

PSCI 2701A

Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

Mondays and Wednesdays 2:35 pm to 4:25 pm – Please check location on Carleton Central

Instructor:

Dr. Vandna Bhatia

Contact:

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Office Hours:

Wednesday, 12:00-1:00

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, the measurement and analysis of social and political 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

Item	Due Date	Weight
Quiz 1 (on-line)	May 11, 2015	10%
Assignment 1: Analyzing Arguments	May 20, 2015	10%
Quiz 2 (on-line)	May 25, 2015	10%
Assignment 2: Operationalizing Concepts	June 1, 2015	15%
Quiz 3 (on-line)	June 8, 2015	10%
Assignment 3: Content Analysis	June 16, 2015	20%
Final Exam	During exam period	25%
Total		100%

Quizzes will be made available on-line for a 5-day period during which students are expected to complete the quiz within a one-hour period. Detailed instructions and guidelines for written assignments will be discussed in class and distributed via CULearn. Papers must follow accepted bibliographic and citation formats. Graded work will be returned to students during tutorials, and grades will be posted on 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. Late penalties will be assessed on a daily basis, including weekends. Assignments submitted more than 5 days late will be given a 0. Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds, with appropriate documentation. 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 intend to use the Drop Box, please submit your assignment at least one day before the due date in order to avoid the late penalty.

Academic Resources

<i>If you need 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 	Student Academic Success Centre – Learning Support Services	302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/ No appointments necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support and advice • Choosing, changing major • Academic planning 	Student Academic Success Centre – Academic Advising	302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/ No appointments necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A learning disability 	Paul Menton Centre	501 University Centre, 520-6608 http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing writing skills 	Writing Tutorial Service	4 th Floor MacOdrum Library 613-520-6632 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polishing English conversation skills 	International Student Services Office, Conversation Groups	128 University Centre, 613-520-6600 http://www1.carleton.ca/isso/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research assistance 	Research Help Desk, MacOdrum Library	MacOdrum Library, 520-2735 http://www.library.carleton.ca/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics/SPSS assistance (by appointment only) 	Data Centre, MacOdrum Library	Statistical Consultant, 520-2600 x 2619 http://www.library.carleton.ca/contact/service-points/data-centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping with stress or crisis 	Office of Student Affairs	613-520-2600, x 2573 http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs
	Health and Counseling Services	613-520-6674 www.carleton.ca/health

Course Text

The required textbook for this course is:

- Loleen Berdahl and Keith Archer (2015). *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science* (Third Edition). Oxford University Press. [referred to as BA in the schedule below]-

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 (Monday May 4)

Introduction; the scientific approach and the study of politics

Required:

- ⊙ BA, 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:

- ⊙ 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
- ⊙ 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

Lecture 2: Philosophy of Social Science – Knowledge and Knowing (Wednesday May 6)

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

Required:

- ⊙ BA, Chapter 2 (Observing the Political World)

Optional/Supplementary:

- ⊙ Dryzek, J. (2006). Revolutions without enemies: Key transformations in political science. *American Political Science Review*, 100(4):487-492
- ⊙ 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, Argumentation and Theory Development (May 11)

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

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:

- ⊙ Horowitz E. (2013). [Want to Win a Political Debate? Try Making a Weaker Argument](#). *Pacific Standard*, August 23.
- ⊙ Gutting, G. (2012). [Facts, Arguments and Politics](#), *New York Times*, September 13.
- ⊙ McBrayer, J. (2015). [Why Our Children Don't Think There Are Moral Facts](#), *New York Times*, March 2.

Lecture 4: Formulating Research Questions and Reviewing the Literature (May 13)

Theory and causal arguments; framing research questions; reviewing literature

Required:

- ⊙ BA, Chapter 3 (Theory-Oriented Research)

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 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
- ⊙ Knopf J.W. (2006). Doing a Literature Review. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 1:127-132.
- ⊙ 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 5: Designing Research (May 20)

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:

- ⊙ Adcock, R. and Collier, D. (2001). Measurement validity: A shared standard for qualitative and quantitative research. *American Political Science Review*, 95(3): 529-546.
- ⊙ Finifter, A. (1970). Dimensions of political alienation. *The American Political Science Review*, 64(2): 389-410

- ⊙ Gerring, J. (1999). What makes a concept good? A critical framework for understanding concept formation in the social sciences. *Polity* 31(2): 357-93.

Lecture 6: Ethics in Social Research (May 25)

Ethical principles; doing research with human subjects

Required:

- ⊙ BA, Chapter 6 (Research Ethics)
- ⊙ Fujii, L. A. (2012). Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 45(04): 717-723.

Optional/Supplementary:

- ⊙ Canadian Press (2014). [Is it ethical to use experimental treatments to treat Ebola?](#) *Maclean's Magazine*, August 10.
- ⊙ Dixon-Woods M. and C.L. Bosk (2011). Defending rights or defending privileges? *Public Management Review*, 13(2):257-272
- ⊙ Wood, E.J. (2006). The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones. *Qualitative Sociology*, 29:373-386.

Lecture 7: Survey Research (May 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:

- ⊙ Bird, D. K., Haynes, K., van den Honert, R., McAneney, J., & Poortinga, W. (2014). Nuclear power in Australia: A comparative analysis of public opinion regarding climate change and the Fukushima disaster. *Energy Policy*, 65, 644-653.
- ⊙ Brady, H. E. (2000). Contributions of survey research to political science. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 33(01), 47-58.
- ⊙ Converse, J.M. and S. Presser (1986). *Survey Questions: Handcrafting the Standardized Questionnaire*. Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, 07-063. Thousand Oaks, California. Sage Publications.
- ⊙ Fowler, F.J. (2014). *Survey Research Methods* (Fifth Edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
- ⊙ Harvard University Program on Survey Research (2007). [Tip Sheet on Question Wording](http://psr.iq.harvard.edu/book/questionnaire-design-tip-sheet), Access online at: <http://psr.iq.harvard.edu/book/questionnaire-design-tip-sheet>
- ⊙ Mendelsohn, M. and J. Brent (2001). Understanding polling methodology. *ISUMA*, Autumn: 131-136.

Lecture 8: Experimental Research (Jun 1)

Classical experimental design; field and natural experiments in social science

Required:

- ⊙ BA, Chapter 11 (Experimental Research)
- ⊙ Bond, R. M., Fariss, C. J., Jones, J. J., Kramer, A. D., Marlow, C., Settle, J. E., & Fowler, J. H. (2012). A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization. *Nature*, 489(7415), 295-298.

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

- ⊙ John, P. & T. Brannan (2008). How different are telephoning and canvassing? Results from a 'Get Out the Vote' field experiment in the British 2005 General Election. *British Journal of Political Science*, 38: 565-574
- ⊙ 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

Lecture 9: Textual Analysis (June 3)

Content and discourse analysis techniques; qualitative and quantitative measures in textual analysis

Required:

- ⊙ BA, Chapter 12 (Textual Analysis)
- ⊙ Small, T. (2011). What the Hashtag? A Content Analysis of Canadian Politics on Twitter. *Information, Communication and Society* 14(6): 872-895.

Optional/Supplementary:

- ⊙ DiFrancesco, D. A., & Young, N. (2011). Seeing climate change: The visual construction of global warming in Canadian national print media. *Cultural Geographies*, 18(4), 517-536.
- ⊙ Meeks, L. (2012). Is she "man enough"? Women candidates, executive political offices, and news coverage. *Journal of Communication*, 62(1):175-193

Lecture 10: Case Study Research (Jun 8)

Identifying and selecting cases; comparative research designs and comparative analysis

Required:

- ⊙ BA, Chapter 7 (Small-n Research)
- ⊙ Warde, B. (2013). Black male disproportionality in the criminal justice systems of the USA, Canada, and England: A comparative analysis of incarceration. *Journal of African American Studies*, 17(4), 461-479.

Optional/Supplementary:

- ⊙ Geddes B. (1990). How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics. *Political Analysis*, 2(1): 131-150
- ⊙ Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for? *American Political Science Review*, 98(May): 341-354
- ⊙ 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 (Jun 10)

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)
- ⊙ Alegria, S. (2014). Constructing racial difference through group talk: An analysis of white focus groups' discussion of racial profiling. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 37(2), 241-260.

Recommended:

- ⊙ Aberbach, J. and B.A. Rockman (2002). Conducting and coding elite interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35(4): 673-76

- ◎ Frey, J. and A. Fontana (1991). The group interview in social research. *The Social Science Journal*, 28(2):175-187.
- ◎ Leech, B.L. (2002). Asking questions: Techniques for semi-structured 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: Observation and Field Research (Jun 15)

Observational research; political ethnography; techniques; ethical issues

Required:

- ◎ 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.
- ◎ 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.

Recommended:

- ◎ Bailey, C.A. (2007). *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*, Second Edition. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge.
- ◎ Cohen, N., & Arieli, T. (2011). Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling. *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(4), 423-435.
- ◎ Fenno, R.F. (1986). Observation, context, and sequence in the study of politics. *American Political Science Review*, 80(1): 3-15.
- ◎ Ortbals, 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.
- ◎ Wedeen, L (2010). Reflections on ethnographic work in political science. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 13: 255-272

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 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.

Grading: Assignments and exams will be graded with a percentage grade. To convert this to a letter grade or to the university 12-point system, please refer to the following table.

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

Grades: Final grades are derived from the completion of course assignments. Failure to write the final exam will result in the grade ABS. Deferred final exams are available ONLY if the student is in good standing in the course.

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 <http://facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety> 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: 10 April 2015