

POLS 3001_90
Spring Semester 2025

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to research techniques for the empirical study of politics including elements of research design and statistics. The goal of this course is twofold. First, the course is designed to enable students to read, interpret, and critically evaluate social science research, as well as claims about politics and policy appearing in the media. Second, the course will introduce students to the skills needed to pose and answer research questions of their own. Though focused on political questions and analysis, the skills acquired in this class translate directly to other social science disciplines like Anthropology, Sociology and Economics. As a result, you will be prepared for more advanced coursework in political science and other social sciences.

This section of the course is taught as an asynchronous online course with the material available through CANVAS. This is a 3-credit class that meets the QI (Quantitative Intensive) GE requirement for the BS degree. There are no prerequisites for the class and no textbook is required.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Formulate research questions
- Identify concepts and operationalize them
- Discuss problems with measurement and how to resolve them
- Identify hypotheses in research articles
- Distinguish between descriptive and causal arguments/research
- Read, interpret and critique existing political and social science research

Course Requirements

- Weekly assignments (three lowest grades will be dropped) – 20%
- Two article evaluations – 40%
- Two exams – 40%

Grading Scale

A	94-100%
A-	90-93%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%
B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	less than 60%

University Policies

Updated mandatory syllabus policies regarding the ADA Act, Safety at the U, Addressing Sexual Misconduct, and Academic Misconduct can be viewed at: <https://cte.utah.edu/instructor-education/syllabus/institutional-policies.php>