

Carleton University
Department of Political Science
<https://carleton.ca/polisci/>

Fall 2023

PSCI 5700 A

Basic Research Methods

Instructor: Scott Edward Bennett

Contact Information: C 672 Loeb Building
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Class Times: 8:35am to 11:25am on Tuesdays beginning on September 12 and ending on December 5. Please confirm location on Carleton Central.

Online 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.

NOTE: Most matters can be dealt with in class or by email any time through your Carleton email account. Although the instructor is not available around the clock every day, you will find that he generally responds to emails rapidly and in detail. There are no in person office hours for this course as experience has shown that nearly all relevant matters can be addressed in class or through regular email.

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the preliminary logic and techniques of data-oriented political science research methods. There are five major aspects of the material presented. The first is the logic and assumptions of research on politics and policy. The second is the logic of research design. The third covers various topics of data collection and measurement. The fourth aspect is an introduction to quantitative data analysis techniques. The use of computer software (primarily SPSS) to analyze data for research is also introduced throughout the course, and that constitutes the fifth course element.

The primary benefit that the instructor wants students to take from this course is some sense of how to deal with data in the overall context of the research process. Some of you may not see yourselves as being primarily involved with data in your intended fields of study. However, total ignorance of this area would be a major handicap in navigating contemporary academia, not to mention the contemporary world. Note that if you are totally uninterested in learning about the applied side of data oriented methods, there are other classes you can take that will fulfill your methods requirement.

Sometimes, this course has a variety of students from various programs. This can be an interesting and positive aspect of the course. This will be reflected to some extent in the approach and examples the instructor uses.

Course Format:

The instructor will usually lecture for part at least part of each time slot. The remaining time will usually be allocated to answering students' questions, dealing with students' technical problems in class, conducting class exercises, discussing course material and illustrating computer applications.

Grade Components:

You will be expected to develop the preliminary steps of a research project and write a paper or papers about each step. Unless, there are very good reasons to do otherwise, the instructor will constrain the types of topics you can pursue. Exceptions may be made if this would serve the research agenda of a student in pursuit of their dissertation or thesis. You may turn the papers in any time before the course ends. If you wish, you may turn them all in at the very end of the course as a unified paper. The unified paper would be graded as such rather than as an assembly of sections. Our last class is December 5, and that is the nominal due date for submission of final work. You will definitely get a few days beyond that to complete work if necessary. There will also be a small participation component which will be explained in more detail in class.

Grading Device	% of Total Course Grade
1. Research Proposal and Design	25%
2. Measurement Device and Issues in Data Collection	25%
3. Production and Analysis of Example Data Set	30%
4. Participation	20%

Note that any papers should be submitted to me as WORD attachments to an email. Be sure to keep a backup, and wait for my notification that I have received and opened whatever you submit. More details about the structure of the papers will be provided in class. Further rules and penalties relating to grading and class conduct are described in the final part of this outline.

Read them and understand them because they may be different from what you have experienced in other classes.

The best way to learn this material the first time around is to do a project based on survey research. A second best approach might involve certain kinds of aggregate data. Attempts to pursue projects based on content analysis or similar are usually very unsatisfying and problematic unless they are part of a very large project that could not be successfully completed in one term.

Main Texts:

The main texts is:

Public Affairs Research Methods: A Quantitative Introduction by Bennett (Queenston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996)

A sometimes cited secondary text is:

Empirical Political Analysis (8th edition) by Brians, Willnat, Manheim and Rich (Longman, 2011)

Note: Don't buy these books unless you personally want to have your own copies. There will be plenty of copies on reserve or otherwise available. In addition, much of the text material is recapitulated in slides that will be made available to you.

Occasional reserve or secondary readings may also be suggested from time to time.

In addition, the instructor will likely make a lot of lecture references to very recent literature and trends relating to data collection and measurement. These areas are evolving so quickly, there is no conventional text that summarizes them well.

Course Topics & Readings:

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. We want to cover the material below at a pace and in a manner that is consistent with student background and progress. It is conceivable that some topics will have to be expanded or reduced slightly in light of such considerations compared to what is indicated below.

Also note that almost every topic will be linked to slides or files that recapitulate or expand on the readings referred to below.

1. **Introduction to the Class**
2. **Introduction: The Research Process**
Bennett, Chapter 1-3
Brians, et. al. , Chapter 1
3. **The Logic of Problem Generation and Explanation**
Bennett, Chapter 4
Brians, et. al., Chapters 2, 4 and first part of 5 (pages 88 to 94)
4. **Research Design: General Strategies for Testing Hypotheses and Exploring Data**
Bennett, Chapter 5
Brians, et. al., Chapter 6
5. **Basic Concepts of Estimation and Measurement**
Bennett, Chapter 6
Brians, et. al., Chapter 7
6. **Data Collection Methods**
Bennett, Chapter 7 (first part)
Brians, et. al., Chapters 19, 20 and 21
7. **Concepts of Computerised Data Use in Research**

Since aspects of this topic will be covered as needed earlier in the course, it will probably be a fairly minor component of the material presented at this point. Some remarks will be presented to establish continuity in the course.
8. **Types of Statistical Analysis: An Overview**
Bennett, Chapter 8
9. **Basic Univariate Statistics as an Example of Descriptive and Inferential Data Analysis**
Bennett, Chapter 9
10. **An Overview of Slightly More Advanced Topics in Statistical Analysis**
Bennett, Chapter 10 to 12 and possibly some secondary readings

We may not be able to cover this last topic completely. However, if time permits, it probably will be a major topic.

Important Guidelines and Rules

From, the instructor's 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.
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 December 5, 2023. 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. If you do not turn in the paper on time (or within a very few days after the due date), you will initially get an F in the course. However, a failing grade can be changed at some later date if the papers is finally submitted. Nevertheless, the student should keep in mind that there are elements of grade change policy not within the instructor's control, and authorities in the university hierarchy may not accept a submitted grade change at an extremely late date. Other aspects of the timing of work submission and related flexibility will be discussed in class.

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

Standard Departmental Attachment

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:

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
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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.