

PSCI 2701A Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

1:35 p.m. – 2:25 p.m., Mondays and Wednesdays
Please confirm location on Carleton Central.

Instructor: Tyler Attwood
Office: B646 Loeb Building
Office Hours: 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m. Mondays (*B646 Loeb*); 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Fridays (*online in the Web CT chat room*)
Phone: (613) 520-2600 ext. 1598 (*no voicemail*)
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Course description

The course is concerned with the study of assumptions, principles, and techniques of research methods used in the study and practice of public/social policy. It is intended to provide students with a strong foundation in the general principles of such research methods and their application in the collection of data for systematic analysis. The course also aims to provide students the necessary tools to critically engage the results of quantitative and qualitative research presented by others in the worlds of academia and policy.

While the course is primarily lecture-based, there will be occasional participation in lecture throughout the term. The mandatory discussion groups give you an opportunity to interact with your peers and TA in a smaller environment more conducive to participation. The discussion groups will focus on clarifying and extending the course themes through review of the lecture material and related group exercises.

Course Texts

The required textbook for this course is **Michael Del Balso & Alan D. Lewis, First Steps: A Guide to Social Research, 4th edition, Thomson Nelson, 2008**. The textbook is available for purchase through Haven Books at the price of \$80.56. (Haven Books is located at 43 Seneca Street, on the corner of Seneca and Sunnyside, 1 block east of Bronson). For more information go to: <http://www.havenbooks.ca/carletonsite/carletonhome-e.php>.

Evaluation

➤ Discussion Group	10%
➤ Outline & Bibliography Assignment	10% (<i>due October 8th</i>)
➤ Midterm Exam	15% (<i>Oct. 15th</i>)
➤ Research Design Project	30% (<i>due December 1st</i>)
➤ Final Exam	35%

As per early feedback the outline and bibliography assignment will be returned by October 31st.

Details regarding Term Work and Final Exam

All assignments are due at the beginning of class. Due dates are noted under the description of each item below, as well as on the **Term Schedule** below. You must submit assignments directly to the instructor, unless alternate arrangements are made in advance. Electronic or faxed copies will not be accepted. Assignments submitted late will be penalized 10% of the value of the assignment per day late, to a maximum of 5 days (50%), after which the assignment will receive a grade of zero. Turning an assignment in more than 15 minutes after the class begins on

the day it is due counts as one day late. Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds for which you must provide appropriate documentation. See “**Academic Accommodations**” below for additional exceptions. Weekends are included in the calculation of late penalties.

Written work must adhere to accepted bibliographic and citation formats, preferably APA or MLA (style manuals available at the reference desk of the library). Graded assignments will be returned to students in class within two weeks of the due date. You may also pick up your papers during office hours. If you are unable to collect any assignment during the term you may, if you wish, provide the instructor with a self-addressed, stamped envelope so that any uncollected work can be mailed to you.

Note that email pertaining to the course will be answered on Tuesdays and Fridays only.

- **Discussion Group - 10%:** The scheduled discussion groups for this course are mandatory, and your TA will be responsible for assessing your performance and assigning your mark based on a combination of attendance and quality of participation. Refer to your registration information for your specific discussion group date, time and location.
- **Outline & Bibliographic Search - 10%** (*due October 8th*): For this assignment, you should put forth a **prescriptive argument** that is broadly linked to the social, political, or economic realms. Note, however, that you will not be required to actually construct the argumentative essay. You will also create a point-form outline that indicates your general intentions in the essay. In addition, you should conduct an initial bibliographic search of your issue from three kinds of **credible** sources: (1) articles in the mass media, using the Proquest Canadian Newsstand Database or the LexisNexis Database; (2) reports and essays published on the internet by credible advocacy groups, non-profit organizations, and government agencies, using a search engine such as Google or Yahoo; (3) scholarly articles from electronic journal databases, such as PAIS or International Political Science Abstracts. More detailed instructions and guidelines are provided on the assignment sheet posted on Web CT.
- **Midterm Exam - 15%** (*October 15th*): A midterm exam will be given in class on Wednesday, October 15th. The exam is worth 15% of your grade and will consist of multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank and similar types of questions (e.g., I might give you several hypotheses and ask you to identify the dependent and independent variables). The midterm exam may contain questions on material from the lectures that is not contained in the textbook.
- **Research Design Paper - 30%** (*due December 1st*): For this assignment, you are asked to **propose a researchable question** about voter turnout among university students. Your question may address one of any number of related issues, such as: “Are university students more or less likely to vote than other young adults?” or “Are there particular demographic characteristics (gender, education, income, etc.) that influence voting patterns among university young adults?” Once you have decided on a question, you will need to consider how you will answer it. This involves, first, **establishing a testable hypothesis**. In selecting and stating your hypothesis, you should briefly discuss the existing research that is relevant to and supports (or contradicts) your hypothesis. This is, in effect, a brief **review of the literature** regarding your research topic. The second step is to develop a **research design** that outlines how you would carry out the research to answer your question, and discuss why the design is appropriate for the question you have posed. Next, you should describe how you would **operationalize** your research -- the key concepts and their nominal and operational definitions, the variables you would use to measure your concepts, and how they would be analyzed. **Note that you are not actually required to conduct the research or do any data analysis!** Rather, you will develop a research design **as if** you were going to carry out the research, but stop before the data collection stage. More detailed instructions and guidelines are provided on the assignment sheet posted on Web CT.
- **Final Exam - 35%:** The final exam will be cumulative (i.e., it will deal with material from the entire course) and will be held during the official final exam period. The exam will cover material from the Del Balso & Lewis textbook and the lectures. The format will be definition, identification, and short answer questions. You will have three hours to complete the exam. The date, time and location will be announced later in the term (check the university website).

Course Topics and Class Schedule

Monday, Sept. 8th

- Discussion of course structure & assignments

Wednesday, Sept. 10th

- Lecture on nature of theory, knowledge, and the social sciences (no readings)

Monday, Sept. 15th

- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 1, pp. 1-18

Wednesday, Sept. 17th & Monday, Sept. 22nd

- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 2, pp. 19-45

Wednesday, Sept. 24th & Monday, Sept. 29th

- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 3, pp. 46-71

Wednesday, Oct. 1st

- Lecture on ethics in social research (no readings)

Monday, Oct. 6th & Wednesday, Oct. 8th

- *Outline & bibliographic search assignment due in class on Wednesday Oct. 8th*
- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 4, pp. 72-96

Monday, Oct. 13th

- *No class (Thanksgiving holiday)*

Wednesday, Oct. 15th

- *Midterm exam today in class*

Monday, Oct. 20th & Wednesday, Oct. 22nd

- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 5, pp. 97-129

Monday, Oct. 27th & Wednesday, Oct. 29th

- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 6, pp. 130-154

Monday, Nov. 3rd & Wednesday, Nov. 5th

- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 7, pp. 155-179

Monday, Nov. 10th & Wednesday, Nov. 12th

- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 8, pp. 180-204

Monday, Nov. 17th & Wednesday, Nov. 19th

- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 9, pp. 205-238

Monday, Nov. 24th & Wednesday, Nov. 26th

- Del Balso & Lewis, Chap. 10, pp. 239-261

Monday, Dec. 1st

- *Research design project due at the beginning of class today*
- Catch-up (if necessary) and final exam review

ACADEMIC RESOURCES:

If You Need 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 520-7850 www.carleton.ca/sasc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 a learning disability 	Paul Menton Centre	500 University Centre 520-6608 www.carleton.ca/pmc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 developing writing skills 	Writing Tutorial Service	229 Paterson Hall 520-6632 www.carleton.ca/wts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 assistance with math 	Math Tutorial	www.math.carleton.ca/student
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 peer assisted tutoring for pre-identified, notoriously difficult courses 	Peer Assisted Study Sessions	Centre for Initiatives in Education 520-2600, ext. 1523 www.carleton.ca/cie
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 polishing English conversation skills, or proof reading (International students only) 	International Student Advisory	501 University Centre 520-6600 www.carleton.ca/isa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 🕒 research assistance 	Staff at MacOdrum Library (reference services desk)	520-2735 www.library.carleton.ca

Academic Accommodations

For students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (500 University Centre) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Registered PMC students are required to contact the centre (613-520-6608) every term to ensure that the instructor receives your letter of accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet with the instructor in order to discuss your needs **at least two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations**. If you require accommodation for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodation to PMC by **November 7, 2008 for December examinations**, and **March 6, 2009 for April examinations**.

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 Undergraduate Calendar defines plagiarism as: "to use and pass off as one's own idea or product, work of another without expressly giving credit to another." The Graduate Calendar states that plagiarism has occurred when a student either: (a) directly copies another's work without acknowledgment; or (b) closely paraphrases the equivalent of a short paragraph or more without acknowledgment; or (c) borrows, without acknowledgment, any ideas in a clear and recognizable form in such a way as to present them as the student's own thought, where such ideas, if they were the student's own would contribute to the merit of his or her own work. Instructors who suspect plagiarism are required to submit the paper and supporting documentation to the Departmental Chair who will refer the case to the Dean. It is not permitted to hand in the same assignment to two or more courses. The Department's Style Guide is available at: <http://www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/Essay%20Style%20Guide.html>

Oral Examination: At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on research papers and essays.

Submission and Return of Term Work: Papers must be handed directly to the instructor 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. Please note that assignments sent via fax or email will not be accepted. Final exams are intended solely for the purpose of evaluation and will not be returned.

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.

Course Requirements: Students must fulfill all course requirements in order to achieve a passing grade. Failure to hand in any assignment will result in a grade of F. Failure to write the final exam will result in a grade of ABS. FND (Failure No Deferred) is assigned when a student's performance is so poor during the term that they cannot pass the course even with 100% on the final examination. In such cases, instructors may use this notation on the Final Grade Report to indicate that a student has already failed the course due to inadequate term work and should not be permitted access to a deferral of the examination. Deferred final exams are available **ONLY** if the student is in good standing in the course.

Connect Email Accounts: The Department of Political Science strongly encourages students to sign up for a campus email account. Important course and University information will be distributed via the Connect email system. See <http://connect.carleton.ca> for instructions on how to set up your account.

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 in the after-hours academic life 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, please email carletonpss@gmail.com, visit our website at poliscisociety.com, or come to our office in Loeb D688.