

POL 496 – Introduction to Political Inquiry
Fall 2017
Wednesday, 6:00-9:00 PM
Schroeder 207

Instructor: Dr. Carl L. Palmer
Office: 433 Schroeder Hall
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 11:30-1:00, or by appointment
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Course Objectives:

This course is designed to familiarize students with the methodological approaches to the scientific study of politics. By the completion of this course, students should be capable of critically evaluating published research on theoretical grounds, as well as formulate their own research designs to study political phenomena. This course is primarily designed as a lecture; I expect that students **will** arrive prepared for class, so as to best comprehend the material. With that said, students should take an active engagement in class and ask any and all questions they have with the material during lecture. The success of this class depends upon **all** students comprehending the material.

In addition to a focus on research design, this course will also serve as a gentle introduction to both qualitative research methods, and the use of statistics and statistical computing. For the latter, we will primarily focus on implementing these models using the Stata statistical software, which is available for student use in the Politics and Government departmental lab in 216 Schroeder Hall. As a courtesy, students **should always** check with the main office to be certain the lab is not in use by other faculty.

Required Readings:

- Baglione, Lisa A. 2016. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. 3rd Edition. Thousand Oaks CA: CQ Press.
- Dixon, Jeffrey C., Royce A. Singleton, Jr., and Bruce C. Straits. 2016. *The Process of Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Additional readings will be made available via ReggieNet.

Course Policies:

1. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please see the university's policies regarding plagiarism and cheating online at the Dean of Students Office website.
2. Assignments must be submitted *at the beginning of class* on the due date in the syllabus; late assignments will lose 10% credit per day late. All assignments *must* be typed unless otherwise instructed.
3. Usage of cell phones in class will not be permitted. Please silence all electronic devices before coming to class.

4. If you have special needs that require accommodation, please let me know early on so that the appropriate measures can be taken. You will be required to provide documentation of your requirements.

Course Requirements:

Reaction Papers (30%):

You will be required to submit a one-page single-spaced paper (12-point font with 1in margins) reacting to the week's readings for 3 of the weeks (beginning with week 3). Papers must be submitted electronically to the instructor via email by 9AM on Wednesday prior to class, in Word or PDF format. Late papers **will not** be accepted without proper documentation.

Reaction papers should identify and evaluate the author(s)' execution of the core concept being discussed for the week, and, where appropriate, provide suggestions for refinement and/or improvement.

Assignments (20%):

An important component of developing your familiarity with the methods of scientifically examining politics is not simply reading and discussing the material, but actually getting your hands dirty. There will be a series of assignments, with due dates listed in the syllabus. All assignments, unless otherwise noted, should be typed, and all statistical output should be formatted into tables rather than simply pasting raw output into the assignment.

Final Paper (40%):

You will be asked to develop a 20-25 page research proposal (12-point font with 1in margins) over the course of the semester. It will be comprised of an annotated bibliography (due 9/20, 2% of final grade), a literature review (due 10/18, 4% of final grade), a research design (due 11/15, 4% of final grade), and a revised final paper due on the day of the final (TBD).

Your paper should be modeled after an academic research article, and contain the following components: 1) a general introduction stating your research question and a statement of its significance, 2) a review of the literature, developing a theoretical framework for your project, 3) a series of hypotheses derived from your review of the literature, 4) a discussion of the data and methods you would use to test your hypotheses, and 5) a discussion and conclusion that reiterates your contribution to our understanding of the phenomena being analyzed.

Class Presentation and Discussion (10%):

The final class meetings you will present your research paper and provide comments for one of your colleagues' work. Your grade will be determined by the quality of your presentation, and the thoughtful comments you provide for the paper you discuss.

Course Schedule:

Week 1: Making Science

August 23 – Introductions and syllabus

Week 2:

August 30 – What is a theory?

- *PSR*, Chapter 2
- Jennings, M. Kent, Laura Stoker, and Jake Bowers. 2009. “Politics across Generations: Family Transmission Reexamined.” *The Journal of Politics*. 71(3): 782-99.
- Maoz, Zeev, and Bruce Russett. 1993. “Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace, 1946-1986.” *The American Political Science Review*. 87(3): 624-38.

Week 3:

September 6 - Ethics in research

- *PSR*, Chapter 3
- Singer, Eleanor and Felice J. Levine. 2003. “Protection of Human Subjects of Research: Recent Developments and Future Prospects for the Social Sciences.” *Public Opinion Quarterly*. 67(1): 148-64.
- Walther, Joseph B. 2002. “Research Ethics in Internet-Enabled Research: Human Subjects Issues and Methodological Myopia.” *Ethics and Information Technology*. 4(3): 205-16.

Week 4:

September 13 – Research Questions and the literature review

- Baglione, Chapters 2, 4
- Blais, Andre. 2006. “What Affects Voter Turnout?” *Annual Review of Political Science*. 9: 111-25.
- Gerber, Alan S., Gregory A. Huber, David Doherty, and Conor M. Dowling. 2011. “The Big Five Personality Traits in the Political Arena.” *Annual Review of Political Science*. 14: 265-87.

Week 5:

September 20 – Hypotheses and Causality

- Baglione, Chapter 5
- Nicholson, Stephen P. 2003. “The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness.” *The American Journal of Political Science*. 47(3): 403-10.
- Somer-Topcu, Zeynep. 2009. “Timely Decisions: The Effects of Past National Elections on Party Policy Change.” *The Journal of Politics*. 71(1): 238-48.

Week 6: Annotated bibliography due

September 27 – Measurement

- *PSR*, Chapter 5
- Luskin, Robert C. 1987. “Measuring Political Sophistication.” *The American Journal of Political Science*. 31(4): 856-99.
- Montinola, Gabriella R., and Robert W. Jackman. 2002. “Sources of Corruption: A Cross-Country Study.” *British Journal of Political Science*. 31(1): 147-70.

Week 7:

October 4 – Sampling

- *PSR*, Chapter 6

- Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis*. 2(1): 131-50.
- Kam, Cindy D., Jennifer R. Wilking, and Elizabeth J. Zechmeister. 2007. "Beyond the 'Narrow Data Base': Another Convenience Sample for Experimental Research." *Political Behavior*. 29(4): 415-40.
- Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options." *Political Research Quarterly*. 61(2): 294-308.

Week 8:

October 11 – Experimental political science

- *PSR, Chapter 7*
- Gartner, Scott Sigmund. 2008. "The Multiple Effects of Casualties on Public Support for War: An Experimental Approach." *The American Political Science Review*. 102(1): 95-106.
- Kam, Cindy D. 2007. "Implicit Attitudes, Explicit Choices: When Subliminal Priming Predicts Candidate Preference." *Political Behavior*. 29(3): 343-67.

Week 9: Literature Review due

October 18 – Non-experimental political science (quantitative)

- *PSR, Chapter 8*
- King, Gary, Christopher J. L. Murray, Joshua A. Salomon, and Ajay Tandon. 2004. "Enhancing the Validity and Cross-Cultural Comparability of Measurement in Survey Research." *The American Political Science Review*. 98(1): 191-207.
- Zaller, John, and Stanley Feldman. 1992. "A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences." *The American Journal of Political Science*. 36(3): 579-616.

Week 10:

October 25 – Non-experimental political science (qualitative)

- *PSR, Chapter 9*
- Fenno, Richard F. 1986. "Observation, Context, and Sequence in the Study of Politics." *The American Political Science Review*. 80(1): 3-15.
- Walsh, Katherine Cramer. 2004. *Talking About Politics: Informal Groups and Social Identity in American Life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, chapter 8, appendix 1.

Week 11:

November 1 – Non-experimental political science (qualitative)

- *PSR, Chapter 10*
- Baumgartner, Frank R., Suzanna L. De Boef, and Amber E. Boydstun. 2008. *The Decline of the Death Penalty and the Discovery of Innocence*. Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press, chapter 4.
- Ferree, Myra Marx, William Anthony Gamson, Jurgen Gerhards, and Dieter Rucht. 2002. *Shaping Abortion Discourse: Democracy and the Public Sphere in Germany and the United States*. Cambridge MA: Cambridge University Press, chapter 3.

Week 12: Research design due

November 8 – Qualitative Data Analysis

- *PSR*, Chapter 13
- Bennett, Andrew, and Colin Elman. 2006. “Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods.” *Annual Review of Political Science*. 9: 455-76.
- Lieberman, Stanley. 1991. “Small N’s and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on A Small Number of Cases.” *Social Forces*. 70(2): 307-20.

Week 13:

November 15 – Descriptive Statistics

- Walsh, Anthony, and Jane C. Ollenburger. 2001. *Essential Statistics for the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, chapters 1-3.
- Hamilton, Lawrence. 1996. *Data Analysis for Social Scientists*. New York: Duxbury Press, chapter 7.

Week 14: Thanksgiving Break

November 22 – no class

Week 15: - Assignment 1 (descriptive statistics) due

November 29 – Quantitative data analysis

- *PSR*, Chapter 12
- Kish, Leslie. 1959. “Some Statistical Problems in Research Design.” *American Sociological Review*. 24(3): 328-38.

Week 16: Final Presentations – Assignment 2 (data analysis) due

December 6 – Presentations