CARLETON UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

PSCI2701A – INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Mondays: 12:35 - 14:25.

Please see Carleton Central for location

Instructor: Viktoriya Thomson

Office Hours: Mondays 14:30 – 16:30 (Loeb B641)

Email: viktoriya.thomson@carleton.ca

Course Description

This is an introductory course for undergraduate students in political science. The main goal of this course is to make students familiar with basic qualitative methods in political science and learn how to apply different research techniques in a process of conducting scientific research. Course topics will include theory building and research design (including research questions and hypotheses). The methodology component will be focused on the main research methods in political science and their application. Methods included are as follows: comparative methods, literature review, content analysis, case studies, survey analysis, experiments, and interviews.

By the end of this course, students should be able to conduct basic scientific research using different techniques or have their own “tool box” of qualitative research methods. Students should develop a clear understanding of the main qualitative approaches to political science research. Students should be able to write a simple literature review based on their evaluation of different approaches on topics in political science.

Course Grades breakdown:

Assignment N1 Argument (October 3rd) – 10%
Assignment N2 Concepts (October 17th) - 15%
Mid Term Exam (November 7th) – 15%
Assignment N3 Literature review; mini-proposal (December 5th) – 20%
Tutorial participation – 10%
Final exam – 30%
Course Text

**Required text book:** Loleen Berdahl and Keith Archer (2015) *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*. The book will be at the bookstore for purchase or rent. A copy of the book will be on reserve at the library as well. Some supporting materials will be posted in CuLearn for all students.

Some books that students may find helpful in applying particular research techniques are:


**Assignments:** Detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted in CuLearn and will be discussed during the class. All assignments should be submitted online in Culearn on their due date before 11 pm. Late assignments will be penalized 1% per day of the assignment total including the weekends for the maximum of 7 days. After that, the assignment will be given a mark of 0. Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds with appropriate documentations from a doctor.

**Midterm exam:** the main goal of the midterm exam is to give students an opportunity to prepare for the final exam, test their knowledge of the course material, and to help retain learned material. The midterm exam will take place during the class on the November 7th. Detailed instructions will be provided during the class 2 weeks before the exam’s date.

**Final exam:** The exam will be held during the exam period. Detailed instructions will be provided during the lecture closer to the exam’s date.

**Topics**

**Lecture 1 Introduction. Is Political science a science? (September 12)**

Required: Explorations, Chapter 1, 2

Suggested:


Lecture 2 Theory building; type of argument (September 19)

Required: Explorations, Chapter 3

Suggested:


Lecture 3 Research design: research questions and hypothesis (September 26)


Suggested:

Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath (2012). *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford University Press. Ch. 7

Lecture 4 Concepts and their operationalization (October 3) - due date assignment N1

Required: Explorations, Chapter 4,5.

Suggested:


October 10 - holiday, no class

Lecture 5 Research ethics in social science (October 17) – due date assignment N2

Required: Explorations, Chapter 6

Suggested:


Lecture 6 (October 24) – no class, reading week.

Lecture 7 Literature review, content analysis (October 31)
Required: Explorations, Chapter 12

Suggested:


**Lecture 8 (November 7) – midterm exam.**

**Lecture 09 Case study research (November 14)**

Required: Explorations, Chapter 7

Suggested:


**Lecture 10 Survey research (November 21)**

Required: Explorations, Chapter 8,10

Suggested:


**Lecture 11 Interview, focus groups and observation (November 28)**

Required: Explorations, Chapter 9

Suggested:


**Lecture 12 Experimental research (December 05) Due date Assignment N 3**

 Required: Explorations, Chapter 11.

 Suggested:


**Lecture 13 Preexam review (December 09)**

**Academic and Student Support Resources**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IF A STUDENT NEEDS ASSISTANCE WITH...</th>
<th>REFER TO...</th>
<th>CONTACT INFORMATION</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| ▪ understanding academic rules and regulations  
▪ choosing or changing their major  
▪ finding a tutor  
▪ academic planning guided by an Academic Advisor  
▪ polishing study skills | Student Academic Success Centre (SASC) | 302 Tory Building 613-520-7850  
http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/  
No appointment necessary as all students are seen on a walk-in basis. |
| ▪ developing writing skills | Writing Tutorial Service | 4th Floor, Library 613-520-6632  
https://carleton.ca/csas/writingservices/ |
| ▪ peer assisted tutoring for pre-identified, notoriously difficult courses | Peer Assisted Study Sessions | Centre for Student Academic Support  
https://carleton.ca/csas/group-support/ |
| ▪ Library and Research help; Learning Support and IT support | Staff at MacOdrum Library (reference services desk) | http://www.library.carleton.ca/  
613-520-2735 |
| ▪ coping with stress or crisis | Office of Student Affairs or Health and Counseling Services | Either ext. 2573 or  
http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs or  
www.carleton.ca/health |
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 may include a mark of zero for the plagiarized
work or a final grade of "F" for the course.
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).

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 Letter grade 12-point scale</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90-100 A+ 12</td>
<td>67-69 C+ 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-89 A 11</td>
<td>63-66 C 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80-84 A- 10</td>
<td>60-62 C- 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77-79 B+ 9</td>
<td>57-59 D+ 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73-76 B 8</td>
<td>53-56 D 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70-72 B- 7</td>
<td>50-52 D- 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 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 https://www.facebook.com/groups/politicalsciencesociety/ 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.