

PSCI 2701A

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:35 pm to 5:25 pm. See Carleton Central for location

Instructor: Simon Langlois-Bertrand

Office hours: Tuesdays 1:00pm-2:00pm, Loeb B646 (subject to change, please see cuLearn)

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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 and consuming scientific research in political science. The emphasis will be on the main non-quantitative methods and other tools used in political science, including literature review, data source research, case studies, content analysis, interviews, surveys, observation, and experiments, among other topics.

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

- Build arguments that are coherent, logically sound, and empirically supported, and analyze and criticize arguments and claims made by others;
- Be familiar with the techniques for measuring social and political phenomena;
- Choose which methods and methodological approaches are appropriate in a given context, as well engage with debates about the benefits and drawbacks of each. This includes being able to judge and criticize 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 th to June 1 st	15%
Assignment 1 : Analyzing arguments	May 18 th	10%
Assignment 2 : Operationalizing Concepts	May 25 th	15%
Assignment 3 : Content analysis	June 17 th	30%
Final Exam	Final exam period (date TBD)	30%
Total		100%

Students will be provided with detailed instructions and guidelines for each assignment in class and via cuLearn (login at 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 posted on cuLearn, so students are strongly encouraged to check the website on a daily basis for important messages, as well as ensuring that their Carleton email inbox works well.

Policy on late assignments. Assignments are due online through the link on cuLearn, before midnight on the night of the due date. No email copy will be accepted. No copy handed in the political science department drop box 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 midnight cut-off always applies to determine the number of days to be counted in the late penalty. Assignments submitted after midnight on the night of the fifth day following the due date will automatically be given a grade of 0, and will result in a failing grade for the course.

Extensions/exceptions 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.

Course Requirements: Students must fulfil all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment before 5 days after the deadline (see 'policy on late assignments' above), failure to complete the online quiz during the allocated time period, or failure to obtain a passing grade in the final exam, will result in a grade of F.

Online quiz. You will need to log into your cuLearn account and complete the quiz between 6:00am on Friday, May 30th to 11:59pm on Sunday, June 1st. More instructions will be provided prior to the quiz.

Final exam. The cumulative final exam will be held during the exam period (between June 20th and June 26th). 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:

Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath (2012). *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford University Press.

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

Academic Resources

<i>If you need assistance with...</i>	<i>Refer to...</i>	<i>Contact Information</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a tutor • One-on-one study skills support • Group study skills workshops • Reserving group study rooms 	Student Academic Success Centre – Learning Support Services	302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/ No appointments necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support and advice • Choosing, changing major • Academic planning 	Student Academic Success Centre – Academic Advising	302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/ No appointments necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A learning disability 	Paul Menton Centre	501 University Centre, 520-6608 http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing writing skills 	Writing Tutorial Service	4th Floor MacOdrum Library, 613-520-6632 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polishing English conversation skills 	International Student Services Office, Conversation Groups	128 University Centre, 613-520-6600 http://www1.carleton.ca/isso/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research assistance 	Research Help Desk, MacOdrum Library	MacOdrum Library, 520-2735 http://www.library.carleton.ca/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics/SPSS assistance (by appointment only) 	Data Centre, MacOdrum Library	Statistical Consultant, 520-2600 x 2619 http://www.library.carleton.ca/contact/service-points/data-centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping with stress or crisis 	Office of Student Affairs Health and Counseling Services	613-520-2600, x 2573 http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs 613-520-6674 www.carleton.ca/health

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 latter.

LECTURE #1 (6 May)

Topics: Introduction; Scientific Approach to Politics and Social Phenomena

No tutorial.

Required reading:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 1 (Political Research).

LECTURE #2 (8 May)

Topics: Causation and Argumentation

Required reading:

- 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 (13 May)

Topics: Theory and research; Qualitative vs. quantitative approaches; Objectivity in Social Science Research

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 2 (Forms of Knowledge);
- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 3 (Objectivity and Values), pp. 53-60;
- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 5 (Asking Questions)

LECTURE #4 (15 May)

Topics: Conceptualization; Measuring social phenomena; Finding and gathering Data; Introduction to theory development and research design;

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 6 (Answering Research Questions), 129-56;
- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 7 (Research Design), pp. 164-78.

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 (20 May)

Topics: Ethics in Social Research; Writing a research report

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 7 (Research Design), pp. 178-80;
- 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 (22 May)

Topics: Causality; Experiments

Required reading:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 8 (Experimental Research).

Optional:

- 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;
- 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 #7 (27 May)

Topics: Comparative Research Designs and Case Study Research; Selection Bias

Required reading:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 9 (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;
- Sawyer, 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 #8 (29 May)

Topic: Textual Analysis

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 13 (Textual Analysis);

- 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 (3 June)

Topics: Sampling techniques; Conducting Surveys and Interpreting Results

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 10 (Surveys).

Optional:

- Nelson, Thomas E. and Zoe M. Oxley. 1999. "Issue Framing Effects on Belief Importance and Opinion." *The Journal of Politics* 61(4): 1040-67.

5 JUNE: NO CLASS

Break period to work on assignment #3.

LECTURE #11 (10 June)

Topics: Interviews and Focus Groups

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 11 (Interviewing and Focus Groups);
- 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 #12 (12 June)

Topics: Feminist methodologies and action research

Required readings:

- Harding, Sandra. 1987. "Introduction." In Sandra Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Indiana University Press, 1-14;

Optional:

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

LECTURE #13 (17 June)

Topics: Observation and ethnography; Communicating results and reading critically; Review and final thoughts

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 12 (Ethnography and Participant Observation).

Optional:

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

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 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.

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.

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 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, visit our website at 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.