



**TEXAS A&M**  
UNIVERSITY  
CENTRAL TEXAS

**POLI 5398:**

**Thesis**

**Fall 2017**



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### **Course Description**

This course enables political science students to receive credit for the work they do on their thesis.

### **Course Objectives and Outcomes**

1. Students in this course will learn to understand, critique, and propose academic research on the thesis topic.
2. Students in this course will construct a theory, solve a model of their empirical problem consistent with that theory, and gather data appropriate for testing the implications of the model (first 3 hours).
3. Students will respond to feedback on the literature review, theory, and model, and proceed to use their data to test the implications of the model (last 3 hours).
4. Students will orally present and defend their research (last 3 hours).

Note that a completed, defended, and approved thesis is required for a grade of S.

### **Assigned Work (second 3 credit-hours)**

1. For September 4: The student will complete revisions to the introduction, literature review, theory, formal model, and hypotheses. For guidelines (aside from page limits) on research projects in political science, see Enterline (2007), available from the instructor or for download at <http://davinci.cascss.unt.edu/users/aje0004/projectguidev4b.pdf>
2. For September 18: The student will write a detailed research design, explaining and justifying the scope of the empirical analysis, the units of observation, the methods for measuring the dependent variable and each independent variable of interest, how the student intends to control for confounding variables, etc (as in Enterline).
3. For November 3: Using the standards established in the research design, the student will gather the data necessary to test the hypotheses.
4. Also for November 3: Using the gathered data, the student will conduct tests of each hypothesis, summarize the results and potential shortcomings of these tests, and then describe what additional knowledge in the field has been generated by the study.
5. **Before** November 17: The student will defend the thesis by presenting its main points and evidence, followed by answering questions from an audience consisting, at a minimum, of the members of the thesis committee.
6. For November 17: The student will format the revised thesis in accordance with the TAMUCT thesis manual, get signatures from the thesis committee, and turn the thesis in to Graduate Studies. Note that this is a Graduate Studies deadline, not just a course deadline.

### **Grading**

- A student who successfully accomplishes the above objectives will receive an S. A student who does not will receive an NS or incomplete (see below).

- Grades of incomplete are not to be used when students simply fall behind. Instead, they are used when some event such as a hospitalization or deployment effectively takes the student out of the class after the drop deadline. By university policy, incompletes must be finished in the subsequent semester.
- Note that until the thesis is defended, a grade of S cannot be awarded, so if you split your thesis work between two semesters, the initial semester will be graded as “in progress” (IP) until the thesis is defended and approved in the second semester.

## Academic Integrity

*University Code of Academic Honesty:* Texas A&M University -Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student’s academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student’s work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university’s Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university’s standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

Specific guidelines for this course, which supplement and do not replace University policy:

- *Violations:* There are plenty of ways to cheat listed by the Student Handbook. Some common violations of academic integrity that I have observed while teaching similar classes at TAMUCT are
  - Using direct quotes without quotation marks. Even if you are just using three- or four-word phrases, you need to surround them with quotation marks if you didn’t create them yourself. This is true even if you cite the source! Remember that changing a few words in a sentence does not transform a direct quote into a paraphrase; instead, it transforms one long direct quote into several shorter direct quotes with a word of your own between each. A true paraphrase is the expression of the cited source’s ideas in your own words.
  - Paraphrasing another person’s words without citing the source
- *Penalties:*
  - The normal penalty for a violation of academic integrity (whether or not it is specifically listed above) in any of my classes is a grade of NS for the semester’s thesis credit. The infraction will be reported to the TAMUCT administration, with a recommendation for probation in the case of deliberate violation or no further action in the case of clearly inadvertent violation.
  - The (a) outright purchase, download, or completion by others of a substantial portion of a thesis, or (b) second or subsequent violation of academic integrity (in this course or other courses) display such serious disregard for academic integrity that either one of them will result in course failure **and** recommendation for expulsion to the TAMUCT administration.

## Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a Drop Request Form, found through the [Registrar’s web page](https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/business-office/droppolicy.php): <https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/business-office/droppolicy.php>

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar’s Office will provide a deadline on the University Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar’s Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar’s Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

## Student Resources

- **UNILERT** (Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University – Central Texas): UNILERT is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled

in UNILERT through their myCT email account. Connect at Unilert (<https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/security/unilert.php>) to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in UNILERT, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

- **Library Services:** The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 72,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at TAMUCT are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On-campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.
  - Research assistance from a librarian is also available twenty-four hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.
  - Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the TAMUCT main campus includes student lounges, private study rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our homepage: <https://tamuct.libguides.com/>
- **Academic Accommodations:** At Texas A&M-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the University's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.
  - For more information please visit our Access & Inclusion webpage: <http://www.tamuct.edu/departments/access-inclusion>
  - TAMUCT supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. For more information, please visit <https://www.tamuct.departments/index.php> Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these requirements and guidelines, please visit: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf>
- **Tutoring:** Tutoring is available to all TAMUCT students, both on-campus and online. On-campus subjects tutored include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.
  - If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at 254-519-5796, or by emailing Kim Wood at [k.wood@tamuct.edu](mailto:k.wood@tamuct.edu)
  - Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables TAMUCT students to log-in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over forty subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.
- **University Writing Center:** Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University – Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-4pm Monday-Thursday during the Summer semester (June 5, 2017 to July 27, 2017). Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available). Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process. While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking

out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help! If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at [bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu](mailto:bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu)

### **Amendments**

Not all exigencies can be foreseen. I reserve the right to amend the syllabus at any time. Any such amendment will be provided to the students in writing.