

PSCI2701B [36260]
Intro Research Methods in Political Science
Thursdays from 7:05pm – 8:55pm
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Anne J Rahming
Office: Loeb B645
Phone: 613) 520-2600 x1657 (no voicemail)
Office Hours: Thursdays from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
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Course Description

This course considers the assumptions, principles, and techniques of various research methods employed in political science. The goals are to introduce students to the world of social science research; to provide them with a foundation in the general principles of research methods; and to unravel how they are applied when conducting political analysis.

By the end of the course, students should:

1. Be able to identify and outline the principles of empirical social scientific research;
2. Be able to conduct basic data gathering and analysis;
3. Be able to compare and contrast the benefits and drawbacks of the different methodologies employed in political science research.

Course Text

(Available for purchase in the Carleton University Bookstore)
Jarol Manheim, Richard Rich et al (2008) Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science, 7th edition, Longman, ISBN: 0-205-57640-1

Evaluation Summary

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| • Tutorial attendance and participation: | 10% |
| • Reading assignments (x 10): | 40% |
| • Research report: | 20% |
| • Final exam (during official exam period, Dec 4-20th): | 30% |

Expectations

Attendance & participation

This course is delivered via a 1 hour and 50 minute lecture plus a 1 hour tutorial each week. Students are expected to attend their assigned tutorials and demonstrate evidence of having done the required readings each week in order to obtain full marks.

Comprehension of the readings will be tested through your reading assignments as well as active participation in tutorial groups. By the end of the course, students are expected to have developed a knowledge and understanding of the concepts and methods explored.

Reading Assignments

You must complete 10 reading assignments (one for each week beginning Week 2 and ending Week 11 inclusive). Each is worth 4% of your total grade – for a total of 40%. They vary in length (some are as short as half a page) but answers should never exceed 1 page of single-spaced, type-written text.

Reading assignments are questions that are related to the weekly reading and are designed to both ensure that you keep up with the coursework and identify any areas where there may be problems. The

questions are posted on WebCT where you may print them or download the file. Assignments must be type-written and handed in each week to your TA at the beginning of your tutorial. TAs will endeavor to return all assignments in a timely fashion, i.e. usually by the next tutorial, and will post marks on WebCT in the My Grades section, so that you may chart your progress over the course of the term.

Please note that late assignments will be penalized at the rate of 10% per day, including weekends, to a maximum of 5 days. If you do need to hand in your work late, please contact your TA about how best to submit the assignment so that he or she can retrieve it in a timely fashion. Assignments submitted more than 5 days late will not be accepted. Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds, with appropriate documentation.

Research Report

You must complete one (1) research report **on or before the beginning of your tutorial in Week 10 (i.e. the week of the November 13, 2008 lecture)**. A research report should be no longer than 7 and no shorter than 5 double-spaced and type-written pages and should do the following:

Detail (1) what the topic is; (2) a brief summary of the literature you examined in order to address it; (3) your theoretical approach and hypothesis, in point form; (4) a short explanation of the kind of evidence you think is needed to respond to your hypothesis; (5) how you intend to get this evidence; (6) how you intend to analyze the data you compile; and, (7) your analysis.

In other words, you should provide a 5- to 7-page research paper that introduces your theme, its main hypotheses and your rationale for researching the issue; performs a brief literature review; explains the method used and your rationale for using it; presents one or two findings; and concludes with a discussion of the research findings.

See Chapter 22 (discussed in Week 1) for an in-depth discussion of what constitutes a "good" research report.

Final Examination

A 3-hour final exam will be conducted during the formal examination period. The exam format will consist of multiple-choice questions and the content is based on the course readings and the lecture notes. Students will be required to answer all questions in the 3 hours allotted.

Re 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: www.carleton.ca/polisci/undergrad/styleguide.pdf

Re Oral Examination

At the discretion of the instructor, students may be required to pass a brief oral examination on assignments.

Re 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.

Re 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.

Re 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 B 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.

Re Connect Email Accounts

Lecture Schedule & Readings

September 4, 2008 – Introduction to course

- Reading: None scheduled

September 11, 2008 – The research process

- Reading: Chapters 1 and 22

September 18, 2008 – Theory building and foundations of research

- Reading: Chapters 2, 3 and 4

September 25, 2008 – Operationalization and Measurement

- Reading: Chapter 5

October 2, 2008 – Research Design and Sampling

- Reading: Chapters 6 and 7

October 9, 2008 – Surveys and Scaling

- Reading: Chapters 8 and 9

October 16, 2008 – Content Analysis, Data and Comparisons

- Reading: Chapters 10, 11 and 12

October 23, 2008 – Data Preparation and Processing

- Reading: Chapter 14

October 30, 2008 – Describing Data

- Reading: Chapter 15

November 6, 2008 – Summarizing Distributions

- Reading: Chapter 16

November 13, 2008 - Relationships Between Two Variables

- Reading: Chapter 17 (pp. 279-290)

November 20, 2008 - Relationships Between Two Variables

- Reading: Chapter 17 (pp. 291-300)

November 27, 2007 - Review

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.

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<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.

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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.