

PSCI 2701A
Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science
Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:35pm to 5:25 pm

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Anne J. Rahming

Office Hours: Tuesdays 5:30pm – 6:30pm
Office Location: Loeb Building, Room B646
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Course Description

This course considers the assumptions, principles, and techniques of various research methods employed in political science. The goals are to introduce students to the world of social science research; to provide them with a foundation in the general principles of research methods; and to unravel how they are applied when conducting political analysis.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the course, students should be able:

- To identify and outline the principles of empirical social research;
- To conduct basic data gathering and descriptive analysis;
- To compare and contrast the benefits and drawbacks of the different methodologies used in political science research.

Required Course Text:

(Available for purchase in the Carleton University Bookstore)

Jarol Manheim, Richard Rich et al (2008) Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science, 7th edition, Longman, ISBN: 0-205-57640-1

Evaluation Summary:

- Tutorial Attendance and Participation: 15%
- 2 In-Class Tests (on October 15 and November 17): 30% (i.e. 15% each)
- Short Research Paper (due on November 24): 25%
- Final Exam (Dec 9-22): 30%

Expectations:

- Attendance and Participation* 15%
- This course is delivered via 2 lectures plus 1 tutorial each week. Students are expected to attend their assigned tutorials (it is your responsibility to ensure that you have signed in with the TA each week) and to demonstrate evidence of having done the required readings, in order to obtain full marks.
- Comprehension of the readings will be tested through your active participation in the tutorial discussion. By the end of the course, students are expected to have developed a knowledge and understanding of the concepts and methods explored.
- 2 in-class tests* 30%
- The mid-term in-class tests will take place on **October 15 and November 17, 2009**.
 - Both will be in multiple-choice format and will cover the content of the lectures and the required readings for the period specified in the "Schedule and Readings" section on pages 4 and 5 of the course outline.
- Short Research Paper* 25%
- Each student must submit 1 short research paper to the course instructor **on or before the beginning of the lecture on November 24, 2009**.
 - If you are unable to submit this way, use the Department drop-off box. This box is emptied every weekday at 4 p.m. and all items collected at that time are date-stamped with that day's date. Any late assignments will be deducted 1 letter-grade category / day [ex., a B+ paper 2 days late will be reduced to a B-]. Weekend submissions will be counted as three days late, as a consequence.
 - The paper should be **4-6 pages long**. Text should be double-spaced (except for indented quotes, footnotes and the bibliography) and the font used should be standard, i.e. Times New Roman, 11pt or 12pt.
 - The choice of topic is relatively open. However, all papers should do the following:
 - Present a research question and/or hypothesis to be tested.
 - Present the method used to test it and the logic employed in operationalizing your concepts.
 - Provide some analysis, based upon your approach.
 - Sum up the research with some observations.
- Final Exam* 30 %
- The final exam will be two hours and will be in short essay format. Questions may touch on any of the content of the course, from Week 1 to Week 13 inclusive.
 - This exam will be scheduled during the final exam period, i.e. **December 9-22, 2009**. Remember that you are expected to be available to write during this entire period.

A note on how you will receive comments and evaluation of your work:

You will receive marks on your work via the WebCT site. As assignments are marked, you will see the grade appear in the WebCT grade book.

Comments, however, will be provided on your hard copy, which will be returned to you at the beginning of the next scheduled class.

Late Assignments & Extensions: Assignments that are more than 5 days late are not normally accepted, unless there are documented health reasons, family or similar circumstances.

Absences: Attendance will be taken each week and repeated absences will affect your participation grade. Repeated absences are only be permitted in exceptional cases, after consultation with and agreement of the instructor. In such cases, students will normally be required to submit additional written work, as agreed to in writing with the instructor.

Schedule and Readings

Week 1 (September 10, 2009) - Introduction to Course

NO READING THIS WEEK

Week 1 (September 15, 2009) - The Research Process

Reading: Chapter 1

Week 2 (September 17, 2009) – The Research Process (cont'd)

LIBRARY EXERCISE – NO READING TODAY

Week 2 (September 22, 2009) – Theory building: Concepts and Hypotheses

Reading: Chapter 2

Week 3 (September 24, 2009) – Setting the Foundation

Reading: Chapter 3

Week 3 (September 29, 2009) – Internet Research

Reading: Chapter 4

Week 4 (October 1, 2009) – Operationalization and Measurement

Reading: Chapter 5

Week 4 (October 6, 2009) – Working from a Plan

Reading: Chapter 6

Week 5 (October 8, 2009) – The Problem of Sampling

Reading: Chapter 7

Week 5 (October 13, 2009) – Writing a Research Report

Reading: Chapter 22

Week 6 (October 15, 2009) – 1st In-Class Test (on Chapters 1 to 7 inclusive + Chapter 22)

NO READING THIS WEEK

Week 6 (October 20, 2009) – Survey Research

Reading: Chapter 8

Week 7 (October 22, 2009) – Scaling Techniques

Reading: Chapter 9

Week 7 (October 27, 2009) – Content Analysis

Reading: Chapter 10

Week 8 (October 29, 2009) – Sources and Applications of Aggregate Data

Reading: Chapter 11

Week 8 (November 3, 2009) – Comparative Research

Reading: Chapter 12

Week 9 (November 5, 2009) – Social Network Analysis

Reading: Chapter 13

Week 9 (November 10, 2009) – Data Preparation and Processing

Reading: Chapter 14

Week 10 (November 12, 2009) – Describing Things with Data

Reading: Chapter 15

Week 10 (November 17, 2009) – 2nd In-Class Test (on Chapters 8 to 15 inclusive)

NO READING THIS WEEK

Week 11 (November 19, 2009) – Direct Observation

Reading: Chapter 19

Week 11 (November 24, 2009) – Focus Group Methodologies

Reading: Chapter 20

Week 12 (November 26, 2009) – Elite and Specialized Interviewing

Reading: Chapter 21

Week 13 – (December 1, 2009) Overview and Conclusions

Reading: Chapter 23

Week 13 –(December 3, 2009) Review for Final Exam

NO READING THIS WEEK

WRITING TUTORIAL SERVICE

The Writing Tutorial Service is open to all Carleton students for the spring and summer sessions. For your information, their hours are as follows:

Every day except Sunday from 8:30am to 4:30pm.

The Centre is available to all students at any stage of the writing process, including brainstorming, outlining, thesis development, and written drafts. Students working on research essays and theses are encouraged to contact the Centre for writing support. Consultation and class visits are available for faculty and teaching assistants teaching courses this summer. To make an appointment, visit the 4th floor of MacOdrum Library or call (613) 520-7850. The Writing Tutorial Service is located on the 4th floor of MacOdrum Library. For more information and links to writing resources, please visit <http://www.carleton.ca/wts>.

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 16, 2009 for December examinations** and **March 12, 2010 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).

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, visit our website at 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.