PSCI 2701A

Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

Thursdays 2:35 pm to 4:25 pm – Please check location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Dr. Vandna Bhatia
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520-2600, ext. 1360
Vandna_bhatia@carleton.ca

Office Hours: Thursdays
10:00 am to 12:00 pm

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Analyzing Arguments</td>
<td>September 25th</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Operationalizing Concepts</td>
<td>October 23rd</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Content Analysis</td>
<td>December 4th</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 1 (on-line)</td>
<td>October 2nd</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 2 (on-line)</td>
<td>November 6th</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz 3 (on-line)</td>
<td>November 27th</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>During exam period</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100%</td>
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Quizzes will be made available on-line for a 7-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**

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<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>
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<tr>
<td>One-on-one study skills support</td>
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<td>Group study skills workshops</td>
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<td>Reserving group study rooms</td>
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<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>Choosing, changing major</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Academic planning</td>
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<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>
</tr>
<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/issc/">http://www1.carleton.ca/issc/</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>
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<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>
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Course Text

The required textbook for this course is:

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; Theories and the Science of Politics (September 4)

*Introduction; the scientific approach and the study of politics*

**Required:**
- Halperin & Heath, Chapter 1 (Political Research)

**Optional/Supplementary:**

Lecture 2: Philosophy of Social Science – Knowledge and Knowing (September 11)

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

**Required:**
- Halperin & Heath, Chapters 2 (Forms of Knowledge) and 3 (Objectivity and Values)

**Optional/Supplementary:**
Lecture 3: Causation and Argumentation (September 18)
The form and structure of arguments: generalizations, logic and causation

Required:

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 4: Formulating Research Questions and Reviewing the Literature (September 25)
Theory and causal arguments; framing research questions; reviewing literature

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

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 5: Designing Research (October 2)
Conceptualizing and measuring the political world; finding and collecting data; selecting a research design

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

Optional/Supplementary:
Lecture 6: Ethics in Social Research (October 9)

Ethical principles; doing research with human subjects

Required:

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 7: Experiments (October 16)

Classical experimental design; field and natural experiments in social science

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

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 8: Textual Analysis (October 23)

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

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

Optional/Supplementary:
Lecture 9: Case Study Research (November 6)
Identifying and selecting cases; comparative research designs and comparative analysis

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

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 10: Survey Research (November 13)
Sampling and probability; designing survey instruments; question structure and format

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

Optional/Supplementary:

Lecture 11: Interviews and Focus Groups (November 20)
Interview formats and techniques; advantages and disadvantages of each; focus groups as a special form of interview

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

Recommended:


**Lecture 12: Observation and Field Research (November 27)**

*Observational research; political ethnography; techniques; ethical issues*

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

**Recommended:**

**Lecture 13: Review Class (December 4)**

*A brief review of key concepts and ideas from the term; discussion of final exam format and expectations*

**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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</thead>
<tbody>
<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>63-66</td>
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<td>80-84</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
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<td>57-59</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<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.