

<https://carleton.ca/polisci/>

# Intermediate Research Methods for Applied Political Science

**PSCI 4702B - PSCI 5702W**

*While face-to-face classes at Carleton remain suspended because of COVID-19, this course will meet in a synchronous online format via Zoom. Please find access information on Brightspace.*

**Instructor:** Scott Edward Bennett  
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**Class Times:** 8:35am to 11:25pm on Thursdays beginning on January 13 and ending on April 7. This class is formally conducted in person. However, the room in which we meet allows us to experiment with modes of delivery. We are tentatively scheduled to meet in Richcraft Hall 2308. Please confirm location on Carleton Central.

**Office Hours:** There are no fixed office hours, but you can communicate with the instructor by email at any time. He will usually get back to you within a day.

Read this syllabus carefully. This syllabus stipulates class policies. Exemptions from these policies will seldom be granted.

**NOTE: IN SO FAR AS POSSIBLE, YOU SHOULD TRY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE INSTRUCTOR IN CLASS OR THROUGH ELECTRONIC MAIL. IN PERSON MEETINGS DURING OFFICE HOURS ARE NOT AVAILABLE AND NEITHER ARE ONE ON ONE ZOOM SESSIONS.**

## Course Description

At one point or another, most students in political science or related fields have probably been confronted with the question, “What can you do with your degree or degrees?” While there are some opportunities to use your education in purely non-quantitative areas, such opportunities are increasingly rare. Alternatively, there are a great many professions which fundamentally involve the use of empirical, particularly quantitative, analysis in politics and policy. A list of some relevant activities in those professions would include, *inter alia*, the following:

- Public opinion polling which drives almost all parts of the policy process
- Campaign and election analysis often involving polling to track electorate response, evaluate campaign strategies or serve media interests
- Evaluation of public policy and programmes—a multi dimensional set of activities involving everything from the simplest monitoring and performance measurement activities to full scale multi-methods evaluations and experiments
- Developing public affairs communication strategies for political parties, interest group, government agencies and even corporations
- Devising ways to change public opinion for particular purposes
- Devising ways to mobilize groups
- Using some of the same skills required in the above to do private sector market or management research.

For that matter, in many parts of the discipline, even if one wishes to be an academic, knowing about the substance of the above activities and the skills used in them is increasingly important.

The purpose of this course is to provide you with an opportunity to become more acquainted with applied political analysis by producing a paper that could contribute to one of the types of projects noted above. Since our time frame and resources are very limited, it will probably not be possible to do a full scale project based on a large project data set that you create yourself. In light of that, you should consider taking one of the following approaches:

- Emphasize the analysis of an existing data set
- Emphasize the construction of a research design paper laying out the structure of a larger, potential research project. This might involve some very limited data collection just as a pre-test.

Each student should choose the type of project that best suits their own research. I think this is particularly important in that this course tends to have students from varied academic backgrounds with varied interests. However, the instructor is willing to recommend paper topics and approaches if the student does not have a project in mind. The instructor will use certain types of projects for the purposes of illustration in class, but students do not have to pursue the same types of projects if it doesn't suit their purposes.

One of the unusual features of this course is that there are really very few useful academic readings available that realistically reflect the nature of these projects. The academic work done on the nature of public affairs analysis tends to be at several removes from (and often several years behind), the practical features of this kind of work. That means a great deal of the material will have to be imparted to the students through participation and example. At the same time, students will usually need to do a great deal of work finding their own substantive sources for their research.

## Main Texts

There are no main texts for the course. However, the main references that may be of use are listed below. You will probably not need to buy them, and they are on reserve or online if you need them.

Public Affairs Research Methods: A Quantitative Introduction by Scott Edward Bennett (mostly for review)

Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods (9<sup>th</sup> edition) by Rich, Brians, Manheim and Willnat (mostly for review) There is an 8th edition which is also of use, but it has a slightly different structure.

Introduction to Survey Sampling by Graham Kalton (mostly for review)

Using Multivariate Statistics (ideally at least fifth edition) by Tabachnick and Fidell (for more advanced reference)

Secondary readings may also be suggested from time to time and will sometimes be available on reserve.

## Grading and Preliminary Comments on Course Work

Major Seminar Paper                      70 % of course grade

Presentations                                      30 % of course grade

More details on the major paper will be provided in class. If time permits, an oral presentation on the paper will be made to the class during its last meeting on April 7, 2022. The final version of the paper is due by the end of April 7, 2022. It is to be submitted as a WORD attachment to an email.

Ideally, there will be at least two major presentations, apart from any minor presentations of exercises. One of these should be during the final class when the results of the major paper are presented. The other major presentation will occur at about the sixth class (depending on class progress) when each student will be asked to briefly present preliminary aspects of their project plans. There will be some small weight given to general attendance as well.

Those registered in PSCI 5702 will be evaluated in essentially the same way as those registered in PSCI 4702. However, it is expected that students registered in a graduate course will pay a bit more attention to placing their work in existing literature than those registered in an undergraduate course.

## Main Topics

**Note that the instructor considers it to be bad pedagogy to assign in advance specific dates to the coverage of specific topics. We will cover as many of the topics as is appropriate and possible in the order listed below. Our progress will primarily depend on student background and interests.**

It is assumed that students will have taken at least an introductory quantitative methods course prior to taking this course. There will likely be some opportunity to review that material during the course, but the review will be inserted at a couple of different points within the following topics.

We can alter the emphasis placed on certain topics if it suits the background and interests of the students.

### 1. Introduction to the Course and Some Review Elements

We will also consider some of the types of projects that can be pursued and what students are interested in pursuing. There may some review of basic concepts.

### 2. Using Experiments, Surveys and Focus Groups to Develop Later Research Strategy that Will Influence Policy and Related Behaviour and Opinion: The Importance of Research Design and Sample Selection in Applied Work

### 3. The Importance of Questionnaires and Measurement Instruments: Developing Them and Linking Them to Analysis in Practically Useful Ways

### 4. Gathering and Processing Basic Data: The Implications of Various Modes of Data Collection

### 5. Preliminary Presentations

Presentations will probably take place at about this time, but it will depend on other aspects of class progress.

### 6. Analysing Data

This will almost certainly take up much more time than other topics. It will cover such sub-topics as univariate analysis, bivariate analysis and aspects of multivariate analysis. In addition, some aspects of data transformation will be dealt with. This overall topic may well take up much of the course. A probable list of topics is:

- a. Possibly a quick review of univariate techniques and basic association and correlation
  - b. Linear regression and some basic extensions: explaining ordered variables
  - c. Logistic Regression: Specialised Prediction of Categorical Variables
  - d. Discriminant analysis: predicting categorical group memberships using a different analytic tradition
  - e. Factor and principal components analysis: finding patterns in sets of variables  
(\*If it seems to suit student projects, we may cover this technique earlier.\*)
  - f. Cluster analysis and related techniques: finding patterns in sets of cases
  - g. The Causal Modelling Approach: Exploring Systems of Relationships
7. Using Results to Create a Recommendation for a Change Strategy and Further Research

This will not be a big section, but I want students to be able to discuss what they think the major issues would be in writing effective recommendations.

8. Problem Solving Sessions if Time Permits

In fact, parts of certain earlier classes will be devoted to this. So, this may not be critical to include here.

9. Final Presentations if Time Permits

## Other Considerations

Without going into great detail, various other course, departmental and university rules apply to the conduct of any course. You are expected to know them, and I imagine they are already understood by senior students and graduate students. From, my point of view, the important rules are:

1. Do your work on time as described in this outline and in class. This will be interpreted in a more detailed way than in previous years.
2. With respect to any persistent behavioural problems, the instructor may limit a person's involvement in the class.
3. Do not engage in plagiarism.

4. Do not disrupt the class.
5. Keep an open mind with respect to value systems and approaches to inquiry.

If a paper is not submitted by the end of day on April 7, then there is no formal lateness penalty. However, the initial grade submitted will be an F. This can be changed to a better grade once the paper is submitted. As much leniency as possible will be exercised with respect to late papers. However, experience shows that a paper that is more than 2 weeks late is seldom submitted. This has more to do with the realities of student life than anything else. Beyond a certain point, it is also true that university management may raise questions about extremely late grade change submissions.

Other rules of general interest from a departmental or university perspective are contained in an attachment that follows. The instructor only takes responsibility for the essence of the above material.

### **Standard Departmental Attachment Follows**

## **Appendix**

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### **Covid-19 Information**

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow COVID-19 prevention measures and all mandatory public health requirements (e.g. wearing a mask, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory and cough etiquette) When accessing campus you must fill in the [COVID-19 Screening Self-Assessment in cuScreen](#) each day before coming to campus. You must also check-in to your final destination (where you plan on being longer than 15 minutes) within a building using the [QR location code](#).

If you feel ill or exhibit COVID-19 symptoms while on campus or in class, please leave campus immediately, self-isolate, and complete the mandatory [symptom reporting tool](#). For purposes of contact tracing, attendance will be recorded in all classes and labs. Participants can check in using posted QR codes through the cuScreen platform where provided. Students who do not have a smartphone will be required to complete a paper process as indicated on the [COVID-19 website](#).

All members of the Carleton community are required to follow guidelines regarding safe movement and seating on campus (e.g. directional arrows, designated entrances and exits, designated seats that maintain physical distancing). In order to avoid congestion, allow all previous occupants to fully vacate a classroom before entering. No food or drinks are permitted in any classrooms or labs.

For the most recent information about Carleton's COVID-19 response and required measures, please see the [University's COVID-19 webpage](#) and review the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). Should you have additional questions after reviewing, please contact [covidinfo@carleton.ca](mailto:covidinfo@carleton.ca)

Please note that failure to comply with University policies and mandatory public health requirements, and endangering the safety of others are considered misconduct under the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Policy](#). Failure to comply with Carleton's COVID-19 procedures may lead to supplementary action involving Campus Safety and/or Student Affairs.

### **Requests for Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

***Pregnancy accommodation:*** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf).

***Religious accommodation:*** Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf).

***Accommodations for students with disabilities:*** If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more information, please visit [carleton.ca/pmc](https://carleton.ca/pmc).

***Accommodation for student activities:*** Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is

known to exist. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>.

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: [students.carleton.ca/course-outline](https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline).

### **Sexual Violence Policy**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support).

### **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 includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

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.

More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

### **Intellectual property**

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. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

### **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

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 Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

### **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. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, 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 our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/>.

### **Official Course Outline**

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.