

**Selected Topics in Political Science - Data Analysis for Governance: Formal Approaches and Practical Realities**

**PSCI 3809 B**

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**Class Times:** 11:35 to 14:25 Tuesdays starting January 12, 2021 and ending on April 13, 2021. **The course will be conducted on line, and you will receive instructions allowing you to login to course meetings.**

**Office Hours:** There are no fixed office hours, but you can communicate with the instructor by email at any time. He will usually get back to you within a day.

Read this syllabus carefully. This syllabus stipulates class and university policies. Exemptions from these policies are almost never granted.

**Note: In so far as possible, you should try to communicate with the instructor through email. There are no online office hours. There are very few matters that cannot be dealt with by email.**

## Course Description and Format

This is technically a lecture course, and there will be significant lecture material. However, there will be various other activities that are outside the bounds of traditional lectures, and those other activities will take up a significant amount of the course. So, it is probably best thought of as being somewhere between a pure lecture and a pure seminar. It is important to note that more will be expected of students in this type of course as will be the case in fourth year courses later in your studies. It is not a passive learning experience like many conventional lectures. Also, this is not a lower level course where you can reasonably expect to know how many points you have in grading in the course on a given day. However, the compensation for this more broad brush grading approach is that there is a truncated grading distribution which makes it difficult to get a truly bad grade.

The practical focus of the course is to prepare a student to deal with the following type of situation. As a consultant or an analytic employee of government, you are asked to prepare a document that

will ultimately, in some form, be presented to cabinet. It will develop a small set of options to address a large policy issue. Because of the limited time, we will concentrate on designing ways to collect data to serve policy making. Your papers will elaborate ways to measure and analyse different kinds of preferences that might be relevant to defining options. Most papers will probably not reach the final stage of writing up a formal presentation, but they will concentrate on defining the kinds of data that might drive a more complete paper. This will build on some of the skills you have learned in other courses such as PSCI 2701 and PSCI 2702

In developing and defending this sort of document, one must deal with both technical and political issues, broadly defined. One must be aware that the leadership that has requested the document already has some general preferences in mind, but they probably do want to at least see those preferences examined in a broader, technically adequate manner. There will probably be a number of different groups involved with different concerns in both the political and technical realms.

In this course, I hope to introduce you to the considerations involved in preparing a document of the kind noted. I hope to do this in a way which gives you some experience of both the political and technical considerations. This will be done in several stages which will be apparent in later parts of the course outline.

## Main Text

There are no main texts in this course. For this reasons, it is extremely important to attend the class to take in lecture material and to interact with others. For the purely technical side of the course, there will be some texts that are recommended, but you do not need to buy them. In many cases, the essential content of the texts will be presented in slides and lectures.

## Grade Components

Paper at End of Course (due April 13)	65%
Participation	35%

Details relating to the paper due at the end of the course will be provided in class.

Details on participation will be provided after class begins. There will be an attendance component and a discussion/participation component. However, it would be inappropriate to decide on details of participation until we know the number of people enrolled in the course.

**This term we are also requiring that you must attend (online) at least one of the first two meetings of the course if you wish to pass the course. This is essential for the continuity of the course under current circumstances.**

## Course Topics

**Note that the instructor considers it to be bad pedagogy and probably bad administration to assign in advance specific dates to the coverage of specific topics. In general, we hope to reach topic 6 no later than week 7 of the course. However, this is an expectation that can be altered in light of student background, interests and progress. We will cover as many of the topics as is appropriate and possible in the order listed below.**

### 1. Introduction to the Course

This is just a description and discussion of the mechanics of the course.

### 2. The Emergence of Analytic Problems in Governing

How do problems for analysis emerge? Recurring expressions of interest versus unexpected events. What are the technical and political factors that initially shape responses and analysis?

At this point, there will be lectures on the theory behind the emergence of problem and some practical comments on their emergence. Two areas will be introduced as a basis for most illustrations: the problem of poverty and the problem of pandemics. Students should begin to think about which of these problems they want to write their paper on. Some alternative choices might be allowed, but they would have to be at the same level of generality.

### 3. The Emergence of Solutions to Problems: The Practical Reality of Predefined Solutions

Again, we will look at what theories have had to offer on this topic. We will then apply these theories and some other frameworks to the two major issues areas chosen as main examples- poverty and pandemic.

### 4. The Meaning of Certain “Magic” Words in Theory and Reality

Public Good --- Popular discourse, the media and many citizens often use the term “public good” as if it were a magic word with an obvious meaning that justifies a preferred solution. It is more complicated than that, and we will consider some of the background to this concept as well as the practicalities of measuring it.

Evidence --- Another magic word in current policy discourse is “evidence” as in “evidence based policy.” We will introduce some general thoughts on this here and elaborate them in a more technical sense later.

The way these concepts are used provides a way of understanding the early interplay of ideas used to sort problems and solutions, and it has continuing importance.

#### 5. The Early Factors Involved in Collecting Relevant Data

We will look at aspects of problems, solutions, conceptions of the public good and the actors associated with variations in these dimensions. Here we will look at ways to measure the preferences of different types of actors who might be taken into account in shaping a more complete policy options paper. At this point, I want students to start developing questionnaires/instruments that would measure the preferences and related data of each of the following groups.

- a. The Perspectives of the Political Leadership
- b. The Perspectives of the Organized Community/Political Class
- c. The Perspectives of the Bureaucracy
- d. The Perspectives of the Public
- e. The Perspectives of Clients /Beneficiaries of Potential Policy and Programs

#### 6. Preliminary Discussion of Paper Topics if Necessary

#### 7. Some Early Research Design Considerations as a Prelude to More Detailed Issues

#### 8. The Quality of Data and Evidence: A Journey into Some Aspects of Empirical Methods in Policy with Emphasis on Measurement

#### 9. Generating and Analysing Data for Decision Making: Research Design and Analytic Techniques

It is unlikely that we can do much analysis of the tiny amounts of data we might generate through course activities. However, we will make some general comments on how this should be approached.

#### 10. Bringing the Evidence to Bear in Policy Making Interactions

What would a final policy recommendation paper look like, and how would it be used in the policy making process. No matter how good the technical side of such a paper might be, we

will see a resurgence of rhetoric and shallow reasoning in order to protect interests. Nevertheless, some parts of the analytics will have to be taken into account.

#### 11. Problem Solving Sessions

Here, we will deal with any final considerations that are relevant to the completion of student papers.

#### 12. Final Presentations if Time Permits

Note that it is quite likely that some of the major topic will take more than one week to cover.

Finally, note that this is the first time this course has been offered. So, we may adjust the order and importance of some topics depending on how the course is progressing.

## Instructor's Other Important Guidelines and Rules

Without going into great detail, various other course, departmental and university rules apply to the conduct of any course. You are expected to know them. From, my point of view, the important rules are:

1. Do your work on time as described in this outline and in class.
2. Do not engage in plagiarism.
3. Do not disrupt the class. This will be interpreted in a more detailed way than in previous years. While participating in the online class, make sure there are no disruptive noises in the background. With respect to persistent behavioural problems, the instructor may limit a person's involvement in the class.
4. Keep an open mind with respect to value systems and approaches to inquiry.

With respect to point one above, the final copy of the course paper should be submitted by the end of April 13, 2021. It must be in electronic form as a WORD attachment to an email. Be sure you keep copies of what you submit, and wait for the instructor's return message that he has received and can open the attachment.

Presentations must be done on time as assigned. Failure to observe this will lead to a loss of all marks associated with a presentation.

Other rules of general interest from a departmental or university perspective are contained in the material that follows. The instructor only takes responsibility for the essence of the above material.

### Standard Departmental Attachment Follows

#### Accommodations during COVID

Due to COVID, instructors will not request or require a doctor's note when students seek accommodation for missed term work or exams due to illness. Instead, students will be asked to complete the self-declaration form available here: [https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19\\_Self-declaration.pdf](https://carleton.ca/registrar/wp-content/uploads/COVID-19_Self-declaration.pdf)

#### Academic Accommodations

##### Pregnancy

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, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

##### Religious obligation

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, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

##### 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](mailto: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, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

##### Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and is 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](http://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

##### Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform 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.

<https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

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

### 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.

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).