

PCSI 2701 A
Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science
Wednesday and Friday 11:35 – 2:25
Online Class

Instructor: Said Yaqub Ibrahim
Office Hours: By appointment
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Course Description

This course introduces students to concepts, methods, and processes of qualitative research in political science. The course contains both theoretical and empirical issues including the philosophy of social sciences, the nature and structure of argument, theory-building, research design, case selection, and multiple types of data collection and analysis. At the end of the course, students are expected to express a general understanding of qualitative research methods in political science and be able to use those methods in conducting their research. The course is taught online every Wednesday and Friday via zoom. The zoom link is available on the course's Brightspace page.

Textbooks

1. Loleen Berdahl and Jason Roy (2021). *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*, 4th Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Marc Menard (2016). *Political Argument: A Guide to Research, Writing, and Debating*. Oxford University Press. Available online in MacOdrum Library.

Course Evaluation

Course evaluation includes three assignments, tutorials, and a final exam and will be calculated on the following basis:

A. Assignment 1: Argument (10%)

Select a political science topic/concept and develop an argument about it. Your argument should include a major premise and two or more minor premises and lead to a logic conclusion. A list of topics/concepts with detailed instruction will be posted at Brightspace in due course. Select your topic/concept with the assumption that you will work on it in your second and third assignments.

This assignment should not exceed 2-3 pages (double-spaced in 12-point font). A detail instruction will be posted on Brightspace in due course.

B. Assignment 2: Research Paper (35%)

Students are required to write a research paper on a political science topic. The paper should include a literature review of at least 8 scholarly sources, a research question, an argument, a conceptualization of key terms, case study(s), and a conclusion. The paper should not exceed 12-14 pages (double-spaced in 12-point font, including bibliography). A detail instruction will be posted on Brightspace in due course.

C. Group Discussion (20%)

Group discussion is a critical component of this course. Discussions will be led by instructor and TA. Students must attend all group discussions and actively participate in breakout room discussions and in reporting the conclusion(s). The format and topics of group discussion will be provided at the end of each lecture.

D. Final Exam (35%)

Open book online examination with 3 hours (180 minutes) fixed duration. Students are required to answer two essay questions on topics relevant to the course material. The final exam will be scheduled during the regular examination period. A detailed instruction on the format and requirements of the exam will be provided in the last class.

E. Citation

Assignments must follow standard bibliographic and citation formats including MLA, APA, and Chicago Manual of Style. For each assignment select one citation format and use it consistently throughout the paper.

F. Submission Policy

All assignments should be submitted electronically in Brightspace. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted. Late submissions will be penalized 3 percent per 24 hours. If you need an extension for an assignment, contact the instructor or the TA prior to the due date.

Course Summary

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Group Discussion</i>	<i>Assignments</i>
Part 1: Fundamentals of Research Methods			
<i>May. 8</i>	Course Introduction	No Discussion	
<i>May. 10</i>	Research Methods & Philosophy of Social Sciences	Is Political Science a Science?	
<i>May. 15</i>	Argument, Causation & Theory Development	Argument	
Part 2: Research Design			
<i>May. 17</i>	Research Question & Hypothesis	Answering RQ	
<i>May. 22</i>	Concept & Measurement	Measurement	Assignment 1 Due
<i>May. 24</i>	Case Study & Comparative Research	Combative Research	
<i>May. 29</i>	Research Ethics	No Discussion	
<i>May. 31</i>	Part 3 Research in Practice		
	Textual Analysis	Discourse Analysis	
<i>June. 5</i>	Interview & Focus Group	Interview	
<i>June. 7</i>	Observation & Field Research	Ethnography	
<i>June. 12</i>	Survey & Final Exam Instruction	Survey	Research Paper Due

Course Schedule

Lecture 1: Course Introduction

The instructor reviews the syllabus and discusses the course content, requirements, and organization.
No required reading

Lecture 2: Research Methods and Philosophy of Social Sciences

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapters 1 & 2.

Lecture 3: Argument, Causation & Theory Development

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter 2 (read only *constructing an argument*)

Marc Menard, Chapter 4

Optional:

Baxter-Moore, N., Carroll, T. and Church R. *Studying Politics: An Introduction to Argument and Analysis* (Toronto: Copp Clark Longman, 1994), Chapters 2 & 3 (available electronically in Ares)

Lecture 4: Research Question and Hypothesis

Required Reading:

Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath (2012). *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford University Press. Chapters 5 & 6 (available electronically in Ares)

Lecture 5: Concept and Measurement

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter 4

Lecture 6: Case Study & Comparative Research

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter, 10.

Optional:

John Gerring, What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For? *American Political Science Review* 98 (2), 2004: 341-354.

Lecture 7: Ethics in Political Science Research

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter 3.

Optional:

Esikot F. Idorenyin, Social science and research ethics in developing countries: The perspective from Nigeria, *African Journal of Science, Technology, Innovation and Development*, 6(4), 2014: 231-241.

Lecture 8: Textual Analysis

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter, 6.

Lecture 9: Interview and Focus Group

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter 7 (read only interview and focus group sections).

Lecture10: Observation & Field research

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter 7 (read only observation section)

N. Cohen, & T. Arieli, 'Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling,' *Journal of Peace Research*, 48(4), 2011: 423-435.

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

Lecture 11: Survey and Final Exam Instruction

Required Reading:

Berdahl and Roy, Chapter 8.

Optional:

Harvard University Program on Survey Research (2007). *Tip Sheet on Question Wording*, Access online at: <http://psr.iq.harvard.edu/book/questionnaire-design-tip-sheet>

Appendix

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- **Carleton Resources:**

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

- **Off Campus Resources:**

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
- The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>

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:

Academic consideration for medical or other extenuating circumstances: Please contact your instructor if you are experiencing circumstances that (a) are beyond your control, (b) have a significant impact your capacity to meet your academic obligations,

and (c) could not have reasonably been prevented. Decisions on academic consideration are in your instructor's discretion; they will be guided by the course learning outcomes and the principle of good faith. Please see [here](#) for more details. For considerations relating to course work, your instructor may request that you complete the [Self-Declaration form](#). To apply for a deferral of your final exam, you must submit the Self-Declaration form to the Registrar's Office no later than three days after the scheduled examination or take-home due date.

Pregnancy accommodation: 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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

Religious accommodation: 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 [click here](#).

Accommodations for students with disabilities: 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 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, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, [click here](#).

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and to the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who engage in student activities 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. For more information, please [click here](#).

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

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. 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.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's academic integrity rules.

Plagiarism

The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- Using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Use of Artificial Intelligence

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, image, summary, video, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

Procedures in Cases of Suspected Violations

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are serious offences which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. When an instructor suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the assignment/exam in question or a final grade of "F" for the course. More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

Intellectual property

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. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

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:

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

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 Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

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/>.

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.