

PCSI 2701 B
Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science
Friday 11:35 – 1:25
For Class Location see Carleton Central

Instructor: Said Yaqub Ibrahim
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Course Description

This course introduces students to concepts, methods, and processes of qualitative research in political science. The course contains both theoretical and empirical issues including the philosophy of social sciences, the nature and structure of argument, theory-building, research design, case selection, and multiple types of data collection and analysis. At the end of the course, students are expected to express a general understanding of qualitative research methods in political science and be able to use those methods in conducting their research. This course is taught in-person every Friday in fall 2022. Every class includes a two-hour lecture by the instructor and a fifty-minute tutorial by teaching assistants.

Textbooks

1. Loleen Berdahl and Jason Roy (2021). *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*, 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Marc Menard (2016). *Political Argument: A Guide to Research, Writing, and Debating*. Oxford University Press

Course Evaluation

Course evaluation includes three assignments, tutorials, and a final exam and will be calculated on the following basis:

A. Assignment 1: Argument (10%)

Select a political science topic/concept and develop an argument about it. Your argument should include a major premise and two or more minor premises and lead to a logic conclusion. A list of topics/concepts with detailed instruction will be posted at Brightspace in due course. Select your topic/concept with the assumption that you will work on it in your second and third assignments. This assignment should not exceed 2-3 pages (double-spaced in 12-point font).

B. Assignment 2: Measurement (15%)

This assignment is an opportunity for students to operationalize a political science concept. Students will use the concept which they have worked on in their first assignment, conduct a review of 3 relevant scholarly sources, and explain how the concept is operationalized in each source. You should be able to identify two or more variables that explain the concept. This assignment should not exceed 3-4 pages (double-spaced in 12-point font). A detailed instruction will be posted in Brightspace.

C. Assignment 3: Final Paper (25%)

Students are required to write a research paper by putting together the argument, the concept, and the measurements that they have developed in previous assignments. Students should conduct a literature review of 8 to 10 scholarly sources to write a well-organized mini-research paper that should not exceed 10-12 pages (double-spaced in 12-point font). A detailed instruction will be posted in Brightspace in due course.

D. Tutorial (15%)

All tutorials.

Tutorial participation is a critical component of this course. Tutorials are led by teaching assistants who will evaluate students' attendance and participation.

E. Final Exam (35%)

To be scheduled during the regular exam period.

F. Citation

Assignments must follow standard bibliographic and citation formats including MLA, APA, and Chicago Manual of Style. For each assignment select one citation format and use it consistently throughout the paper.

G. Submission Policy

All assignments should be submitted electronically in Brightspace. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted. Late submissions will be penalized 3 percent per 24 hours. If you need an extension for an assignment, contact the instructor or the TA prior to the due date.

Course Summary

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Tutorial</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
Part 1: Fundamentals of Research Methods			
<i>Sept. 9</i>	Course Introduction	<i>No Tutorial</i>	
<i>Sept. 16</i>	Research Methods & Philosophy of Social Sciences	Political Science as Science?	
<i>Sept. 23</i>	Argument, Causation & Theory Development	Argument	
Part 2: Research Design			
<i>Sept. 30</i>	Research Question & Hypothesis	Answering RQ	Assignment 1 Due
<i>Oct. 7</i>	Concept & Measurement	Measurement	
<i>Oct. 14</i>	Case Study & Comparative Research	Comparison	
<i>Oct. 21</i>	Research Ethics	<i>No Tutorial</i>	Assignment 2 Due
<i>Oct. 28</i>	Fall Break, no class		
Part 3 Research in Practice			
<i>Nov. 4</i>	Textual Analysis	Discourse Analysis	
<i>Nov. 11</i>	Interview & Focus Group	Interview	
<i>Nov. 18</i>	Observation & Field Research	Ethnography	
<i>Nov. 25</i>	Survey	Survey	
<i>Dec. 2</i>	Course Overview and final Exam Instruction	<i>No Tutorial</i>	Assignment 3 Due

Course Schedule

Lecture 1: Course Introduction

The instructor reviews the syllabus and discusses the course content, requirements, and organization.

No required reading

Lecture 2: Research Methods and Philosophy of Social Sciences

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapters 1 & 2.

Lecture 3: Argument, Causation & Theory Development

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapters 2 (read only *constructing an argument*)

Marc Menard, Chapters 4

Optional:

Baxter-Moore, N., Carroll, T. and Church R. *Studying Politics: An Introduction to Argument and Analysis* (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1994), Chapters 2 & 3 (available electronically in Ares)

Lecture 4: Research Question and Hypothesis

Required Reading:

Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath (2012). *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 5 & 6 (available electronically in Ares)

Lecture 5: Concept and Measurement

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapters 4

Lecture 6: Case Study & Comparative Research

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter, 10.

Optional:

John Gerring, What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For? *American Political Science Review* 98 (2), 2004: 341-354.

Lecture 7: Ethics in Political Science Research

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter 3.

Optional:

Esikot F. Idorenyin, Social science and research ethics in developing countries: The perspective from Nigeria, *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 6(4), 2014: 231-241.

Lecture 8: Textual Analysis

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapters, 6.

Lecture 9: Interview and Focus Group

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapters 7 (read only interview and focus group sections).

Lecture10: Observation & Field research

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter 7 (read only observation section)

N. Cohen, & T. Arieli, 'Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling,' *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(4), 2011: 423-435.

R. F. Fenno, 'Observation, context, and sequence in the study of politics,' *American Political Science Review*, 80(1), 1986: 3-15.

Lecture 11: Survey

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter 8.

Optional:

Harvard University Program on Survey Research (2007). *Tip Sheet on Question Wording*, Access online at: <http://psr.iq.harvard.edu/book/questionnaire-design-tip-sheet>

Lecture 12: Course Overview and final Exam Instruction

Appendix

Covid-19 Pandemic Measures

It is important to remember that COVID is still present in Ottawa. The situation can change at any time and the risks of new variants and outbreaks are very real. There are [a number of actions you can take](#) to lower your risk and the risk you pose to those around you including being vaccinated, wearing a mask, staying home when you're sick, washing your hands and maintaining proper respiratory and cough etiquette.

Feeling sick? Remaining vigilant and not attending work or school when sick or with symptoms is critically important. If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms do not come to class or campus. If you feel ill or exhibit symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately. In all situations, you should follow Carleton's [symptom reporting protocols](#).

Masks: Masks are no longer mandatory in university buildings and facilities. However, we continue to recommend masking when indoors, particularly if physical distancing cannot be maintained. We are aware that personal preferences regarding optional mask use will vary greatly, and we ask that we all show consideration and care for each other during this transition.

Vaccines: While proof of vaccination is no longer required to access campus or participate in in-person Carleton activities, it may become necessary for the University to bring back proof of vaccination requirements on short notice if the situation and public health advice changes. Students are strongly encouraged to get a full course of vaccination, including booster doses as soon as they are eligible and submit their booster dose information in [cuScreen](#) as soon as possible. Please note that Carleton cannot guarantee that it will be able to offer virtual or hybrid learning options for those who are unable to attend the campus.

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow requirements and guidelines regarding health and safety which may change from time to time. For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and health and safety requirements please see the [University's COVID-19 website](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact covidinfo@carleton.ca.

Student Mental Health

As a university student you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- ***Carleton Resources:***

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

- ***Off Campus Resources:***

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

Academic Accommodations

The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your ***Letter of Accommodation*** at the beginning of the term, and 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 me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

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

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline 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. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

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:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3
73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2

70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1
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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.

Carleton E-mail Accounts: All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton university e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton and Brightspace accounts.

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 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, visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencesociety/> 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.