

**GOV 679HB, Honors Tutorial Course**  
**Spring 2022**  
**Wednesday 12:00-3:00pm**  
**SZB 2.814**

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## **Course Description and Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to provide support for students as they write their honors thesis. We will start off the semester with some optional intensive introductions to topics of social science methodology, followed by weekly check-ins with small goals and peer reviews. Throughout the semester I will also host optional labs and workshops for those who are interested. We will finish the semester with presentations of your theses.

As students, your main main goal for this course is to finish your thesis. Writing a significant paper is difficult, but the benefit of such a small class is the flexibility. As always, you are encouraged to bring your concerns to me and I will help you find a solution, or connect you with people who can.

I understand that you are taking this class at an unusual time. If a student misses class for whatever reason (e.g. religious commitments, care taking, etc.), they should send me an e-mail in advance and we can make alternate plans. I also understand that students may be unavailable for a longer stretch of classes. I invite the student to discuss these special circumstances during regularly scheduled office hours. Again because of the precarious time in which we're all in this class, the syllabus may change; students who miss class are responsible for learning about any changes to the syllabus.

## **Grading**

Your course grade is based on the following components:

- Advisor's recommend grade
- My assessment of effort and overall project (which would only be used to raise, not lower a recommended grade)

## **Flag Course**

This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write

regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

This course also carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

## Course and University Policies

**Academic Freedom:** I encourage and value student participation. You will no doubt encounter point of views that differ from your own. Students in this class come from a variety of personal and academic backgrounds and these backgrounds may lead to a variety of perspectives on the social world. I believe that having a variety of viewpoints will make our discussions more interesting and will allow us to learn from each other. We will maintain a respectful dialogue even when we disagree and no student's grade will be affected by his or her personal views.

**Changes to Syllabus:** The readings and schedule of the syllabus are subject to change, but any such changes will be noted with an announcement either in class and/or via email, as well as an updated copy of the syllabus posted online at the course website and/or Canvas.

**Disability Accommodations:** Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>. If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring your note to me EARLY in the semester so we can work our arrangements.

**Emergency Evacuation Policy:** In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with "Attn. Mr. Roosevelt

Easley" written in the subject line.

**Late Assignment Policy:** Everyone has times in the semester where they are busy, they are sick, or life catches up to them. To allow for some flexibility in your schedule, you have 2 "late days" built into the schedule. That is, you can, for any reason, turn in an assignment up to 48 hours late. Alternatively, you may use 1 late day on 2 assignments (Anything turned in after the class period where something is due is considered late). These may only be used as whole days (i.e. you can't distribute them as hours late on all assignments). You don't need to explain why they are late. Please just note in your email that you are using your late day(s). These are the only extensions that I will grant during the semester, so if you use them both in the first week, they are gone. [Please see me to discuss any extreme cases of illness and family emergencies.]

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:** Using someone else's work in your own writing without giving proper credit is considered plagiarism, a serious form of academic dishonesty that can result in severe penalties. Copying someone else's work, buying a paper and submitting it as your own, copying and pasting text (even with changes), or borrowing images from an online source, are some examples of plagiarism. Even if you plagiarize accidentally, you can be held responsible and penalized.

Learning to cite sources appropriately is an important part of becoming a professional. When you are unsure about citation, you are encouraged to **ask your instructor** (who is already an expert in the discipline) what is appropriate in the context of your assignment. Consultants at The University Writing Center can also help you determine whether you are citing sources correctly—and they have helpful guides online for using direct quotations and paraphrasing. Reviewing those skills will help you feel confident that you are handling sources professionally in your writing.

You can read the University's definition of plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty in Sec. 11-402 of the Student Conduct Code. For more information, visit the Dean of Students' site.

**Regrading:** Should you wish to challenge a grade you received on a specific assignment, you must (a) write a memo detailing why you deserve more points (i.e. why you came closer to getting the right answer than points reflect) and (b) turn that memo in to me within two weeks of the class receiving the grades. Otherwise, I won't consider challenges to your grade. Once I receive your challenge, I'll regrade the entire assignment.

**Religious holidays:** A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so that arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Technology:** You may use tablets, smartphones, and laptops in this course. Please bring a wireless device to class. However, the use of these devices is for class purposes, not for shopping, being on social media, or making online dinner reservations. I reserve the right to limit or ban electronics if they are distracting to me or class members. Any recording—

audio or visual—of class meetings must be approved by the instructor, and out of courtesy to others in the course, by peers in advance—unless said recordings are part of an Office of Disability Services approved accommodation.

## **Title IX Reporting**

Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:

1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university's relevant policies.

Faculty members and certain staff members are considered "Responsible Employees" or "Mandatory Reporters," which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. We are Responsible Employees and must report any Title IX related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with us, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you want to speak with someone for support or remedies without making an official report to the university, email [advocate@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:advocate@austin.utexas.edu). For more information about reporting options and resources, visit [www.titleix.utexas.edu](http://www.titleix.utexas.edu) or contact the Title IX Office at [titleix@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu).

## **Readings**

There are no required textbooks for this course. Instead, the course Canvas page will include a selection of recommended readings related to methodology, examples of good writing, and other useful resources for finishing your thesis.

In addition, students will be in charge of constructing reading lists for their thesis—if you are having difficulty finding appropriate recourses, please let me know right away. We will also cover strategies for finding relevant books and articles in class.

## **Course Outline and Schedule**

**Week 1.** Catching up.

- Optional: Causality, potential outcomes framework

**Week 2.** Evidence and analysis

- Optional: Probability theory, regression
- **Assignment due:** Semester plan (1 page)

**Week 3.** Writing case studies

- Guest speaker on political theory
- Optional: Qualitative methods
- **Assignment due:** 5 pages

**Week 4.** Peer review

- Optional: Stats lab

**Week 5.** Checking in

- **Assignment due:** 5 pages

**Week 6.** Peer review

- Optional: Stats lab

**Week 7.** Checking in

- **Assignment due:** 5 pages

**Week 8.** Peer review

- Optional: Stats lab

**Week 9.** Spring break

**Week 10.** Checking in

- **Assignment due:** 5 pages

**Week 11.** Peer review

- Optional: Workshopping drafts

**Week 12.** How to present your work

- Optional: L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X/ Beamer workshop

**Week 13.** Rough drafts, editing, prioritization

- Optional: Workshopping drafts

**Week 14.** No class

**Week 15.** Presentations

- **Assignment due:** Final drafts due

**Week 16.** Final class

## Recommended readings

Most of these should be available via the UT library, and some you can borrow from me. Let me know if you have trouble finding any of these.

### Social science methodology

Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2019). *Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines*. University of Michigan Press.

- *Note: Excellent book on how to do process-tracing in case studies*

Brancati, D. (2018). *Social scientific research*. Sage.

Gelman, A., & Cortina, J. (Eds.). (2009). *A quantitative tour of the social sciences*. Cambridge University Press.

Gerring, J. (2006). *Case study research: Principles and practices*. Cambridge university press.

Gerring, J. (2011). *Social science methodology: A unified framework*. Cambridge University Press.

- *Note: Excellent (advanced) textbook on social science methodology*

Kellstedt, P. M., & Whitten, G. D. (2018). *The fundamentals of political science research*. Cambridge University Press.

- *Note: Excellent textbook*

Laitin, D. D. (2003). The perestroika challenge to social science. *Politics & Society*, 31(1), 163-184.

- *Note: Good article on tripartite method of comparative research*

Lieberman, E. S. (2005). Nested analysis as a mixed-method strategy for comparative research. *American political science review*, 99(3), 435-452.

- *Note: Good article on combining qualitative and quantitative methods*

Mahoney, J. (2000). Strategies of causal inference in small-N analysis. *Sociological methods & research*, 28(4), 387-424.

- *Note: Very good article for thinking about comparative case studies*

Mahoney, J., & Goertz, G. (2006). A tale of two cultures: Contrasting quantitative and qualitative research. *Political analysis*, 14(3), 227-249.

- *Note: Compares and contrasts quantitative and qualitative research across 10 areas*

Powner, L. C. (2014). *Empirical research and writing: A political science student's practical guide*.

- *Note: Comes highly recommended*

Ragin, C. C., & Rihoux, B. (2004). Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA): State of the Art and Prospects. *Qualitative Methods*, 2(2), 3.

- *Note: Focuses on a type of comparative case study method (QCA) that enables more comparisons*

Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options. *Political research quarterly*, 61(2), 294-308.

- *Note: Excellent article on different types of case selection strategies*

Shapiro, I. (2002). Problems, methods, and theories in the study of politics, or what's wrong with political science and what to do about it. *Political theory*, 30(4), 596-619.

## **Software/tutorials**

Advanced R online book ([link here](#))

Data Visualization online course by Dr. Andrew Heiss ([link here](#))

Healy, K. (2018). *Data visualization: a practical introduction*. Princeton University Press. ([online here](#))

Monogan, J. E. (2015). *Political analysis using R*. Springer. (UT has digital copies)

## **Examples of good writing**

Adams, J., Ezrow, L., & Somer-Topcu, Z. (2011). Is anybody listening? Evidence that voters do not respond to European parties' policy statements during elections. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(2), 370-382.

Bartlett, R. C. (2015). How to rule the world: an introduction to Xenophon's the education of Cyrus. *American Political Science Review*, 109(1), 143-154.

Bawn, K., & Somer-Topcu, Z. (2012). Government versus opposition at the polls: How governing status affects the impact of policy positions. *American Journal of Political Science*, 56(2), 433-446.

Doner, R. F., Ritchie, B. K., & Slater, D. (2005). Systemic vulnerability and the origins of developmental states: Northeast and Southeast Asia in comparative perspective. *International organization*, 59(2), 327-361.

Leeds, B. A. (2003). Do alliances deter aggression? The influence of military alliances on the initiation of militarized interstate disputes. *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(3), 427-439.

Liu, A. H. (2011). Linguistic effects of political institutions. *The Journal of Politics*, 73(1), 125-139.

Mutz, D. C. (2018). Status threat, not economic hardship, explains the 2016 presidential vote. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 115(19), E4330-E4339.

Pangle, L. S. (2018). The Anatomy of Courage in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. *The Review of Politics*, 80(4), 569-590.

Ritter, E. H. (2014). Policy disputes, political survival, and the onset and severity of state repression. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 58(1), 143-168.

Somer-Topcu, Z. (2015). Everything to everyone: The electoral consequences of the broad-appeal strategy in Europe. *American Journal of Political Science*, 59(4), 841-854.

Stauffer, D. (2016). "Of Darkness from Vain Philosophy": Hobbes's Critique of the Classical Tradition. *American Political Science Review*, 110(3), 481-494.