GOV 374N: POLITICAL INTERNSHIPS
Summer 2021
Department of Government
The University of Texas at Austin
Unique: 81565

INSTRUCTOR: Laura de Castro Quaglia

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 1:30-4:30

EMAIL: lauracquaglia@gmail.com (please use email rather than Canvas messaging)

COURSE DESCRIPTION – SUMMER 2021

The Government Department internship program provides students an opportunity to combine work experience in government and politics with academic coursework. This course emphasizes guiding students through the design and execution of a carefully defined small-scale research project, and an analysis of their research that can be communicated intelligibly to a public audience using evidence-based argument. The coursework is designed to sharpen students' ability to use basic academic research skills as tools in a professional environment, and to convey the results of their research in ways that contribute to public discourse about politics, policy, and government.

Most of students' time will be directed toward performing the duties of their internships in a manner that reflects positively on them and on The University of Texas at Austin. A solid performance as an intern provides a rich learning experience, the possibility of future intellectual and professional opportunities, and also reflects well on the program, paving the way for future students to have the same opportunities current interns enjoy.

However, interns should be clear about the nature of this course. Students are not receiving credit from the Government Department primarily for fulfilling their internships. Students receive grades and credit for completing the internships in conjunction with guided course work. **Supervisor evaluations are taken into account in assigning grades per the grading criteria below, but 75% of your course grade is based on assessment of academic work completed for the course.**

COURSE HOME ON THE WEB
Documents and notices will be posted using the Canvas site for the class. You can log in here: https://utexas.instructure.com/courses/1309423

INDEPENDENT INQUIRY

This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

TEXTBOOKS
None.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
- Completion of 4 assignments connected to research project
- Completion of 6 ungraded exercises related to the research project.
- Work hours: at least 17 hours per week, beginning first week of semester, concluding the last week of the semester. The minimum total hours worked should be 150 hours. How you track this is up to you and your supervisor/employer, but it should be verifiable if necessary. If you want to work more hours, this is at your discretion. Summer students note: the calendar for the summer session has mid-week start and end dates. Summer internships also vary a great deal in terms of hours worked per week – some work more hours per week for fewer weeks. The minimum is to accumulate the 150-hour minimum within the 9 weeks between the first week of class and finals week.
- Two evaluations by internship supervisor

NOTE: all requirements must be fulfilled to receive credit and a passing grade for the course.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS
Computer Hardware & Software Requirements
- Windows or Mac laptop or desktop computer
- Modern and updated operating system (MacOS or Windows)
- Chrome (highly recommended), Safari or Firefox
- 5Mbps internet connection speed (**check your speed here**)
- Ensure your microphone and webcam work properly if your course requires them

Tips for the Best Class Experience
- Close all unnecessary browser windows and tabs and programs
    - Streaming music (Pandora, Spotify, etc.)
    - Social media sites
    - Youtube or other video sites
    - Online/offline gaming
- Clear the browser's cache before class (**here's how**)

- Check to make sure your computer is free of viruses, malware, and spyware (**UT recommendations**)
- Make sure your computer has all system updates in place
- Disable pop-up blockers
- To watch in full-screen, use the video player's full-screen button (bottom right corner) rather than clicking to expand the browser window

Need Additional Help?
- Click "Online Course Tech Support" in the left navigation menu of your Canvas course.

GRADE CALCULATION

Course component	Percent of final grade
Project assignment #1: Proposal	15%
Project assignment #2: Data Graphic Prototype	15%
Project assignment #3: Text Draft	15%
Project assignment #4: Final Research Project	25%
Practice assignment exercises	5%
Mid-term supervisor evaluation	10%
Final supervisor evaluation	15%

Grade scale for final grades:
A 94-100%
A- 90-93%
B+ 87-89%
B 84-86%
B- 80-83%
C+ 77-79%
C 74-76%
C- 70-73%
D+ 67-69%
D 64-66%
D- 60-63%
F 59 and below

Again: Students <u>must complete all of the assignments</u> in order to receive a passing grade for the course. Decimal points will be rounded.

CONTACT POLICY

When it comes to electronic communication, I prefer being contacted via email rather than through the messaging system in Canvas. I will try to answer emails sent during ordinary working hours (9 am to 5 pm on weekdays) as soon as possible. Messages received after 5 pm may not receive a response until the next business day. If you have a brief question that you think could be answered in a few sentences, then it is appropriate to ask over email. If it is something that requires a more extended explanation, please come to office hours, or email me to schedule a time to meet outside my regular office hours. Please do not wait until the last minute to ask a question about an assignment. During my office hours, my students are my number-one priority. I am invested in helping all of you perform to your highest capability.

OFFICE HOURS

I will hold office hours via Zoom every Tuesday from 1:30 to 4:30PM. The link for the meeting will be available on Canvas. If the posted times do not work for you, email me to set up another time. If for whatever reason I need to cancel or reschedule my office hours for a particular day or week, I will announce it in advance via Canvas.

SUMMER 2021 SCHEDULE / IMPORTANT DATES*

June 3	First day of 9-week session	Your internship should be set up and you should start working this week if you haven't already.
June 9	Submit internship supervisor contact info	Submit using Qualtrics form in Canvas.
	Proposal Exercise: Part 1	Submit via Canvas
June 18	Proposal Exercise: Part 2	Submit via Canvas
	Proposal Submission	
July 1	Midterm supervisor evaluation due	Use Google Form (link in Canvas).

July 5	Data Exercise: Part 1	
	Data Exercise: Part 2	
	Data and Graphics Assignment Submission	Submit via Canvas
July 18	Text Draft Exercise: Part 1	
	Text Draft Exercise: Part 2	
	Text Draft Submission	Submit via Canvas
July 27	Final Digital Project Submission	Post to web, submit URL to Canvas
July 29	Final supervisor evaluation due	Use Google Form (link in Canvas). **Be sure your supervisor is aware of this deadline and provided with the appropriate form, as there will be little margin for late evaluations given grade submission deadlines.**

* All assignments within a module must be submitted by 11:59 pm CDT on the due date. No exceptions.

RESEARCH PROJECT

This project is designed to sharpen students' abilities to research and analyze questions related to politics and government using primary data, and to present the results of your research in a way that is both **informative *and* accessible to a public audience.** The final product of the research assignment should incorporate original text and graphic presentation of data presented in a webpage or other digital document posted on a publicly accessible location on the Internet. The default media for producing the final product will be the public publishing platform Medium, at Medium.com, unless students request and receive instructor approval to use another platform that meets the requirements of the assignment.

Your project will focus on a question related to politics and/or government in

Texas. The final product of the project will combine polished textual explanation accompanied by research-based digital graphics. The final product should convey your interpretation of your research in a way that would be of interest to readers in the general public.

The project is organized into a series of assignments. Each assignment will generate feedback for proceeding to the next stage of the project. The descriptions below provide an overview of the assignments and their point values. All stages of the assignment are graded on a 100-point scale, then weighed as indicated in your final grade. Specific rubrics used to grade submissions can be found in each assignment's module in Canvas.

Description of Required Assignments
Due dates for each assignment may be found in the course schedule and in Canvas. Log into Canvas to find the specific assignment page and grading rubrics for each assignment.

Research Assignment #1: Project proposal

   Value: 15% of final grade   Length: 250-500 words

Assignment #1 is a written description of the specific question your research addresses, and how you will go about answering that question. The proposal should indicate what question you seek to answer, why it is relevant to Texas government and politics, and specific identification and justification of your primary data sources. You will need to identify a very specific question to address – remember, your final product will not be a major research project. Rather, it will be a relatively short exploration of a relevant problem that you use relevant data to explain to a general audience – not an academic audience. Your justification should avoid partisan advocacy. Stay focused on why the question you are answering is relevant for policy, government, or the political system. You should list both primary and secondary sources with your proposal, whether you quote them directly or not. **Reports based on other people's analysis of primary source data are not sufficient primary sources, even though other people's work should provide the <u>context</u> for the work <u>you</u> are doing. Overreliance on these sources will result in a penalty equivalent to one letter grade at each stage of the project. This project is supposed to push students to engage with raw data, not summarize analysis published by others. Please clarify with the instructor if you have questions about what counts as raw data.**

Research Assignment #2: Data and graphics

   Value: 15% of final grade

Assignment #2 requires students to compile data you have gathered for a secondary analysis in a spreadsheet, and to produce initial versions of graphics that may be used to present data in your final published version in Medium. This should include presenting your data in tabular form (e.g. a spreadsheet in Excel or Google Spreadsheets) and an initial attempt at graphical presentation of all of your data (i.e. plot, chart, etc.). You should **not** reproduce numbers, averages, or percentages from a single report based on someone else's analysis, even if you can put it in tabular form yourself. The best assignments will find raw data from governmental or research sources and compile a spreadsheet out of the data. In some cases, students may need to compile spreadsheets using multiple sources which may include reports as well as tabular data from official sources. In the latter cases, over-reliance on data compiled by others will be evaluated as less satisfactory than compilation of raw data. Product should be in digital form - you can upload either an Excel spreadsheet with graphics created in the file, or link to a Google Spreadsheet using your UT Google account. You MUST include a verifiable source -- via citation and when possible URL -- for all data presented. All graphics should be clearly and comprehensively labeled.

Research Assignment #3: Text Draft

Value: 15% of final grade   Length: 500-1000 words

Description: A first, edited draft of the textual explanation of your data. At this stage of the project, you want to move from thinking about your work as research, and move toward composing a short article that is engaging to a what you should think about as an interested general reader rather than an academic audience or someone giving you a grade. You need to write an article that tells your reader something interesting through an evidence-based discussion of policy or politics. Don't write like this is a student paper; rather, write as if were an article for public consumption – which, when you post the final version to the web, is what it will be. However, you must follow rules of attribution: cite all sources you use for both background information and the data in your analysis. Any thought that did not originate in your mind or in your analysis should be cited with a relevant source.

Overall, keep in mind the role of this assignment in the overall arc of the research project. The project has been broken down into discrete stages designed to structure your research and thinking. The objective of this stage is to think about the product of the research stage, especially the data and graphics submitted for the previous assignment, and assemble a written analysis based on the data you've gathered, how you are thinking about it, and the text you will present in your final public project.

The four key goals of this assignment form the basis of the grading rubric.

1. Refinement of the scope of your project.

2. Understanding the result of your research and analysis.

3. Providing context for the subject of your research, especially the political or policy debate surrounding the topic you are discussing.

4. The production of a finished draft that meets the requirements textual component of the final digital media project.

Be sure to remember that you need to be clear about the sources of your data and interpretations. Using hyperlinks is a good way to do this given the format of this assignment.

Research Assignment #4: Final digital project

Value: 25% of final grade   Length: 500-1000 words

Description: A final draft that combines your textual analysis with a visualization of your data based on your data graphic prototype, which reflects further refinement in your research and thinking, as well as the feedback you received on both. The final project should be constructed in Medium.com, a publishing platform. You may use another platform if you have a good reason to do so – it must be approved in advance by the instructor and it must be readable via a common web browser (Chrome, Firefox, Safari).

LATE PENALTIES: For all assignments, late submissions (after 11:59 PM CDT on due date) are subject to a 10 percent reduction on points assigned per day and/or fraction of a day late. No exceptions.

GRADING RUBRIC EXERCISES

The course modules in Canvas include short exercises designed to familiarize you with the expectations of your work during the first three assignments in your research project. You will download a document and use the grading rubric to assign the assignment a grade based on the rubric. These assignments are interwoven into video discussions at each stage. You are required to submit the rubric, but the work is credit/no credit. Completing and submitting all of the rubrics is worth 5% of your final grade in the course.

INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR CONTACT FORM

Complete and submit a brief online form in Qualtrics (link in Canvas modules) that provides information about your internship and contact information for your supervisor. This is mandatory and should be submitted no later than June 10.

SUPERVISOR EVALUATIONS

Supervisors must evaluate interns twice, at mid-semester and at the semester's end. You should share the Google Form links for each evaluation with your supervisor, and ask them to fill out and submit the form online by the due date.

These evaluations are due July 1st and July 29th.

Interns should provide supervisors with plenty of lead-time, and make sure forms are available to them.

POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin. More specifically, you and other students are expected to maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work undertaken at the University. This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University's Honor Code. At a minimum, you should complete any assignments and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

Students who violate University rules on academic 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 academic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/academicintegrity.php

NOTICE: students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, https://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/