

**Instructor: Bethany Albertson, [balberts@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:balberts@austin.utexas.edu)**

**Office hours: Monday, 9-12, and by appointment. For the Monday office hours, please sign up here:**

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1pX5vs7uviL-zezIxkbfVbz-qT7Jxy98uy95Tk6z2FIQ/edit?usp=sharing>

**Course Overview:** The goal of this class is to introduce you to how empirical social scientists study, think, and research. We will discuss the process of theory building, hypothesis testing, and how social scientists across subfields ask and answer substantive questions. Subfields include:

- American politics
- Comparative politics
- International relations
- Political theory
- Methods
- Public law
- Public policy

## **COURSE FORMAT**

The purpose of this course is to provide support for students as they write their honors thesis. If you are planning to miss a week, or find yourself unable to attend, please contact me so we can make alternate arrangements.

## **COURSE INTEGRITY**

- Honor system for quizzes and writing assignments: By taking this class, the student agrees to abide by the University of Texas regulations concerning cheating. For written assignments, all submitted materials must be original and done exclusively by the student whose name is attached to it. If students observe cheating in any manner, they are honor bound to contact the instructor. For more, see **Academic Dishonesty**.
- Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty are strictly enforced: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/index.php>

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

Grades for this class will be based on the following:

- 20% Participation in class discussions and activities
- 40% Performance on short writing assignments
- 40% Rough draft of first 20 pages of the thesis

## Overall Grades

The grading scale is as follows:

93%-100%	A
90%-93%	A-
87%-90%	B+
83%-87%	B
80%-83%	B-
77%-80%	C+
73%-77%	C
70%-73%	C-
67%-70%	D+
63%-67%	D
60%-63%	D-
0%-60%	F

## 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://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/>.

Those with documentation for accommodations should contact Professor Albertson as soon as possible.

## 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 [titleix.utexas.edu](http://titleix.utexas.edu) or contact the Title IX Office at [titleix@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:titleix@austin.utexas.edu).

## READINGS

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 SCHEDULE

August 23 Introduction

August 30 What do social scientists do?

Major concepts: What’s a research question? IVs, DVs, hypotheses

**Assignment due** – email me with your advisor’s name

September 6 Thinking like a social scientist

Major concepts: Conceptualization, operationalization, measurement, ethics

**Assignment due** – Research question (1 or 2 sentences); article example; 2 sources.

September 13 Doing Research

Major concept: Literature reviews

**Assignment due** – *First stab – what is your question and why is it important (1 page)*

September 20 Connecting research to our puzzles, Theory building

Major concept: Case selection

**Assignment due** – 4 sources, annotated bibliography

September 27 Good writing

Major concept: Writing about research

**Assignment due** – 4 more sources, annotated bibliography

October 4     Checking in on research progress

**Assignment due** – first 5 pages

October 11     Peer review

October 18     **Assignment due** – first 10 pages

October 25     Peer review

November 1     **Assignment due** – first 15 pages

November 8     **Election Day**

November 15 Peer review

November 22 Winter plans

**Assignment due** – first 20 pages; 1 page outlining your Winter Break Plan

November 29 Peer review and feedback