

course time: Monday and Wednesday, 4:00-5:20

classroom: Rees-Jones 214

office hours: Mondays 10-10:50am, Wednesdays 2:00-3:00pm, Fridays 10-10:50am
(drop by or sign up [here](#)), or by appointment

office: Scharbauer 2007F

e-mail: [michael.strausz AT tcu.edu](mailto:michael.strausz@tcu.edu)

response time: I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, and within 48 hours during weekends and holidays.

Final Exam

For non-degree candidates (i.e., everyone except graduating seniors), the final exam will be **Wednesday, May 10 from 2:00-4:30**. Degree candidates (graduating seniors) should see me about rescheduling the exam for Monday, May 8 or Tuesday, May 9.

Course Description

This course has two aims. First, it is my goal for you to become better *consumers* of the work of professional political scientists. You will learn skills including how to evaluate the measurement of concepts, interpret statistical tables, and think critically about both qualitative and quantitative research designs. In short, you will learn to evaluate the strength of factual claims about politics. Second, it is my goal for you to learn to use the tools of empirical inquiry to become *producers* of your own political science research. You will learn to ask good questions, assemble competing explanations, gather data to test those explanations, analyze those data, and draw conclusions. Both of these sets of skills—becoming better consumers and producers of political 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, but we will also discuss qualitative research techniques, and we will spend time thinking about things like measurement, case selection, and research design, which are important for both quantitative and qualitative research.

Required Texts / Materials

This class will be easier if you have access to a laptop computer that you can bring to the labs. If you do not have access to a computer, please contact me as soon as you can to discuss alternatives.

You are not required to purchase any textbooks for this class; all of the reading is available online. We will be using these three free online textbooks:

[Introduction to Political Science Research Methods](#), by Josh Franco, Charlotte Lee, Kau Vue, Dino Bozonelos, Masahiro Omae, and Steven Cauchon

[Applied Statistics for Political Science](#), by J.K. Corder

[Are you ready for R? A Workbook for R for Political Science and Beyond](#), by Michael Strausz

Course Policies and Requirements

Assignments

Exams: This class will have midterm exams on **February 15** and **March 29** and a final exam on **Wednesday, May 10**. All of the exams will be a combination of short answer and multiple choice. Given the importance of the concepts we are discussing in this class toward your future political science classes, the second midterm exam and the final exam are cumulative, meaning you will continue to be tested on key concepts throughout the course.

Lab quizzes: Before each day with a lab chapter assigned you will be required to take a short quiz on the assigned chapter. The quizzes will be on D2L. They will be open book and open notes. They will cover the content of the chapter as well as concepts that we have discussed in class.

Lab assignments: Over the course of the semester, you will be given 10 lab assignments. These assignments labs give you an opportunity to apply some of concepts that we have gone over in lecture. For many students, this is the most exciting part of the class. You will be learning how to use the software package called “R” to analyze real world data, including surveys of Americans, data on countries, and data on US states. R is an extremely powerful piece of software that you can use to do professional quality data analysis. Lab assignments are generally due a week after we work on them in class unless otherwise noted.

In-class reflections: At the end of each class session—lab or lecture—students will have a few minutes to write one to three sentences on one of these questions:

1. What is something that you learned today?
2. What is the muddiest point for you from today’s class?
3. What is something that we touched on today that you want to learn more about?

If students miss a class, they should log in to D2L before the next class to give a brief explanation of why they missed class. These explanations might include “I was sick,” “my sister got married,” “I was having some family issues,” etc. I respect your privacy, so I do not need details in your explanations (no need to tell me about what kind of illness or doctor’s appointment, for example).

For each day that a student fills out a genuine reflection on the class or explanation for why he or she missed class, that student will get full credit (a 100). Failure to complete a day’s prompt will result in a grade of 0 for that day.

Homework: I will occasionally assign short exercises to complete at home or in class. The grades that you earn on these will be averaged together into your homework grade.

Reading: I expect students to read assigned materials before coming to class and lab (see the course schedule beginning on page five of this document for readings). Reading the assigned materials will set you up to get more out of class. Timely and careful completion of the assigned reading will help you with your performance on the exams, on the lab quizzes, and on the labs.

Grading

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

A: 93.45 and above	B: 82.45-86.44	C: 72.45-76.44	D: 62.45-66.44
A-: 89.45-93.44	B-: 79.45-82.44	C-: 69.45-72.44	D-: 59.45-62.44
B+: 86.45-89.44	C+: 76.45-79.44	D+: 66.45-69.44	F: 59.44 and below

Assignments, Exams/Quizzes, Presentations, etc.	Percentage
First exam	15%
Second exam	20%
Final exam	25%
Lab workbook quizzes	5%
Lab assignments (Labs 1-9 are each worth 2% of your final grade and lab 10 is worth 6% of your final grade)	24%
Homework assignments	5%
In-class reflections	6%

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 material was returned.

Extra Credit

If I decide to establish extra credit opportunities, the specifics will be announced in class, posted on D2L, and/or emailed out to all students enrolled in the class. So, come to class, check D2L, and check your TCU email regularly.

Late Work

In general, late assignments lose 10 points (out of 100) per 24 hours late. So, if a paper is due at 2:00pm on Tuesday and you turn it in at 3:00, you will lose 10 points. And if you turn it in after 2:00pm on Wednesday, you will lose 20 points, (and after 2:00 on Thursday, you will lose 30 points... etc.). However, if you miss or are late in submitting any assignment because of an Official University Absence, an illness, or a personal or family emergency, please communicate with me as soon as you can we can discuss rescheduling your work. You don't have to tell me the nature of the illness or emergency; just let me know that you are dealing with an illness or an emergency and we can discuss an alternate deadline for your work.

Office Hours

I encourage students to take advantage of my [office hours](#) in order to ask questions about the course materials or to chat about issues related to the course or political science more generally. While you are free to drop by without an appointment, if you want to make sure that I will be available right when you drop by, please feel free to sign up for an appointment here: <https://calendly.com/michael-strausz/10min>. That link gives you a choice of either an in-person meeting or a Zoom meeting; please feel free to select whichever is more convenient for you. If I am not able to hold in-person office hours at any point, I will email the class and temporarily move office hours to Zoom. If you have classes or other obligations during my office hours and would like to meet with me, please email me to make an appointment.

PowerPoint Slides

Most days in class I will have PowerPoint slides that have three purposes:

1. The slides are meant to help you organize your notes, by showing you what we are discussing and when.
2. The slides might include quotes and/or questions that we will discuss in class.
3. The slides might include photographs, maps, animations, and other types of images to help illuminate class concepts.

The slides are not a transcript of everything that I plan to say in class; they are meant to help you take notes. You will be able to download slides before class (I will have them online a few minutes before class starts) and they will stay up for the whole semester. If you miss a class, you should download the slides, but you should also borrow notes from a classmate. Once you have looked over the notes that you borrowed, feel free to ask me about any points you want clarification on.

Technology Policy

Students wishing to use computers, tablets, or smartphones to take notes in class are requested to use those devices only for class related purposes. I know how tempting it can be to use an electronic device for Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Ravelry (the knitting social networking site), Instagram, TikTok, games, and other fun distractions, but if I catch a student doing so, that student will no longer be permitted to bring his or her electronic device to class. Remember that your primary responsibility at TCU is to learn. If you don't trust yourself to avoid online distractions, I encourage you to take notes with a pen or pencil. If I catch you using an electronic device for non-class related purposes during class, you will lose permission to use that device in class for the rest of the semester. Students wishing to make audio or video recordings of classes are required to see me to discuss acceptable use of those recordings and to sign a contract indicating that you will use those recordings responsibly. In the absence of written permission, you are not permitted to make audio or video recordings of classes.

TCU Policies

This course will be conducted in accordance with all relevant TCU policies. For specific language, please see the syllabus appendix on the course's D2L site. The syllabus

appendix includes the following policies: Academic Misconduct, Anti-Discrimination and Title IX Information, TCU Policy for Religious Observations & Holidays, and Student Access and Accommodation.

Daily Schedule

- 18-Jan *Welcome*
No assigned reading.
- 23-Jan *What is political science?*
IPSRM (*Introduction to Political Science Research Methods*), Chapter 1.
- 25-Jan *Lab 1, getting started with R*
Strausz, chapter 1.
- Complete first lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- 30-Jan *The scientific method*
IPSRM, chapter 3.
- 1-Feb *Lab 2: Welcome to the tidyverse*
Strausz, chapter 2.
- Complete lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- Lab 1 is due by the beginning of class.
- 6-Feb *Theories, hypotheses, variables units*
IPSRM, chapter 4.
- 8-Feb *Lab 3: Describing and recoding variables*
Strausz, chapter 3.
- Complete lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- Lab 2 is due by the beginning of class.
- 13-Feb *Conceptualization, operationalization, measurement*
IPSRM, chapter 5.
- 15-Feb **First midterm exam**
- 20-Feb *Elements of research design*
IPSRM, chapter 6.

- 22-Feb *Lab 4: Comparing means and comparing proportions*
Strausz, chapter 4.
- Complete lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- Lab 3 is due by the beginning of class.
- 27-Feb *Qualitative methods*
IPSRM, chapter 7.
- 1-Mar *Introduction to quantitative methods*
IPSRM, chapter 8.
- 6-Mar *Introduction to measures of association*
Applied Statistics for Political Science (ASPS), chapter 3, introduction and sections 3.1 through 3.4.
- 8-Mar *Lab 5: Controlled comparisons*
Strausz, chapter 4.
- Complete lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- Lab 4 is due by the beginning of class.
- 13-Mar & 15-Mar SPRING BREAK
- 20-Mar *T-tests*
ASPS, chapter 4.
- 22-Mar *Lab 6: Making inferences from sample means*
Strausz, chapter 6.
- Complete lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- Lab 5 is due by the beginning of class.
- 27-Mar *What we now know*
No assigned reading.
- 29-Mar **Second midterm exam**
- 3-Apr *Chi-squared tests*
ASPS, chapter 5.

- 5-Apr *Lab 7: Chi-squared*
Strausz, chapter 7.
- Complete lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- Lab 6 is due by the beginning of class.
- 10-Apr *Correlation and bivariate regression*
ASPS, sections 3.5 and 3.5 as well as chapter 6.
- 12-Apr *Lab 8: Pearson's r and linear regression*
Strausz, chapter 8.
- Complete lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- Lab 7 is due by the beginning of class.
- 17-Apr *Multiple regression*
ASPS, chapter 7.
- 19-Apr *Lab 9: Dummy variables and interactions*
Strausz, chapter 9.
- Complete lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- Lab 8 is due by the beginning of class.
- 24-Apr *Article exercise*
Assigned reading to be announced.
- 26-Apr *Lab 10: Your own empirical analysis*
Strausz, chapter 10.
- Complete lab quiz before class (plan to take it after reading the chapter).
- Lab 9 is due by the beginning of class.
- 1-May *Lab 10 work day*
No assigned reading.
- 3-May *Wrapping it all up*
No assigned reading.
- 10-May **Final exam from 2:00pm-4:30pm**