

**PCSI 2701 A**  
**Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science**  
**Tuesday & Thursday 2:35-5:25**  
**Online Course**

Instructor: Dr. S. Yaqub Ibrahim

Office Hours: Virtual Office Hour – BigBlueButton (Tuesdays 1:00-2:00)

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## **I. 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 of qualitative research including the philosophy of social science, 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 their research. The course is taught online by using mixed synchronous and asynchronous methods. Every class includes a two-hour online lecture through the BigBlueButton (BBB) learning platform and a tutorial/discussion through the cuLearn forum. In the first part, the instructor will give an online lecture with slides delivered through the BBB every Tuesday & Thursday from 2:35 to 4:25. The second part of the class will include an open discussion on the main theme of the lecture. In the discussion part, the instructor will post tutorials and discussion questions in the CuLearn Forum and students are highly encouraged to participate during the last 50 minutes of the class. Students will also have the opportunity to engage in discussions during the week by posting their reflections/responses on the discussions in cuLearn forum.

## **II. Textbooks**

1. Loleen Berdahl and Keith Archer (2015). *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Marc Menard (2015). *Political Argument: A Guide to Research, Writing, and Debating*. Oxford University Press

*You can purchase electronic or hard copies of the textbooks from University Book Store. You can order it through the bookstore's website [www.carletonshop.ca](http://www.carletonshop.ca)*

### **III. Course Evaluation**

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

#### **A. Assignment 1: Argument (10%)**

Due May 14

Select a topic/concept of your interest and develop an argument about it. Your argument should include a major premise and a few minor premises and lead to a logic conclusion. A list of topics/concepts along with detailed instruction will be posted in cuLearn in due course; however, you are free to choose a concept of interest beyond the list. Select your topic/concept with the assumption that you will work on it in your second assignment and the term paper. This assignment should not exceed 1.5-2 pages (double-spaced in 12-point font).

#### **B. Assignment 2: Measurement (15%)**

May 28

This assignment is an opportunity for students to operationalize a political science concept. Students will use the concept which they have worked on in their first assignment, conduct a review of 3 relevant scholarly sources, and explain how the concept is operationalized in each source. This assignment should not exceed 3-4 pages (double-spaced in 12-point font). A detailed instruction will be posted in cuLearn.

#### **C. Assignment 3, Term Paper (30%)**

Due June 16.

This assignment is an opportunity for students to write a research paper using the methods learned during the semester. In this assignment, you will use the concept, the argument, and the measurement that you have worked on in previous assignments, develop a research design and conduct a literature review of 8-10 scholarly sources. The result should be a well-organized mini-research paper that should not exceed 10-12 pages (double-spaced in 12-point font). A detailed instruction will be posted in cuLearn.

#### **D. Tutorial Participation (15%)**

All tutorials.

Tutorial participation is a critical component of this course. Tutorials will be posted in cuLearn Forum every week. Students are expected to engage in discussions and respond to questions within one week after a tutorial is posted. Every student is required to participate in one tutorial per week (when there is only one tutorial per week all students must participate in that tutorial & when there are two tutorials assigned in a week, students are free chose to participate in only one of them). Your participation grade will be evaluated based on three responses every week: the first response must be a statement on the posted material and the other two responses should be engagement with other students' responses or questions arose during the discussions.

### **E. Final Exam (30%)**

The final exam will be scheduled during the formal exam period.

### **F. Citation**

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

### **G. Submission Policy**

All assignments are required to be submitted electronically to the cuLearn. E-mailed assignments will not be accepted. Late submissions will be penalized daily, i.e. 3% of the overall grade for the assignment per day, for a maximum of 7 days. Assignments that are submitted after the 7 days will receive a zero. Extensions will be granted on medical basis.

## **IV. Program**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Tutorial</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
May 5	Course Introduction	<i>No Tutorial</i>	
May 7	Philosophy of Social Sciences	Scientific Approach to Political Science	
May 12	Argument, Causation & Theory Development	Argument	
May 14	Research Question & Hypothesis	Answering RQs	<b>Assignment 1 Due</b>
May 19	Concept & Measurement	Operationalization	
May 21	Ethics in Political Science Research	<i>No Tutorial</i>	
May 26	Case Study & Comparative Research	Comparison	
May 28	Textual Analysis	Content Analysis	<b>Assignment 2 Due</b>
June 2	Interview & Focus Group	Interview	
June 4	Observation, Field Research & Experiment	Observation	
June 9	Survey	Survey	
June 11	Writing the Final Report	<i>No Tutorial</i>	
June 16	Pre-exam Review	<i>No Tutorial</i>	<b>Assignment 3 Due</b>

## **V. Course Schedule**

### **Lecture 1: Course Introduction**

The instructor reviews the syllabus and discusses the course content, requirements, and organization.

### **Lecture 2: Scientific Approach to Political Science**

*Required Reading:*

Berdahl and Archer, Chapters 1 & 2.

### **Lecture 3: Argument, Causation & Theory Development**

*Required Reading:*

Marc Menard, Chapters 4

Berdahl and Archer, Chapter 3

*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 Archer, Chapters 4-5.

### **Lecture 6: Ethics in Political Science Research**

*Required Reading:*

Berdahl and Archer, Chapter 6.

*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 7: Case Study & Comparative Research**

*Required Reading:*

Berdahl and Archer, Chapters, 7, 8.

*Optional:*

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

## **Lecture 8: Textual Analysis**

### *Required Reading:*

Berdahl and Archer, Chapters, 12, 13.

## **Lecture 9: Interview and Focus Group**

### *Required Reading:*

Berdahl and Archer, Chapters 9.

## **Lecture 10: Observation, Field Research & Experiment**

### *Required Reading:*

Berdahl and Archer, Chapter 9 (pp. 181-186)

Berdahl and Archer, Chapter 11

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

## **Lecture 11: Survey**

### *Required Reading:*

Berdahl and Archer, Chapter 10.

### *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>

## **Lecture 12: Writing the Final Report**

### *Required Reading:*

Berdahl and Archer, Chapter 18

Marc Menard, Chapter 3

## **Lecture 13: Course Overview and Final Exam Discussion**

No assigned reading

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## **Academic Accommodations**

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.

**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.