

Carleton University  
Department of Political Science

Fall 2010

**PSCI 5700F**  
**Basic Research Methods**  
Seminar: Wednesday 18:05-20:55  
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

**Instructor:** Ken Hart  
**Office:** Loeb B645  
**Office Hours:** Wednesday 16:40-18:00 or by appointment  
**Phone:** 613-520-2600 ext.1657 (no voice mail)  
**E-mail:** Please use WebCT e-mail: kenhart@connect.carleton.ca

**Course Description:**

The primary objective of the course is to develop the capacity to understand, explain and work confidently with the empirical literature in political science. A second objective is to develop basic skills working with data of various kinds.

Finally, students should complete the course with a better understanding of how they personally come to understand the world. With this objective in mind, it is highly recommended that students keep a journal or commonplace book for this course in which to record their own responses/reactions to the course material and any ah ha! moments that occur. [You will not be asked to share this with the instructor!]

At the end of the course the student is expected to be prepared to pursue further studies in political science or policy studies, to work successfully in an analytical position in government or the research/information industries, or to pursue more advanced and technical studies in research methods and methodology.

NOTE: For many students, the material and style of discourse in this course will be unfamiliar, perhaps even threatening. It is highly recommended that students endeavour to participate in the seminar sessions each week. This is especially true since the texts, outlined below, do not cover all the material in the course and cover some material in too much technical depth. Thus, mastering the texts will not necessarily be sufficient for success in the course.

**Texts:** Available for purchase at Carleton University Bookstore

*Required:*

- Kaplan, Abraham. *The Conduct of Inquiry: methodology for behavioral science*. Transaction, New Brunswick, N.J., 1998
- Brians, Craig Leonard, Lars Willnat, Jarol B. Mannheim, and Richard C. Rich. *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition. Longman Inc., New York, N.Y., 2011;
- Norusis, Marija J. *PASW Statistics 18.0 Guide to Data Analysis*. Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, N.J., 2010.
- Brians, Craig Leonard. *Quantitative Analysis Lab Manual to accompany Empirical Political Analysis, Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods, Eighth Edition*. Longman, New York, 2011.

Other readings may be suggested as the course proceeds; some readings may be on reserve in the MacOdrum Library.

**Evaluation:**

Exam (Exam period: Dec 9-22)	66%
Discussion	5%
Exercises	20%
Web CT	9%

There will be one closed-book essay examination in the course, during the regularly scheduled examination period, December 9-22, 2007. The examination will consist of three questions chosen from a longer list of questions that will be distributed early in the course. The examination will count for 66% (3 x 22%) of the grade in the course.

A further 5% of the grade in the course will be allocated on the basis of the student *leading a discussion* in class on one of the discussion questions provided by the instructor (to be distributed in the first class). All questions are based on the required readings. In the second week of the course, or as soon thereafter as possible, students are required to commit to a question on which to lead discussion. At the beginning of the class in which the discussion is to take place, the student is required to submit a 1 to 2 page (**NO LONGER**) outline of the key issues to be addressed in the class discussion. Completion of this assignment is a requirement. A grade of F will be assigned if this requirement is not met.

A further 20% will be based on 10 one-page exercises. Five will involve reading an article in a professional political science journal and summarizing it according to a format to be distributed at the first class. The remaining 5 exercises will be data analysis exercises using SPSS.

The final 9% of the grade will be assigned on the basis of participation in a discussion group on the WebCT site for the course. Students are asked to identify, on the discussion group site, 9 (nine) different professional journals, e.g. the Canadian Journal of Political Science, the American Political Science Review, that bear on their interests in the discipline. Each week from week three to week eleven students will obtain the latest issue available of one of the journals and browse it – that is, check the authors, titles, and abstracts, book reviews, communications. What does it say about the discipline (your corner of it anyway)? Are any of them articles you will go back to and use in your own research and studies? Your comments and reflections on the issue of the journal and how it bears on your studies are to be posted on the WebCT discussion group and you should be commenting on other student's posts. The purpose is not to 'one-up' each other. Rather it is intended to stimulate a professional discussion of the discipline as it is found in the journals. In particular, you should browse with an eye to accumulating questions about how research topics are selected and evidence brought to bear on them. I will be monitoring and, occasionally throwing in my two-bits worth.

The nature of the course is an accreditation that the student understands and is able to work with a particular approach to research. Therefore there will be no necessity to adjust marks in order to rank students.

**Course Calendar**

- Week 1  
Sept 15 Introduction, objectives, the idea of a political science, evidence.  
Readings: Kaplan chapter I; Mannheim chapters 1, 3, 22.
- Week 2  
Sept 22 Theory, Hypothesis, Proposition; Concept, Variable, Indicator.  
Readings: Kaplan II; Mannheim 2.  
**Article Exercise 1 is due.**
- Week 3  
Sept 29 Research Design: Experimental, Quasi-experimental, non-experimental.  
Readings: Kaplan IV; Mannheim 6; Brians Chapter 4, Appendix A.
- Week 4  
Oct 6 Measurement: Levels of Measurement, Reliability and Validity, Data.  
Readings: Kaplan V; Mannheim 5, 8, 11; Norusis 1, 2; Brians Introduction.  
**Article Exercise 2 is due.**
- Week 5  
Oct 13 Discussing single variables: central tendency and dispersion.  
Readings: Mannheim 15, 16; Norusis 4, 5, 7, 9; Brians Chapter 1.  
**Article Exercise 3 is due.**
- Week 6  
Oct 20 Discussing 2 variables: Fit and Shape.  
Readings: Mannheim 17; Norusis 8 (pp. 141-150 & 157-170), 19, 20; Brians 2, 11, 12, 13.  
**Stats Exercise 1 is due.**
- Week 7  
Oct 27 Review  
Readings: Kaplan III, VIII; Norusis 3.; Mannheim 4, 10, 14; Brians 3, 14.  
**Stats Exercise 2 is due.**
- Week 8  
Nov 3 Generalization: Samples & Populations, Measures & Estimators, Risk & Precision.  
Readings: Mannheim 7; Norusis 10, 11, 21; Brians 5.  
**Article Exercise 4 is due.**
- Week 9  
Nov 10 Generalization continued.  
Readings: Kaplan VI.  
**Stats Exercise 3 is due.**
- Week 10  
Nov 17 Multiple variables, Explanation  
Readings: Mannheim 18; Norusis 8 [150-170], 23.; Kaplan IX.  
**Stats Exercise 4 is due.**
- Week 11  
Nov 24 Refinement: Transformations, Design, Concept and Theory.  
Readings: Kaplan VII; Mannheim 12  
**Stats Exercise 5 is due.**
- Week 12  
Dec 1 Review.  
Readings: Kaplan X; Mannheim 23.  
**Article Exercise 5 is due.**

### Academic Accommodations

**For students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your request for accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations**. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **November 15 2010 for December examinations and March 11 2011 for April examinations**.

**For Religious Observance:** Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. Instructors and students may contact an Equity Services Advisor for assistance ([www.carleton.ca/equity](http://www.carleton.ca/equity)).

**For Pregnancy:** Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a *letter of accommodation*. Then, make an appointment to discuss your needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

**Plagiarism:** The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of “F” for the course.

**Oral Examination:** At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

**Submission and Return of Term Work:** Papers must be handed directly to the instructor and will not be date-stamped in the departmental office. Late assignments may be submitted to the drop box in the corridor outside B640 Loeb. Assignments will be retrieved every business day at **4 p.m.**, stamped with that

day's date, and then distributed to the instructor. For essays not returned in class please attach a **stamped, self-addressed envelope** if you wish to have your assignment returned by mail. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

**Approval of final grades:** Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

**Course Requirements:** Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

**Connect Email Accounts:** All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

**Carleton Political Science Society:** The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. Holding social events, debates, and panel discussions, CPSS aims to involve all political science students in the after-hours academic life at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through numerous opportunities which will complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, please email [carletonpss@gmail.com](mailto:carletonpss@gmail.com), visit our website at [poliscisociety.com](http://poliscisociety.com), or come to our office in Loeb D688.

**Official Course Outline:** The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.