



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
FACULTY OF ARTS

POLI 397 Lecture 01  
Introduction to Research Methods  
Fall 2021

*The Faculty of Arts, the Department of Political Science, and the instructor reserve the right to change the delivery method of this course from blended to online if it is determined that circumstances warrant such a change.*

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**EMAIL:** [erica.rayment@ucalgary.ca](mailto:erica.rayment@ucalgary.ca)  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Meetings held on Zoom; Book through <https://ericarayment.youcanbook.me/>  
**COURSE DAY/TIME:** TR 12h30 – 13h45 (in-person meetings Thursdays 12h30-13h45)  
**DELIVERY METHOD:** Blended (Asynchronous & in-person Thu 12h30-13h45)  
**COURSE LOCATION:** ST 141 (for Thursday in-person meetings) everything else is on D2L  
**COURSE PRE-REQUISITES:** None  
**TEACHING ASSISTANT:** Ashpal Atwal

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## Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the questions, strategies and rationales of political science research methods. Emphasis on the practical and theoretical advantages and disadvantages of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches.

## Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to:

- Provide students with an introduction to and clear understanding of the methods employed in empirical political science research;
- Equip students to identify the key components of effective empirical political science research so they can be better consumers of political science research;
- Give students an opportunity to practice and apply some of the methodological tools used in political science research.

By the end of this course, students will:

- Have a clearer understanding of the conversations that are happening in political science research;
- Be able to identify, understand, evaluate and critique existing political science research;
- Know how to ask and answer research questions in political science;
- Know how to select appropriate methods for different types of research questions;
- Have practiced some of the key skills and tools needed for conducting independent research.

## Required Textbooks and Readings

There is one required textbook for the course:

**Halperin, Sandra and Oliver Heath. 2020. *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills* 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.**

Additional readings will be made available on D2L. These readings will be journal articles that exemplify the methods being discussed each week. They are intended to provide students with the opportunity to see what the application of the methods being considered looks like in peer reviewed political science research and to practice reading and making sense of this research, with a particular focus on the methods being used and the knowledge claims being made.

## Required Technology

Students in this course are required to have a computer with an internet connection and audio/video capability that will enable them to access digital course content (readings, videos, etc.) through D2L.

## Summary of Course Components, Due Dates, and Weighting

Assessment	Due Date	Weighting
Syllabus Quiz	September 17 @ 11:59 p.m.	2%
Participation	Ongoing	5%
Quizzes (Best 2 of 3)	Oct. 5, Nov. 2, Dec. 7	30%
Literature Search	October 1 @ 11:59 p.m.	13%
Article Analysis	October 29 @ 11:59 p.m.	25%
Methods Practice	December 3 @ 11:59 p.m.	25%

**NOTE: All course assignments MUST be submitted electronically through D2L.** If a student misses a required course component, they must contact the instructor as soon as possible.

## Course Schedule

Please note that the schedule below is tentative and may change as the need arises. Any changes to this schedule will be announced in class and on D2L. If there is a discrepancy between the schedule and/or assigned readings listed in the syllabus and on D2L, please treat D2L as authoritative.

### **PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND FOUNDATIONS FOR RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **Week 1 (September 7, 9): Welcome and Introduction to the Course**

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 1: Political Research

#### **Week 2 (September 14, 16): Research Questions, Theories and Hypotheses**

**\*\*SYLLABUS QUIZ THIS WEEK\*\***

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 4: How to Find and Formulate Research Questions
- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 5: Finding Answers
- Guest Speaker: John Wright, Political Science Librarian on using library resources to find existing research.

#### **Week 3 (September 21, 23): Research Design**

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 6: Research Design

#### **Week 4 (September 28, 30): NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION – NO CLASSES**

**\*\*LITERATURE SEARCH ASSIGNMENT DUE THIS WEEK [FRIDAY]\*\***

- We won't have class this week, but students are encouraged to review the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action, available here: <https://nctr.ca/records/reports/#trc-reports>

## **PART 2: MAKING EMPIRICAL CLAIMS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

### **Week 5 (October 5, 7): Descriptive Inference and Measurement**

**\*\*QUIZ 1 THIS WEEK [TUESDAY]\*\***

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 7: What is Data?

### **Week 6 (October 12, 14): Causal Inference I**

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 8: Experiments

### **Week 7 (October 19, 21): Causal Inference II**

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 17: A Guide to Multivariate Analysis

### **Week 8 (October 26, 28): Case Studies and Small-n Research**

**\*\*ARTICLE ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT DUE THIS WEEK [FRIDAY]\*\***

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 9: Comparative Research
- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 10: Historical Research

## **PART 3: TECHNIQUES FOR RESEARCH IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

### **Week 9 (November 2, 4): Interviews**

**\*\*QUIZ 2 THIS WEEK [TUESDAY]\*\***

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 12: Interviewing and Focus Groups

### **Week 10 (November 9, 11): READING BREAK – NO CLASSES**

### **Week 11 (November 16, 18): Surveys**

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 11: Surveys

### **Week 12 (November 23, 25): Ethnography and Participant Observation**

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 13: Ethnography and Participant Observation

### **Week 13 (November 30, December 2): Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis**

**\*\*ARTICLE ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT DUE THIS WEEK [FRIDAY]\*\***

- Halperin and Heath, Chapter 14: Textual Analysis

### **Week 14 (December 7, 9): Catch up**

**\*\*QUIZ 3 THIS WEEK [TUESDAY]\*\***

## **Description of Course Assignments**

### **Syllabus Quiz**

The easiest 2% you'll ever earn! To ensure students are familiar with the details of course policies, assignment details and lecture topics, there will be a short, multiple choice, open book

quiz about the content of the course outline. The quiz will be available on D2L. The quiz is not timed, and students can take the quiz as many times as they would like until the deadline at 11:59 p.m. on September 17.

### **Participation**

To encourage participation in the weekly in-person meetings and active engagement with course material, a small portion of your grade in the course will be based on participation. During weekly meetings, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate engagement with course material (e.g. asking questions, participating in small group work and full class discussions, in-class writing/reflections, etc.).

I recognize that students may need to miss in-person meetings more frequently this semester due to illness or close contact with someone who is ill (please see the note on COVID-19 and attendance in the Course Policies section below). To account for this, participation will be assessed flexibly and alternative opportunities to participate and demonstrate engagement with course material will be made available to students by request.

### **Quizzes**

To assess students' understanding of foundational concepts in the course, there will be three short multiple-choice quizzes over the course of the semester (October 5, November 2, November 30). Quizzes will cover lecture and reading content from the course. Students' final grade for the quizzes will be based on their best two quiz scores. No make-up quizzes will be offered since the lowest grade is automatically dropped.

Quizzes will be available on D2L for a 24-hour period starting at 11:59 p.m. on the Monday before the quiz is scheduled until 11:59 p.m. on the Tuesday when the quiz is due (**October 5, November 2, November 30**). Students can complete the quiz at any time during this 24-hour period. Quizzes should take 20 minutes to complete. Students will be given 30 minutes to complete each quiz to allow for any technology issues that may arise. Quizzes are open book and must be completed individually.

### **Literature Search**

The literature search assignment is designed to give students an opportunity to practice formulating clear research questions, using library and other online resources to systematically find and evaluate the relevance of existing research, and to format bibliographic entries using the Chicago author-date style. Students will formulate a research question on a political science topic they are interested in, and then conduct a keyword search related to that research question using four different search engines: Google, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Web of Science. Students will report on the sources they find through each search tool and reflect on the differences in the results.

Detailed assignment instructions and assessment criteria will be discussed in class and posted on D2L. ***The literature search assignment must be submitted through D2L by 11:59 p.m. on October 1.***

### **Article Analysis**

The article analysis assignment is designed to help students practice being effective critical consumers of political science research and to reinforce their understanding of how the methods studied in class are applied in peer reviewed political science research. Students will be asked to choose one of the supplementary journal articles from Weeks 5 – 8 and to analyse the research design and methods used in that article. Students will identify the research question, theoretical framework, research design, and research method(s) the article uses and summarize the answers the article provides to the research question.

Detailed assignment instructions and assessment criteria will be discussed in class and posted on D2L. ***The article analysis assignment must be submitted through D2L by 11:59 p.m. on October 29.***

### **Methods Practice**

The methods practice assignment is designed to give students an opportunity to try out one of the research methods/techniques that we cover in class. Students will have several options to choose from, based on their interests and strengths.

Detailed assignment instructions and assessment criteria will be discussed in class and posted on D2L. ***The methods practice assignment must be submitted through D2L by 11:59 p.m. on December 3.***

## Writing Statement

Written assignments are often required in Political Science courses, and the quality of writing skills, including but not limited to such elements as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization, will be taken into account in the determination of grades. Students are encouraged to make use of the services offered through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre by contacting them at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

## Grading Scale

A+ (91-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (67-69)	D+ (55-59)
A (85-90)	B (73-76)	C (63-66)	D (50-54)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (60-62)	F (0-49)

## Course Policies

### **These Strange Times**

As we make our way back to campus for what is likely to be a challenging Fall term, everyone's health and well-being – yours, your families', and mine – are my top priority. We all need to do whatever we can to keep each other healthy. With that in mind, I'd make the following requests:

1. **Get vaccinated.** Vaccines are our best protection against COVID-19 and the U of C strongly encourages everyone in the university community to get their vaccines (I've had mine!). If you have not been fully vaccinated for COVID (2 shots + 2 weeks), I encourage you to do so. It will help keep us all safe. There are drop-in clinics on campus, including at the MacEwan Student Centre pharmacy.
2. **Wear a mask in class.** The University of Calgary is recommending mask use in campus buildings this semester. We'll be in pretty close quarters, so I would request that everyone wear their mask in class for POLI 397. Masks are an easy step we can all take to keep each other safe and healthy. I'll be wearing my mask in class too.
3. **Don't come to class if you or someone in your household is feeling ill.** Even if it's just a sniffle. I promise to do the same - if I'm feeling unwell, I'll shift our in-person meetings to Zoom (and make the announcement and share links on D2L and by email). There are a couple of big lessons I hope the last 18 months have taught us, and one of them is that it's not worth it to show up to work/school/etc. if we're sick.<sup>1</sup> I've designed the course so that if you have to miss a class, the impact on your learning will be limited. The bulk of the material (readings, lecture videos, assignments) can be worked through asynchronously on D2L. Participation will be assessed flexibly and if you're unable to make it to our weekly in-person meeting, there will be alternative opportunities to demonstrate participation/engagement with class material. *But if you and everyone in your household are feeling healthy and well, please do come to class – there's no substitute for the in-person experience!*

### **Course Communication**

Office hours are usually the best way to get an effective response on an issue from me. Students can sign up for an appointment in office hours using the automatic system through <https://ericarayment.youcanbook.me/>.

Email communication is best for dealing with logistical and/or administrative issues (e.g. providing documentation to request an extension, reminding me to share that link I mentioned in class, asking for clarification on something that isn't covered in the syllabus). If you have a question about course content, ideas, or concepts your best bet is to come to office hours for a (virtual) in-person chat.

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<sup>1</sup> Another is that airplanes are truly disgusting and we should probably keep wearing masks on airplanes. But that's less relevant here.

If you are contacting me by email, please use your university email address and include the course code in the subject line. I check email from Monday to Friday and will do my best to respond to emails within two business days. Your patience is appreciated if it takes me a bit longer to respond, but if your matter is urgent and you haven't heard from me within two business days, please send a nudge.

### **Late Penalties**

Late assignments will be subject to a late penalty of 5% per day (including weekends). Assignments submitted more than five days after the due date will be assigned a grade of zero. Assignments handed in after the work has been returned to the class cannot be marked for credit. Accommodations due to late registration into the course will NOT be approved.

### **Extensions**

Deadline extensions can be provided in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the instructor. **Extensions MUST be requested at least 48 hours in advance of the assignment deadline.** Extensions requested less than 48 hours in advance of the deadline will not be approved unless there are unforeseeable, last-minute exceptional circumstances. **Requests for extensions received after the assignment deadline will not be considered and the late penalties outlined above will be applied.** If you require an extension, you must notify me as soon as possible.

### **Grade Discussions**

Grades are assigned based on an assessment of the quality of the work submitted against the grading criteria/rubric. It is helpful to remember that points on assignments are earned, not lost. If students would like to discuss a grade they have received on an assignment the process for doing so is as follows:

- 1) Email the instructor a half page summary of what aspect of the assigned grade is unclear, or what aspect of the assignment you are struggling with. This summary **MUST** include direct reference to the assignment instructions and/or grading rubric. Along with this summary, your email should include a copy of the graded assignment.
- 2) Schedule a 10-minute appointment in office hours to discuss the assignment. Please note that I will NOT regrade work in this meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to provide students with an opportunity discuss where the assignment did well and where there is room for improvement.

I will not accept grade discussion requests in the first 48 hours after an assignment is returned to allow students time to properly review and consider the feedback on their assignment against the assignment instructions and grading rubric.

## **Equity Statement**

The University of Calgary is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech in any course forums will not be tolerated. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns you may contact the University of Calgary Student Conduct Office at [conduct@ucalgary.ca](mailto:conduct@ucalgary.ca).

## **Statement on Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and achieving course goals. The assignments in this course are designed to give you an opportunity to learn important skills and concepts over the course of your degree by making honest attempts through your own thinking, writing, and hard work.

I encourage you to review the University of Calgary's Student Academic Misconduct Policy (<https://ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-academic-misconduct-policy.pdf>). It outlines the rules for acceptable academic behaviour and you are expected to know the rules.

**If you have questions about appropriate research and/or citation methods, or if you aren't sure if something is allowed or would constitute academic misconduct, PLEASE reach out to me for additional information.**

## Important Policies and Information

### **Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration**

As stated in the University Calendar:

Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, third party letter of support or a statutory declaration etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note.

Students can make a Statutory Declaration as their supporting documentation (available at [ucalgary.ca/registrar](http://ucalgary.ca/registrar)). This requires students to make a declaration in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths. It demonstrates the importance of honest and accurate information provided and is a legally binding declaration. Several registered Commissioners for Oaths are

available to students at no charge, on campus. For a list of locations to access a Commissioners for Oaths, visit [ucalgary.ca/registrar](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar)).

Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

This statement is accessible at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

### **Absence From a Mid-term Examination**

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

### **Deferral of a Final Examination**

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

### **Reappraisals**

The University Calendar states that for reappraisals of graded term work:

“A student who feels that a piece of graded term work (term paper, essay, test, etc.) has been unfairly graded, may have the work reappraised as follows. The student shall discuss the work with the instructor **within ten business days** of being notified about the mark or of the item's return to the class. If not satisfied, the student shall take the matter to the head of the department offering the course **within 2 business days of receiving the decision from the instructor**, who will arrange for a reappraisal of the work **within the next ten business days**. The reappraisal will only be considered if the student provides a detailed rationale that outlines where and for what reason an error is suspected.” See

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

The University Calendar states that for reappraisal of academic assessments (final grades):

“A student may request a reappraisal of a final grade. The only element that will be considered is the final assessment(s) that makes up the final mark (e.g., final examination, final project, and final paper). The exception is when a grade for a piece of graded term work is made available to

students after the last day of classes for the term in which the course is scheduled; that grade may also be considered in a reappraisal of the final grade.”

“A student seeking a reappraisal of a final grade should first attempt to review the final assessment with the department or faculty offering the course. After which the student shall obtain a Reappraisal of Final Grade form from [ucalgary.ca/registrar](http://ucalgary.ca/registrar) (under Student Forms). The student must indicate exactly what error was made in marking the final assessment and/or in computing the final grade. The reappraisal will only be considered if the student provides a detailed rationale that outlines where and for what reason an error is suspected.” More information is available at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

### **University Regulations**

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University policies found in the Academic Regulations sections of the Calendar at [www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html).

### **Student Accommodations**

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

### **Plagiarism And Other Forms Of Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

### **Required Access to Technology**

Please see the University’s resource page at [https://ucalgary.service-ow.com/it?id=kb\\_article&sys\\_id=86e7438013753ac06f3afbb2e144b031](https://ucalgary.service-ow.com/it?id=kb_article&sys_id=86e7438013753ac06f3afbb2e144b031)

### **Copyright Legislation**

As stated in the University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, “students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright and

requirements of the copyright act to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.”

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf> and <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>

### **Instructor Intellectual Property**

Course materials created by instructors (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)**

FOIP legislation requires that instructors maintain the confidentiality of student information. In practice, this means that student assignment and tests cannot be left for collection in any public place without the consent of the student. It also means that grades cannot be distributed via email. Final exams are kept by instructors but can be viewed by contacting them or the main office in the Department of Political Science. Any uncollected assignments and tests meant to be returned will be destroyed after six months from the end of term; final examinations are destroyed after one year.

### **Evacuation Assembly Points**

In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at

[www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints)

and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

### **Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources**

For program planning and advice, visit the Arts Students’ Centre in Social Sciences 102, call 403-220-3580 or email [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit [arts.ucalgary.ca/advising](http://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising) for program assistance.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit their office in the MacKimmie Tower, MT 116..

### **Important Contact Information**

Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)

Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives

Phone: 403-220-6551

Email: [arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca),  
[arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca)

Students' Union URL: [www.su.ucalgary.ca](http://www.su.ucalgary.ca)

Graduate Students' Association

Phone: 403-220-5997

Email: [askgsa@ucalgary.ca](mailto:askgsa@ucalgary.ca)

URL: [www.ucalgary.ca/gsa](http://www.ucalgary.ca/gsa)

Student Ombudsman

Phone: 403-220-6420

Email: [ombuds@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ombuds@ucalgary.ca)

### **Campus Mental Health Resources**

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the following resources:

*SU Wellness Centre:* <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

*Student Wellness Services:*

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>

*Campus Mental Health Strategy website:* <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.