

**PSCI 5700**  
**Basic Research Methods**  
Seminar: Thursday 8:35 - 11:25  
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Pablo Heidrich  
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**Course Description:**

The primary objective of the course is to develop the capacity to understand, explain and work confidently with the empirical literature in political science. A second objective is to develop basic skills working with data of various kinds.

Finally, students should complete the course with a better understanding of how they personally come to understand the world. With this objective in mind, it is highly recommended that students keep a journal or for this course in which to record their own responses/reactions to the course material and any eureka moments that occur. [You will not be asked to share this!]

At the end of the course the student is expected to be prepared to pursue further studies in political science or policy studies, or to pursue more advanced analytical research in their respective fields of specialization.

For some students, the material and style of discourse in this course might be unfamiliar, or overly hard to make sense of as a whole. That perception, if it occurs at all, will disappear along the weeks of the course. It is therefore required that students attend all seminar sessions, having made all the obligatory readings and at-home exercises each time. The lectures and in-class exercises each week will build on that experience and not repeat them.

Obligatory readings will be on reserve in the MacOdrum Library or available through the electronic class board. Additional readings will be suggested as the course proceeds;

**Evaluation:**

Discussion and attendance	15%
In class exercises	20%
1 <sup>st</sup> Analysis and Presentation	25%
2 <sup>nd</sup> Analysis and Presentation	40%

Active participation, demonstrating having read the assigned texts each week and timely attendance to the full period of each class is required. Not participating in class discussions will be taken as not having come prepared for it and graded accordingly. Not attending will be penalized as well.

There will be 5 in class exercises making use of the materials learnt up to each class to process the accumulation of skills and analytical knowledge acquired until each date. Missing any of the exercises due to absence or lack of timely completion will also reflect in the grades.

There will be two extended analysis and presentations in the course, one in the middle of semester, and the other towards the end. Each analysis will included a written assessment of the methodology used in different pieces of political science literature pre-assigned to each student and its presentation to the course and instructor, followed by a Q & A period. The 1<sup>st</sup> analysis will be on an academic article, and the second on a full, single author academic book.

Students will be asked to identify, 5 different professional journals, e.g. the Canadian Journal of Political Science, the American Political Science Review, that bear on their interests in the discipline. They will obtain the latest issue available of the journals and browse it, checking the authors, titles, abstracts, book reviews, and communications. From these, each student will select a triad of articles for the instructor to decide which will be used for the 1<sup>st</sup> analysis. The 2<sup>nd</sup> analysis will be done on a book selected together between the instructor and each student, according to the fields of interest of the latter.

The purpose of these exercises will be to explore methodologically what is the state of the discipline (your corner of it anyway). That systematic exploration is intended to stimulate a professional discussion of the discipline as it is found in the journals and academic books. In particular, you should browse with an eye to accumulating questions about how research topics are selected and evidence brought to bear on them.

The nature of the course is an accreditation that the student understands and is able to work with different modes of research. Therefore there will be no necessity to adjust marks in order to rank students.

## **Course Calendar**

### Week 1 September 3

#### **Introduction, course objectives, criteria for evaluation, organization of assignments**

Flyvbjerg, Bent (2012) Making Social Science Matter. In Georgios Papanagnou, ed., Social Science and Policy Challenges: Democracy, Values, and Capacities, Paris: UNESCO Publishing, pp. 25-56.

### Week 2 September 10

#### **State of the discipline of political science, nature of the debates**

Manheim, J., Rich, R., Willnat, L., Birans, C. 2007. Empirical Methods in Political Science. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Chapters 1 and 22.

King, G., Keohane, R., Verba, S. 1994. Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research. Chapter 1, pp.3-33.

### Week 3 September 17

#### **Theory, hypothesis, proposition, concept, variable, indicator**

Manheim, J., Rich, R., Willnat, L., Birans, C. 2007. Empirical Methods in Political Science. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Chapters 2 and 3.

Wonka, A. 2007. Concept Specification in Political Science Research. In Gschwend, T. and Schimmelfennig, F. (ed.) Research Design in Political Science. Palgrave-MacMillan, pp. 41-61.

*Exercise 1 to be done in class.*

Week 4 September 24

**Research design: experimental, non-experimental**

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, And Sidney Verba. 1995. The Importance of Research Design in Political Science. American Political Science Review, Vo1. 89, No. 2, pp. 475-481.

Johnson, J. & Joslyn, R. 1995. Political Science Research Methods. 3rd Ed. Congressional Quarterly Press. Chapters 5, pp. 111-152.

Week 5 October 1

**Measurement: levels of measurement, reliability and validity, types of data.**

Manheim, J., Rich, R., Willnat, L., Birans, C. 2007. Empirical Methods in Political Science. 6th ed. Chapters 5, 7, 8.

Johnson, J. & Joslyn, R. 1995. Political Science Research Methods. 3rd Ed. Congressional Quarterly Press. Chapters 4, pp. 73-110.

Miller, B. Making Measures Capture Concepts: Tools for Securing Correspondence between Theoretical Ideas and Observations. In Gschwend, T. and Schimmelfennig, F. (ed.) Research Design in Political Science. Palgrave-MacMillan, pp. 83-102.

*Exercise 2 to be done in class.*

Week 6 October 8

**One, Two and Multiple-variable analysis.**

Johnson, J. & Joslyn, R. 1995. Political Science Research Methods. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. Congressional Quarterly Press. Chapters 11, 12 and 13, pp. 295-402.

*Exercise 3 to be done in class.*

Week 7 October 15

**Case studies. Structures and comparisons.**

George. A. and Bennet, A. 2005. Case Studies and Theory Development. MIT Press. Chapters 1 and 3.

White, L. 2008. The comparative turn in Canadian political science. UBC Press. Part 1 (all). <http://site.ebrary.com.proxy.library.carleton.ca/lib/oculcarleton/detail.action?docID=10348950>

*Exercise 4 to be done in class.*

Week 8 October 22

**1<sup>st</sup> Analysis due and 1<sup>st</sup> Presentation Round**

October 29 No class (Fall Break)

Week 9 November 5

**Mixed method research. Complementing qualitative and quantitative research.**

Johnson, R., Onwuegbuzie, A., Turner, L. 2007. Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. Volume 1 Number 2. Pp. 112-133

Brady, H., Collier, D., Seawright, J. 2006. Toward a Pluralistic Vision of Methodology. *Political Analysis*, vol. 14, pp. 353–368.

Week 10 November 12

**Document analysis and subjects' interviewing**

Gervais, J. 2013. When Access is Restricted: Craftiness and Combining Methods in the Study of a Secretive Elite. In *Political Science Research methods in Action*, by Michael Bruter and Martin Lodge (eds.) Palgrave-MacMillan.

Lodge, M. 2013. Semi-structured Interviews and Informal Institutions: Getting Inside Executive Government. In *Political Science Research methods in Action*, by Michael Bruter and Martin Lodge (eds.) Palgrave-MacMillan.

Week 11 November 19

**Discourse and text analysis**

Harrison, S. 2013. Decoding Manifestos and Other Political Texts: The Case of Extreme Right-Wing Ideology. In *Political Science Research methods in Action*, by Michael Bruter and Martin Lodge (eds.) Palgrave-MacMillan.

Wellings, B. 2013. Into the Archives. In *Political Science Research methods in Action*, by Michael Bruter and Martin Lodge (eds.) Palgrave-MacMillan.

Week 12 November 26

**2nd Analysis due and 2nd Presentation Round**

Week 12 December 3

**Class wrap up and further practical directions in research**

(Plus remaining presentations if not concluded on Nov. 26)

**Academic Accommodations**

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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](mailto: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](http://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.