

SYLLABUS

POLS 200 – Sections 900 - 909 – Spring 2025

Course Information

Course Number: POLS 200

Course Title: Foundations of Political Science

Section: Sections 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 906, 908, 909

Time: plenary lectures TR 1:10-2:00pm, discussion sections on Friday afternoons (times and locations see below)

Location: BLOC 102

- **Plenary lectures: TR 1:10-2pm BLOC102**
- **Discussion sections:**
- Section 900 F 10:55-11:45am ALLN 1016 (Ariela Briscuso)
- Section 901 F 1:15-2:05pm ALLN 1005 (Muge Acarlar)
- Section 902 F 2:25-3:15pm ALLN 1015 (Maruf Mia)
- Section 903 F 3:30-4:20pm ALLN 1015 (Yumin Kang)
- Section 904 F 2:25-3:15pm ALLN 1016 (Mateus Bandeira)
- Section 906 F 2:25-3:15pm ALLN 1005 (Yumin Kang)
- Section 907 F 10:55-11:45am ALLN 1005 (Mateus Bandeira)
- Section 908 F 12:05-12:55pm ALLN 1015 (Changlip Kim)
- Section 909 F 12:05-12:55pm ALLN 1005 (Maruf Mia)

Credit Hours: 3

Instructor Details

Instructor: Todd Kent, Ph.D.

Office: ALLN 3098

Phone: 979-845-2138

E-Mail: toddkent@tamu.edu

Office Hours: Zoom or in-person by appointment

Teaching Assistants: contact information & office hours

Muge Acarlar	mugeacarlar@email.tamu.edu	ALLN 3047
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Course Description

Survey of the scholarly discipline of political science and its theoretical foundations, principal subfields, major research questions, and modes of scholarship.

Course Prerequisites

POLS 206

Special Course Designation

This is a writing intensive "W" course, which means that it will provide you with some writing instruction for the style of writing that is common in the discipline of political science. Forty-four percent (40%) of your final grade is based on your writing assignments, which provide opportunities for writing practice and feedback to improve your writing over the semester.

NOTE: To pass this course you must pass the writing components. Failure to earn a passing average grade on the writing requirements precludes the assignment of "W" credit, irrespective of the student's making a passing grade for the entire course on a straight-point calculation basis.

Course Learning Outcomes

What are we going to learn?	How will you engage with the material?	How will we know what you have learned?
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Define and explain core political science concepts.• Formulate critical thinking questions related to core political science concepts.• Differentiate between theoretical and empirical approaches in political science.• Evaluate how empirical findings challenge and refine political theories.• Identify and apply key quantitative methodologies used in political science research.• Utilize key political science vocabulary accurately in both oral and written communication.• Develop and deliver clear, evidence-based oral presentations on political science topics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the class material• Participate in class and recitation discussions• Ask questions in class• Engage other students through Packback Questions.• Practice oral and written communication through class material.• Research your issues from a variety of sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three exams covering key concepts from class lectures.• Four written assignments covering different types of writing.• Oral class presentations during recitation sections.• Participation in class discussions.• 10-weeks of asking questions and responding to other students' questions through Packback.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write analytical essays, policy briefs, and research summaries that demonstrate conceptual clarity and empirical rigor. • Collaborate in group activities to simulate real-world political decision-making processes and debates. • Engage in student activities, including role-plays, case studies, and discussions, to apply theoretical knowledge to practical scenarios. 		
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Textbook and/or Resource Materials

This **course** does not require the purchase of a textbook.

- All required readings are available through the course Canvas page or directly through the TAMU library webpage eJournals (at <https://library.tamu.edu/search/eJournals.html>). To access the eJournals provided by the TAMU library you will need to be signed in using your NetID. Please note that some materials can only be accessed on computers connected to the University's network.
- Recommended readings are also available through the TAMU library eJournals (see above), or from TAMU's Evans Library.
- If you have trouble accessing any of the required readings, please let your TA or your professor know as soon as possible.
- CAUTION: Do not just "Google" the article title on the internet to find the article. Doing that may get you to an incorrect article. If you submit a reading summary about an incorrect article you will have to rewrite your essay, it will lose 3 letter grades, and it will then be graded (starting from a maximum grade of 70) by Dr. Kent. You will need to submit the new essay within a week of when your TA returns the essays (essay return dates are on the syllabus.) An article that you find on the internet will probably also cost you money to download. All course readings that you will download from the TAMU Library eJournals are available to you free of charge.

Grading Policy

Grades

Grades are assigned based on final averages as follows: A = 100 – 89.5; B= 89.4 – 79.5; C = 79.4 – 69.5; D = 69.4- 59.5; F = below 59.4

- **There are NO individual extra credit assignments in this course.**

Final grades are computed from your scores for three exams, four graded reading summary papers, Packback Questions, and attendance/participation in the discussion section. Scores for these items are weighted according to the following scale:

Course Requirements:

- Exam 1 = 12%
- Exam 2 = 13%
- Exam 3 = 15%
- Writing Assignment 1 (Personal Essay) = 10%
- Writing Assignment 2 (Short Policy Brief) = 10%
- Writing Assignment 3 (Reading Summary Essay) = 10%
- Writing Assignment 4 (Reading Summary Essay) = 10%
- Packback questions = 10%.
 - Ten weeks of submission at 10 points each.
- Discussion section attendance/participation = 10%.
 - PLEASE NOTE: your TA will take attendance at each meeting of the discussion section and record your participation in class.

Grade Calculation:

Assignment	Points	Value	Due Date
Packback Questions Topic #1	10	.01	Jan. 29
Packback Questions Topic #2	10	.01	Feb. 5
Writing Assignment #1	50	.05	Feb. 7
Exam #1	127	.13	Feb. 14
Packback Questions Topic #3	10	.01	Feb. 19
Packback Questions Topic #4	10	.01	Feb. 26
Packback Questions Topic #5	10	.01	March 5
Writing Assignment #2	100	.10	March 7
Packback Questions Topic #6	10	.01	March 19
Exam #2	127	.13	March 28
Packback Questions Topic #7	10	.01	April 2
Writing Assignment #3	100	.10	April 4
Packback Questions Topic #8	10	.01	April 9
Packback Questions Topic #9	10	.01	April 16
Packback Questions Topic #10	10	.01	April 23
Writing Assignment #4	100	.10	April 25
Exam #3	127	.13	May 6
Discussion section attendance and participation	100	.10	Weekly
Total points	950	100%	

Exams: Each exam will have 25-30 questions (multiple choice or true/false format). Questions will be based on lectures, slides, required readings, and required videos. All exams are administered during the Friday class period in the Allen building and you will need to bring your laptop to the classroom to take the exam. The following are important announcements that pertain to the exams:

1. Each student must bring a laptop or iPad to your Friday recitation to take the exam. Be sure you have charged your device before class.
2. All technology is the responsibility of the student taking the exam.
3. Students must download the free version of Respondus LockDown Browser (see below) before coming to class.
4. The exam must be taken in the Allen Building (or in the TAMU testing center if the student has prior approval from the instructor).
5. Phones must be turned off in the classroom during and after exams.
6. Do not arrive late for the exam. You will want to have your computer turned on and ready to go when the exam starts.
7. Grades will be released on Canvas within a few days of the exam.

POLS 200 will require that you use Respondus LockDown Browser to take exams. To prepare for the exams, please read the following information:

1. **Install Respondus LockDown Browser.**
<https://download.respondus.com/lockdown/download.php?id=961615468>
2. **Test your computer to make sure everything is working properly before the exam.**
Take the Practice Quiz in the Assignments to test your system.
3. **Exam scores will be posted on Canvas when grading is completed by the professor.** An announcement will be posted on Canvas when scores are available.
4. **For students who ordinarily take their exams in the testing center, please make sure to sign up with the center to take exams.** You will still take your exam using Respondus Lockdown Browser and your computer, but instead of taking the exam in Allen or Blocker, you will take your exam at the testing center.

Reading Summaries are assigned 2 times during the semester. The first paper does not receive a grade (but you will receive comments), as it is a practice assignment for you to learn how to write this type of paper and to summarize an academic journal article. PLEASE NOTE: even though Reading Summary #1 does not receive a grade, **it must be submitted in your discussion section on the assigned due date or 10% will be deducted from the discussion/attendance grade.** The grading rubric for these assignments is below. The reading you will need to summarize in the essay and the due dates are listed on the syllabus. Comments on each essay and your grade will be returned to you by your assigned TA via Packback on the day of the next meeting of your discussion section. Your essay grade will be available at the same day/time on the course Canvas page.

Instructions about format of Reading Summary essays:

- Readings Summaries are 400-500 words, plus a reference page. You must include a full citation of the journal article being summarized, as well as full citations for any other paper, book or chapters referred to in the summary. Citations may be presented on a third page.
- Citations must be in the format used by the *American Political Science Review*, which is also the citation format used on this syllabus. This citation format follows the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- Reading Summary essays are due by noon on the due date listed on the syllabus and will be submitted via Packback Deep Dives. Each Deep Dive (Reading Summary essay assignment) will open to you on Monday at 5:30pm of the week that it is due.
- **You are not allowed to use AI to write your reading summary.**

- Quality of writing in the reading summary
 - Paper meets required length (5 points)
 - Evidence paper was carefully proofread and does not have grammatical errors (20 points)
 - Writing is clear to the reader and the essay is divided into paragraphs with each paragraph covering a single topic (20 points).
 - Correct & complete citation for an article and additional sources cited (7 points)

Discussion Section Attendance is required. TAs will record attendance at each session. 10% of the course grade is based on attendance and participation at the discussion section.

Participation includes the following:

- Being physically present in the classroom on Friday.
- Contributing to the class discussion on the weekly topic.
- Asking relevant questions on the topics and the assignments for the week.

Packback Questions

- THERE ARE NO MAKEUPS FOR MISSED PACKBACK ASSIGNMENTS
- When assigned in the syllabus, students should submit a question concerning the topic of the week and respond to two other student's questions.
- These brief assessments are submitted via Packback Questions and are due by Wednesday at 11:59PM CST. These questions and responses will be discussed on Thursdays of each week.
 - Required minimum Curiosity Score of 70.
 - You can continue to revise until you reach a score of 70.
 - The purpose of this assignment is to get you thinking about what are important considerations concerning the weekly topics and possible research questions.

Reading Assignments

Required reading assignments for each week of class are listed in the *Course Schedule* section of this syllabus. (Suggestions for further reading are also listed.) Required reading assignments should be completed each week prior to meeting with your discussion section.

If you have trouble accessing any of the assigned materials, please let your TA or your professor know as soon as possible.

- SUGGESTION: Download the articles for all reading summary assignments at the beginning of the semester so that you are not scrambling to find the reading the night before it is due in your discussion section.

With a few exceptions, assigned readings are primary sources and academic journal articles. They deal with complicated subjects, about which you may not yet know much. Understanding the arguments and ideas in these selections sometimes may be difficult, and you may struggle to grasp what an author is trying to communicate or the importance of his or her ideas.

This is completely normal; in fact, it is unavoidable. Do not stop reading. Do not stop thinking. Do not be afraid to ask your classmates, TAs, or professor for help. Do not give up. A willingness to work to understand something new in spite of difficulties you encounter is one of the most valuable character traits you can have.

The reading summary assignments will also help you learn how to read political science scholarship, teaching you how to dissect the parts of an academic journal article.

Late Work Policy

- **Late assignment policy:** If you submit a Reading Summary essay late it will be marked down 1 letter grade per day (including weekend days) unless you submit a university excuse as defined by Student Rule 7. Assignments are due by noon on the due date listed on the syllabus and must be submitted via Packback.
- Late essays will be submitted to your TA via Packback. Packback includes the date/time of the submission which will be used to assign the late penalty
- Late assignments cannot be submitted if you contact your TA or the professor at the end of the semester because you just realized you did not get a grade on an assignment. This policy is important for you to benefit from the “writing intensive” component of this course because you need to receive feedback on each essay in order to improve.
- **PLEASE NOTE that it is your responsibility to be sure that your essay was successfully submitted in Packback. If you do not receive comments for your essay in Packback and your grade in Canvas on the day of the next meeting of your discussion section, you must contact your TA by the following Tuesday about the problem.**
- **If you submit an essay that is not written about one of the assigned articles for that essay you will have to rewrite your essay, it will lose 3 letter grades, and it will then be graded (starting from a maximum grade of 70) by Dr. Kent.** Please be sure to carefully read the assignment listed on the syllabus and be sure that you read the correct article. Do not substitute an alternate article.

Course Schedule

NOTE: To access each MODULE for the course, click the “Modules” link on the course Canvas page.

Week 1 January 14		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Class introduction	Introductory lecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up Packback account • Attend Friday recitation
Week 2 January 21		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Power Measuring National Power,	https://youtu.be/iDYuduRunOw?si=BljKhUm2OPqiqU8G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Friday recitation

Gregory F. Treverton, Seth G. Jones, Chapter 2 &3 Back to Bipolarity, Jennifer Lind, pages 7-20		
Week 3 January 28		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Writing Instruction 1	TOPIC: State Formation “Nasty, Brutish, and Short”: Thomas Hobbes on Life in the State of Nature, 1000-Word Philosophy Social Contract Theory, David Antonini, 1000-Word Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 1 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Attend Friday recitation • Bring draft essay to class on Friday
Week 4 February 4		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Sovereignty		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 2 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Writing Assignment 1 due on Friday at 11:59am • Attend Friday recitation
Week 5 February 11		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Legitimacy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam 1 on Friday during recitation • Exam will cover material from weeks 1-4 and the vocabulary worksheets. • Attend Friday recitation
Week 6 February 18		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Political Ideology		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 3 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Attend Friday recitation

Week 7 February 25		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Writing Instruction 2	TOPIC: Rights and Justice (Part 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 4 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Attend Friday recitation
Week 8 March 4		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Institutions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 5 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Writing Assignment 2 due on Friday at 11:59am • Attend Friday recitation
SPRING BREAK		
Week 9 March 18		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Writing Instruction 3	TOPIC: Rights and Justice (Part 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 6 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Attend Friday recitation
Week 10 March 25		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Political Behavior		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam 2 on Friday during recitation • Exam will cover material from weeks 6-10 and the vocabulary worksheets. • Attend Friday recitation
Week 11 April 1		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Collective Action		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 7 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Writing Assignment 3 due on Friday at 11:59am • Attend Friday recitation
Week 12 April 8		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Representation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 8 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Attend Friday recitation
Week 13 April 15		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment

TOPIC: Legitimacy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 9 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Attend Friday recitation
Week 14 April 22		
Tuesday	Thursday	Assignment
TOPIC: Democracy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packback 10 due on Wednesday by 11:59pm • Writing Assignment 4 due on Friday at 11:59am • Attend Friday recitation
Week 15 May 6		
Tuesday May 6	Thursday	Assignment
Exam 3, 8:00am		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exam 3 on Tuesday during Final Exam time • Exam will cover material from weeks 11-14 and the vocabulary worksheets. •

Additional Course Information

Communication

Please write to Dr. Kent or to your TA from an official university email account to ensure that your messages are not captured by spam filters. Please use an informative subject line that mentions POLS 200 and your section #, e.g. “POLS 200 (section 901) Question about next week’s exam.” I do my best to respond to emails within one business day, and your TAs will too. Please do not expect immediate replies to emails, especially when they are sent after business hours or on weekends.

Please use your discussion section’s TA as your initial point of contact for administrative matters about the course (e.g. questions about the syllabus, notifications about absences, concerns about grades) and questions about or problems accessing course materials. TAs are available via e-mail and have weekly office hours. Please follow your TA’s guidance about the best methods for contacting them

I will post all class announcements on the course Canvas page. Some of these announcements may be about important changes to assignments, exams, schedule or other course modifications, so don’t be left behind by neglecting your email or Canvas.

Technology Support

This term we will be using the Packback Platform for:

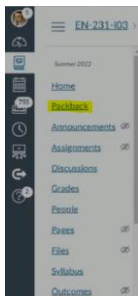
- **Weekly online discussion** about class topics. Packback Questions is an online community that you will use in most weeks of the semester to submit your brief assessment of the big question or puzzle that is addressed by one of the week’s required readings.
- **Deep Dives** You’ll submit all writing assignments on Packback via Packback Deep Dives. On Deep

Dives, you'll see the specific assignment details & rubric and as you write, get real time feedback on how you're anticipated to score on each rubric category related to writing. Packback will also give you feedback on your sources and help you auto-generate sources in the correct format. All of these unique assignments live in our course's Packback community. Registration details are below.

How to Register on Packback:

Note: **Only access Packback through Canvas in order to ensure your grades sync properly**

1. Click the Packback tool link on the left side of your course Canvas page.



2. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

A screenshot of the Packback registration form, step 1: Create Account. The form is titled 'Create a new account' and includes instructions: 'Be sure to enter your real school email address if your class is using Packback for credit. Your professor will identify you using your school email for grading.' The form fields include: 'School Email Address*' (with a hint to enter the school email address), 'Confirm School Email Address*' (with a hint to re-enter the school email address), 'Enter a Password*' (with a hint to enter the password), and 'Confirm Password*' (with a hint to re-enter the password). Below the password fields, there is a 'Sign up and continue' button and a link for 'Already have an account? Log in'. The form also includes a list of password requirements: 'Password must: • Contain at least 8 characters • Contain a number • Contain a special character • NOT contain more than 6 consecutive characters from your email address'.

Note: You will have to pay for access to Packback, which you can do by credit card or PayPal. You can also go to the TAMU Bookstore and purchase a code that you can use to pay for Packback in Canvas. If you need assistance to cover the cost of Packback, they offer scholarships. For information about that assistance contact Packback by email at help@packback.co

How to Get Help from the Packback Team:

If you have any questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please read their FAQ at help.packback.co. If you need more help, contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co

Learning Resources

The University Writing Center can provide you with help to improve your writing. For more information see <https://writingcenter.tamu.edu/>

University Policies

Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to **Student Rule 7** in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to **Student Rule 7** in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. ([See Student Rule 24](#)).

Application of attendance and make-up policies to POLS 200:

Student absences from discussion sections and exams may be excused under the terms of Student Rule 7 (<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule07>).

University excused absences from discussion section meetings are excluded from computing students' grades. However, please note that **if you miss a discussion section session with a university excused absence on a date when a Reading Summary essay is due your Reading Summary essay must still be submitted to your TA via Packback.** It is your responsibility to be sure that you receive comments & a grade on an essay submitted late. DO NOT assume that your assignment has been submitted and received.

Students should make every effort to notify Dr. Kent in advance of an expected absence from exams (e.g. missing an exam to observe a religious holiday) and to notify me of reasons for an unexpected absence (e.g. illness) from an exam in a timely fashion. Students with extended absences

(more than two class sessions) should contact their TA or me to discuss their plans for staying current with the class.

Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

“An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do.”

“Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one’s work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case” ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Students should be aware of and take seriously their obligations to produce original academic work, give appropriate credit to sources, and to use only authorized aid and materials.

Definition of plagiarism:

Plagiarism 20.1.2.3.5 – The appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. An example provided states that plagiarism could be, “failing to credit sources used in a work product in an attempt to pass off the work as one’s own” or even **“failing to cite the World Wide Web, databases and other electronic resources if they are utilized in any way as resource material in an academic exercise.”** While AI is not a real human, it is being groomed and manipulated to serve that purpose. Students utilizing the work of AI as their own work should also be so bold as to quote and cite said resources in their academic work products and seek clarification on what approved resources can be utilized in the completion of their work.

Plagiarism is one of the worst academic offenses, for the plagiarist destroys the trust among colleagues without which research cannot be safely communicated. If you have any questions regarding plagiarism, please consult the Aggie Honor System Office website (<http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/Rules-and-Procedures/Rules/Honor-System-Rules#Definitions>.) or the latest version of the Texas A&M University Student Rules, under the section “Scholastic Dishonesty.”

*AI text generators such as ChatGPT should not be used for any work for this class. Use of AI text generators in this manner could be considered **plagiarism and cheating** according to Student Rule 20. More information may also be found at <https://aggiehonor.tamu.edu> or you may contact me if you have questions.*

If I should discover that you have failed to properly credit sources or have used a paper written by someone else or by an AI bot, I will recommend that you receive an F in this course. The Aggie Honor System Office processes for adjudication and appeals can be found at aggiehonor.tamu.edu.

Academic Dishonesty: Students should be aware that academic dishonesty involves acts other than plagiarism. Please consult the Honor Council Rules and Procedures at <http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu/Rules-and-Procedures> for more information.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below). Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit disability.tamu.edu.

Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#). (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus.

Students who need someone to talk to can contact [Counseling & Psychological Services](#). (CAPS) or call the [TAMU Helpline](#). (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](#).

Campus Specific Policies

Statement on the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

FERPA is a federal law designed to protect the privacy of educational records by limiting access to these records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their educational records and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate and misleading data through informal and formal hearings. Currently enrolled students wishing to withhold any or all directory information items may do so by going to [howdy.tamu.edu](#) and clicking on the "Directory Hold Information" link in the Student Records channel on the MyRecord tab. The complete [FERPA Notice to Students](#) and the student records policy is available on the Office of the Registrar webpage.

Items that can never be identified as public information are a student's social security number, citizenship, gender, grades, GPR or class schedule. All efforts will be made in this class to protect your privacy and to ensure confidential treatment of information associated with or generated by your participation in the class.

Directory items include name, UIN, local address, permanent address, email address, local telephone number, permanent telephone number, dates of attendance, program of study (college, major, campus), classification, previous institutions attended, degrees honors and awards received, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, medical residence location and medical residence specialization.

Department Policies

Classroom Code of Conduct

In this course each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute to all discussions. Everyone is expected to respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by fellow students and the instructors and will engage in reasoned discussion that refrains from derogatory comments about other people, cultures, groups, or viewpoints.

- We will always treat each other with respect and utilize respectful language.

The Department of Political Science at Texas A&M University is committed to fostering an environment of learning and scholarship that is open, respectful, and welcoming to all, regardless of race, religion, gender (identity), ability, age, socio-economic background, or sexual orientation.

Political Science Department Code of Conduct and Anti-harassment Policy:

The Department of Political Science at Texas A&M University is committed to fostering an environment of learning and scholarship that is open, respectful, and welcoming to all, regardless of race, national origin, religion, gender (identity), ability, age, socio-economic background, or sexual orientation.

With this code of conduct, we want to reaffirm our commitment as a department to create a positive climate for all students, faculty, and staff. We are dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience for all members and guests of the department.

In particular, as outlined in this code of conduct, members of the political science department will not engage in harassment, hostile, or threatening behavior towards others. We will ensure and engage in civil and respectful discussions/discourse. Furthermore, we agree to be proactive in helping others to avoid harm in the case that any of these unwelcome behaviors are observed.

Whereas, we expect members of the political science department to adhere to the departmental Code of Conduct in general, respectful behavior by all participants is especially important in the classroom and other course-related interactions (virtual and in-person). An environment conducive to learning and scholarship requires free speech and an open mind, but must be free of harassment^[1], hostile, or threatening behaviors. Faculty, staff, and students ought to be proactive in helping others and speak up to avoid harm in the case that any of these unwelcome behaviors are observed.

TAMU Student Rule 21 (<https://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule21/>): Classroom behavior that seriously interferes with either (1) the instructor's ability to conduct the class or (2) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program will not be tolerated. This may involve but is not limited to: name calling, talking or engaging in other rude/disruptive behavior in class, threatening others in any way, asking inappropriate/personal questions about other students or the professor, etc. An individual engaging in disruptive classroom behavior may be subject to disciplinary action.^[2]

- If a student is being disruptive or disrespectful (rude, inappropriate, unprofessional, and/or harmful to others) either in the classroom, or during class-related communications outside of lecture (online or in-person), Dr. Kent or your TA will give one verbal warning.
- However, if behavior is viewed as seriously disruptive, no warning will be issued and action will be taken. This may involve immediate removal from class.
- If negative behavior persists following a verbal warning, Dr. Kent will request an in-person meeting with the student and Assistant Department Head to discuss and document a plan for changing behavior. This plan will be signed by the student and forwarded to the Head of the Department of Political Science.
- Further infractions will immediately involve the Department Head and the Academic Dean (per Rule 21)

Baseline Code of Conduct:

- Respect for all
- Have an open mind; challenge yourself
- Challenge ideas; never attack individuals
- Be present

Additional Information about Class Conduct

Topics covered in this course may reveal deep disagreements about important questions of policy and politics, yet I expect all students to engage in discussions of these topics in a manner that is consistent with the Student Code of Conduct, the Aggie Core Value of respect, and good manners. At a minimum, you should avoid interrupting someone who is speaking, and refrain from personal attacks or impugning someone's motives. I urge you to apply political *science* to these topics, and to think about how we can develop and test theory about, for example, why institutions operate the way they do, why society works the way it does, and to understand why what often appear to be dysfunctional outcomes persist over time.

Discussion sections are venues for students to review and discuss course material with their classmates and their TA. Students should prepare for their discussion sections by attending the plenary lectures, reading assigned texts, and completing reading summary assignments. I expect everyone to participate actively and respectfully in discussion sections. In addition, each TA will provide additional guidance about his or her classroom rules and expectations and other matters. I expect students to comply with their teaching assistants' classroom policies.

[1] As defined in the Society for Political Methodology Code of Conduct, harassment includes but is not limited to "degrading verbal comments, discriminatory jokes and language, deliberate intimidation, stalking, harassing photography or recording, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention."

[2] You have an established right to free speech on this campus. However, as a student, you are also bound by the rules of this institution. This means acknowledging when your speech or behavior crosses a line to the point of being disruptive/uncivil and assuming the consequences of your actions.

Additional class information

Grading rubric for Reading Summary essays:

	Exemplary 10-12 points	Accomplished 7-9 points	Developing 4-6 points	Beginning 0-3 points
(Hypotheses) Summary of the hypothesis tested (Max-12 points)	Concisely conveys the research question or hypotheses tested	Partially conveys the research question or hypotheses tested (and does not indicate that the article covers more hypotheses than will be the focus of this paper)	Marginally (to only a limited extent) conveys the research question or hypotheses tested.	Does not cover the research question or hypotheses tested.
(Literature review) Explanation of what research is utilized in the paper's literature review and why (Max-12 points)	Notes at least 2 sources cited in the article's literature review & briefly explains their relevance to the research question	Notes 1-2 sources cited in the article's literature review	Notes 1 source only cited in the article's literature review	Does not note any source in the article's literature review
(Data) Data used in the study and why (Max-12 points)	Explains the rationale for case(s) and time period studied & types of data used to test hypotheses	Only explains case(s) and time period OR types of data used	Marginally mentions the cases used	Does not mention data or cases used in the study
(Discussion of findings) Discussion of whether the theory/hypothesis was supported (Max-12 points)	Concisely discusses which of the hypotheses were indicated to be supported by the analysis in the article	Discussion of findings, but in general terms not referring to specific hypotheses, or state that findings "proved" the hypothesis	Marginally mentions findings without specifics	Does not discuss the findings in the paper

Grading rubric for policy brief essays:

	Exemplary 10-12 points	Accomplished 7-9 points	Developing 4-6 points	Beginning 0-3 points
Summary (Max-12 points)	Provides a clear, concise, and comprehensive overview of the policy issue. Effectively synthesizes key points and demonstrates sophisticated understanding of the topic. Uses precise language and maintains professional tone throughout.	Presents a clear overview of the policy issue with most key points included. Shows good understanding of the topic with minor gaps. Generally, maintains professional tone.	Basic overview of the policy issue with some key points missing. Shows partial understanding of the topic. Inconsistent professional tone.	Incomplete or unclear summary. Missing several key points. Shows limited understanding of the topic. Inappropriate or inconsistent tone.
Context and importance of the problem (Max-12 points)	Expertly situates the issue within broader policy context. Provides compelling evidence of problem significance using current data and research. Makes clear connections between problem and affected stakeholders. Demonstrates deep understanding of historical and current factors.	Adequately describes policy context with supporting evidence. Makes good use of data and research to show importance. Identifies most key stakeholders and impacts. Shows good understanding of contributing factors.	Basic description of context with limited evidence. Some use of data but may be outdated or incomplete. Identifies some stakeholders but misses key groups. Shows partial understanding of factors.	Minimal context provided. Little or no supporting evidence. Stakeholder analysis is superficial or missing. Poor understanding of contributing factors.
Critique of policy options (Max-12 points)	Comprehensive analysis of multiple policy alternatives. Demonstrates sophisticated understanding of trade-offs. Evaluates options using clear criteria. Considers implementation	Good analysis of policy alternatives with most major trade-offs identified. Uses reasonable criteria for evaluation. Considers some implementation challenges. Evidence generally supports analysis.	Basic analysis of alternatives with some trade-offs identified. Evaluation criteria unclear or inconsistent. Limited consideration of implementation. Evidence is sparse or weak.	Minimal context provided. Little or no supporting evidence. Stakeholder analysis is superficial or missing. Poor understanding of contributing factors.

	challenges and unintended consequences. Uses strong evidence to support analysis.			
Policy Recommendations (Max-12 points)	Presents clear, specific, and actionable recommendations. Thoroughly justified by previous analysis. Demonstrates feasibility and addresses potential obstacles. Includes specific implementation steps and timeline. Considers resource requirements and constraints.	Presents reasonable recommendations supported by analysis. Generally feasible with some consideration of obstacles. Includes basic implementation steps. Some consideration of resources needed.	Basic recommendations with limited connection to analysis. Feasibility unclear or questionable. Implementation steps vague. Limited consideration of resources or constraints.	Vague or unrealistic recommendations. Poor connection to analysis. No clear implementation steps. Resources and constraints ignored.