

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

GOVERNMENT RESEARCH INTERNSHIP I

GOV 362L
Unique No. 38765
Hans-Inge Langø
Fall 2017

COURSE & INSTRUCTOR INFO

MEETING PLACE:	BAT 5.108	MEETING TIME:	TTH, 3:30pm-5pm
OFFICE:	MEZ 3.228	OFFICE HOURS:	T, noon-3pm
EMAIL:	hans.lango@utexas.edu		

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is the first semester of a two-semester program to introduce undergraduate students to the research process in the social sciences. In this program, students will get hands on experience by contributing to research projects similar to the lab setting of the natural sciences. In the first semester, students will develop and present their own research proposal. In the second semester, students will complete, formally write up, and present their results. Throughout the course, we will discuss issues encountered when conducting applied social science research with a specific focus on the issues that may arise while proceeding with their specific research projects.

Students are required to take both semesters of this two-semester research course.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND POLICIES

- **Course Format:** Class meetings will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Students should come to class prepared to discuss both their research project and the assigned readings.
- **Communication:** Course announcements will be posted on Canvas and/or sent via email. Important announcements may also be made during class, without other notice. If you miss class it is a good idea to check with fellow students or contact me if you have questions or concerns. Anyone having difficulty with the course should feel free to see me after class or arrange to see me in my office.
- **Office Hours:** You have to come to office hours at least once during the semester to discuss your research ideas, but I encourage you to meet with me several times. This will make it easier for me to get to know your interests and provide feedback and suggestions. It will also ensure that you do not waste your time working on unrealistic projects.
- **Deadlines:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates listed below. No late assignments will be accepted, with the exception of an illness, university-approved function, or death in the immediate family. Documentation is required for any of the above and it is

required that you inform me before the deadline. Failure to notify me in advance will result in a zero for the assignment.

- **Grading:** Smaller assignments will be given a Pass/Fail grade, while longer assignments will be given a letter grade (see below). Any complaint about grading must be submitted in writing within two weeks of the assignment deadline.
- **Readings:** The primary emphasis of this course is on research and writing. Thus, students will be expected to regularly read academic articles related to their chosen research topic. Additional readings may be assigned by the instructor and will be made available electronically. In addition, the following book is required for this course (the 2008 version is also acceptable):

Kellstedt, Paul, and Guy Whitten. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Assessment

- **Class Participation (15%):** Due to the structure and goal of this class it is essential that students are both present and prepared to discuss the assigned readings and their research projects. You are also required to meet with me once during office hours to discuss your project.
- **Short written assignments (5%):** In the first half of the semester you will be asked to do short assignments related to your research ideas. For instance, one assignment might be to write a paragraph describing the dependent variable you are interested in exploring for your own research project. These will be assigned the week before they are due, and are graded on a Pass/Fail basis.
- **Research Assignments (35%):** This portion of your grade is based on your contributions to the course research (i.e. the internship part of the course). Students will be expected to make significant contributions to course research weekly and be prepared to discuss progress on their research assignments in class.
- **Literature Review (5%):** For this assignment, you have to write a brief literature review (1-2 double-spaced pages) where you discuss academic literature relevant to your own research project. A good literature review should discuss the key theories and empirical findings related to your topic, but also identify the gaps you wish to fill. This is meant to be a draft of the literature review section in your final research proposal. The purpose of this and the other writing assignments is to ensure that you are making progress throughout the semester and get feedback from me.
- **Theory (5%):** Following the literature review, you have to write a draft of the theory section of your research proposal. This section should include a discussion of the main assumptions of your theory and their implications/predictions (1-2 double-spaced pages).
- **Research Design (5%):** In this assignment, you have to outline the empirical strategy of your project. In other words, you should explain how you mean to test your theory, including what data you will use, your dependent and independent variables, and what method(s) you will use (1-2 double-spaced pages).

- **Research Proposal (25%):** In this final writing assignment you must combine the previous sections you have written and develop them into a coherent research proposal. As such, you must revise and refine them based on your own work through the semester and my feedback, rather than simply copying and pasting the previous assignments. You will carry out the proposed plan in the spring semester, therefore it is required that you commit to both semesters of this yearlong research course. Proposals should be approximately 10-15 double-spaced pages, not including bibliography. More information about the requirements of the proposal will be discussed in class.
- **Presentation (5%):** Students should prepare a brief Power Point presentation and be prepared to answer questions about their project. These presentations will take place at the end of the semester.

Course Grades

There are 100 possible points for the course. Points will correspond to the following letter grades:

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C
70-72	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

Classroom Conduct

This is a professional academic environment. Cell phones are to be silenced during class. Please be on time for class. It is inconsiderate and disruptive to arrive late to class or to leave class early. Laptops are allowed, however, students who create distractions by using their laptops will lose that privilege (e.g. auto-played videos during lecture can bother the instructor and fellow classmates).

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Students who violate University rules on plagiarism and scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and misrepresenting facts. More information about academic dishonesty is given in "Appendix C, Chapter 11" of the 2012- 2013 General academic integrity will

be referred to the Dean of Students office. For further information on please see:
<http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acintstudent.php>

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. Email will be used to communicate class changes through Canvas. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your email address. You should check your e-mail daily to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your email address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

Use of Canvas in Class

In this class I will use Canvas, a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at <http://courses.utexas.edu>. The syllabus, additional readings, grades, and class announcements will be posted on Canvas. Students are responsible for checking Canvas on a regular basis and are expected to consult Canvas (and the syllabus) prior to emailing the teaching assistant or the instructor with questions concerning the course. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>. If you require accommodation, it is your responsibility to bring SSD certification to me early in the semester so we can work out arrangements.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Excused Absences

An absence from class will only be excused if documentation is presented. If you are sick, you will need to produce a note from a healthcare provider. I do not need to keep said documentation, only see it to confirm that the absence was excused. If you are unable to produce documentation, you will need to get documentation from the university. In the case of planned activities, the documentation must be presented to the instructor one week before the absence.

Emergency Evacuation

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. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Changes to the Course

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus in order to better facilitate the needs of the course.

Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: The Scientific Study of Politics

- Readings: Chapter 1
- Research Assignments

Week 3: The Art of Theory Building

- Readings: Chapter 2

- Research Assignments

Week 4: Evaluating Causal Relationships

- Readings: Chapter 3
- Research Assignments

Week 5: Research Design

- Readings: Chapter 4
- Research Assignments

Week 6: Conducting a Literature Review

- Research Assignments

Week 7: Measurement

- Readings: Chapter 5: p 92-109 in the 2013 edition or Chapter 5: all in the 2008 edition
- Research Assignments
- **Literature review assignment due (October 10)**

Week 8: Descriptive Statistics and Graphs

- Readings: Chapter 5 p 109-126 in the 2013 edition or Chapter 6: all in the 2008 edition
- Research Assignments

Week 9: Introduction to STATA

- Research Assignments

Week 10: Statistical Inference

- Readings: Chapter 6 in the 2013 edition or Chapter 7 in the 2008 edition
- Research Assignments
- **Theory assignment due (October 31)**

Week 11: Bivariate Hypothesis Testing

- Readings: Chapter 7 in the 2013 edition or Chapter 8 in the 2008 edition
- Research Assignments

Week 12: Introduction to Regression

- Readings: Chapter 8 in the 2013 edition or Chapter 9 in the 2008 edition
- Research Assignments

- **Research Design Assignment Due (November 14)**

Week 13: Research week (Thanksgiving)

Week 14: Introduction to Regression, cont.

Week 15: Presentations

- **Research Proposal Due and Presentations (December 5)**