Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

Thursdays, 2:35-4:25 pm
Location: Check Carleton Central

Instructor: Dr. Vandna Bhatia
Contact: D685 Loeb Building
520-2600, ext. 1360
Vandna.Bhatia@carleton.ca
Office Hours: Mondays 2:30-4:00 pm

Course Description

This course introduces students to concepts and techniques of empirical inquiry for political science research. Upon completion, students should have an understanding and appreciation of the general principles, processes, concepts, and issues associated with empirical social science. Beginning with an introduction to significant developments in the ‘science’ of politics, we will move to techniques of logical argumentation, and then explore issues in designing research, including: research ethics, framing researchable questions and hypotheses, selecting cases for study, measuring social and political phenomena, and analyzing (primarily) qualitative data. We will also discuss issues related to the range and selection of research methods, focusing primarily on non-quantitative approaches, and their application in political science.

By the end of the course, students should:

• Understand the major theoretical and philosophical approaches to political science research;
• Be familiar with and 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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Analyzing Arguments</td>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Theory, Concepts, and Measurement</td>
<td>November 8</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Research Design</td>
<td>December 6</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Support Workshops (5% x 3)</td>
<td>November 30</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutorial attendance and participation</td>
<td>See schedule</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Support Workshops and the Incentive Program

This course is registered in the Incentive Program offered through the Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS). CSAS Learning Support Workshops are designed to help students cultivate and refine their academic skills for a university environment. To earn 15% marks towards attendance/participation you are expected to attend THREE
workshops throughout the term. All students enrolled in PSCI 2701A MUST complete the Critical Thinking workshop and Academic Reading workshop (either in-person or online), in addition to one other of their choosing. Learning Support Workshops for the Fall 2018 term will be available starting September 10th, 2018 and must be completed by November 30th, 2018 to receive credit for the Incentive Program and for this course. Please register for these workshops ASAP to ensure you can complete them in time.

To see the complete Learning Support Workshop schedule, please visit mySuccess via Carleton Central. You can also view your CSAS Workshop attendance history at any time by logging into mySuccess. In addition to the CSAS Learning Support Workshops hosted on campus, CSAS offers several online workshops. If you are interested in participating in an online workshop, you can enroll through the CSAS website: [carleton.ca/csas](http://carleton.ca/csas). Please also remember to review the Incentive Program participation policies here: [carleton.ca/csas/incentive-program/](http://carleton.ca/csas/incentive-program/). If you have any questions related to the Incentive Program or the Learning Support Workshops, please contact the Centre for Student Academic Support at csas@carleton.ca or 613-520-3822.

**Written Assignments**

Detailed instructions and guidelines for written assignments will be discussed in class and distributed via CULearn. Assignments must follow accepted bibliographic and citation formats. Grades will be posted and graded work will be returned to students via CULearn.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy on Late Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written assignments are due on-line, through CULearn ONLY, unless alternative arrangements are made with the instructor 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 0. Late penalties will be assessed on a daily basis, including weekends. Extensions are usually granted only on medical grounds, and appropriate documentation may be requested.</td>
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**Final Exam**

The final exam will be held during the exam period in December. The exam will be cumulative and include a combination of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.

**Course Schedule & Readings**

**Schedule In Brief**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Tutorial</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06-Sept</td>
<td>1. The Science of Politics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13-Sept</td>
<td>2. Philosophy of Social Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-Sept</td>
<td>3. Thinking Critically: Logic and Argumentation</td>
<td>Tutorial #1: Analyzing Arguments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04-Oct</td>
<td>5. Ethics in Social Research</td>
<td>Tutorial #3: Research Ethics</td>
<td>Assignment #1 Due</td>
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<td>11-Oct</td>
<td>6. Research Design</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-Oct</td>
<td>Reading Week Break – No Classes</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>01-Nov</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>08-Nov</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15-Nov</td>
<td>8. Experimental Research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22-Nov</td>
<td>9. Comparative &amp; Historical Research</td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment #2 Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-Nov</td>
<td>10. Survey Research</td>
<td>Tutorial #5: Survey Question Design</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>06-Dec</td>
<td>11. Interviews &amp; Focus Groups</td>
<td>Tutorial #6: Interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. Some changes may be made at the discretion of the instructor.

Textbooks & Readings

The required textbooks for this course are:

• Sandra Halperin & Oliver Heath (2017). *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Second Edition. OUP [referred to as HH in the reading list]

The texts are on order at Haven Books (located at 43 Seneca Street, at Sunnyside), and are also available (including electronic versions) for purchase online at Amazon, Chapters, OUP Canada (HH) or Broadview Press (HL). Texts will be supplemented with additional required and optional readings, which are available from MacOdrum Library.

Part I: Introduction to the Fundamentals of Inquiry

**Lecture 1: The Science of Politics (September 6)**
Introduction; the scientific approach and the study of politics

*Required Readings:*
• HH, Chapter 1 (Political Research), pp. 1-20

*Optional/Supplementary:*

**Lecture 2: Philosophy of Social Science – Knowledge and Knowing (September 13)**
How we know what we know; ontology and epistemology in political science; quantitative and qualitative approaches

*Required Readings:*
□ HH, Chapter 2 (Forms of Knowledge), pp. 25-50
□ HH, Chapter 3 (Objectivity and Values), pp. 54-75

*Optional/Supplementary:*

**Lecture 3: Thinking Critically – Logic and Argumentation (September 20)**
The form and structure of arguments: generalizations, logic and causation

**Tutorial #1: Analyzing Arguments**
Required Readings:

- HL, Chapter 1 (Reasoning and Critical Thinking), pp. 1-11
- HL, Chapter 5 (Strategies for Assessing Arguments), pp. 91-98
- HL, Chapter 6 (Assessing Truth Claims), pp. 99-122
- HL, Chapter 7 (Assessing Relevance), pp. 127-136
- HL, Chapter 8 (Assessing Adequacy), pp. 141-155

Optional/Supplementary:


Part II: Designing Research

Lecture 4: Asking Questions and Finding Answers (September 27)
Theory and causal arguments; framing research; finding and reviewing literature

Tutorial #2: Theories and Hypotheses

Required Readings:

- HH, Chapter 4 (Asking Questions), pp. 81-108

Optional/Supplementary:


Lecture 5: Ethics in Social Research (October 4)
Ethical principles in conducting research; doing research with human subjects

Tutorial #3: Research Ethics

Required Readings:


Optional/Supplementary:


Lecture 6: Research Design (October 11)
Developing research questions and testable hypotheses; methods of data collection

Required Readings:

- HH, Chapter 5 (Finding Answers), pp. 111-142
• HH, Chapter 6 (Research Design), pp. 146-64

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

Lecture 7: Concepts and Measurement (October 18)
Conceptualizing and measuring the political world; finding and collecting data; selecting a research design Tutorial

#4: Operationalizing Variables

Required Readings:
• HH, Chapter 7 (What is Data?), pp. 168-185

Optional/Supplementary:

Part III: Research in Practice

Lecture 8: Experimental Research (November 1)
Classical experimental design; field and natural experiments in social science

Required Readings:
• HH, Chapter 8 (Experimental Research), pp. 191-207

Optional/Supplementary:
• 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: Comparative and Historical Research (November 8)
Identifying and selecting cases; comparative designs

Required Readings:
• HH, Chapter 9 (Comparative Research), pp. 211-235
• HH, Chapter 10 (Historical Research), pp. 239-256

Optional/Supplementary:

**Lecture 10: Survey Research (November 15)**
Sampling and probability; designing survey instruments; question structure and format

**Tutorial #5: Surveys and Questionnaire Design**

**Required Readings:**
- HH, Chapter 11 (Surveys), pp. 261-283

**Optional/Supplementary:**

**Lecture 11: Interviews and Focus Groups (November 22)**
Interview formats and techniques; advantages and disadvantages of each; focus groups as a special form of interview

**Tutorial #6:**

**Interviews**

**Required Readings:**
- HH, Chapter 12 (Interviewing and Focus Groups), pp. 285-309

**Optional/Supplementary:**

**Lecture 12: Observation and Field Research (November 29)**
Observational research; political ethnography; techniques; ethical issues

**Required Readings:**
- HH, Chapter 13 (Ethnography and Participant Observation), pp. 313-331

**Optional/Supplementary:**

**Lecture 13: Textual Analysis (December 6)**
Analyzing documents and texts; content and discourse analysis techniques; analysis of qualitative data

**Required Readings:**
- HH, Chapter 14 (Textual Analysis), pp. 335-356

**Optional/Supplementary:**

~ Please Note ~

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).
Academic Accommodations

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

- **Pregnancy obligation** ~ Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

- **Religious obligation** ~ Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** - [carleton.ca/pmc](carleton.ca/pmc)

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC 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 your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

**Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

**Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. [https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-forStudent-Activities-1.pdf](https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-forStudent-Activities-1.pdf)

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](students.carleton.ca/course-outline)

**Academic Regulations**

**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.

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:

<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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>63-66</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60-62</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>57-59</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53-56</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50-52</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 email 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. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, 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 our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/ and our website https://carletonpss.com/, or stop by our office in Loeb D688!"

Official Course Outline
The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.
## Campus Resources for Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If you need assistance with...</th>
<th>Refer to...</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ☐ A disability                  | Paul Menton Centre | 501 University Centre  
Tel: 613-520-6608, TTY: 613-520-3937  
Hours: 08:30 -16:30 |
| ☐ Study skills                  | Centre for Student Academic Support | 4th Floor MacOdrum Library  
Phone: 613-520-3822  
Hours: Mon, Wed, Fri 10:00-16:30  
Tues, Thurs 10:00-19:00 |
| ☐ Finding a tutor               |             | 302 Tory Building  
Tel: 613-520-7850  
carleton.ca/sasc/advisingcentre |
| ☐ Peer-assisted subject coaching |             | MacOdrum Library, 4th Floor  
Tel: 613-520-6632 |
| ☐ On-line, in-person workshops  |             | MacOdrum Library, 4th Floor  
Phone: 613-520-3822  
Regular weekly sessions |
| ☐ Academic support and advice   | Centre for Student Academic Support – Writing Services |  |
| ☐ Choosing, changing major      |             | MacOdrum Library, 4th Floor  
MacOdrum Library, Main Floor  
Tel: 613-520-2755  
Email: askthelibrary@carleton.ca |
| ☐ Academic planning             |             |  |
| ☐ Hone writing skills           | Centre for Student Academic Support – English Conversation Sessions |  |
| ☐ Writing tutors – drop-in      |             |  |
| ☐ Academic writing workshops    |             |  |
| ☐ Research assistance           | Research Help Desk MacOdrum Library |  |
| ☐ Government information        | Maps, Data, and Government Information Centre, MacOdrum Library |  |
| collection Data sources         |             |  |
| ☐ IT support – email, wireless  | Information Technology Services | Online Help Centre  
ITS Service Desk: 613-520-3700  
Email: its.service.desk@carleton.ca  
Drop-in: IT Help Desk – Discovery Centre, MacOdrum Library |
| ☐ On-campus computing issues   |             |  |
| ☐ Coping with stress or crisis  | Health and Counseling Services | 2600 CTTC Building  
Tel: 613-520-6674  
Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30-4:30 |
| ☐ Health care services          |             |  |
| ☐ Health promotion, wellness    |             |  |
| ☐ Sexual violence, assault, or | Carleton Sexual Assault Support Centre | Bailey Reid - Coordinator  
503 Robertson Hall  
Tel: (613) 520-2600 x 8454  
Email: bailey.reid@carleton.ca |
| ☐ harassment                    |             |  |
| ☐ Discrimination or harassment  | Equity Services | 503 Robertson Hall  
Tel: (613) 520-5622  
Email: equity@carleton.ca |
|                                |             |  |

*Updated August 1, 2018*