**University of Texas at Austin**

Fall 2024

# Gov 370M: Research on the U.S. Congress

Unique #: 37405 MW, 4-5:30pm MEZ 1.202


**Instructors**:

Professor Sean M. Theriault
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OH: M (1-2:30) & T (2-3:30)
BAT 3.130 or Zoom

Professor Derek Epp
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OH: MW 11am-1230pm
https://shorturl.at/uae9u

**Teaching Assistant**:
Miranda Sullivan
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## Course Description

This research course is the first half of a year-long research program under the direction of Professors Theriault and Epp. Throughout the year, we have two major goals. First, and less important, we aim to familiarize the students with our own research agendas (past and present). Second, and more important, we introduce the students to the entire research experience. The class attempts to replicate the "laboratory" of the hard sciences. In those laboratories, students are engaged in independent, though related projects. Their work is coordinated and synthesized by a principal investigator who uses the independent projects to form a greater whole. This course is a social science laboratory. To that end, the students' work is synthesized by two principal investigators in the construction of major books on the legislative and policy processes.

## Special Needs

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To determine if you qualify, please contact the Dean of Students at 471-6259; 471-4641 TTY. If they certify your needs, I will work with you to make appropriate arrangements.

## Course Format

The class will meet regularly to discuss the two major course objectives. It is the student's responsibility to come to class with all of the assigned work – both research and reading – completed. Rarely will the class stray from a seminar format.

## Grades

In these classes, we will give pluses and minuses, using cutoffs at x3 and x7. We will not "round up" for students who are close to a cutoff. Grades are determined according to the following formula:

- 10% In-class participation. We will take attendance every class meeting.
- 35% Homework. Each of your homework assignments will be graded.
- 35% Research Assignments. These assignments will be the bulk of your work for us this semester. You will be graded on your timeliness and thoroughness of completion.
- 20% Research Proposal. Toward the end of the semester, we will transition to you doing your own research. This exercise will culminate with your proposal at the end of the semester.

We frown on issues of academic dishonesty and will severely punish any student caught plagiarizing, cheating, fabricating data, or engaged in unethical classroom practices. Furthermore, because of the number of deadlines and the building of your posters and papers, it is important that deadlines are adhered to; if not, even assignments that are 1-minute late could lose up to half credit. All grade disputes must be type written and turned in within 1 week of receiving the grade.

## Course Readings

Various course readings will be posted to Canvas throughout the semester.

## Course Outline

Week 1 (August 26 and 28): Introduction to Pickle Research Program
- Due August 26: *The Great Broadening*, Part I
- Due August 26 at 10pm: Submit two tasks that you think past students contributed to *The Great Broadening*
- August 28: First day of coding training
- Due August 30 by 10pm: Submit three potential research projects from *The Great Broadening*

Week 2 (Sept. 4): Introduction to Research, *The Great Broadening*, Parts II and III

Week 3 (September 9 and 11): Introduction to Research, Part II
- Due September 8 at 10pm: A half-page going into more depth about your favorite research question
- September 11: Second day of coding training

Week 4 (September 16 and 18): Hypothesis Building and Hypothesis Testing*
- September 18: Third day of coding training

Week 5 (September 23 and 25): One-on-One Meetings
- Due September xx at 10pm: Draft of URF applications and letter of recommendations.
- Due September xx at 10pm: Submit a draft of your URA application.
- September 25: Fourth day of coding training

Week 6 (September 30 and October 2): Wrapping up the URF Applications and Research Assignments
- URF Applications **Due September XX (by 5PM)**
- October 2: Fifth day of coding training

Week 7 (October 7 and 9): Presenting Your Research Questions
- URA Applications **Due October XX (by 5PM)**
- October 9: Last day of coding training

Week 8 (October 14 and 16): Finding (or Building!) Data

Week 9 (October 21 and 23): One-on-One Meetings
- Due October 20 at 10pm: Submit a final-ish research question and your accompanying hypotheses.

Week 10 (October 28 and 30): Data Manipulation Tutorial*

Week 11 (November 4 and 6): Data Presentations
- Due November 3 at 10pm: Submit a figure or table of the data that will be used in your project.

Week 12 (November 11 and 13): Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

- Due November 10 by 10pm: Submit the link to two peer reviewed research papers with a paragraph describing how each research paper relates to your own research. Be prepared to discuss your chosen research papers in class.

Week 13 (November 18 and 20): Composing a Research Proposal

- Due November 17 at 10pm: Submit an outline of your research proposal. This proposal should include your research question (grounded in the literature), hypotheses, proposed data sources, and methods for analysis. Your outline should be between 3 and 5 pages.

Week 14 (December 2 and 4): Research Proposal Presentations

- Due this week: 3-minute presentation on your research proposal to the class (slides optional). We'll assign time slots in Week 13.

Due December 4th: Final copy of your research proposal