

PSCI 2701A
Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

13:35 p.m. – 14:25 p.m., Tuesdays and Thursdays

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Tyler Attwood
Office: B646 Loeb Building
Office Hours: 14:30 – 15:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday
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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 assist students in developing 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 is built around exploring the research process as a ‘way of knowing’ that informs both policy making and academic argumentation.

Major topics of discussion will include: qualitative vs. quantitative research, variables, sampling, ethics in research, basic concepts in data analysis, and the presentation of findings (writing the research report). The major writing component of the course involves creating a proposal for a research project (up to the stage of collecting data). While the course is primarily lecture-based, the mandatory tutorials give you an opportunity to interact with your peers and TA in a smaller environment more conducive to participation. The tutorials will focus on clarifying and extending the course themes through review of the lecture material and lab exercises.

Course Text

The required textbook is *The Research Process, Canadian edition*, Gary Bouma, Rod Ling, & Lori Wilkinson, Oxford Univ. Press, 2009, available at Haven Bookstore (Seneca & Sunnyside).

Evaluation

- Discussion Groups – 10%
- Lab Exercises - 30% (Sept 28, Oct 14, Nov 4, Nov 23)
- Research Project Proposal - 25% (Dec 2)
- Final Exam - 35% (during formally scheduled exam period)

(Per early feedback guidelines, the first two written exercises and half of your DG mark will be available to you by **October 28th**.)

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 **Class Schedule** below.

**** EMAILED OR FAXED COPIES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED, EVEN FOR TIME VERIFICATION! ****

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. Weekends are included in the calculation of late penalties.

You must provide appropriate documentation for requests of an extension on medical grounds. See **Academic Accommodations** below for additional exceptions.

Please note that you may **NOT** use the drop box to turn in assignments on the day they are due, though you may drop **late** papers there. If you are turning in your assignment on time, you must do so in person, in class.

Graded assignments will be returned (in tutorials) 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 provide the instructor with a self-addressed, stamped envelope so that any uncollected work can be mailed to you.

Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds for which you must provide appropriate documentation. See "**Academic Accommodations**" below for additional exceptions.

The Web CT page for the course will be used and you should make a habit of checking it frequently. The syllabus, lab exercises and other important documents are posted there. There is also a discussion forum for the assignments and general course issues. You should monitor the **Announcements** tab for any last-minute changes or updates, such as class or office hour cancellations, room changes, etc. Please note that the email and grade book functions on Web CT will not be used for this course.

- **Discussion Groups - 10%:** The scheduled discussion groups for this course are mandatory, and your TA will be responsible for assessing your performance and assigning your mark for this component based on a combination of attendance and participation in discussions. Refer to your registration information for your specific discussion group date, time and location. It is your responsibility to determine the DG in which you are registered. **The first DGs will meet the week of September 20-24.** You will receive the first half (5%) of your DG mark on October 28th and the remaining 5% at the end of the term.
- **Lab Exercises - 30% (4 x 7.5% each):** You will complete four short written assignments over the course of the term. These are designed to help 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 Web CT) for more information. I will generally go over some of the concepts the week prior to the due date, and you will deal with them further in your discussion groups. The assignments are due at the beginning of class on the following days: Sept. 28th, Oct. 14th, Nov. 4th, Nov. 23rd

➤ **Research Project Proposal - 25%** (due December 2nd): For this assignment, you will be given a broad research topic (related to voting patterns) and you will need to develop a specific research question within this topic. The goal of this assignment is to create a proposal for a research project. In other words, you will not actually be going out to collect data, but you will be designing the framework for doing so as if you would move on to the collection and interpretation phases. A detailed set of instructions is available on the assignment sheet posted on Web CT. The proposal is due at the beginning of class on Dec. 2nd.

➤ **Final Exam - 35%**: 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/terms, and short essay questions.

Course Topics and Reading Schedule

9/9 (Thurs.): Discussion of course structure & assignments

9/14 & 9/16: Chap. 1, "How We Know What We Know and How We Know We Know", pp. 3-6

9/21 & 9/23: Chap. 2, "Research as a Way of Knowing", pp. 7-22

9/28 & 9/30: Chap. 3, "Selecting a Problem", pp. 25-39

10/5 & 10/7: Chap. 4, "Qualitative or Quantitative Research?", pp. 40-47

10/12 & 10/14: Chap. 5, "Selecting Variables", pp. 48-60

10/19 & 10/21: Chap. 6, "Finding a Variable's Measurement", pp. 61-92

10/26 & 10/28: Chap. 7, "Selecting a Research Design", pp. 93-120

11/2 & 11/4: Chap. 8, "Selecting a Sample", pp. 121-141

11/9 & 11/11: Chap. 9, "Ethics in Human Research", pp. 142-159

11/16 & 11/18: Chap. 11, "Summarizing & Presenting Data in Qualitative Research", pp. 170-192

11/23 & 11/25: Chap. 12, "Presenting Data Using Qualitative Research", pp. 193-214

11/30: Chap. 13, "Drawing Conclusions", pp. 217-228

12/2: Chap. 14, "Reporting Your Research", pp. 229-233

Important dates to remember:

Sept. 28th: First written exercise due
Oct. 14th: Second written exercise due
Nov. 4th: Third written exercise due
Nov. 23rd: Fourth written exercise due
Dec. 2nd: Research Design Project due

Academic Resources

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

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 15 2010 for December examinations and March 11 2011 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 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.

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: 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: 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, visit our website at 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.