

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

PSCI2701A – INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

Tuesdays and Thursdays: 14:35 -17:25.

Please see Carleton Central for location

Instructor: Viktoriya Thomson

Office Hours: Thursdays 12:00 - 14:00 (Loeb B641)

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Course Description

This is an introductory course for undergraduate students in political science. The main goal of this course is to make students familiar with basic qualitative methods in political science and learn how to apply different research techniques in a process of conducting scientific research. Course topics will include theory building and research design (including research questions and hypotheses). The methodology component will be focused on the main research methods in political science and their application. Methods included are as follows: comparative methods, literature review, content analysis, case studies, survey analysis, experiments, observations and interviews.

By the end of this course, students should be able to conduct a basic scientific research using different techniques or have their own “tool box’ of qualitative research methods. Students should develop a clear understanding of the main qualitative approaches to political science research. Students should be able to write a simple literature review based on their evaluation of different approaches on topics in political science.

Course Grades breakdown:

Assignment N1 Argument (May 11) – 10%

Assignment N2 Concepts (May 23) - 20%

Assignment N3 Literature review; mini- proposal (June 8) – 30%

Final exam – 40%

Course Text

Required text book: Loleen Berdahl and Keith Archer (2015) *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*. The book will be at the bookstore for

purchase or rent. A copy of the book will be on reserve at the library as well. Some supporting materials will be posted in CuLearn for all students.

Some books that students may find helpful in applying research techniques are:

Bazeley, P. (2013). *Qualitative Data Analysis: Practical strategies*. London: Sage.

Pollock, Philip H. (2011). *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, CQ Press, Washington DC. Fifth Edition.

Shively, W. Phillips. (2010). *The Craft of Political Research*, Pearson-Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River NJ. Eighth Edition.

Assignments: Detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted in CuLearn and will be discussed during the class. All assignments should be submitted online in CuLearn on their due date before 11 pm. Late assignments will be penalized 1% per day of the assignment total including the weekends for the maximum of 7 days. After that, the assignment will be given a mark of 0. Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds with appropriate documentations from a doctor.

Final exam: The final exam will be held during the exam period. Detailed instructions will be provided during the lecture closer to the exam's date. The exam will be based on multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.

Topics

Lecture 1 Introduction. Is Political science a science? (Tuesday, May 2)

Required: Explorations, Chapter 1, 2

Suggested:

Jane Mansbridge (2014). "What Is Political Science For?" *Perspectives on Politics*, 12, pp. 8-17.

John S. Dryzek. (2006) "Revolutions Without Enemies: Key Transformations in Political Science," *American Political Science Review* Vol. 100 (4): 487-492.

Lecture 2 Theory building; type of argument (Thursday, May 4)

Required: Explorations, Chapter 3

Suggested:

William Hughes, Jonathan Lavery & Katheryn Doran (2009) *Critical Thinking. An Introduction to the Basic Skills*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.

Jerome E. Bickenbach & Jacqueline M. Davies (1996) *Good reasons for better arguments. An Introduction to the skills and values of critical thinking*. Toronto: Broadview Press.

Lecture 3 Research design: research questions and hypothesis (Tuesday, May 9)

Required: Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath (2012). *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford University Press. Ch. 7 (online, Aeries)

Suggested:

Cresswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed-Methods Approaches*. Fourth Edition. London: SAGE. (Library reserve)

Lecture 4 Concepts and their operationalization (Thursday, May 11) - due date assignment N1

Required: Explorations, Chapter 4,5.

Suggested:

Goertz, Gary. (2006) *Social science concepts: a user's guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Barrington, L. (1997). "Nation" and "Nationalism": The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 30(4), 712-716.

Lecture 5 Research ethics in social science (Tuesday, May 16)

Required: Explorations, Chapter 6

Suggested:

J. Andrew Harris. (Spring 2015) "What's in a Name? A Method for Extracting Information about Ethnicity from Names" *Political Analysis* 23 (2): 212-224.

Keerty Nakray (2016) *Social science research ethics for a globalized world*. New York: Routledge (electronic copy through the library)

Lecture 6 Literature review, content analysis (Thursday, May 18)

Required: Explorations, Chapter 12

Suggested:

Klaus Krippendorff (2013) *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hart, Chris. (2003) *Doing a Literature Search: A Comprehensive Guide for the Social Sciences*. London: Sage.

Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. W. (2010). *Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systemic Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Lecture 7 Case study research (Tuesday, May 23) - due date assignment N2

Required: Explorations, Chapter 7

Suggested:

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

Seawright, Jason and John Gerring (2008). Case-Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (2): 294-308.

Lecture 8 Survey research (Thursday, May 25)

Required: Explorations, Chapter 8,10

Suggested:

Barabas, Jason&Jeniffer Jerit (2010) "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid? *American Political Science Review* 104:226-242

Daniel Stegmueller (2011) "Apples and Oranges? The Problem of Equivalence in Comparative Research." *Political Analysis* 19: 471- 487.

Lecture 9 Interviews and focus groups (Tuesday, May 30)

Required: Explorations, Chapter 9

Suggested:

Dexter. (2012) *Elite and specialized interviewing*, ECPR Press, Colchester.

Gallagher, J (2015) 'Interviews as Catastrophic Encounters: An Object Relations Methodology for IR Research', *International Studies Perspectives*: 1-17.

Lecture 10 Observational Research (Thursday, June 1)

Required: Explorations, Chapter 9

Suggested:

Collings, P (2009) 'Participant observation and phased assertion as research strategies in the Canadian Arctic', *Field Methods* 21: 133-153.

Lecture 11 Experimental research (Tuesday, June 6)

Required: Explorations, Chapter 11.

Suggested:

McDermott. (2002) "Experimental Methodology in Political Science," *Political Analysis* 10(4): 325-342.

Gerber and Green. (2002) "Experiments in Political Science," in Katznelson and Milner, editors, *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, Norton.

Lecture 12 Preexam review (Thursday, June 8) - Due date Assignment N 3

Academic and Student Support Resources

IF A STUDENT NEEDS ASSISTANCE WITH...	REFER TO...	CONTACT INFORMATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ understanding academic rules and regulations ▪ choosing or changing their major ▪ finding a tutor ▪ academic planning guided by an Academic Advisor ▪ polishing study skills 	Student Academic Success Centre (SASC)	302 Tory Building 613-520-7850 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/ No appointment necessary as all students are seen on a walk-in basis.
...developing writing skills	Writing Tutorial Service	4 th Floor, Library 613-520-6632 https://carleton.ca/csas/writingservices/
...peer assisted tutoring for pre- identified, notoriously difficult courses	Peer Assisted Study Sessions	Centre for Student Academic Support https://carleton.ca/csas/group-support/
...Library and Research help; Learning Support and IT support	Staff at MacOdrum Library (reference services desk)	http://www.library.carleton.ca/ 613-520-2735
...coping with stress or crisis	Office of Student Affairs or Health and Counseling Services	Either ext. 2573 or http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs or www.carleton.ca/health

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 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.