

**PSCI 2701B**  
**Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science**

11:35 a.m. – 12:25 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays  
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Tyler Attwood  
Office: B645 Loeb Building  
Office Hours: 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Wednesdays  
Phone: (613) 520-2600 ext. 1657 (*no voicemail*)  
Email: tattwood@connect.carleton.ca

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### Course description

The course is concerned with the assumptions, principles, and techniques of research methods used in the study and practice of social science generally, and public/social policy more specifically. It is intended to provide students with a foundation in the general principles of such research methods and their applications in the collection of data for systematic analysis. The course aims to provide students with the necessary tools to critically engage the results of quantitative and qualitative research presented by others within policy-making circles, academia, and the popular media. In addition, students will build a base of knowledge on quantitative and qualitative methods that will enhance future academic research and professional pursuits. The course revolves around an exploration of the research process as a ‘way of knowing’ that informs policymaking and academic argumentation. Major topics of discussion will include: qualitative vs. quantitative research, variables, sampling, ethics, basic concepts in data analysis, and the presentation of findings (writing the research report). The major writing component of the course involves the development of your own research project (up to the stage of collecting data).

While the course is primarily lecture-based, there will be occasional participation in lecture throughout the term. The mandatory discussion groups give you an opportunity to interact with your peers and TA in a smaller environment more conducive to participation. The discussion groups will focus on clarifying and extending the course themes through review of the lecture material and related group exercises.

### Course Texts

The required textbook for this course is *The Research Process, Canadian edition*, Gary D. Bouma, Rod Ling, & Lori Wilkinson, Oxford University Press, 2009, available at the campus bookstore.

### Evaluation

- Discussion Group - 10%
- Written Exercises/Lab Applications - 20% (Sept 28, Oct 19, Nov 9, Nov 25)
- Research Design Project - 30% (Dec 7)
- Final Exam - 40% (Dec 9-22)

(Per early feedback guidelines, two of the written exercises and half of your DG mark will be returned by **October 31<sup>st</sup>**.)

## Details regarding Term Work and Final Exam

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Due dates are noted under the description of each item below, as well as on the **Term Schedule** below. You must submit assignments directly to the instructor, unless alternate arrangements are made in advance. Electronic or faxed copies will not be accepted. Assignments submitted late will be penalized 10% of the value of the assignment per day late, to a maximum of 5 days (50%), after which the assignment will receive a grade of zero. Turning an assignment in more than 15 minutes after the class begins on the day it is due counts as one day late. Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds for which you must provide appropriate documentation. See “**Academic Accommodations**” below for additional exceptions. Weekends are included in the calculation of late penalties.

Written work must adhere to accepted bibliographic and citation formats, preferably APA or MLA (style manuals available at the reference desk of the library). Graded assignments will be returned to students in class within two weeks following the due date. You may also pick up your papers during office hours. If you are unable to collect any assignment during the term you may, if you wish, provide the instructor with a self-addressed, stamped envelope so that any uncollected work can be mailed to you.

- **Discussion Group - 10%:** The scheduled discussion groups for this course are mandatory, and your TA will be responsible for assessing your performance and assigning your mark based on a combination of attendance and quality of participation. Refer to your registration information for your specific discussion group date, time and location. You will receive the first half (5%) of your DG mark on October 28<sup>th</sup> and the remaining 5% at the end of the term.
- **Written Exercises/Lab Applications - 20% (4 x 5% each):** You will complete four short written assignments (“Lab Applications”) over the course of the term. These are designed to help you ground what you learn in practical terms, and they also serve to prepare you for the exams, as well as your research design project. Refer to the specific assignment’s instruction sheet (available on WebCT) for more information. The assignments are due at the beginning of class on the following days: Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>, Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>
- **Research Design Project - 30%** (due December 7<sup>th</sup>): For this assignment, you are asked to **propose a researchable question** pertaining to a topic of your choice. Suggestions will be provided in class throughout the term, and you are encouraged to start thinking early about your topic. Once you have decided on a topic and a researchable question within that topic, you will need to consider **how** you will answer the question. This involves, first, **establishing a testable hypothesis**. In selecting and stating your hypothesis, you should briefly discuss the key theoretical work and existing research that is relevant to and supports (or contradicts) your hypothesis. This is, in effect, a brief **review of the literature** regarding your research topic. The second step is to develop a **research design** that outlines how you would carry out the research to answer your question, and discuss why the design is appropriate for the question you have posed. Next, you should describe how you would **operationalize** your research -- the key concepts and their nominal and operational definitions, the variables you would use to measure your concepts, and how they would be analyzed. **Note that you are not actually required to conduct the research or do any data analysis**. Rather, you will develop a research design as if you were going to carry out the research, but stop before the data

collection stage. More detailed instructions and guidelines are provided on the assignment sheet posted on WebCT. For an example of a complete research design project see *Appendix A* in your textbook (note that the sample includes the collection and analysis of data, which you don't have to do).

➤ **Final Exam - 40%:** The final exam will be cumulative and cover material from both the textbook and lectures. The exam will be given during the official exam period (time, date and location TBA) and you will have three hours to complete it. The format will be multiple choice, definitions/short answer, and short problems (similar to, but shorter, than the written exercises above).

## Academic Regulations

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the academic and conduct regulations of Carleton University. Undergraduate students should consult the [Academic Regulations](#) listed in the Undergraduate Calendar. Particular attention should be paid to those sections dealing with Instructional Offenses and Offenses of Conduct (Sections 14 and 15).

**Plagiarism:** The Undergraduate Calendar defines plagiarism as: "to use and pass off as one's own idea or product, work of another without expressly giving credit to another." The Graduate Calendar states that plagiarism has occurred when a student either: (a) directly copies another's work without acknowledgment; or (b) closely paraphrases the equivalent of a short paragraph or more without acknowledgment; or (c) borrows, without acknowledgment, any ideas in a clear and recognizable form in such a way as to present them as the student's own thought, where such ideas, if they were the student's own would contribute to the merit of his or her own work. Instructors who suspect plagiarism are required to submit the paper and supporting documentation to the Departmental Chair who will refer the case to the Dean. It is not permitted to hand in the same assignment to two or more courses. The Department's Style Guide is available at: <http://www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/Essay%20Style%20Guide.html>.

**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:** Students must fulfill all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F. 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:** The Department of Political Science strongly encourages students to sign up for a campus email account. Important course and University information will be distributed via the Connect email system. See <http://connect.carleton.ca> for instructions on how to set up your account.

## Course Topics and Class Schedule

Mon., Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>: Discussion of course structure & assignments

Wed., Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 1, “How We Know What We Know and How We Know We Know”, pp. 3-6

Mon., Sept. 21<sup>st</sup>: Chapter 2, “Research as a Way of Knowing”, pp. 7-22

Wed., Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> & Mon., Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 3, “Selecting a Problem”, pp. 25-39

Wed., Sept. 30<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 4, “Qualitative or Quantitative Research?”, pp. 40-47

Mon., Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> & Wed., Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 5, “Selecting Variables”, pp. 48-60

Wed., Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> & Mon., Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 6, “Finding a Variable’s Measurement”, pp. 61-92

Wed., Oct. 21<sup>st</sup> & Mon., Oct. 26<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 7, “Selecting a Research Design”, pp. 93-120

Wed., Oct. 28<sup>th</sup> & Mon., Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Chapter 8, “Selecting a Sample”, pp. 121-141

Wed., Nov. 4<sup>th</sup> & Mon., Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 9, “Ethics in Human Research”, pp. 142-159

Wed., Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 10, “Making Notes, Organizing Data, and Constructing Bibliographies”, pp. 163-169

Mon., Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> & Wed., Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 11, “Summarizing and Presenting Data in Qualitative Research”, pp. 170-192

Mon., Nov. 23<sup>rd</sup> & Wed., Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 12, “Presenting Data Using Qualitative Research”, pp. 193-214

Mon., Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> & Wed., Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>: Chapter 13, “Drawing Conclusions”, pp. 217-228

Mon., Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>: Chapter 14, “Reporting Your Research”, pp. 229-233

**Important dates to remember:**

- Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>: First written exercise due
- Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>: Second written exercise due
- Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>: Third written exercise due
- Nov. 25<sup>th</sup>: Fourth written exercise due
- Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>: Research Design Project due

**Academic Resources**

If You Need Assistance With...	Refer To...	Contact Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🕒 understanding academic rules and regulations</li> <li>🕒 choosing or changing their major</li> <li>🕒 finding a tutor</li> <li>🕒 academic planning guided by an Academic Advisor</li> <li>🕒 polishing study skills</li> </ul>	<b>Student Academic Success Centre (SASC)</b>	302 Tory Building 520-7850 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/sasc">www.carleton.ca/sasc</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🕒 a learning disability</li> </ul>	<b>Paul Menton Centre</b>	500 University Centre 520-6608 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/pmc">www.carleton.ca/pmc</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🕒 developing writing skills</li> </ul>	<b>Writing Tutorial Service</b>	229 Paterson Hall 520-6632 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/wts">www.carleton.ca/wts</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🕒 assistance with math</li> </ul>	<b>Math Tutorial</b>	<a href="http://www.math.carleton.ca/student">www.math.carleton.ca/student</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🕒 peer assisted tutoring for pre-identified, notoriously difficult courses</li> </ul>	<b>Peer Assisted Study Sessions</b>	Centre for Initiatives in Education 520-2600, ext. 1523 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/cie">www.carleton.ca/cie</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🕒 polishing English conversation skills, or proof reading (International students only)</li> </ul>	<b>International Student Advisory</b>	501 University Centre 520-6600 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/isa">www.carleton.ca/isa</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🕒 research assistance</li> </ul>	<b>Staff at MacOdrum Library</b> (reference services desk)	520-2735 <a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca">www.library.carleton.ca</a>

**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](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.

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**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.