab report with your TAs.

November 10 (Mon)	**NO CLASS – Instructor at conference**
November 12 (Wed)	**NO CLASS – Instructor at conference.**

November 14 (Fri)	Regression Lab II Work on your fourth lab report with your TAs.

November 17 (Mon)	Multicollinearity and Outliers Read: KW 11.4-11.5 (pages 258-270) Skim: Crabtree, Charles and Matt Golder. 2016. "Party System Volatility in Post-Communist Europe." *British Journal of Political Science* 47(1): 229-234. Available on CANVAS.
November 19 (Wed)	Logistic Regression Read: KW 12.2 (pages 274-282) Skim: Fearon, James D., and David Laitin. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 108: 588-604. Available on CANVAS. **DUE (Lab Report 4): Regression Lab Report**

November 21 (Fri)	Logistic Regression Lab Work on your fifth lab report with your TAs.

November 24 (Mon)	Research Ethics
November 26 (Wed)	**NO CLASS – Reading Day.** **DUE (Lab Report 5): Logistic Regression Lab Report**
November 28 (Fri)	**NO LAB SESSION – Thanksgiving Holiday**
December 1 (Mon)	Poster Stuff
December 3 (Wed)	Review for Final I
December 5 (Fri)	Preliminary Analysis for Final Project Lab Work on your final project's preliminary analysis with your TAs.
December 8 (Mon)	Review for Final II **DUE (Final Project): Preliminary Analysis**

By 5:00 PM CST on **THURSDAY DECEMBER 11**, EVERYONE must upload the following to CANVAS:

- Poster file
- Replication Data
- R code (clean and commented .R file)

Finals Week: December 11-16

Final Exam	TBD

Additional Course Information

Syllabus Changes Policy

This syllabus is subject to change. However, per university policy, the number of assignments, type of assignments, and the percentage each assignment contributes to the final grade will not change. Reading assignments may be adjusted, and the dates of exams or other assignments may be modified if necessary. In the event of any changes, students will be given prior written notification (via email or the learning management system).

How to be Successful?

Students come to this course with varied skills and interests in the design of research and applied statistics. I will do my best to make the material as accessible and easy to digest as possible. This requires you to do your part as well. Here are my tips for you:

- Read before class and come to class with any questions you have.
- Participate in class. At a minimum, attend class, but actively participating is another way to engage the material (see above).
- Do practice problems outside of class. There are some practice exercises at the end of each book chapter (KW).
- I, as well as your TAs, will hold weekly office hours. COME TO OFFICE HOURS AND ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT. Students that come to office hours often do very well in class. Coming to office hours does not mean you aren't smart; it means you care about this class.
- Take handwritten notes during class and while reading/watching the assigned material. Multiple studies also show that handwritten notes improve retention and improve understanding of material better than typed notes. When we get closer to exam time, re-organizing your handwritten notes by typing them up is also a good study strategy. However, I will never penalize you for taking notes on your computer.
- Study regularly. Many students cram their studying before an exam. An alternative strategy is to dedicate a little bit of time every other day or so to just reading through your notes. If you do this, you will find that studying before exams is far less stressful and usually you'll do better on them too.

Office Hours

I, as well as your TAs, will hold weekly office hours. If you need help with the material, come to office hours as much as you can. Our office and weekly office hours are listed at the top of page 1 of this syllabus. Students who come to office hours do the best in class.

Peer Collaboration

Working together is encouraged. You should definitely collaborate on your assignments. However, when submitting the assignments, the final work must be your own. This means that you must type in and produce your own results in R; you must write the written assignments yourself; and you must complete your own final projects. YOU MAY NOT COLLABORATE ON EXAMS.

Academic Dishonesty

Do not cheat. There are more details in the Academic Integrity section, but if you are unsure whether what you are doing is cheating, ask me. I do not tolerate academic dishonesty, and claiming ignorance about what cheating entails will not excuse you from the appropriate consequences.

Technology Support

Technology Services (IT) - Main Campus

Hours: 24/7
Phone: (979) 845-8300
Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu
Call/Chat/Email/Visit: https://it.tamu.edu/help

Canvas LMS Technical Support

Hours: 24/7/365
Phone: (877) 354-4821
Email: support@instructure.com

Support is available by clicking the Help button at the far left in the Canvas global navigation menu. Canvas Resources are also linked on the home page of every Canvas course.

University Policies

This section outlines the university-level policies that must be included in each course syllabus. The TAMU Faculty Senate established the wording of these policies.

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to Student Rule 7 in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to Student Rule 7 in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" (Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" (Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See Student Rule 24.)

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" (Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Texas A&M University is committed to providing safe and non-discriminatory learning, living, and work environments for all members of the University community. The University provides equal opportunity to all employees, students, applicants for employment or admission, and the public, regardless of race, color, sex (including pregnancy and related conditions), religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.

Texas A&M University will promptly, thoroughly, and fairly investigate and resolve all complaints of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), complicity, and related retaliation based on a protected class in accordance with System Regulation 08.01.01, University Rule 08.01.01.M1, Standard Administrative Procedure (SAP) 08.01.01.M1.01, and applicable federal and state laws. In accordance with Title IX and its implementing regulations, Texas A&M does not discriminate on the basis of sex in any educational program or activity, including admissions and employment.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding the non-discrimination policies: Jennifer M. Smith, TAMU Associate VP & Title IX Coordinator at YMCA Ste 108, College Station, TX 77843, 979-458-8407, or email civilrights@tamu.edu. For other reporting options, visit the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights Complaint Assessment System to locate the address and phone number of the office that serves your area, or call 1-800-421-3481.

Civil Rights, Free Speech, and Title IX Policies

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit discrimination and harassment based on an individual's race, color, sex, (including pregnancy and related conditions), religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, or any other legally protected characteristic. This includes forms of sex-based violence, such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, sexual exploitation, dating/domestic violence, and stalking.

Students can report discrimination/harassment, access supportive resources, or learn more about their options for resolving complaints on the University's Civil Rights & Title IX webpage.

Students should be aware that all university employees (except medical or mental health providers) are mandatory reporters, which means that if they observe, experience or become aware of an incident that they reasonably believe to be discrimination/harassment alleged to have been

committed by or against a person who was a student or employee at the time of the incident, the employee must report the incident to the university.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to, attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability-related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

To request academic accommodations, contact the designated ADA office based on your location:

- Texas A&M University, College of Nursing, College of Dentistry, Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy College Station, College of Medicine, School of Public Health, Institute of Biosciences and Technology, EnMed Program, Bush School in Washington DC, Mays Business School – CityCentre, TAMU Engineering Academies, Texas A&M University Higher Education Center at McAllen and Texas A&M University at Galveston should contact Disability Resources at (979) 845-1637 or disability@tamu.edu.
- Texas A&M University School of Law should contact the Office of Student Affairs at (817) 212-4111 or law-disability@law.tamu.edu to request accommodations.
- Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy in Kingsville should contact the Disability Resource Center at Texas A&M University-Kingsville at (361) 593-3024 or drc.center@tamuk.edu to request accommodations.
- Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences in Canyon should contact the Office of Student Accessibility at West Texas A&M University – Canyon at (806) 651-2335 or osa@wtamu.edu.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your approved accommodations, contact the office responsible for approving your accommodations or the Texas A&M ADA Coordinator Julie Kuder at ADA.Coordinator@tamu.edu or (979) 458-8407.

Pregnancy Accommodations

Texas A&M provides reasonable accommodations to students due to pregnancy and/or related conditions, such as childbirth, recovery, and lactation. Students should contact the University's Pregnancy Coordinator as soon as they become aware of the need for accommodation. Depending on the circumstances, accommodations could include extended time to complete assignments or exams, changes in course sequence, or modifications to the physical classroom environment.

Texas A&M will also allow a voluntary leave of absence, ensure the availability of lactation space, and maintain grievance procedures to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints of sex discrimination. For information regarding pregnancy accommodations, email TIX.Pregnancy@tamu.edu.

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors influencing a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care practices by utilizing the resources and services available through University Health Services. The TELUS Health Student Support app provides access to professional counseling in multiple languages anytime, anywhere by phone or chat, and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers 24-hour emergency support at 988 or 988lifeline.org.

Texas A&M College Station

Students needing a listening ear can contact University Health Services at 979.458.4584. Call 911 or visit your nearest emergency room if you are currently experiencing a life-threatening situation or if your safety is at risk. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988) or at 988lifeline.org.

Statement on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records by limiting access to these records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings.

Currently enrolled students wishing to withhold any or all directory information items can do so within howdy.tamu.edu using the Directory Information Withholding Form. The complete FERPA Notice to Students and the student records policy is available on the Office of the Registrar webpage.

Items that can never be identified as public information are a student's social security number, citizenship, gender, grades, GPR, or class schedule. All efforts will be made in this class to protect your privacy and to ensure confidential treatment of information associated with or generated by your participation in the class.

Directory items include name, UIN, local address, permanent address, email address, local telephone number, permanent telephone number, dates of attendance, program of study (college, major, campus), classification, previous institutions attended, degrees, honors and awards received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, medical residence location, and medical residence specialization.

College and Department Policies

Department Statement on Course Content

As a department, we are committed to scholarly rigor, open inquiry, and the scientific study of politics. Political science, as an academic discipline, seeks to understand the political world through systematic analysis, empirical evidence, and theoretical frameworks—not through partisan or ideological advocacy.

In our courses, you may encounter readings, data, or arguments that challenge your assumptions or present perspectives from across the political spectrum. These materials are included not as endorsements of any viewpoint, but because they help illuminate how political questions can be analyzed, debated, and understood through evidence-based inquiry.

Our goal is to help you develop the skills to evaluate claims critically, identify assumptions and limitations, and engage constructively with competing arguments. We value respectful, rigorous

discussion and welcome questions about how knowledge in political science is produced, contested, and applied.

If you have concerns about course content or the framing of particular materials, we encourage you to discuss them with your professors in class or during office hours. By fostering a learning environment grounded in intellectual curiosity and academic integrity, we aim to prepare students to think analytically, argue persuasively, and engage in political debate with both openness and rigor.

Department Statement on Classroom Community and Respect

In this course, every voice in the classroom contributes valuable perspectives to our discussions. All students and the instructor are expected to:

- respect the experiences, beliefs, and values that each person brings to our learning community,
- engage in thoughtful, reasoned discussion while refraining from derogatory comments about individuals, cultures, groups, or viewpoints,
- treat each other with respect and use respectful language in all interactions,
- foster a learning and scholarly environment that is open, respectful, and welcoming to all individuals.

Free Speech and Civil Discourse

Texas A&M recognizes that the pursuit of truth through open and robust discourse is critical to academic inquiry. However, as a community of scholars, the university has an aspirational expectation that such discourse will be conducted in accordance with Aggie Core Values. In this "marketplace of ideas," we encourage civil dialogue creating an environment that allows individuals to express their ideas and to have their ideas challenged in respectful and responsible ways. Students can learn more about Freedom of Expression and Free Speech on the University's website about the First Amendment.

AI Statement

With the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, the ways in which we define our creative processes continue to transform. AI generators are rapidly evolving from simple editing for grammatical errors and spelling mistakes (Grammarly, MS Word Spell Check) to sophisticated text production (ChatGPT, Google Bard, etc.), as well as image, computer code, and audio generation. The presence of such tools, however, does not replace our need to learn how to draft, revise, and reflect on texts, programs, drawings and how to exercise information literacy and personal responsibility in how we locate, evaluate, incorporate, and cite primary/ secondary sources. For example, the Association for Writing Across the Curriculum states the following:

> *Writing to learn is an intellectual activity that is crucial to the cognitive and social development of learners and writers. This vital activity cannot be replaced by AI language generators (AWAC).*

Engaging in the various aspects of creative pursuits (e.g., writing, coding, drawing) is critical to education in a broad sense. While AI technologies will continue shaping how we approach these creative tasks, the critical work of creativity relies on integrity, originality, and ethical conduct in regard to appropriate representation as an author or creator. Thus, submitting work with a significant percentage of AI-generated content, unless otherwise permitted, can be considered academic misconduct under Texas A&M University Student Rule 20. Students must therefore cite the use of Generative AI tools and document what they have contributed to an assignment.

Course-Specific Policy on AI Use

In this course, generative AI use is permitted **ONLY** for the purposes of **debugging R code** for **lab reports** and **final project checkpoint** assignments. It is strictly **NOT** permitted for generating the written text submitted for these assignments. Two important caveats apply:

- AI use of any kind, including for code debugging, is **NOT** permitted during the midterm or final exams.
- Each time you use AI for code debugging in a lab report or final project checkpoint, you must submit the **complete conversation you had with the AI tool** as a supplementary file. AI platforms (e.g., ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc.) allow you to download a copy of your conversation directly from your account history. These conversations must demonstrate that you used AI as a "tutor" to help debug your own code rather than asking AI to produce entire code solutions or assignment text.

Failure to follow these guidelines may constitute academic dishonesty.