

Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

PSCI 2701B

Fridays, 8:35 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. - Please confirm location on Carleton Central

Instructor: Michael Gavin

Office: Loeb B641

Office Hours: Fridays, 1:30 p.m. 3:30 p.m.

Phone: 613-520-2600 x 3052

Email: michaelgavin@cmail.carleton.ca

Course Description

This course introduces the basic tenets of empirical research design in political science. The first half of the course introduces students to the fundamental building blocks of the scientific approach to political science research. The second half of the course will introduce a few common research designs and relate each to the building blocks established in the first half of the course. Throughout the course emphasis will be placed on how difficult it is to establish sound causal relationships between variables of interest in the real world.

Following the course, students will be able to:

- Understand the basic tenets of political science research design;
- Understand that the same research question can often be approached using various research designs, each with its own pros and cons;
- Critically assess the merits and pitfalls of various research designs.

Text

Required: Archer, Keith, and Loleen Berdahl. *Explorations: Conducting empirical research in Canadian political science*. Oxford University Press, 3rd edition, 2015.

Explorations is available for purchase at the University Bookstore.

Optional:

Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath. *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*, 2nd ed. Oxford University Press, 2017.

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 2nd ed. Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Evaluation

Item	Due Date	Weight
Assignment 1: Causality	September 29	10%
Assignment 2: Concepts, Ethics, & Sampling	October 20	10%
Midterm	October 20	25%
Assignment 3: Research Design	November 24	10%
Tutorial participation		10%
Final exam		35%

Assignments will be posted on CULearn one week prior to the due date. Each will consist of three or four short-answer questions. Assignments are due on-line, through CULearn ONLY, unless alternative arrangements have been made in advance. Late submission of assignments will be penalized, to a maximum of 5 days. Late penalties will be assessed on a daily basis, including weekends, at a rate of 1/3 of a letter grade per day late (i.e. A- to B+). Assignments submitted more than 5 days late will be given a grade of 0. Extensions will not be granted except on medical grounds, with appropriate documentation. Any assignments placed in the department's Drop Box on the due date will also be considered late, since the box is not emptied until 4:00 pm. If you intend to use the Drop Box, please submit your assignment at least one day before the due date in order to avoid the late penalty.

The final exam will be held during the exam period. The exam will be cumulative and include a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

Schedule

Lecture 1 – Introduction Studying Politics Scientifically (September 8)

Required:

- *Explorations*, Chapters 1 & 2

Optional:

- Sartori, Giovanni. "Comparing and miscomparing." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* Vol. 3, No.3 (1991): 243-257.
- Bernstein, S., R.N. Lebow, J.G. Stein and S. Weber (2000). "God gave physics the easy problems: Adapting social science to an unpredictable world," *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 6, No. 1: 43-76.
- Halperin and Heath, Chapters 1 & 2.

Lecture 2 – Theory Building and Causality (September 15)

Required:

- *Explorations*, Chapter 3

Optional:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapters 4 & 5.
- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 2

Lecture 3 – Evaluating Causal Relationships (September 22)

Required:

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 3 (This chapter will be made available to students through CULearn)

Optional:

- Clarke, K.A., (2005). The phantom menace: Omitted variable bias in econometric research. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 22(4), pp.341-352. (You can skip the math if you like)
- Lee Ray, J., (2003). Explaining interstate conflict and war: What should be controlled for? *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 20(2), pp.1-31.

Lecture 4 – Concepts and Measurement (September 29)

Required:

- *Explorations*, Chapter 4 & 5

Optional:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 7
- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 5

Lecture 5 – Literature Reviews and Research Ethics (October 6)

Required:

- *Explorations*, Chapter 6
- Knopf J.W. (2006). Doing a Literature Review. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Volume 39, Issue 1, pp. 127-132

Optional:

- Porter, T. (2008). Research Ethics Governance and Political Science in Canada. *PS: Political Science and Politics* Volume 41, Issue 3, pp. 495-99.

Lecture 6 – Probability and Sampling (October 13)

Required:

- *Explorations*, Chapter 8

Optional:

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 6
- Tansey, O., (2007). Process tracing and elite interviewing: a case for non-probability sampling. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 40(4), pp.765-772.

Lecture 7 – Midterm Exam (October 20)

October 27 – Fall break – No class

Lecture 8 – Small-N Research (November 3)

Required:

- *Explorations*, Chapter 7

Optional:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 9
- Lijphart, A., 1971. Comparative politics and the comparative method. *American Political Science Review*, 65(3), pp.682-693.

Lecture 9 – Experiments (November 10)

Required:

- *Explorations*, Chapter 11

Optional:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 8
- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 4, sections 4.1 and 4.2 only
- McDermott, R., (2002). Experimental methodology in political science. *Political Analysis*, 10(4), pp.325-342.

Lecture 10 – Observational Research (November 17)

Required:

- *Explorations*, Chapter 9

Optional:

- Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 4, sections 4.3 only

Lecture 11 – Surveys (November 24)

Required:

- *Explorations*, Chapter 10

Optional:

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 11

- Using Experiments to Improve Women's Rights in Pakistan
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/openglobalrights/gulnaz-anjum-adam-chilton/using-experiments-to-improve-women-s-rights-in-pakistan>

Lecture 12 – Review (December 1)

Required:

- None

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.

Academic Resources

If you need assistance with...	Refer to...	Contact Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding a tutor • One-on-one study skills support • Group study skills workshops • Reserving group study rooms 	Student Academic Success Centre, Learning Support Services	302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/ No appointments necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic support and advice • Choosing, changing major • Academic planning 	Student Academic Success Centre, Academic Advising	302 Tory Building, 613-520-7850 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/ No appointments necessary.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A learning disability 	Paul Menton Centre	501 University Centre, 520-6608 http://www2.carleton.ca/pmc/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing writing skills 	Writing Tutorial Service	4th Floor MacOdrum Library 613-520-6632 http://www2.carleton.ca/sasc/writing-tutorial-service/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polishing English conversation skills 	International Student Services Office, Conversation Groups	128 University Centre 613-520-6600 http://www1.carleton.ca/isso/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research assistance 	Research Help Desk MacOdrum Library	MacOdrum Library, 520-2735 http://www.library.carleton.ca/
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statistics/SPSS assistance (by appointment only) 	Data Centre MacOdrum Library	Statistical Consultant 520-2600 x 2619 http://www.library.carleton.ca/contact/service-points/data-centre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coping with stress or crisis 	Office of Student Affairs Health and Counseling Services	613-520-2600, x 2573 http://www.carleton.ca/studentaffairs 613-520-6674 www.carleton.ca/health