

POLS 2104: Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

Spring 2019

Instructor: Dr. Tamer ElGindi (tamer.elgindi@aucegypt.edu)

Teaching Assistant: Ms. Maram Abutaleb (maramabutaleb@aucegypt.edu)

Office: HUSS 2020, Department of Political Science

Office Hours: Sundays and Wednesdays 12:45-1:45 PM, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students seeking a career in political science-related fields to qualitative and quantitative (empirical) research methods used in political science and other social science sister disciplines. The skills developed over the course should enhance both the career and academic potentials for students. The over-arching goal for this course is to help students write quality term papers in political science classes.

The course will be divided into four major parts. The first part will cover the foundational aspects of empirical research, identifying research questions and research puzzles, and conducting literature reviews. The second part will focus on developing compelling arguments by the process of developing concepts along with highlighting the various types of causal relationships. The third part will offer an overview of different qualitative research methods covering interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and the comparative case study method. Finally, the fourth part will introduce different types of quantitative research methods. This will cover content analysis along with surveys and experiments.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

This course will utilize one major textbook that will be available through the AUC library reserve. The textbook is :

Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.

The following are some additional sources that could be of relevance.

- 1) Nachmias, Chava Frankfort and David Nachmias. (2000). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. New York: Worth Publisher.
- 2) Neuman, W. Lawrence. (2007). *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Boston: Pearson.
- 3) Pearsall, Thomas E. (2001). *The Elements of Technical Writing*. Second Edition. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- 4) Yin, Robert K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- 5) Miller, Jane E. (2004). *The Chicago Guide to Writing About Numbers*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- 6) Best, Joel. (2008). *Stat-Spotting: A Field Guide to Identifying Dubious Data*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Participation (15%):

Active participation in class discussions demonstrating comprehension of readings is essential for this course. Students need to do required readings **BEFORE** class. There will be five pop-quizzes spread out throughout the semester (**each weighing 2%**) as part of the total grade. Pop-quizzes will cover basic understanding of the required readings of the week. They could be administered at the beginning, during, or at the end of class time. The **remaining 5%** will be assessed based on student's active participation in class discussions.

More than six absences will result in a failing grade (F).

2) Assignments (20%):

There will be four assignments with due dates as shown below in course structure. Assignments need to be submitted both as **hard copy** and **soft copy** through Safe Assign on Blackboard. Late submissions will have a 0.5% deduction for each day delayed.

***NO assignment will be accepted after one week from the assignment's due date, and the student will receive an F for the respective assignment.**

3) Midterm Exam (20%):

The exam will consist of various questions such as definitions, short essay questions, multiple choice, and true or false questions. **The exam will cover weeks from one to six.**

4) Final Exam (25%):

The final exam will be given on the date assigned by the university exam schedule. **The exam will be comprehensive.**

5) Research Proposal (20%):

Each student is required to submit a research proposal that he/she will be working on throughout the semester of a topic of their choosing. The proposal should be approximately **4,000-5,000 words** including the following sections:

1) Introduction, 2) Literature Review, 3) Methodology, and 4) References.

References should consist of **at least 8 sources**, and they should include journal articles along with books.

The research proposal is due on (or before) May 2nd, 2019. Late submissions will have a 0.5% deduction for each day delayed. The proposal needs to be submitted both as **hard copy** and **soft copy** through Safe Assign on Blackboard. Failing to do so will lead to grade reduction.

Final grades will adhere to the following grading rubric:

A = 100-94	A- = 93-90	B+ = 89-87	B = 86-83	B- = 82-80	C+ = 79-77
C = 76-73	C- = 72-70	D+ = 69-67	D = 66-60	F ≤ 59	

***Grades are NOT negotiable.**

GENERAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

The following are some essential policies that students need to abide with throughout the semester:

- Punctuality is essential. **Students will not be allowed to enter class ten minutes after the beginning time of class, and will be marked as absent.**
- Students need to communicate by email with the instructor in case of absence **BEFORE** beginning of class notifying him with their cause of absence in order to be allowed to do make-ups for pop-quizzes/quizzes/exams that they might miss due to sickness or other personal issues.
- Mobile phones are to be switched off during class time. Usage of mobile phones during class time could lead to the student being asked to leave class and it will also affect your participation grade negatively.
- Late submissions will have a 0.5% deduction for each day delayed for the first week after their submission date. **NO assignment will be accepted after the first week from the due date of the assignment, and the student will receive an F for the respective assignment.**
- We will be using throughout class several online teaching tools in order to enhance active learning (such as <https://kahoot.com> and/or <https://nearpod.com/>). Students will need to have a device (smart phone/laptop/tablet) to complete such tasks.
- Any information, data, and arguments used in papers, reports, and oral presentations need to be correctly cited and credited. Failure to do so by cheating or plagiarizing will result in a failing grade and your name will be turned over to all relevant administrative bodies: the Department, HUSS Dean, and Academic Integrity Committee. If you are unsure about proper citation or what is regarded as plagiarism, please feel free to ask.
- Respect and tolerance. Students need to listen and respect each other views even (or especially) when it contradicts their own views. Any misbehavior towards your colleagues will not be tolerated.
- Students with any sort of writing problems are encouraged to go and visit the Writing Center (<http://in.aucegypt.edu/auc-academics/mohamed-taymour-writing-center>).
- The university offers a wide range of special needs and additional support services. Students with special needs are encouraged to go and visit the center (<http://in.aucegypt.edu/student-life/student-well-being/disability-services>).
- Students are highly encouraged to come to office hours and meet with their instructor. Building rapport with your instructor will facilitate your learning process and make you perform better in your academic career.
- **Important note on academic calendar:** We will miss couple of classes throughout this semester due to holidays. In order to abide by university's policies, we will reschedule these classes on Saturdays or Tuesdays throughout the semester. Exact dates will be announced during the semester.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

- Students are expected to commit to the principles of academic integrity.
- Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another persons' work as one's own, using Internet or other sources without citation, fabricating field data or citations, stealing examinations, tampering with the academic work of another student, facilitating other students' acts of academic dishonesty, etc.
- Plagiarism for assignments and/or reports may result in a zero grade for the assignment and/or the report in question. Cheating during an examination may result in a zero grade for this examination. Further action, according to university regulations, would also be implemented.
- You should be aware that all written work might be submitted to “Turnitin.com”, the detection prevention software. By signing this syllabus, you will acknowledge that you have understood that any detected plagiarism will have to be reported.
- The University's statement on academic integrity, from which the above statement is drawn, is available at <http://www.aucegypt.edu/academics/integrity/Pages/default.aspx>

COURSE STRUCTURE

Part One: Foundations of Empirical Research

Week 1 (30/1): Course Introduction

Week 2 (3/2-6/2): Foundations of Social Science Research / Research Ethics

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd.(Chapters 1 & 2)

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Neuman, W. Lawrence. (2007) "Doing Social Research" in *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Boston: Pearson. (Chapter 1: pp. 1-22)
- 2) Dooley, David. (2001). *Social Research Methods*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc. (Chapter 2: pp. 16-39)

Week 3 (10/2-13/2): Research Questions / Research Puzzles

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapter 3)

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Nachmias, Chava Frankfort and David Nachmias. (2000). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. New York: Worth Publishers. (Chapter 3: pp. 45-66)

**Assignment #1: Develop four potential research questions.
Due on February 14th**

Week 4 (17/2-20/2): Literature Review

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapter 4)

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Neuman, W. Lawrence. (2007) "Reviewing the Scholarly Literature and Planning a Study" in *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Second edition. Boston: Pearson. (Chapter 4: pp. 68-107)
- 2) Knopf, Jeffrey W. (2006). "Doing a Literature Review." *PS Online* 1(1): 127-32.

Part Two: Argumentation

Week 5 (24/2-27/2): Building Effective Concepts / Making Strong Arguments

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapters 5 & 6)

Assignment #2: Develop an annotated bibliography for six different sources.
Due on February 27th (in class)

Week 6 (3/3-6/3): Exam Review + Midterm

March 3rd: Review for Midterm Exam

March 6th : Midterm Exam

Week 7 (10/3-13/3): Method Selection (Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research) / Case Selection

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapters 7 & 9)

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Yin, Robert K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. (Chapter 1: pp. 2-23)

Part Three: Qualitative Research Methods

Week 8 (17/3-20/3): Interviews and Focus Groups

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapters 10 & 11)

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Nachmias, Chava Frankfort and David Nachmias. (2000). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. New York: Worth Publishers. (Chapter 10: pp. 205-228 and Chapter 11: pp. 229-254)

Week 9 (24/3-27/3): Participant Observation / Comparative Case Method

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapters 12 & 14)

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Neuman, W. Lawrence. (2007) "Field Research" in *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Second edition. Boston: Pearson. (Chapter 11: pp. 275-303)

- 2) Goldbart, Juliet, and David Hustler. (2005) "Ethnography" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin. London: SAGE Publications. (Chapter 1: pp. 16-23)

Assignment #3: Write a literature review (1,500-2,000 words) covering at least one book and five academic articles on your topic.

Due on March 27th (in class)

Part Four: Quantitative Research Methods

Week 10 (31/3-3/4): Measurement and Quantitative Data

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapters 15 & 16)

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Nachmias, Chava Frankfort and David Nachmias. (2000). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. New York: Worth Publishers. (Chapter 15: pp. 319-350)
- 2) Neuman, W. Lawrence. (2007) "Analysis of Quantitative Data" in *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Second edition. Boston: Pearson. (Chapter 10: pp. 247-274)

Week 11 (7/4-10/4): Content Analysis

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapter 17)

Week 12 (14/4-17/4): Surveys and Experiments

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapters 18 & 19)

Recommended Readings:

- 1) Neuman, W. Lawrence. (2007) "Survey Research" in *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Second edition. Boston: Pearson. (Chapter 7: pp. 166-199)

Assignment #4: Revisit your research question and write the methods of data gathering and analysis (500-1,000 words)

Due on April 17th (in class)

Week 13 and Week 14: Spring Break

Week 15 (5/5-8/5): Social Scientific Writing

Required Readings:

- 1) Brancati, Dawn. (2018). *Social Scientific Research*. London, UK: Sage Publications Ltd. (Chapters 15&16)

Recommended Reading(s):

- 1) Berg, Bruce L. (2001) "Writing Research Papers: Sorting the Noodles from the Soup" in *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. (Chapter 12: pp. 268-287)
- 2) Pearsall, Thomas E. (2001). *The Elements of Technical Writing*. Second Edition. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. (Chapter 4: pp. 23-34).

Research proposal is due on (or before) May 2nd, 2019

Week 16 (12/5-15/5): Review for Final Exam