

PSCI 2701B

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Mondays, 8:35 am to 10:25 am. See Carleton Central for location

Instructor: Dr. Simon Langlois-Bertrand

Office hours: Mondays 11:00am-12:00pm, Loeb B645

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Course description

This course offers an introduction to key 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 empirical 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 reviews, data source research, case studies, content analysis, interviews, surveys, observation, and experiments, among other topics.

Broadly speaking, this introduction to research methods in political science emphasizes how to generate legitimate scientific knowledge about political problems. In practice, this means (1) learning how to identify these problems and generate a workable research question to answer, and (2) figuring out how to design and carry out research in order to answer it and create legitimate knowledge. 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 November 6 th to 8 th	15%
Assignment 1: Analyzing arguments	September 27 th	10%
Assignment 2: Operationalizing Concepts	October 18 th	15%
Assignment 3: Content analysis	November 29 th	25%
Tutorial attendance and participation	N/A	10%
Final Exam	Final exam period (date TBD)	25%
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 properly.

Policy on late assignments. All assignments are due online through 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.

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.

Online quiz. You will need to log into your cuLearn account and complete the quiz between 6:00am on Friday, November 6th and 11:59pm on Sunday, November 8th. More instructions will be provided prior to the quiz.

Tutorials. Students are strongly encouraged to attend and participate to weekly tutorials. Half of the points allocated to tutorials will go to attendance, while the other half will be assigned according to the quality of the participation. More details will be provided during the first tutorial.

Final exam. The cumulative final exam will be held during the exam period (between December 9th and December 21st). 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 made available through the Ares link (online library reserve) on cuLearn.

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 (4 September)

Topics: Introduction; Scientific approach to politics and social phenomena

No tutorial.

Required reading:

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

7 September

NO CLASS OR TUTORIAL. STATUTORY HOLIDAY.

LECTURE #2 (14 September)

Topics: Causation and argumentation

Tutorial #1.

Required reading:

- Stokes, P. 2012. "No, you're not entitled to your opinion." *The Conversation* (4 October). Online, <http://theconversation.com/no-youre-not-entitled-to-your-opinion-9978>;
- 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;
- Stafford, Tom. 2014. "The best way to win an argument." *BBC Future* (21 May). Online, <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20140521-the-best-way-to-win-an-argument>

Optional:

- O'Neil, Luke. 2014. "Here's how to prevent fake news from spreading on social media." *VICE* (June 15). Online, <http://www.vice.com/read/only-you-can-stop-fake-news-from-spreading-on-the-internet>;
- The Skeptics' guide to the Universe. 2015. "Logical fallacies: introduction to argument". Online, <http://www.theskepticsguide.org/resources/logical-fallacies>;
- Almossawi, Ali. 2013. *An illustrated book of bad arguments*. Online, <https://bookofbadarguments.com/?view=allpages>

LECTURE #3 (21 September)

Topics: Theory and research; How we know what we know; Questions and answers in political science research; Reviewing literature; Objectivity in Social Science Research

Tutorial #2.

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);
- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 6 (Answering Research Questions), pp. 129-144;

Optional:

- WKT. 2008. "It is not just a theory... it is a theory!" *Chandra Chronicles*. Online, <http://chandra.harvard.edu/chronicle/0308/theo/>;
- Leonhardt, D. 2015. "A quick puzzle to test your problem solving." *New York Times*. Online, http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/07/03/upshot/a-quick-puzzle-to-test-your-problem-solving.html?_r=0&abt=0002&abg=0

LECTURE #4 (28 September)

Topics: Introduction to theory building; Conceptualization; Measuring social phenomena

Tutorial #3.

Required readings:

- Berdahl, L. and K. Archer. 2015. *Explorations: Conducting empirical research in Canadian political science*. Oxford. Chapter 4 (Defining the political world: Concepts);
- Berdahl, L. and K. Archer. 2015. *Explorations: Conducting empirical research in Canadian political science*. Oxford. Chapter 5 (Defining the political world: Measures), pp. 87-96 and 103-110

Optional:

- Gerring, J. 1999. "What makes a concept good? A criterial framework for understanding concept formation in the social sciences." *Polity* 31(2): 357-93;
- Salking, N.J. 2011. *Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics*. Chapter 6 (Just the truth: An introduction to understanding reliability and validity);
- Carmines, E.G. and R.A. Zeller. 1979. *Reliability and validity assessment*. London, UK: SAGE Publications

LECTURE #5 (5 October)

Topics: Causality; Research designs part 1: Experiments

Tutorial #4.

Required reading:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 7 (Research Design), pp. 164-78;
- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 8 (Experimental Research)

Optional:

- Bond, R.M., C.J. Fariss, J.J. Jones, A.D.I. Kramer, C. Marlow, J.E. Settle and J.H. Fowler. 2012. "A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization." *Nature* 489(7415): 295-298;
- 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, J. and R. McDermott. 2007. "An Experimental Template for Case Study Research." *American Journal of Political Science* 51(3): 688-701

12 October

NO CLASS. STATUTORY HOLIDAY.

LECTURE #6 (19 October)

Topics: Research designs part 2: Comparative research designs and case study research; Finding and gathering Data; Selection Bias

Tutorial #5.

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, J. 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, A.L. and A. 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, R. and T. Bernauer. 2004. "Beyond story-telling: Designing case study research in international environmental policy." In *Models, numbers & cases: Methods for studying international relations*, ed. D.F. Sprinz and Y. Wolinsky-Nahmias, 81–106. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press;
- Bailey, C.A. 2007. *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*. Pine Forge Press. Chapters 10, 11 and 12

26 October

NO CLASS. READING WEEK.

LECTURE #7 (2 November)

Topic: Textual analysis

Tutorial #6.

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 13 (Textual Analysis);
- Tumasjan, A., T.O. Sprenger, P.G. Sandner and I.M. Welpe. 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. Online, <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 #8 (9 November)

Topic: Ethics in social research

Tutorial #7

Required readings:

- Berdahl, L. and K. Archer. 2015. *Explorations: Conducting empirical research in Canadian political science*. Oxford. Chapter 6 (Research Ethics: People behind the numbers), pp. 115-127;
- Wood, E.J. 2006. "The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones." *Qualitative Sociology* 29: 373-86

Optional:

- Dawkins, R. 2014. "Are there Emotional No-Go Areas where Logic Dare not Show Its Face?" *The Huffington Post* (UK, July 30). Online, http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/richard-dawkins/richard-dawkins-rape-tweets_b_5633885.html;
- Dixon-Woods, M. and C.L. Bosk. 2011. "Defending rights or defending privileges?" *Public Management Review* 13(2): 257-72

LECTURE #9 (16 November)

Topics: Sampling techniques; Institutional data; Conducting surveys and interpreting results

Tutorial #8.

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 10 (Surveys);
- Vavreck, L. 2014. "Why Polls Can Sometimes Get Things So Wrong." *The New York Times* (3 July). Online, <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/04/upshot/why-polls-can-sometimes-get-things-so-wrong.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&r=1&abt=0002&abg=0>

Optional:

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

LECTURE #10 (23 November)

Topics: Interviews and focus groups; Observational research and political ethnography

Tutorial #9.

Required readings:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 11 (Interviewing and Focus Groups);
- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 12 (Ethnography and Participant Observation)

Optional:

- Parham-Payne, W. 2009. "Through the lens of Black Women: The significance of Obama's campaign." *Journal of African American Studies* 13: 131–38;
- 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;
- Aberbach, J. and B.A. Rockman (2002). Conducting and coding elite interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35(4): 673-76;
- Leech, B.L. (2002). Asking questions: Techniques for semi-structured interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35: 665-668;
- Fenno, R. F. 1986. "Observation, context, and sequence in the study of politics." *American Political Science Review*, 80(1): 3-15

LECTURE #11 (30 November)

Topics: Action research and critical methodologies

Tutorial #10.

Required readings:

- Harding, Sandra. 1987. "Introduction: Is there a Feminist Method?" In Sandra Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Indiana University Press, 1-14

Optional:

- Reese, D.J., R.E. Ahern, S.Nair, J.D. O'Faire, and C. Warren. 1999. "Hospice Access and Use by African Americans: Addressing Cultural and Institutional Barriers through Participatory Action Research." *Social Work* 44(6), 549-559;
- Harding, Sandra. 1987. "What is a feminist epistemology?" In Sandra Harding (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, Indiana University Press, 105-137;
- S.N. Hesse-Biber (ed.). 2012. *The Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and praxis*. London, UK: SAGE Publications

LECTURE #12 (7 December)

Topics: Writing reports; Communicating results and reading critically; Review and final thoughts

No tutorial.

Required readings:

- Gatehouse, J. 2014. "America Dumbs Down." *MacLean's* (15 May). Online, <http://www.macleans.ca/politics/america-dumbs-down/>

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 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:

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

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.