**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 pm to 3:30 pm

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**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Analyzing Arguments</td>
<td>October 4th</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial Quiz 1</td>
<td>October 11th</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Operationalizing Concepts</td>
<td>October 25th</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial Quiz 2</td>
<td>November 8th</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tutorial Quiz 3</td>
<td>November 29th</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Content Analysis</td>
<td>December 6th</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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Quizzes will be held during regularly scheduled tutorials. Detailed instructions and guidelines for assignments will be distributed via CULearn. Papers must follow accepted bibliographic and citation formats. Graded work will be returned to students during class, 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. 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you need assistance with…</th>
<th>Refer to…</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Finding a tutor</td>
<td>Student Academic Success Centre – Learning Support Services</td>
<td>302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 <a href="http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/">http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/</a> No appointments necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Academic support and advice</td>
<td>Student Academic Success Centre – Academic Advising</td>
<td>302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 <a href="http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/">http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/</a> No appointments necessary.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• A learning disability</td>
<td>Paul Menton Centre</td>
<td>501 University Centre, 520-6608 <a href="http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/">http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing writing skills</td>
<td>Writing Tutorial Service</td>
<td>4th Floor MacOdrum Library 613-520-6632 <a href="http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/">http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Polishing English conversation skills</td>
<td>International Student Services Office, Conversation Groups</td>
<td>128 University Centre, 613-520-6600 <a href="http://www1.carleton.ca/issos/">http://www1.carleton.ca/issos/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research assistance</td>
<td>Research Help Desk, MacOdrum Library</td>
<td>MacOdrum Library, 520-2735 <a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Statistics/SPSS assistance (by appointment only)</td>
<td>Data Centre, MacOdrum Library</td>
<td>Statistical Consultant, 520-2600 x 2619 <a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/contact/service-points/data-centre">http://www.library.carleton.ca/contact/service-points/data-centre</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coping with stress or crisis</td>
<td>Office of Student Affairs</td>
<td>613-520-2600, x 2573 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/">http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health and Counseling Services</td>
<td>613-520-6674 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/health">www.carleton.ca/health</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Text

The required textbook for this course is: Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath (2012). Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills, Oxford University Press.

The text is on order at Haven Books (located at 43 Seneca Street, at Sunnyside).

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; Theories and the Science of Politics (6 September)

Required:
- Halperin & Heath, Chapters 1 (Political Research) and 2 (Forms of Knowledge)

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 2: Philosophy of Social Science – Knowledge and Knowing (13 September)

Required:
- Halperin & Heath, Chapters 3 (Objectivity and Values) and 4 (Methodological Individualism and Wholism)

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 3: Causation and Argumentation (20 September)

Required:

Optional/Supplementary:
Lecture 4: Formulating Research Questions and Reviewing the Literature (27 September)

Required:
- Halperin & Heath, Chapter 5 (Asking Questions)

Optional/Supplementary:
- Political Science Subject Guide, MacOdrum Library Website: http://www.library.carleton.ca/subjects/politicalscience.html

Lecture 5: Designing Research (4 October)

Required:
- Halperin & Heath, Chapter 6 (Answering Research Questions)
- Halperin & Heath Chapter 7 (Research Design)

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

Lecture 6: Ethics in Social Research (11 October)

Required:

Optional/Supplementary:


**Lecture 7: Experiments (18 October)**

**Required:**
- Halperin & Heath, Chapter 8 (Experiments)

**Optional/Supplementary:**

**Lecture 8: Content Analysis (25 October)**

**Required:**
- Halperin & Heath, Chapter 13 (Textual Analysis)

**Optional/Supplementary:**

**Lecture 9: Case Study Research (8 November)**

**Required:**
- Halperin & Heath, Chapter 9 (Comparative Research)

**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
Lecture 10: Survey Research (15 November)

Required:
- Halperin & Heath, Chapter 10 (Surveys)

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 11: Interviews and Focus Groups (22 November)

Required:
- Halperin & Heath, Chapter 11 (Interviewing and Focus Groups)

Recommended:

Lecture 12: Observation and Field Research (29 November)

Required:
- Halperin & Heath, Chapter 12 (Ethnography and Participant Observation)

**Recommended:**

**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Letter grade</th>
<th>12-point scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>85-89</td>
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<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>D-</td>
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**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](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: 6 August 2013*