

PSCI 2701A

Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:35 am to 12:25 pm

Instructor:

Dr. Vandna Bhatia

Contact:

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Office Hours:

Tuesdays 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Course Description

This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to key empirical methods used in political science. The purpose of the course is to provide students with an understanding and appreciation of the general principles, process, concepts, issues and methods for conducting research in social and political science. The course will address issues related to the range and selection of 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

| Item | Due Date | Weight |
|---|-----------------------|---------------|
| On-Line Quizzes | 3 @ 10% each | 30% |
| Assignment 1: Plagiarism On-Line Tutorial | May 22 nd | 5% |
| Assignment 2: Operationalizing Concepts | June 5 th | 10% |
| Assignment 3: Content Analysis | June 19 th | 20% |
| Workshop Attendance | | 5% |
| Final Exam | | 30% |
| Total | | 100% |








Detailed instructions and guidelines for assignments will be distributed via WebCT. Papers must follow accepted bibliographic and citation formats. Graded assignments will be returned to students during

class, and grades will be posted on WebCT. The final exam will be held during the exam period. The exam will be cumulative and include a combination of short answer and essay questions.

In lieu of tutorials, this course has been registered in the study skills Incentive Program offered through Learning Support Services (LSS). To earn the 5 marks for workshops students are expected to attend **5** workshops throughout the term. The objectives of workshop attendance in LSS are to develop and refine your academic skill set, in particular those that will strengthen your research abilities. There are over 15 different offered, but for this course you must attend the following four: **Academic Reading; Critical Thinking; Research Skills; Writing Reports**. The fifth workshop is of your choosing. All workshops are held in room 402 in the MacOdrum Library, and run about 25 minutes in length. To see the complete workshop schedule and to preregister (although not mandatory) please login to Carleton Central, and click on the SASC Learning Support Services – workshops link under the mySuccess tab. Also note that if you attend 5 or more workshops you will earn your *Skills for Academic Success Certificate* which can be added to your co-circular record.

Policy on Late Assignments – Assignments are due at the beginning of class, and must be submitted directly to the instructor, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance. Late submission of assignments will be penalized, to a maximum of 5 days. Assignments submitted more than 5 days late will automatically be given a 0. Assignments placed in the department’s Drop Box on the due date will also be considered late, since the box is not emptied until 4:00 pm. If you need to use the Drop Box, you must submit your assignment at least one day before the due date in order to avoid the late penalty. Late penalties will be assessed on a daily basis, including weekends. Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds, with appropriate documentation.

Academic Resources

| <i>If a student needs assistance with...</i> | <i>Refer to...</i> | <i>Contact Information</i> |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a tutor • One-on-one study skills support • Group study skills workshops • Reserving group study rooms | Learning Support Services Link:  | 302 Tory Building, 520-7850 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support and advice | Academic Advising Centre Link:  | 302 Tory Building, 520-7850 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A learning disability | Paul Menton Centre Link:  | 501 University Centre, 520-6608 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing writing skills | Writing Tutorial Service Link:  | 4 th Floor MacOdrum Library, 520-2600 ext. 1125 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polishing English conversation skills | English Conversation Groups Link:  | 501 University Centre, 520-6600 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research assistance | Research Help Desk, MacOdrum Link:  | 2 nd Floor MacOdrum Library, 520-2735 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics/SPSS assistance (by appointment only) | Data Centre, MacOdrum Library Link:  | Statistical Consultant, 520-2600 x 2619 |

Course Text

The required textbook for this course is:

- Keith Archer and Loleen Berdahl (2011). *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*, 2nd edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

The text is on order at [Haven Books](#) (located at 43 Seneca Street, at Sunnyside), and is also on reserve at MacOdrum Library. A number of required readings are only available in hard copy from the library reserves. These 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; Theories and the Science of Politics (8 May)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 1 (The Scientific Approach to Politics)
- *Issacs, A.C. (1969). *Scope and Methods of Political Science*. Homewood: Dorsey Press. Chapter 2: Politics and science, pp. 13-30, Chapter 4: Is political science a science? pp. 45-57.

Optional/Supplementary:

- Dryzek, J. (2006). Revolutions without enemies: Key transformations in political science. *American Political Science Review*, 100(4):487-492
- McIntyre, L.J. (2005). *Need to Know: Social Science Research Methods*. New York: McGraw-Hill. Chapter 1: Why you need to know: An introduction, pp. 1-12
- Baxter-Moore, N., Carroll, T. and Church R. (1994). *Studying Politics: An Introduction to Argument and Analysis*. Toronto: Copp Clark Longman. Chapter 4: Standard science and the study of politics, pp. 78-90
- Bernstein, S., R.N. Lebow, J.G. Stein and S. Weber (2000). God gave physics the easy problems: Adapting social science to an unpredictable world, *European Journal of International Relations* 6(1): 43-76

Lecture 2: Connecting Theory with Research (10 May)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 2 (Theory Oriented Research and Causality)
- *Brians, C.L., L. Willnat, J.B. Manheim, R.C. Rich (2011). *Empirical Political Analysis, 8th Edition*. New York: A.B. Longman. Chapter 2: Theory Building pp. 16-35

Optional/Supplementary:

- Hay, C. (2002). *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan; Chapter 1: Analytical perspectives, analytical controversies, pp. 1-54.
- Kuhn, T. (1996). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Third Edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2: The route to normal science, pp. 10-22 and Chapter 3: The nature of

normal science, pp. 23-34.

- Marsh, D. and Furlong, P. (2002). A skin, not a sweater: Ontology and epistemology in political science. In Marsh and Stoker, eds., *Theory and Methods in Political Science, Second Edition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan; pp. 17-41.

Lecture 3: Causation and Argumentation (15 May)

Required:

- *Baxter-Moore, N., Carroll, T. and Church R. (1994). *Studying Politics: An Introduction to Argument and Analysis*. Toronto: Copp Clark Longman. Chapter 2: Understanding arguments, pp. 23-48; Chapter 3: Generalization, cause and analogy, pp. 49-76.

Optional/Supplementary:

- Babbie E. and L. Benaquisto (2004). *Fundamentals of Social Research. First Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Thomson and Nelson. Chapter 3: The Idea of Causation, pp. 58-72
- Wilfred Laurier University Writing Centre, "How to Construct and Argument", http://www.wlu.ca/forms/915/How_to_Construct_an_Argument.pdf
- Purdue On-Line Writing Lab, "Argumentative Essays" <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/05/>
- University of Toronto, Centre for Teaching and Learning "Constructing a Logical Argument" <http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/twc/sites/default/files/Argument.pdf>

Lecture 4: Designing a Research Project and Gathering Data (17 May)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 10 (Government Data Sources)
- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 20 (Writing the Report)

Optional/Supplementary:

- Political Science Subject Guide, MacOdrum Library Website <http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/politicalscience.html>
- Babbie E. and L. Benaquisto (2004). *Fundamentals of Social Research. First Canadian Edition*. Toronto: Thomson and Nelson. Chapter 4: Research Design
- Brians, C.L., L. Willnat, J.B. Manheim, R.C. Rich (2011). *Empirical Political Analysis, 8th Edition*. New York: A.B. Longman. Chapter 3 (Developing your literature review) Chapter 4 (Internet research)
- Johnson, J.B. and H.T. Reynolds (2012). *Political Science Research Methods, 7th Edition*. Washington: CQ Press. Chapter 3: Beginning the research process
- Schmidt, D.E. (2005). *Writing in Political Science. A Practical Guide*. San Francisco: Pearson-Longman. Chapter 4: Locating research materials, using indexes, databases and the internet; pp. 39-74.

Lecture 5: Ethics in Social Research (22 May)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 5 (Research Ethics)
- Dixon-Woods M. and C.L. Bosk (2011). Defending rights or defending privileges? *Public Management Review*, 13(2):257-272

Optional/Supplementary:

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2010) [Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans](#)
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Special Working Committee: A Working Committee of the Interagency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics (2008). [Extending the Spectrum: The TCPS and Ethical Issues in Internet-based Research](#). Interagency Advisory Panel and Secretariat on Research Ethics
- Ermine, W., R. Sinclair and B. Jeffery (2004). [The Ethics of Research Involving Indigenous Peoples](#). Indigenous People's Health Research Centre.
- Langlois, Anthony J. (2011): Political research and human research ethics committees. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 46(1):141-156
- Palys, T. (2003). *Research Decisions: Quantitative and Qualitative Perspectives, Third Edition*. Scarborough: Thomson Nelson. Chapter 5: Ethics in Social Research.
- Porter, T. (2008). Research ethics governance and political science in Canada. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 41: 495–99.
- Wood, E.J. (2006). The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones. *Qualitative Sociology*, 29:373-386.
- Yanow, D. and P. Schwartz-Shea (2008). Reforming institutional review board policy: Issues in implementation and field research *PS: Political Science and Politics* 41:483-494

Lecture 6: Measuring Social Phenomena (24 May)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 3 (Defining the Political World: Concepts),
- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 4 (Defining the Political World: Measures),
- Archer and Berdahl, 6 (Observing the Political World: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches)

Optional/Supplementary:

- Adcock, R. and Collier, D. (2001). Measurement validity: A shared standard for qualitative and quantitative research. *American Political Science Review*, 95(3): 529-546.
- Lin, A.C. (1998). Bridging positivist and interpretivist approaches to qualitative methods. *Policy Studies Journal* 26(1): 162–180
- Mahoney J. and G. Goertz (2006). A tale of two cultures: Contrasting quantitative and qualitative research, *Political Analysis* 14:227-249

Lecture 7: Experiments (29 May)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 11 (Experiments)
- Loewen, P.J., D. Rubenson and L. Wantchekon (2010). Help me help you: Conducting field experiments with political elites. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science March*, 628(1): 165-175

Optional/Supplementary:

- Berinsky A.J. and D.R. Kinder (2006). Making sense of issues through media frames: Understanding the Kosovo crisis, *Journal of Politics*, 68(3):640-656.

- Green D.P. and Gerber, A.S. (2003). The underprovision of experiments in political science. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 589: 94-112.
- McDermott, R. (2002). Experimental methodology in political science, *Political Analysis* 10(4):325-242
- Oakley, A. et al. (2003). Using random allocation to evaluate social interventions: Three recent U.K. examples. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 589: 170-189

Lecture 8: Survey Research (31 May)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 8 (Sampling and the Political World)
- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 9 (Observing the Political World: Survey Research)
- Contandriopoulos, D. and H. Bilodeau (2009). The political use of poll results about public support for a privatized healthcare system in Canada. *Health Policy*, 90(1): 104–112

Optional/Supplementary:

- Abramson P. and C. Ostrom (1994). Question wording and partisanship: Change and continuity in party loyalties during the 1992 election campaign. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 58:21-48.
- Fowler, F.J. (2009). *Survey Research Methods, Fourth Edition*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.
- Mendelsohn, M. and J. Brent (2001). Understanding polling methodology. *ISUMA*, Autumn: 131-136.
- Orr, S. K. (2005). New technology and research: An analysis of internet survey methodology in political science. *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 38(2):263-267.
- Saris, W., M. Revilla, J.A. Krosnick and E.M. Schaeffer (2010). Comparing Questions with Agree/Disagree Response Options to Questions with Item-Specific Response Options. *Survey Research Methods*, 4(1): 61-79

Lecture 9: Content Analysis (5 June)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 12 (Content Analysis)
- Archer and Berdahl. Chapter 19 (Analyzing Qualitative Data)
- Tumasjan, A., T.O. Sprenger, P.G. Sandner, I.M. Welp (2011). Predicting elections with Twitter: What 140 characters reveal about political sentiment. *Proceedings of the Fourth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence Press, pp. 178-185. Available online at: <http://www.aaai.org/ocs/index.php/ICWSM/ICWSM10/paper/view/1441>
- Meeks, L. (2012). Is she “Man Enough”? Women candidates, executive political offices, and news coverage. *Journal of Communication*, 62(1):175–193

Optional/Supplementary:

- Observatory on Media and Public Policy, McGill University. *2008 Canadian Federal Election Newspaper Analysis*. Available at <http://www.mcgill.ca/misc/research/media-observatory/research>
- Andrew, B., L. Young and S. Soroka (2008). [Back to the Future](#): Press Coverage of the 2008 Canadian Election Campaign strikes both familiar and unfamiliar notes. *Policy Options*, November:79-84

- Brians, C.L., L. Willnat, J.B. Manheim, R.C. Rich (2011). *Empirical Political Analysis, 8th Edition*. New York: A.B. Longman. Chapter 10: Content Analysis.
- Strömbäck J. and D.V. Dimitrova (2006). Political and media systems matter: A comparison of election news coverage in Sweden and the United States. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/politics*, 11(4):131-147.

Lecture 10: Case Study Research (7 June)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 7 (Comparative Research)
- Geddes B. (1990). How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics *Political Analysis*, 2(1): 131-150
- Sawyer M. and D. Laycock (2009). Down with elites and up with inequality: Market populism in Australia and Canada, *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 47(2):133-150

Optional/Supplementary:

- Brians, C.L., L. Willnat, J.B. Manheim, R.C. Rich (2011). *Empirical Political Analysis, 8th Edition*. New York: A.B. Longman. Chapter 12 (Comparative Research)
- Lijphart, A. (1971). Comparative politics and the comparative method. *The American Political Science Review*, 65(3):682-693
- Seawright, J. and J. Gerring (2008). Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2):294-308

Lecture 11: Interviews and Focus Groups (12 June)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 13 (Elite Interviews)
- Speckhard, A. (2009). Research challenges involved in field research and interviews regarding the militant jihad, extremism, and suicide terrorism. *Democracy and Security*, 5: 199–222.
- Parham-Payne, W. (2009). Through the lens of Black Women: The significance of Obama's campaign. *Journal of African American Studies*, 13:131–138

Recommended:

- Aberbach, J. and B.A. Rockman (2002). Conducting and coding elite interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35(4): 673-76
- Brians, C.L., L. Willnat, J.B. Manheim, R.C. Rich (2011). *Empirical Political Analysis, 8th Edition*. New York: A.B. Longman. Chapter 21: Elite and Specialized Interviewing, and Chapter 20: Focus Group Research
- Frey, J. and A. Fontana (1991). The group interview in social research. *The Social Science Journal*, 28(2):175-187.
- Krueger, R. and M.A. Casey (2009). *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. 4th Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage
- Leech, B.L. (2002). Asking questions: Techniques for semistructured interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35:665-668.
- Noy, D. (2009). Setting up targeted research interviews: A primer for students and new interviewers. *The Qualitative Report*, 14(3): 454-465 <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR14-3/noy.pdf>

Lecture 12: NO CLASS (14 June)

Lecture 13: Direct Observation and Field Research (19 June)

Required:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 14 (Observation)
- Clark, J.A. (2006) Field research methods in the Middle East. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 39(3):417-424
- Virchow, F. (2007). Performance, emotion and ideology: On the creation of “collectives of emotion” and worldview in the contemporary German Far Right. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 36(2):147-164.

Optional/Supplementary:

- Clark, A., C. Holland, J. Katz and S. Peace (2009). Learning to see: Lessons from a participatory observation research project in public spaces, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(4):345-360
- Bailey, C.A. (2007). *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*, Second Edition. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge.
- Fenno, R.F. (1986). Observation, context, and sequence in the study of politics. *American Political Science Review*, 80(1): 3-15.
- Liang, B. and H. Lu (2006). Conducting fieldwork in China: Observations on collecting primary data regarding crime, law, and the criminal justice system. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 22:(2):157-172
- Ortobals, C.D. and M.E. Rincker (2009). Fieldwork, identities, and intersectionality: Negotiating gender, race, class, religion, nationality, and age in the research field abroad. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 42(2): 287-328.
- Russell, M., R. Price, L. Signal, J. Stanley, Z. Gerring and J. Cumming (2011). What do passengers do during travel time? Structured observations on buses and trains. *Journal of Public Transportation*, 14(3):123-146.

Updated: April 11, 2012

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 **(Dates to be determined still for summer term)**

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.