

## PSCI 2701A

### INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

'A' section: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:35 pm to 17:25 pm. See Carleton Central for location

'T' section: Wednesdays, 2:00 pm to 5:00 pm and Saturdays, 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Instructor: Simon Langlois-Bertrand

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00pm-2:00pm, Loeb B645 (subject to change, please see cuLearn)

Tel: 613.520.2600 x 1657

Email: [sibertra@connect.carleton.ca](mailto:sibertra@connect.carleton.ca) (please always put 'PSCI2701' in the subject line)

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### Course description

This course offers an introduction to key empirical methods required for understanding, analyzing and researching problems in political science. Students will learn and reflect on the different philosophical and practical issues, the concepts, the methods and other components in conducting scientific research in political science. The emphasis will be on the main non-quantitative methods used in political science, including literature review, data source research, case studies, content analysis, interviews, and surveys.

More specifically, the course is designed to enable students to:

- Choose which methods are appropriate in a given context, as well engage with debates about the benefits and drawbacks of the different approaches;
- Be familiar with the techniques for measuring social and political phenomena;
- Build arguments that are coherent, logically sound, and empirically supported, and analyze and critique arguments and claims made by others;
- Judge and critique the methods used by other researchers and analysts;
- Know the fundamentals of comparative and descriptive research in political science, in order to be able to create and plan a research project.

### Evaluation

Item	Due Date	Weight
Online Quiz	Open from May 30 <sup>th</sup> to June 4 <sup>th</sup>	15%
Assignment 1 : Analyzing arguments	May 18 <sup>th</sup>	10%
Assignment 2 : Operationalizing Concepts	May 28 <sup>th</sup>	15%
Assignment 3 : Content analysis	June 18 <sup>th</sup>	30%
Final Exam		30%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

Students will be provided with detailed instructions and guidelines for each assignment in class and via cuLearn (login at [www.carleton.ca/culearn](http://www.carleton.ca/culearn)). Students are responsible for getting this information and

contacting the instructor for any precisions they feel necessary. Regular updates will be put on cuLearn, so students are strongly encouraged to check the website on a daily basis for important messages.

**Course Requirements:** Students must fulfil all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F.

**Policy on late assignments.** Assignments are due online through the link on cuLearn, before 4:00pm on the due date. This is the case for students of both A and T sections. No email copy will be accepted. Exceptions on these criteria must be justified with the instructor ahead of the due date, in which case alternative arrangements will be made if necessary. Late assignments will be penalized by 10% a day, up to a maximum of 5 days (50%). The 4:00pm rule always applies to determine the number of days to be counted in the late penalty. Assignments submitted after 4:00 pm on the fifth day following the due date will automatically be given a 0.

Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds, with appropriate documentation. These rules are enforced to ensure fairness across the large number of students registered in the course.

**Online quiz.** The online quiz will be administered through cuLearn and will consist of multiple-choice questions. You will need to log into your account and complete the quiz between 6:00pm on May 30<sup>th</sup> to 2:00pm on June 4<sup>th</sup>. More instructions will be provided prior to the quiz.

**Final exam.** The cumulative final exam will be held during the exam period. A description of the exam format and content will be provided during the last class.

### **Course text**

Most of the readings in this course come from the required textbook:

Keith Archer and Loleen Berdahl (2011). *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

The text is on order at the Carleton bookstore, including online, and is also on reserve at the MacOdrum Library, and is available on short-term loan (2 hours) basis. Other readings will be available on cuLearn.

## **Academic Resources**

<b><i>If you need assistance with...</i></b>	<b><i>Refer to...</i></b>	<b><i>Contact Information</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding a tutor</li> <li>• One-on-one study skills support</li> <li>• Group study skills workshops</li> <li>• Reserving group study rooms</li> </ul>	Student Academic Success Centre – Learning Support Services	302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 <a href="http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/">http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/</a> No appointments necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic support and advice</li> <li>• Choosing, changing major</li> <li>• Academic planning</li> </ul>	Student Academic Success Centre – Academic Advising	302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 <a href="http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/">http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/</a> No appointments necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A learning disability</li> </ul>	Paul Menton Centre	501 University Centre, 520-6608 <a href="http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/">http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing writing skills</li> </ul>	Writing Tutorial Service	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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Polishing English conversation skills</li> </ul>	International Student Services Office, Conversation Groups	128 University Centre, 613-520-6600 <a href="http://www1.carleton.ca/isso/">http://www1.carleton.ca/isso/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research assistance</li> </ul>	Research Help Desk, MacOdrum Library	MacOdrum Library, 520-2735 <a href="http://www.library.carleton.ca/">http://www.library.carleton.ca/</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistics/SPSS assistance (by appointment only)</li> </ul>	Data Centre, MacOdrum Library	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>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coping with stress or crisis</li> </ul>	Office of Student Affairs  Health and Counseling Services	613-520-2600, x 2573 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs">http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs</a>  613-520-6674 <a href="http://www.carleton.ca/health">www.carleton.ca/health</a>

## **Topics and Schedule**

The following list of topics is offered as a tentative schedule only. Flexibility being essential in order to cover the course material at a pace that works for both the students and the instructor, some changes may be made at the discretion of the instructor. Since this is an intensive summer schedule, it is strongly suggested to do the whole week's readings (i.e., Tuesday's and Thursday's readings) before the Tuesday class.

### **LECTURE #1 (7 May)**

Topic: Introduction; Scientific Approach to Politics and Social Phenomena

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 1 (The Scientific Approach to Politics).

Optional:

- Isaak, 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 (available only in physical copy at the library reserve).

*LECTURE #2 (9 May)*

Topic: Causation and Argumentation

Required readings:

- Baxter-Moore, N., Carroll, T. and Church R. 1994. *Studying Politics: An Introduction to Argument and Analysis*. Toronto: Cobb Clark Longman. Chapter 2: Understanding arguments, pp. 23-45; Chapter 3: Generalization, cause and analogy, pp. 49-64.

*LECTURE #3 (14 May)*

Topic: Theory and research; Introduction to theory development and research design

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 2 (Theory-oriented Research and the Issue of Causality);
- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 3 (Defining the Political World: Concepts).

*LECTURE #4 (16 May)*

Topic: Conceptualization; Measuring social phenomena; Finding and gathering Data

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 4 (Defining the Political World: Measures);
- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 10 (Government Data Sources).

Optional:

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

*LECTURE #5 (21 May)*

Topic: Ethics in Social Research

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 5 (Research Ethics: People Behind the Numbers);
- Wood, E.J. 2006. "The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones." *Qualitative Sociology* 29: 373-86.

Optional:

- Dixon-Woods, M. and C.L. Bosk. 2011. "Defending rights or defending privileges?" *Public Management Review* 13(2):257-72.

*LECTURE #6 (23 May)*

Topic: Communicating results and reading critically; Review for the quiz

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 20 (Writing the Report).

*LECTURE #7 (28 May)*

Topic: Qualitative vs. quantitative approaches; Sampling; Conducting Surveys and Interpreting Results

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 6 (Observing the Political World: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches);
- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 8 (Sampling and the Political World);
- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 9 (Observing the Political World: Survey Research).

*LECTURE #8 (30 May)*

Topic: Content Analysis

*PERIOD TO COMPLETE ONLINE QUIZ STARTS AT 6:00PM*

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 12 (Content Analysis);
- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 19 (Analyzing Qualitative Data);
- Tumasjan, A., T.O. Sprenger, P.G. Sandner and I.M. Welp. 2011. "Predicting elections with Twitter: What 140 characters reveal about political sentiment." *Proceedings of the Fourth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence Press, 178-85  
<http://www.aaai.org/ocs/index.php/ICWSM/ICWSM10/paper/view/1441>

Optional:

- Meeks, L. 2012. "Is she 'Man Enough'? Women candidates, executive political offices, and news coverage." *Journal of Communication* 62(1): 175-93.

*LECTURE #9 (4 June)*

Topic: Experiments

*PERIOD TO COMPLETE ONLINE QUIZ ENDS AT 2:00PM.*

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 11 (Experiments);
- 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): 165-75.

Optional:

- Berinsky, A.J. and D.R. Kinder. 2006. "Making sense of issues through media frames: Understanding the Kosovo crisis." *Journal of Politics* 68(3): 640-56;

- Gerring, John and Rose McDermott. 2007. "An Experimental Template for Case Study Research." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(3): 688-701.

#### LECTURE #10 (6 June)

Topic: Interviews and Focus Groups

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 13 (Elite Interviews);
- Parham-Payne, W. 2009. "Through the lens of Black Women: The significance of Obama's campaign." *Journal of African American Studies* 13: 131-38.

Optional:

- 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.

#### LECTURE #11 (11 June)

Topic: Comparative and Case Study Research; Selection Bias

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 7 (Comparative Research).

Optional:

- Geddes B. 1990. "How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics." *Political Analysis* 2(1): 131-50;
- Gerring, John. 2004. "What is a case study and what is it good for?" *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 341-54;
- Sawer, M. and D. Laycock. 2009. "Down with elites and up with inequality: Market populism in Australia and Canada." *Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 47(2):133-50;
- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press. Chapter 1, all of Part II, and Chapter 12 ;
- Mitchell, Ronald and Thomas Bernauer. 2004. "Beyond story-telling: Designing case study research in international environmental policy." In *Models, numbers & cases: Methods for studying international relations*, ed. Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, 81-106. Ann Arbor MI: University of Michigan Press;
- Bailey, Carol A. 2007. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*, Second Edition. Pine Forge Press. Chapter 10, 11 and 12.

#### LECTURE #12 (13 June)

Topic: Observation and Field Research; Feminist methodologies and action research

Required readings:

- Archer and Berdahl, Chapter 14 (Observation);

- Harding, Sandra. 1987. "Introduction." In Sandra Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Indiana University Press, 1-14;
- Harding, Sandra. 1987. "What is a feminist epistemology?" In Sandra Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Indiana University Press, 105-137.

Optional:

- Fenno, R. F. 1986. "Observation, context, and sequence in the study of politics." *American Political Science Review*, 80(1): 3-15.
- 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): 147-64.

LECTURE #13 (18 June)

Review and final thoughts

## **Student Conduct, Academic Regulations and Academic Accommodations**

**For students with Disabilities:** 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](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send the instructor 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 the instructor to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website ([www.carleton.ca/pmc](http://www.carleton.ca/pmc)) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam.

**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](http://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 grade with a percentage grade. To convert this to a letter grade or 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.

**Connect Email Accounts:** All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via Connect. Important course and University information is also distributed via the Connect email system. It is the student's responsibility to monitor their Connect account.

**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 in the after-hours academic life 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, please email [carletonpss@gmail.com](mailto:carletonpss@gmail.com), visit our website at [poliscisociety.com](http://poliscisociety.com), 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.