

PSCI 5700
Basic Research Methods
Wednesdays 18.05-20.55
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Ken Hart
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Phone: 613-952-0705;
Office Hours: 1 hour before class and 1 hour after class or by appointment.

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:

Required:

- Kaplan, Abraham. *The Conduct of Inquiry: methodology for behavioral science*. Transaction, New Brunswick, N.J., 1998
- Mannheim, Jarol B., Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat and Craig Leonard Brians. *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*, 7th edition. Longman Inc., New York, N.Y., 2008;
- Norusis, Marija J. *SPSS 16.0 Guide to Data Analysis*. Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, N.J., 2008.

Recommended:

- Brians, Craig Leonard. Quantitative Analysis Lab Manual to accompany Empirical Political Analysis, Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods, Second Edition. Pearson-Longman , New York, 2008.

Encouraged:

Students should, on a weekly basis during and preceding the course, browse the professional literature in political science as it pertains to their field of study. In particular, the Canadian Journal of Political Science and the American Political Science Review should be read with an eye to accumulating questions about how research topics are selected and evidence brought to bear on them. Other readings may be suggested as the course proceeds; some readings may be on reserve in the MacOdrum Library.

Grading

10x1 page exercises	20%
Final exam	75%
Leading a Discussion	5%

Evaluation:

There will be one closed-book essay examination in the course, during the regularly scheduled examination period, December 04-20, 2008. 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 75% 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.

The remaining 20% will be based on 10 one-page exercises (2% each). 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 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. 10	Introduction, objectives, the idea of a political science, evidence. Readings: Kaplan chapter I; Mannheim chapters 1, 3, 22.
Week 2 Sept. 17	Theory, Hypothesis, Proposition; Concept, Variable, Indicator. Readings: Kaplan II; Mannheim 2.

Article Exercise 1 is due.

- Week 3
Sept 24
Research Design: Experimental, Quasi-experimental, non-experimental.
Readings: Kaplan IV; Mannheim 6; Brians Chapter 4, Appendix A.
- Week 4
Oct. 1
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. 8
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 15
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. 22
Review
Readings: Kaplan III, VIII; Norusis 3.; Mannheim 4, 10, 14; Brians 3, 14.
Stats Exercise 2 is due.
- Week 8
Oct 29
Generalization: Samples & Populations, Measures & Estimators, Risk & Precision.
Readings: Mannheim 7; Norusis 10, 11, 21; Brians 5.
Article Exercise 4 is due.
- Week 9
Nov 5
Generalization continued.
Readings: Kaplan VI.
Stats Exercise 3 is due.
- Week 10
Nov 12
Multiple variables, Explanation
Readings: Mannheim 18; Norusis 8 [150-170], 23.; Kaplan IX.
Stats Exercise 4 is due.
- Week 11
Nov 19
Refinement: Transformations, Design, Concept and Theory.
Readings: Kaplan VII; Mannheim 12
Stats Exercise 5 is due.
- Week 12
Nov 26
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 letter of 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 7, 2008 for December examinations**, and **March 6, 2009 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 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.