

POLS 2104
Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science
(Fall 2020)

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Class: Online

Class times: Sunday and Wednesday, 11:30 am - 12:45 pm

Office Hours: Flexible, by appointment

Course description

This course introduces students to the basic logic and methods of political science research. It discusses the idea behind empirical social sciences in general and political science in particular. It offers a detailed take on how to develop a research design that includes the formulation of a proper puzzle or question, the critical positioning of oneself within extant literature, the development of concepts and their operationalization and measurement and the testing of hypotheses. The course provides an extensive coverage of the diversity of research methods, qualitative and quantitative and mixes of the two.

Course objectives

The ultimate goal of this course is the students' acquisition of necessary skills and tools to write proper political science research as well as to read and evaluate it. As introductory as it is, students should understand what political science is about, how theorization and generalization are possible and which methods are used to realize this mission. The course also aims at familiarizing students at this stage with the great variety of methods and methodological traditions that exist in political science that sometimes converge but diverge on many other occasions. It will hence be a hands-on course where students will get to practice the skills and tools they acquire and to test the concepts they learn in class through assignments, quizzes, class discussions and activities and a final proposal.

Requirements and assessment

- This is an online course.
- We will meet on zoom on Sunday and Wednesday every week between 11:30 am and 12:45 pm.
 - You are allowed to join up to five minutes of the beginning of the zoom session. Otherwise, you won't be counted as present.

- *Switch on your camera throughout the whole session. Otherwise, you won't be counted as present.*
- You are expected to attend and participate in classes. Attendance will NOT be graded. However, as per university rules, if you miss more than three weeks of classes, for whatever reason, you will receive an F in the course. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are marked present for the day or withdraw from the course if you have too many absences.
- In classes in which we will be discussing submitted assignments, the class will be split in two groups in order to ensure the greatest interaction possible. The first half of the list on banner will appear between 11:30 am and 12:05 pm, while the other half will appear between 12:10 and 12:45 pm. My assistant will send you the list of each group and a reminder of which classes we will be split.
- All readings on the syllabus are required to complete the course.
- There will be a total of SEVEN assignments throughout the course. The exact dates of giving and submitting assignments are as follows:

Assignment number	Date assigning essay	Date of Submission
Assignment One	Sept. 13 th	Sept. 20 th , no later than 7am
Assignment Two	Sept. 23 rd	Oct. 4 th , no later than 7am
Assignment Three	Oct. 4 th	Oct. 11 th , no later than 7am
Assignment Four	Oct. 18 th	Oct. 25 th no later than 7am
Assignment Five	Nov. 8 th	Nov. 15 th , no later than 7am
Assignment Six	Nov. 18 th	Nov. 29 th , no later than 7am
Assignment Seven	Dec.2 nd	Dec. 9 th , no later than 7am

- **Assignments submitted later than the set deadline WILL NEIHER BE ACCEPTED NOR GRADED. No excuses, including computer collapse or loss of files, so keep a backup.**

- You will also be required to submit a research proposal towards the end of the course. The idea behind the proposal is to apply the skills, tools and methods students will have acquired through the course. The proposal should be around 3000 words. More detailed information about the structure of the assignment will be communicated in due course.
- As you develop your proposal, each of you will be required to present the topic of their research, the main question, argument, concepts and variables and the methods likely to be used. You will receive feedback on it from myself and your colleagues. The dates of your presentation will be communicated in due course.
- **Assessment will be as follows:**

Participation:	25 per cent
Assignments (a total of 7)	35 per cent (5 each)
Research proposal	25 per cent
Presentation	15 per cent
- The grade cut-offs will be as follows: A (94 and above), A- (90-93), B+(87-89), B (84-86), B- (80-83), C+ (77-79), C (74-76), C- (70-73), D+ (61-69), D (50-60).

Classes

Class 1 (Sunday, Sept. 6th): Introduction

Classes 2 and 3: Basics of social research

Class 2 (Wednesday, Sept. 9th)

Babbie, Earl R. (2007) “Basics of Social Research”, Chapter one

Class 3 (Sunday, Sept. 13th)

Berg, Bruce L. (2001) “Ethical issues” in *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*: 39-65

Classes 4 to 10: Research Design

Class 4 (Wednesday, Sept. 16th)

De Vaus, David (2001) “What is research design?” The context of design” in *Research Design in Social Research*: 1-16

Class 5 (Sunday, Sept. 20th)

Babbie, Earl R. (2007) “Paradigm, Theory and Research” in “Basics of Social Research”, Chapter Two

Class 6 (Wednesday, Sept. 23rd): Conceptualization and Operationalization

Babbie, Earl R. (2007) “Conceptualization, Operationalization and Measurement” in “Basics of Social Research”, Chapter Five

Class 7 (Sunday, Sept. 27th): Exercise reading on conceptualization and operationalization

Dahl, Robert, A. (1971), “Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition”:1-18

Class 8 (Wednesday, Sept. 30th): Class activity on question/puzzle formation and reviewing assignment one.

Class 9 (Sunday, October, 4th): Variables, operationalization and measurement

Masoud, Tarek (2018), “Not Ready for Democracy: Modernization, Pluralism and the Arab Spring in Revisiting the Arab Uprisings.

Class 10 (Wednesday, Oct. 7th): Literature review

Neuman, W. Lawrence (2007) "Reviewing the Scholarly Literature and Planning a study" in Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches: 68-107

Class 11 (Sunday, Oct. 11th): Class activity on concept formation and reviewing assignment two.

Class 12 (Wednesday, Oct. 14th): Comparative research

Teune, H., & Przeworski, A. (1970). The logic of comparative social inquiry (pp. 34-9). New York: Wiley-Interscience.

Classes 13-18: Qualitative methods

Class 13 (Sunday, Oct. 18th): The logic of qualitative inquiry

Kalof, Linda, Amy Dan and Thomas Dietz (2008) "Basic Logic of Qualitative Inquiry" in Essentials of Social Research: 78-102

Class 14 (Wednesday, Oct. 21st): Field research, surveys and questionnaires

Neuman, W. Lawrence (2007) "Field research" in Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, chapter 11

Class 15 (Sunday, Oct. 25th): Class activity and reviewing assignment four.

Class 16 (Wednesday, Oct. 28th): Ethnography

Goldbart, Juliet and Husler, David (2005) "ethnography" in Research Methods in the Social Sciences, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin, Chapter one

Class 17 (Sunday, November, 1st): Interviews and focus groups

Bloor, Michael, and Fiona Wood (2006) "Focus Groups" in Keywords in Qualitative Methods: A vocabulary of research concepts, p. 88-92 and;

Leech, B. L. (2002). Interview methods in political science. PS: political science & politics, 35(4), 663-664.

Class 18 (Wednesday, Nov. 4th): Process tracing

Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen (2019) "Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines", Chapters 1 and 2

Classes 19 to 24: Quantitative methods

Class 19 (Sunday, Nov. 8th): The logic of quantitative methods

Kalof, Linda, Amy Dan and Thomas Dietz (2008) “Basic Logic of Quantitative Inquiry” in *Essentials of Social Research*: 59-77

Class 20 (Wednesday, Nov. 11th): Sampling and probability (1)

Babbie, Earl R. (2010) “The Logic of Sampling” in *The Practice of Social Research*, P.179-196 (book pages)

Class 21 (Sunday, Nov. 15th): Sampling and probability (2)

Babbie, Earl R. (2010) “The Logic of Sampling” in *The Practice of Social Research*, P.196-213 (book pages)

Class 22 (Wednesday, Nov. 18th): Exercise on quantitative analysis

Boix, Carles and Stokes, Susan (2003), “Endogenous Democratization”, *World Politics* 55 (July 2003), 517–49

Class 23 (Sunday, Nov. 22nd): Survey research and Questionnaires

Guthrie, Gerard (2010) “Questionnaires” in *Basic Research Methods: An Entry to Social Science Research*: 129-138

Class 24 (Wednesday, Nov. 25th): Indexes, scales and typologies

Babbie, Earl R. (2007) “Introduction to social research”, Chapter 6

Class 25 (Sunday, Nov. 29th): Social experiments

Babbie, Earl R. (2007) “Social Experiments in Introduction to social research, Chapter Seven

Classes 26 and 27: Mixed methods

Class 26 (Wednesday, December, 2nd):

Elliott, Jane (2005) “Telling Better Stories? Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Research” in *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*: 171-188

Class 27 (Sunday, Dec. 6th): Class activity and discussion on hypothesis formation.

Class 28 (Wednesday, Dec. 9th): Wrap up and concluding remarks