PSCI 2701A
Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

FRIDAYS, 11:35 AM TO 1:25 PM – PLEASE CHECK LOCATION ON CARLETON CENTRAL

Instructor: Dr. Vandna Bhatia
Contact: A625 Loeb Building
520-2600, ext. 1360
Vandna_bhatia@carleton.ca
Office Hours: Fridays 1:30-3:00 pm

Course Description

This course introduces students to basic empirical methods used in political science research. The purpose of the course is to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of the general principles, process, concepts, issues and techniques in social science. We will consider key points in the development of the science of politics, the qualities of logical argumentation, and issues of research design, including: how to frame researchable hypotheses and questions, selecting samples and cases for study, measurement of social and political phenomena, and analysis of qualitative data to better understand how the social world works. We will also discuss issues related to the range and selection of research methods, focusing primarily on non-quantitative approaches, and their application including: literature review, case study, interviews, content analysis, surveys and finding data sources.

By the end of the course, students should:
- Understand the major theoretical and philosophical approaches to political science research;
- Become familiar with and be able to discuss the principles of empirical social scientific research, including the ethics of doing research with human beings;
- Be able to describe and discuss various social scientific research methodologies in the context of political science;
- Be able to identify and apply the tenets of research design and methodology, including systematic data gathering and analysis, in a research paper;
- Be able to find, read and critically assess published research and on-line materials.

Evaluation

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quiz 1 (on-line)</td>
<td>October 2</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Analyzing Arguments</td>
<td>October 9</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 2 (on-line)</td>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Operationalizing Concepts</td>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 3 (on-line)</td>
<td>November 20</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Content Analysis</td>
<td>December 7</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Quizzes will be made available on-line for a 7-day period during which students are expected to complete the quiz within 90 minutes. Detailed instructions and guidelines for written assignments will be discussed in class and distributed via CULearn. Papers must follow accepted bibliographic and citation formats. Grades will be posted and graded work will be returned to students via CULearn. The final exam will be held during the exam period. The exam will be cumulative and include a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.

**Policy on Late Assignments** – Written assignments are due on-line, through CULearn ONLY, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted. Late submission of assignments will be penalized, to a maximum of 5 days. Assignments submitted more than 5 days late will be given a 0. Late penalties will be assessed on a daily basis, including weekends. Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds, with appropriate documentation.

**ACADEMIC & STUDENT SUPPORT RESOURCES**

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<tr>
<th>If you need assistance with…</th>
<th>Refer to…</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Study skills</td>
<td>Student Academic Success Centre – Learning Support Services</td>
<td>302 Tory Building Tel: 613-520-7850 carleton.ca/sasc</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Finding a tutor</td>
<td>Student Academic Success Centre – Academic Advising</td>
<td>302 Tory Building Tel: 613-520-7850 carleton.ca/sasc/advisingcentre</td>
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<td>• Peer-assisted subject coaching</td>
<td>Paul Menton Centre</td>
<td>501 University Centre Tel: 613-520-6608 carleton.ca/pmc</td>
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<td>• On-line, in-person workshops</td>
<td>Writing Tutorial Service</td>
<td>MacOdrum Library, 4th Floor Tel: 613-520-6632 carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Academic support and advice</td>
<td>Student Academic Success Centre – Learning Support Services</td>
<td>MacOdrum Library, 4th Floor Tel: 613-520-7850 carleton.ca/lss/english-conversation-groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Choosing, changing major</td>
<td>Student Academic Success Centre – Learning Support Services</td>
<td>MacOdrum Library, 4th Floor Tel: 613-520-7850 carleton.ca/lss/english-conversation-groups</td>
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<td>• Academic planning</td>
<td>MacOdrum Library, Main Floor Tel: 613-520-2735 Email: <a href="mailto:askthelibrary@carleton.ca">askthelibrary@carleton.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Developing writing skills</td>
<td>MacOdrum Library, 1st Floor 613-520-2600 x2749 Email: <a href="mailto:GIS@carleton.ca">GIS@carleton.ca</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Writing groups, workshops</td>
<td>Health and Counseling Services</td>
<td>2600 CTTC Building Tel: 613-520-6674 carleton.ca/health</td>
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<td>• Peer mentors</td>
<td>Maps, Data, and Government Information Centre, MacOdrum Library</td>
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<td>• Research assistance</td>
<td>Research Help Desk MacOdrum Library</td>
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<td>• Government information collection</td>
<td>Data sources</td>
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<td>• Coping with stress or crisis</td>
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COURSE TEXT

The required textbook for this course is:


The text is on order at Haven Books (located at 43 Seneca Street, at Sunnyside), and is also available (including electronic versions) for purchase online at Amazon, Chapters and OUP Canada.

The text will be supplemented with additional required and optional readings. A number of these readings are only available in hard copy from the library reserves, and are marked with an asterisk in the reading list for each week. These readings will be available on a short-term loan (2 hours) basis from MacOdrum.

COURSE TOPICS AND SCHEDULE

The course is organized to enable flexibility in covering the course material while moving at a pace that is comfortable for both students and instructor. The proposed schedule is to serve as a tentative guide only. At the discretion of the instructor, some changes may be made.

**Lecture 1: Introductions; The Science of Politics (Friday September 11)**

*Introduction; the scientific approach and the study of politics*

**Required Readings:**
- BA, Chapter 1 (The Scientific Approach to Politics)

**Optional/Supplementary:**

**Lecture 2: Philosophy of Social Science – Knowledge and Knowing (Friday September 18)**

*How we know what we know; ontology and epistemology in political science; a brief history of the discipline; quantitative and qualitative approaches*

**Required Readings:**
- BA, Chapter 2 (Observing the Political World)

**Optional/Supplementary:**
Lecture 3: Causation, Argumentation and Theory Development (Friday September 25)

*The form and structure of arguments: generalizations, logic and causation*

**Required:**

**Optional/Supplementary:**

Lecture 4: Theories and Questions (Friday October 2)

*Theory and causal arguments; framing research; reviewing literature; developing research questions and hypotheses.*

**Required:**
- BA, Chapter 3 (Theory-Oriented Research)

**Optional/Supplementary:**

Lecture 5: Designing Research (Friday October 9)

*Conceptualizing and measuring the political world; finding and collecting data; selecting a research design*

**Required:**
- BA, Chapter 4 (Defining the Political World: Concepts)
- BA, Chapter 5 (Defining the Political World: Measures)

**Optional/Supplementary:**
Lecture 6: Ethics in Social Research (Friday October 16)
Ethical principles; doing research with human subjects; ethics of community-based research

Required:
- BA, Chapter 6 (Research Ethics)

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 7: Small-n Research: Case Study and Comparative Designs (Friday October 23)
Identifying and selecting cases; comparative research designs and comparative analysis

Required:
- BA, Chapter 7 (Small-n Research)

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 8: Textual Analysis (Friday November 6)
Analyzing documents and texts; content and discourse analysis techniques; analysis of qualitative data

Required:
- BA, Chapter 12 (Textual Analysis)
- BA, Chapter 13 (Analyzing Qualitative Data)

Optional/Supplementary:
Lecture 9: Interviews and Focus Groups (Friday November 13)

*Interview formats and techniques; advantages and disadvantages of each; focus groups as a special form of interview*

**Required:**
- BA, Chapter 9 (Interview, Focus Group and Observation Research)

**Optional/Supplementary:**

Lecture 10: Observation and Field Research (Friday November 20)

*Observational research; political ethnography; techniques; ethical issues*

**Required:**

**Recommended:**

Lecture 11: Sampling, Surveys, and Questionnaire Design (Friday November 27)

*Sampling and probability; designing survey instruments; question structure and format*

**Required:**
- BA, Chapter 8 (Sampling the Political World)
- BA, Chapter 10 (Survey Research and Official Statistics)
Optional/Supplementary:

**Lecture 12: Experiments in Political Science Research (Friday December 4)**

*Classical experimental design; field and natural experiments in social science*

**Required:**
- BA, Chapter 11 (Experimental Research)

**Optional/Supplementary:**

**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.

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 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:

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<tr>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
<th>LETTER GRADE</th>
<th>12-POINT SCALE</th>
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<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
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<td>85-89</td>
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<td>53-56</td>
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<td>50-52</td>
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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 cuLearn. As important course and University information is distributed this way, it is the student’s responsibility to monitor their Carleton and cuLearn 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/politicalsciencessociety/ 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.

Updated: 11 August 2015