
course time: Monday and Wednesday, 8:00 am – 8:50 am

classroom: Sadler 203

e-mail: michael.strausz@tcu.edu

office hours: Tuesday 10:00 am – 12:00 pm, Wednesday 1:00-2:00

office: Sadler 205e

Course Description and Objectives: This course has two aims. First, it is my goal for you to become better *consumers* of the works of professional social scientists. You will learn skills including how to ask questions about the measurement of concepts, interpret statistical tables, and think critically about both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Second, it is my goal for you to learn to use the tools of political science to become *producers* of your own social science research. You will learn to ask good questions, assemble competing explanations, gather data to test those explanations, analyze those data, and even draw conclusions. Both of these sets of skills—becoming better consumers and producers of social science research—will help you in your other courses, and they will help you in life beyond college as well.

This is not a statistics class; it is a class about how political scientists do research. Because political scientists often use statistics in their research, we will pay a lot of attention to statistics (you may have noticed that the only textbook required for this class is a statistics book) but we will also spend time thinking about things like measurement, case selection, and research design, which are important for both quantitative (statistical) and qualitative research. Moreover, toward the end of the class we will also examine qualitative research techniques in depth.

Expectations:

1. Prepare for each class by carefully reading the assigned materials. If it seems that you are not doing the readings, I will give pop quizzes that will be considered as a part of your lab work grade.
2. Attendance Policy: Come to class on time, and stay for the duration. I take attendance, and I will notice if you miss class. If you miss a class where an in-class activity, pop quiz, or test was administered, you will receive a grade of zero unless you produce documentation from campus life indicating that the absence was excused. If you leave early on a day when you submitted work, you will receive a grade of zero on that work.
3. There is a lab component to this class, and you are required to register for a lab section. There will be 10 lab work assignments throughout the semester. Those that are not finished by the end of class are due at the beginning of the next class period (not at the beginning of the next lab).
4. Statement on Disability Services at TCU: Texas Christian University complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 regarding students with disabilities. Eligible students seeking accommodations should contact the Coordinator for Students with Disabilities in the Center for Academic Services located in Sadler Hall, 11. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the Coordinator as soon as possible in the term for which they are

seeking accommodations. Further information can be obtained from the Center for Academic Services, TCU Box 297710, Fort Worth, TX 76129, or at (817) 257-7486.

5. Academic Misconduct (See Section 3.4 from the Student Handbook) – I expect that the work that you turn in will be your own. Any act that violates the academic integrity of the institution is considered academic misconduct, and I will not hesitate to bring suspected academic misconduct to the proper authorities.

Grading: Grades in this course will be determined as follows:

Lab work (10 assignments) and other in-class exercises: 25%

First Exam (**February 23**): 20%

Second Exam (**April 13**): 25%

5-6 page Research Design (**Due April 29 at the beginning of class—8 am**): 25%

Oral Presentation of Research Designs: 5%

Grades are determined on a 100-point scale as follows:

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|-------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| A: 93.5 and above | B: 82.5-86.4 | C: 72.5-76.4 | D: 62.5-66.4 |
| A-: 89.5-93.4 | B-: 79.5-82.4 | C-: 69.5-72.4 | D-: 59.5-62.4 |
| B+: 86.5-89.4 | C+: 76.5-79.4 | D+: 66.5-69.4 | F: 59.4 and below |

I will use the +/- system for all students, and the TCU registrar will automatically convert the grades of students not under the +/- system to the old system.

Paper and lab work deadline extensions will not be allowed except in the cases of university-excused absences or illnesses, and proper documentation is required.

There will be ten lab work assignments over the course of the class. These assignments will give you a chance to practice what you are learning in the class. Many of these assignments will require that you use the computer software SPSS. In the event that you are not able to complete the SPSS portion of the assignment in lab, SPSS is available at campus computer labs including those labs at the library. Lab space is limited, so please plan accordingly (i.e. inability to access a computer will not be accepted as an excuse for late work).

If you feel that you have been graded unfairly on any course assignment, please wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned and then contact me with a typed statement about why you believe you were graded unfairly. This statement must provide substantive reasons why you believe that you were graded unfairly. The appeal process must be started one week after the exam/homework was returned.

Assignments are due at the *beginning of class*. I am strict about enforcing this rule. Late assignments will be penalized 10 per date late. Once grades have been officially submitted for the course, late assignments will no longer be accepted.

Research Design: For your final project in this class, you will be asked to *design*, but not *implement*, a research project that addresses a political science question that interests you. You

will also be required to orally present your research design toward the end of the semester. A more specific assignment will be distributed in class in the coming weeks.

Office Hours: I encourage students to take advantage of my office hours in order to ask questions about course materials or to chat about issues related to the course or political science more generally. Also, if you have any comments about or problems with the course itself I encourage you to share them in my office hours or coffee hours.

If you would like to get in touch with me to ask a question or schedule an appointment, I encourage you to e-mail me.

Course Materials: The following book is required. It is available at the TCU bookstore, but feel free to buy copies at other bookstores or online. Readings that aren't in this book will be available online, through the course's ecollege site (log in to tcuglobal.edu, go to the "Doc Sharing" section, and then view "Assigned Readings").

Statistics Unplugged, Second Edition, by Sally Caldwell

Schedule:

1/12 *Introduction*

1/14 *Asking Good Questions*
Look over the course's ecollege site (you can access it from tcuglobal.edu).

1/19 CLASS CANCELLED FOR MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

1/21 *Finding good answers*
Caldwell, pp. 1-16.

1/26 *Case Selection*
Beer, Caroline, and Neil J. Mitchell. 2006. Comparing Nations and States: Human Rights and Democracy in India. *Comparative Political Studies* 39 (8): 996-1018: skim the whole thing, but focus on the "Democracy, Human Rights, and India" section (pp. 999-1004). We will be returning to this article later in the semester.

1/28 *Measurement: Reliability and Validity*
Malcolm Gladwell "None of the Above: What I.Q. Doesn't Tell you About Race," *The New Yorker*, 12/17/2007.

Article evaluation assignment distributed in class.

2/2 *Measurement: Types of Data*
Caldwell, pp. 18-46.
Beer, Caroline, and Neil J. Mitchell. 2006. Comparing Nations and States: Human Rights and Democracy in India. *Comparative Political Studies* 39 (8): 996-1018 (electronic reserve): this time focus on the "Data and Measures" section (pp. 1004-1008).

- 2/4 *Reviewing the Literature (and I am not talking about Shakespeare)*
 Beer, Caroline, and Neil J. Mitchell. 2006. Comparing Nations and States: Human Rights and Democracy in India. *Comparative Political Studies* 39 (8): 996-1018: Focus on the introduction, but look at the way that they cite secondary sources throughout the article.
- 2/9 *Writing a Research Design*
 Caldwell, pp. 49-65.
- 2/11 *Distributions and Sampling*
 Caldwell, pp. 68-87.
- 2/16 *Statistics: Some Important Fundamentals*
 Caldwell, pp. 89-101.
- 2/18 *More fundamentals*
- 2/23 **First Exam: Bring Bluebook**
- 2/25 *Ethical Issues in Research Design*
Movie: The Stanford Prison Experiment
 Carl Elliot, "Guinea-Pigging: Healthy Human Subjects for Drug-Safety Trials are in Demand. But is it a Living?" *The New Yorker*, 1/7/2008 (electronic reserve).
- 3/2 *Confidence!*
 Caldwell, pp. 103-138.
- 3/4 *Hypothesis Testing in Statistics and Beyond*
 Caldwell, pp. 143-168.
- 3/9 *Which Mean is Bigger?*
 Caldwell, pp. 172-193.
- 3/11 *Nulls and Tails*
 Caldwell, pp. 197-212.
- 3/16-3/20 **SPRING BREAK**
- 3/23 *Return, tanned, to learn about ANOVA and Chi-squared*
 Caldwell, pp. 214-263.
- 3/25 *More hypothesis testing*
 Caldwell, pp. 247-263.

- 3/30 *Correlations*
Caldwell, pp. 266-295.
- 4/1 *Regression*
- 4/6 *Regression in practice*
Beer and Mitchell, 2006: reread the whole thing, and focus on the “Empirical Analysis” section (pp. 1008-1014).
- 4/8 *Review of all that we have learned about quantitative analysis*
- 4/13 **Second Exam: Bring Bluebook**
- 4/15 *Qualitative Analysis: Historical Case Studies, Interviews, Participant Observation, and Beyond*
Kier, Elizabeth (1995). “Culture and Military Doctrine: France between the Wars.”
International Security 19 (4): 65-93.
- 4/20 *More Qualitative Analysis: Dr. Strausz presents a research design for a new project he is working on*
- 4/22 *Students present research designs*
- 4/27 *More students present designs*
- 4/29 *Conclusion*
Research design due at the beginning of class (i.e. 8 am).