

Carleton University
Fall 2020
Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs

PAPM 3000 A
Policy Research
asynchronous and synchronous – recorded lectures; online (Zoom) office hours

Instructor: Sacha Ghandeharian

Office Hours: Students are encouraged to email instructor to arrange for phone or online (Zoom) conferencing meetings.

Email: sacha.ghandeharian@carleton.ca or through cuLearn email function.

Course Overview

This course is designed to provide students with a broad knowledge of qualitative research methods related to policy research and analysis. In addition, the course is designed with an emphasis on helping students develop skills related to designing a policy research project. These skills will be important for students planning to complete an Honours Research Essay (HRE); however, are equally crucial to engaging in policy research and analysis more broadly.

The course itself is largely structured around the development of a policy research proposal. This will happen in a number of stages, and will see students develop skills related to: developing an effective research question and argument, searching for the relevant literature, situating their research question in that literature, choosing an appropriate theoretical framework for their analysis, outlining their methodology and method(s), anticipating potential challenges in conducting research, and conveying the relevant policy implications of their research.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be familiar with the main facets of designing and conducting research such as literature review, identification of key concepts, theoretical framework, and methodology/methods. In addition, the readings are designed so that students will gain knowledge of significant qualitative research methods such as discourse analysis, interviews, focus groups, case studies, ethnography and research ethics. An important aspect of the course will be the application of the knowledge gained through the readings, lectures and discussion to the development of a policy research proposal. Students will develop skills related to thinking critically about different approaches to conducting research, which will allow them to both analyze existing research in their field, as well as think through what methods are most appropriate for their own research.

Required Course Materials

Recorded lectures will be accessible through the cuLearn page for this course. All readings are available through the Carleton University Library's ARES online reserve system. This can be

accessed through the cuLearn course page, or through the Library's website. Additional links and resources will be posted to cuLearn.

Office Hours and Emails

All e-mail communication will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn accounts. In addition, all e-mails to the instructor should be sent from Carleton University e-mail accounts. Students are always encouraged to e-mail the instructor with any questions and concerns, and/or, to schedule a meeting over the phone or online conferencing (Zoom). Questions can also be posted to cuLearn forums.

Course Evaluation

Participation – 15%

Research Project Topic, Question and Hypothesis – 10% (Due: September 29 via cuLearn)

Annotated Bibliography – 10% (Due: October 6 via cuLearn)

Literature Review – 20% (Due: October 20 via cuLearn)

Methodology and Methods Statement – 20% (Due: November 10 via cuLearn)

Final Research Proposal – 25% (Due: December 8 via cuLearn)

Total – 100%

1. Participation (15%)

- a. Participation in the three online cuLearn forum discussions. See schedule below for when these will take place. Instructions on how to participate will be provided. Discussion I: 2%; Discussion II: 10%; Discussion 3: 3%; Total: 15%.

2. Research Project Topic, Question and Hypothesis (10%)

- a. This should include a statement of your topic – which can be framed as a preliminary title for your research proposal – a statement of the research question that you seek to explore in your proposal and a tentative statement about what you see as your central argument. The latter should be framed as an answer to your research question. These, of course, will all be tentative as you are at the very beginning of the process. This exercise will provide an opportunity for you to get started with your policy research proposal, as well as to get feedback related to developing a topic, research question and thesis statement. Even though they are preliminary, your topic, research question and statement of argument should be well thought-out, clearly stated and appropriate to the course themes, objectives and instructions.

3. Annotated Bibliography (10%)

- a. Your annotated bibliography should have at least 5 publications. They can be a combination of academic sources and grey literature (e.g. organizational reports, government documents); however, please include at least 3 academic peer-reviewed sources. Please do not count news sources towards your 5 publications. You are required to provide a full citation for each publication. Please use the Chicago Manual of Style (Author-Date) citation style – a link demonstrating how

to use this citation style will be provided. It is important to cite correctly and consistently. Your annotations will consist of a summary for each article (3 sentences) and an analysis of how this article will contribute to your research project (3 sentences). The goal is to locate the literature that will contribute to your particular project and research goals.

4. Literature Review (20%)

- a. Your literature review should be 3-5 pages doubled-spaced. This is not including your bibliography. This literature review should explore how your specific research question fits into the literature that you have researched thus far. Naturally, you will want to use some of the sources contained in your annotated bibliography as the basis for your review; however, you can use additional sources if you wish. Please make sure to have at least 5 sources incorporated into your literature review (I would like at least 3 of these to be academic peer-reviewed sources). The purpose of the literature review is to situate your research question within the debates and discussions going on in related fields/literatures – for example: What are the dominant understandings of your research topic? How does your research project add-to, or perhaps, problematize, current research in the field? Maybe your research seeks to answer a question that has, in your eyes, been ignored by the field thus far. The point of the literature review is not only to foreground the relevant/related literature, but to point to the ways in which your own research seeks to make a contribution to this body of knowledge.

5. Methodology and Methods Statement (20%)

- a. Your methodology and methods statement should be 3-5 pages doubled-spaced, not including bibliographic entries. Similar to your literature review, I would like you to incorporate at least 3 academic peer-reviewed sources in your statement. The goal of this statement will be to convey to your reader the methodology and methods that you will utilize in order to conduct your research and/or engage in analysis. You will want to show your reader why you have chosen the methods that you have, i.e. justify why these are appropriate for your particular research project. You will want to think about how exactly you conceive of your object of study; for example, is your object of study a broad social phenomenon? A particular government policy? A body of literature about a particular issue? And subsequently, how exactly will you go about collecting and studying your ‘sources of evidence’ related to that object of study; for example, you might want to do a discursive analysis of how a particular social issue is framed in mainstream policymaking, or, a case study related to a particular government program. Naturally, each one of these projects will have particular research methods that are more appropriate than others given the object of study and goal of the project. Therefore, this statement is important since it will help clarify and justify the tools you will use in trying to answer the research question you have about your particular research topic, and, subsequently, help you develop/support the argument you want to make about that topic.

6. Final Research Proposal (25%)

- a. Your final submission for this course will be your full policy research proposal and will be marked as ‘Pass’ or ‘Fail.’ You will have already completed many of these sections over the course of the term, and some will be new elements that you will

be required to add. It is important to note that the expectation is that you will have revised and refined the parts of this proposal that you have already completed/submitted based on the feedback that you have received. A crucial part of conducting research and developing a research project is being able to incorporate feedback, so I will need to see this reflected in your final submission in order for you to receive a grade of ‘pass’ on the assignment. Furthermore, in order to receive a grade of ‘pass’ on your research proposal: all sections (listed below) must be completed in full, they must follow the instructions (both as explained below, as well as any possible further instructions from the instructor), reflect attention to the content of the course, sufficiently meet the goals and purpose of the section/assignment and reflect an effort to write clearly with proper syntax and grammar. This assignment will be factored into your final grade for the course as follows: a submission which lacks multiple components or significantly fails to meet the general expectations will receive a mark of ‘fail’ equal to 0/25 marks; a submission which lacks a maximum of one component or otherwise partially fails to meet the general expectations will receive a mark of ‘fail’ equal to 12/25 marks; a complete submission which meets expectations will receive a mark of ‘pass’ equal to 25/25 marks. Your final submission should include the elements listed below (note: the organization/order of some of these components can be modified based on your particular project and/or how you feel it works the best; however, make sure that your choices do indeed lead to a clear and well-structured proposal). Please adhere to the word count guidelines and avoid going 10% below/above the stated guideline; for example, if you are asked to write 300 words, your range should be 270-330 words depending on your particular context and writing style. Page length requirements for previously submitted components remain the same.

- b. **Introduction** (New; 300 words) – introduce and provide the context for your project and why it is important.
- c. **Research Question and Hypothesis** – a polished statement of your research question and the particular argument you want to develop and support. This should be a well-crafted thesis statement.
- d. **Theoretical Framework** (New; 300 words) – outline and justify the important concepts, theories and/or theoretical assumptions that will guide your research and the argument you want to make.
- e. **Methodology and Methods** – a revised version of your previously written statement which incorporates feedback and makes it fit with the other sections.
- f. **Research Ethics, Potential Challenges and/or Policy Relevance Write-up** (New; 200 words) – this section will depend a bit on your particular project; however, please use it to outline any relevant ethical considerations, potential challenges and/or practical implications related to your research project.
- g. **Literature Review** – a revised version of your literature review which incorporates feedback and makes it fit with the other sections.
- h. **Bibliography** – a properly formatted (CMS author-date) and complete list of all the sources you have cited in your research proposal.

Note: Written work will be evaluated based on how well it:

- a. Meets the requirements and guidelines for the assignment.
- b. Achieves the goals and purposes of the assignment.
- c. Incorporates knowledge gained through lectures and readings.
- d. Demonstrates clear and effective writing with proper syntax and grammar.

Late Submissions: Course work submitted past the stated due date will be accepted but subject to a late penalty of 3% per day (weekends will be counted as 1 day). Written assignments will no longer be accepted once 7 days have passed since the due date. Extensions will be granted at the discretion of the instructor and only for serious documented medical reasons or other emergency circumstances. Students should consult with the instructor as early as possible and should not wait until after the due date for an assignment has passed. **Note:** Students requesting academic accommodation related to COVID-19 can fill out and submit Carleton's 'COVID-19 – Self-declaration for Academic Accommodation' form in lieu of a doctor's note or medical certificate.

Course at a Glance

1. Introduction – September 15
2. Defining Policy Research and Qualitative Methods – September 22
3. Designing a Research Project – September 29
4. Concepts and Theoretical Frameworks – October 6
5. Reviewing the Literature and Writing a Review – October 13
6. Methodology and Methods – October 20
7. Discourse Analysis – November 3
8. Interviews and Focus Groups – November 10
9. Case Studies and Ethnography – November 17
10. Research Ethics and Challenges – November 24
11. Research Findings and Policy Implications – December 1
12. Final Thoughts and Delivery of Research Proposals – December 8

Weekly Topics and Readings

Class 1: Introduction (September 15)

Online cuLearn Forum Discussion I: Introduce yourself! (2% of participation grade)

Class 2: Defining Policy Research and Qualitative Methods (September 22)

Leslie Pal. 2013. *Beyond Policy Analysis: Public Issue Management in Turbulent Times*. 5th edition. Toronto: Nelson Education. Chapter 1.

Thomas Townsend and Bob Kunimoto. 2009. *Capacity, Collaboration and Culture: The Future of the Policy Research Function in the Government of Canada*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Brower, Ralph S., Mitchel Y. Abolafia, and Jered B. Carr. 2000. "On Improving Qualitative

Methods in Public Administration Research.” *Administration and Society* 32(4): 363-397.

Class 3: Designing a Research Project (September 29)

Ian Greener. 2011. *Designing Social Research: A Guide for the Bewildered*. New York: Sage.
Chapter 1.

Enrique Mendizabel. 2013. “Research Questions are Not the Same as Policy Questions.” On Think Tanks. <https://onthinktanks.org/articles/research-questions-are-not-the-same-as-policy-questions/>

Patrick Power Library. nd. “Writing an Annotated Bibliography?” Halifax: Saint Mary’s University. <https://smu.ca/academics/writing-an-annotated-bibliography.html>

Arthur Kroeger College of Public Affairs. 2020. *Guidelines for Students: PAPM 4908 Honours Research Essay*. Ottawa: Carleton University. <https://carleton.ca/bpapm/wp-content/uploads/PAPM-Student-Guidelines-2019.pdf>

Class 4: Concepts and Theoretical Frameworks (October 6)

Gerring, John. 1999. “What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences” *Polity* 31(3): 357–393.

Shawn Wilson. 2008. *Research as Ceremony*. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing. Pages 33-39.

Donna Haraway. 2014. “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.” In *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*, ed. by Alison M. Jaggar, 346-351. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

University of Southern California Library. 2019. “Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Theoretical Framework.” Los Angeles: USC.
<https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/theoreticalframework>

Class 5: Reviewing the Literature and Writing a Review (October 13)

Ian Greener. 2011. *Designing Social Research: A Guide for the Bewildered*. New York: Sage.
Chapter 2.

Dena Bain Taylor. 2007. “A Brief Guide to Writing a Literature Review.” Toronto: University of Toronto. <https://smu.ca/webfiles/guidelitreviewbrief.pdf>

Online cuLearn Forum Discussion II: Classes 2 – 5 (10% of participation grade)

Class 6: Methodology and Methods (October 20)

Jennifer Browne, Brian Coffey, Kay Cook, Sarah Meiklejohn, and Claire Palermo. 2019. “A Guide to Policy Analysis as a Research Method.” *Health Promotion International* 34(5):1032-1044.

Toby Epstein Jayarante and Abigail J. Stewart. 2014. “Quantitative and Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences: Current Feminist Issues and Practical Strategies.” In *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*, ed. by Alison M. Jaggar, 44-57. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Rudra Sil and Peter J. Katzenstein. 2010. “Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring Problems and Mechanisms across Research Traditions.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8, no. 2 (June): 411-31.

*** Fall Break October 26-30***

Class 7: Discourse Analysis (November 3)

Jennifer Milliken. 1999. “The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods.” *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 2: 225-54.

Ospina, Sonia M., and Jennifer Dodge. 2005. “It’s About Time: Catching Method Up to Meaning—The Usefulness of Narrative Inquiry in Public Administration Research.” *Public Administration Review* 65(2): 143-157.

Kevin Walby and M. Larsen. 2012. “Access to Information and Freedom of Information Requests: Neglected Areas of Data Production in the Social Sciences.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 18, no. 1 (January): 31-42.

Class 8: Interviews and Focus Groups (November 10)

Alex Marland and Anna Lennox Esselment. 2018. “Negotiating with Gatekeepers to Get Interviews with Politicians: Qualitative Research Recruitment in a Digital Media Environment.” *Qualitative Research*: 1-18.

Robert Mikecz. 2012. “Interviewing Elites: Addressing Methodological Issues.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 18, no. 6: 482-93.

James P. Kahan. 2001. “Focus Groups as a Tool for Policy Analysis.” *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*: 129-46.

Class 9: Case Studies and Ethnography (November 17)

John Gerring. 2004. “What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?” *American Political Science Review* 98(2) (May): 341-54.

Levy, Jack S. 2008. "Case studies: Types, designs, and logics of inference." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25(1): 1-18.

Giulia Cappellaro. 2017. "Ethnography in Public Management Research: A Systematic Review and Future Directions." *International Public Management Journal* 20, no. 1: 14-48.

Class 10: Research Ethics and Challenges (November 24)

Hammersley, Martyn and Anna Traianou. 2012. *Ethics in Qualitative Research: Controversies and Contexts*. London: Sage Research Methods. Chapter 2 and 3.

Christine Halse and Anne Honey. 2005. "Unravelling Ethics: Illuminating the Moral Dilemmas of Research Ethics". *Signs* 30(4): 2141-2162.

Jody LaPorte. 2014. "Confronting a Crisis of Research Design." *PS Political Science and Politics* 47, no. 2 (April): 414-417.

Class 11: Research Findings and Policy Implications (December 1)

Ruth Lawrence. 2006. "Research Dissemination: Actively Bringing the Research and Policy Worlds Together." *Evidence & Policy* 2, no. 3: 373-84.

Matthew Flinders. 2013. "The Politics of Engaged Scholarship: Impact, Relevance and Imagination." *Policy and Politics*. 41(4): 621-42.

Betty T. Izumi, Amy J. Schulz, Barbara A. Israel, Angela G. Reyes, Jenifer Martin, Richard L. Lichtenstein, Christine Wilson, and Sharon L. Sand. 2010. "The One-Pager: A Practical Policy Advocacy Tool for Translating Community-Based Participatory Research Into Action." *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action* 4, no. 2: 141-7.

University of Southern California Library. 2019. "Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Executive Summary." Los Angeles: USC.

<https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/executivesummary>

Class 12: Final Thoughts and Delivery of Research Proposals (December 8)

Online cuLearn Forum Discussion III: Research Proposal Abstracts

Requests for Academic Accommodation

Carleton University is committed to providing access to the educational experience in order to promote academic accessibility for all individuals. Academic accommodation refers to educational practices, systems and support mechanisms designed to accommodate diversity and difference. The purpose of accommodation is to enable students to perform the essential requirements of their

academic programs. At no time does academic accommodation undermine or compromise the learning objectives that are established by the academic authorities of the University. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit: <http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

Religious obligation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit: <https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit: <https://carleton.ca/PMC/>

Survivors of Sexual Violence: As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and where survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: <https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support/>

Accommodation for Student Activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, see: <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline

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 may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized work or a final grade of "F" for the course.

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission of Term Work and Final Grades

Assignments should be submitted directly to cuLearn and according to the instructions in the course outline.

Grading: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

90-100% = A+ = 12; 85-89% = A = 11; 80-84% = A- = 10; 77-79% = B+ = 9; 73-76% = B = 8;
70-72% = B- = 7; 67-69% = C+ = 6; 63-66% = C = 5; 60-62% = C- = 4; 57-59% = D+ = 3;
53-56% = D = 2; 50-52% = D- = 1.

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.