Dr. Robert Yowell
Academic I Room 201E – Kitty Hawk Campus
Office Hours:
    MW 2:00 – 4:30 p.m.
    R   2:00 – 4:30 p.m.
    F   10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
    or by appointment (210) 486-5218

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Introduction to Political Science

Purpose

This three (3) credit course is an introductory survey of the discipline of political science that focuses on the history, scope and methods of the field, and the substantive topics in the discipline.

This course fulfills the Social and Behavioral Sciences foundational component area of the core and addresses the following required objectives: Critical Thinking, Communication, Empirical and Quantitative Skills and Social Responsibility.

Student Learning Outcomes

After successfully completing this course, a student is able to:

1. Define and apply political terms and concepts.

2. Define political science and identify the subfields.

3. Compare and contrast different political systems and institutions.

4. Apply the methods used to study politics.

5. Critically interpret and analyze contemporary political issues and problems.

Required Texts

Analyzing Politics, Sixth Edition by Ellen Grigsby
Research Methods in Political Science, Eighth Edition by Michael K. Le Roy
A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper, 2013 Edition by John Allen Paulos

Required Classroom Technology

All students will need to install and use the MicroCase statistical analysis software that is accessible by purchasing the Le Roy text.

Grading

Grading will be comprised of the following elements:

	Portion of course grade
Attendance and Participation	10%
Research Exercises (5 @ 4% each)	20%
Critical Thinking Discussions	5%
Midterm Exams (2 @ 15% each)	30%
Research Project	20%
Final Exam (Wednesday, December 9, 10:00 a.m.)	15%

Grade cutoffs for all assignments are 90% for an "A," 80% "B," 70% "C," and 60% "D."

Attendance score is the percentage of non-exam classes fully and attentively attended; student responses to questions posed by the instructor can boost or deflate this number. You will find attending class sessions to be crucial and necessary in your ability to understand the material, perform well on the exercises and exams, and earn a passing grade for the course.

Any electronic communication devices such as cellular phones are to be turned off and put away during the entire class, during every class meeting. Any student who either receives an incoming call or message or uses the device will be marked as absent for that class period. Unless cleared with the instructor beforehand, it is never appropriate to receive or send any text or voice message during class meetings in this or any course you will ever take. Any use of laptop computers or personal desktop assistants, etc. that is non-class related will result in that student be marked absent as well. Sleeping, putting one's head down on the desk or chatting with another student will achieve the same result. Please do not bring individuals to class who are not registered for the course without first receiving permission from the instructor.

You will be assigned five Research Exercises to ensure you understand basic techniques of measurement and inference employed by political scientists. The assignments will be due in class on days to be specified as the semester progresses. These exercises will be graded based on both your understanding of the applications of the methods and the usefulness of your work within the greater research process. These exercises will be in preparation for and help you to complete the research paper discussed below.

The Critical Thinking Discussion will involve oral presentations and discussion leadership of individually assigned chapters from *A Mathematician Reads the Newspaper*. These exercises will challenge you to apply the quantitative analysis skills you learn in the course to critique coverage of newsworthy events. More detailed expectations will be announced when the chapters are assigned to students.

Two midterm exams will be given (9/30 & 11/11) and will be composed of short answers and essays. Exams will require students to integrate readings and material from class discussions. Make-up exams may be given during the last week of class meetings only (the week *before* final exams), to students with valid and documented excuses who contact the instructor before or on the day of the originally scheduled exam. It is your responsibility to schedule any valid make-up exam.

The Research Project will charge you to test an original and relevant hypothesis, discuss your results and integrate your findings into existing political theory. The project is due is due Wednesday, November 25, during class. Although specific requirements for the research project will be distributed and discussed later in the semester, I encourage you to begin thinking about possible hypotheses to test as soon as possible. You will need to collect data and apply quantitative methods of analysis to complete the project. This project will include a literature review of topics relevant to your research inquiry. Any student who does not submit a completed research project or presents a paper that contains plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty will receive an "F" grade for the course.

College personnel with administrative authority, including faculty, may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of scholastic dishonesty. "Scholastic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test, plagiarism, and collusion. See Student Code of Conduct for more details at:
http://www.alamo.edu/uploadedFiles/District/Employees/Departments/Ethics/pdf/policies/F.4.2-Policy.pdf

Religious Holy Day Policy
A "religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code. The student must notify the faculty member in writing within the first 12 days of the semester of the intent to be absent due to a religious holy day. Under Texas Education Code 51.911, a student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time as established by the faculty member.

Online access to library resources is available at http://www.alamo.edu/nlc/library.

The Academic Support Center (ASC) is located on the second floor of the library and the phone number there is 486-5366. The hours are: Monday through Thursday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Hours may vary between semesters and during the summer sessions. All services provided are free of charge to students.

NLC policy suggests strongly that students not bring children to a classroom or lab. Faculty members have the right to prohibit children from entering the classroom for safety reasons. Minors under the age of 12 must not be left unattended on campus, including the library.

Disability Access Statement
It is the student's responsibility to self-identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office to receive an evaluation of accommodations and services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Only those students with appropriate documentation will receive a letter of accommodation from the DSS office. The student will be responsible for presenting his/her letter of accommodation to the instructor in a timely manner. Instructors are required to follow only those accommodations authorized in the letter of accommodation. For further information, please contact the DSS office at (210) 486-5487 or email dmitchell-hebert@alamo.edu. The office is located in the Student Commons Building, Room 222H.

Mental Health Services: Free, confidential mental health counseling is available on campus in Student Commons Room 222D. Please call 210 486-5496 to arrange an appointment.

Any appeals concerning course grade must be submitted in writing; e-mail and phone inquiries will not be considered due to federal and state privacy laws. No extra credit work will be assigned or considered. I will not accept academic dishonesty of any kind. All work you submit must be your own.

Tentative Course Schedule

	Date	**Topic**	**Reading**
Week 1			
	August 24	Introduction and Expectations	Course Syllabus
	August 26	Introduction to the Software	Le Roy pp. xi- xviii
Week 2			
	August 31	What is Politics?	Grigsby Chapter 1
		Studying Politics	Grigsby Chapter 2
	September 2	Studying Politics	
Week 3			
	September 7	*No Class – Labor Day Holiday*	
	September 9	Overview of Research Methods	Le Roy Chapter 1
		Measurement: Ideas and Types of Data	Le Roy Chapters 2 & 3
Week 4			
	September 14	Key Concepts in Political Science	Grigsby Chapter 3
	September 16	Key Concepts in Political Science	
Week 5			
	September 21	Variables, Variation and Explanation	Le Roy Chapter 4
		Political Theory	Grigsby Chapter 4
	September 23	Political Theory	
Week 6			
	September 28	Hypotheses	Le Roy Chapter 5
		Sampling	Le Roy Chapter 6
	September 30	*Midterm Exam #1*	
Week 7			
	October 5	Political Ideologies I	Grigsby Chapter 5
	October 7	Political Ideologies II	Grigsby Chapter 6
		Political Ideologies III	Grigsby Chapter 7
Week 8			
	October 12	Descriptive Statistics	Le Roy Chapter 7
	October 14	Cross-tabulation	Le Roy Chapters 8 & 9
Week 9			
	October 19	Comparative Governmental Systems	Grigsby Chapter 8
	October 21	Comparative Governmental Systems	

Date	Topic	Reading
Week 10		
October 26	Significance and Association	Le Roy Chapter 10
October 28	*No Class – Employee Development Day*	
Week 11		
November 2	Comparative Political Behavior	Grigsby Chapter 9
November 4	Comparative Political Institutions	Grigsby Chapter 10
Week 12		
November 9	Comparative Political Institutions	
November 11	*Midterm Exam #2*	
Week 13		
November 16	Controlling for a Third Variable	Le Roy Chapter 11
	Correlation	Le Roy Chapter 12
November 18	Regression	Le Roy Chapter 12
	Assembling a Competent Paper	Le Roy Chapter 13
Week 14		
November 23	International Relations	Grigsby Chapter 11
	Contemporary Issues in International Relations	Grigsby Chapter 12
November 25	Judicial Politics and Policy	Handout
	Research Project Due	
Week 15		
November 30	Judicial Politics and Policy	Handout
December 2	Public Administration	Handout
	Rational Choice, Game Theory and Formal Modeling	Handout
Week 16		
Final Exam	*Wednesday, December 9, 10:00 a.m.*	