

PSCI 2701A

Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

MONDAYS & WEDNESDAYS 2:35-5:25 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:

Wednesdays 10:00-11:00 AM or
by appointment

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

Item	Due Date	Weight
On-Line Quizzes (3 @ 10% each)	All quizzes must be completed by June 7th	30%
Assignment 1: Analyzing Arguments	May 16 th	10%
Assignment 2: Operationalizing Concepts	May 30 th	15%
Assignment 3: Research Assignment	Jun 14 th	25%
Final Exam	TBA	20%
Total		100%

Quizzes are available on-line and must be completed by the indicated due date(s). Students are expected to complete each quiz within 90 minutes of beginning the session. 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 grade of zero. 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

<i>If you need assistance with...</i>	<i>Refer to...</i>	<i>Contact Information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study skills • Finding a tutor • Peer-assisted subject coaching • On-line, in-person workshops 	Student Academic Success Centre – Learning Support Services	302 Tory Building Tel: 613-520-7850 carleton.ca/sasc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support and advice • Choosing, changing major • Academic planning 	Student Academic Success Centre – Academic Advising	302 Tory Building Tel: 613-520-7850 carleton.ca/sasc/advisingcentre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A disability 	Paul Menton Centre	501 University Centre Tel: 613-520-6608 carleton.ca/pmc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing writing skills • Writing groups, workshops • Peer mentors 	Writing Tutorial Service	MacOdrum Library, 4 th Floor Tel: 613-520-6632 carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer mentor English Conversation sessions to polish language skills 	Student Academic Success Centre – Learning Support Services	MacOdrum Library, 4 th Floor Tel: 613-520-7850 carleton.ca/lss/english-conversation-groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research assistance 	Research Help Desk MacOdrum Library	MacOdrum Library, Main Floor Tel: 613-520-2735 Email: askthelibrary@carleton.ca
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government information collection • Data sources 	Maps, Data, and Government Information Centre, MacOdrum Library	MacOdrum Library, 1 st Floor 613-520-2600 x2749 Email: GIS@carleton.ca
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping with stress or crisis 	Health and Counseling Services	2600 CTTC Building Tel: 613-520-6674 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; A Science of Politics (Mon May 2)

Introduction; the scientific approach and the study of politics

Required Readings:

- 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

Lecture 2: Philosophy of Social Science – Knowledge and Knowing (Wed May 4)

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)
- Dryzek, J. (2006). Revolutions without enemies: Key transformations in political science. *American Political Science Review*, 100(4):487-492

Optional/Supplementary:

- Mahoney J. and G. Goertz (2006). A tale of two cultures: Contrasting quantitative and qualitative research, *Political Analysis* 14:227-249

Lecture 3: Causation, Argumentation and Theory Development (Mon May 9)

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:

- Homer-Dixon, T. F., & Karapin, R. S. (1989). Graphical argument analysis: A new approach to understanding arguments, applied to a debate about the window of vulnerability. *International Studies Quarterly*, 33(4):389-410.
- Gutting, G. (2012). [Facts, Arguments and Politics](#), *New York Times*, September 13.

Lecture 4: Theories, Questions and Concepts (Wed May 11)

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

Required:

- BA, Chapter 3 (Theory-Oriented Research)
- BA, Chapter 4 (Defining the Political World: Concepts)

Optional/Supplementary:

- Knopf J.W. (2006). Doing a literature review. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 1:127-132.
- 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 5: Designing Research (Mon May 16)

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

Required:

- 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.

Lecture 6: Ethics in Social Research (Wed May 18)

Ethical principles; doing research with human subjects; ethics of community-based research

Required:

- BA, Chapter 6 (Research Ethics)
- Castellano, M.B. (2004). Ethics of Aboriginal Research. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, 1(1): 98-114

Optional/Supplementary:

- Dixon-Woods M. and C.L. Bosk (2011). Defending rights or defending privileges? *Public Management Review*, 13(2):257-272
- Fujii, L. A. (2012). Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 45(04): 717-723.
- Wood, E.J. (2006). The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones. *Qualitative Sociology*, 29:373-386.

Please note there will be no classes on May 23rd (Victoria Day) or May 25th (instructor will be absent).

Lecture 7: Textual Analysis (Mon May 30)

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:

- 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
- Trimble, L., Way, L., & Sampert, S. (2010). Drawn to the polls? Representations of Canadian voters in editorial cartoons. *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*, 44(2), 70-94.

Lecture 8: Small-n Research: Case Study and Comparative Designs (Wed Jun 1)

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:

- 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

Lecture 9: Sampling, Surveys, and Questionnaire Design (Mon Jun 6)

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)
- Green D.A. & K. Milligan (2010). The Importance of the Long Form Census to Canada. *Canadian Public Policy* 36(3): 383-388.

Optional/Supplementary:

- 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>

Lecture 10: Interviews, Focus Groups and Observational Research (Wed Jun 8)

Interview formats and techniques; advantages and disadvantages of each; observational research; political ethnography; techniques; ethical issues.

Required:

- BA, Chapter 9 (Interview, Focus Group and Observation Research)
- Aberbach, J. and B.A. Rockman (2002). Conducting and coding elite interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35(4): 673-76
- 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.

Optional/Supplementary:

- Fenno, R.F. (1986). Observation, context, and sequence in the study of politics. *American Political Science Review*, 80(1): 3-15.
- 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>
- Wedeen, L (2010). Reflections on ethnographic work in political science. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 13: 255-272

Lecture 11: Experiments in Political Science Research (Mon Jun 13)

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:

- 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

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:

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

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/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.