



2018–2019 Academic Year
Winter Session



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
FACULTY OF ARTS

POLI 397 (L01)
Introduction to Research Methods

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| INSTRUCTOR | Dr. Brenda O’Neill |
| TELEPHONE | (403) 220-6710 |
| OFFICE | 726 Social Sciences Building |
| EMAIL | bloneill@ucalgary.ca |
| OFFICE HOURS | Wednesdays 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. |
| LECTURE LOCATION | ST 131 |
| LECTURE TIMES | Monday/Wednesday/Friday 2:00 p.m. – 2:50 p.m. |
| ANTI-REQUISITES/PREREQUISITES | N/A |
| TUTORIALS | N/A |

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This lecture course introduces students to the basics of conducting empirical research in political science. It provides an overview of the logic behind research design and a basic introduction to various quantitative and qualitative approaches including experimental methods, survey research, interviews, field research, comparative/historical comparisons, and case selection. We will also spend some time reviewing how to conduct library research, write papers and build arguments, each a central component of successfully undertaking and sharing political science research. The course adopts a lecture format but will also involve in-class group work and guest lecturers. In a nutshell, the course reviews how to successfully ask and answer political science research questions and how to write up and share the results of that research.

At the end of the term students will have:

- An understanding of the fundamental framework that lies behind empirical research in political science;
- Been introduced to a range of methods employed by political scientists when conducting research;
- An understanding of how to select the appropriate method for different types of research questions;
- The skills required to better evaluate research undertaken by others;
- Some of the basic skills and tools necessary for conducting independent research;
- Reviewed the steps to conducting a successful research project, from start to finish.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Two books are required for the course. Both are available at the bookstore as part of a bundle at a reduced price. They can be found under the author name Menard; Halperin and Heath and the bundle name is **Pkg POLI 397; Political Argument / Political Research**.

- 1) Sandra Halperin & Oliver Heath, *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*, 2nd ed. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2017. The student companion site includes study guides and practice questions. Find it here: <https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/politics/research/halperin2e/>.

- 2) Marc Ménard, *Political Argument: A Guide to Research, Writing, and Debating*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.

Supplementary readings: The following are on reserve at TFDL. To search for these listings, go to the library website, click on the [Reserves](#) tab below the white search bar under Search Library Resources on the main page and then enter POLI and 397 as your search terms.

- Alan Bryman and Edward Bell. 2016. *Social Research Methods*, 4th Canadian ed. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Loleen Berdahl and Keith Archer. 2015. *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*, 3rd ed. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Janet Buttolph Johnson and H.T. Reynolds. 2016. *Political Science Research Methods*, 8th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

| Requirement | Dates | Weight |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------|
| Two Assignments (choice of 3) | See course schedule | 30% |
| Mid-term (50 minutes; in-class) | Friday, March 8 | 30% |
| Final Exam (2 hour) | Scheduled by Registrar | 40% |

ASSIGNMENTS

Students are required to complete two of three assignments worth 30% of the overall course grade. Further information on the topics and requirements for these assignments will be discussed in class and posted on D2L.

In an effort to reduce paper waste, assignments will be submitted and returned electronically via D2L. All assignments **must** be saved in a common word processing program (e.g. .pdf, .doc or .rtf). Any submitted assignments that cannot be opened or that are blank will receive late penalties from the day that the assignment was due; **no exceptions will be made to this rule**. This means that “I sent the wrong version of the file...” is not a valid reason for having late penalties waived. Students are responsible for keeping the confirmation email sent by D2L for the receipt of assignments; this email must be produced to avoid any late penalties for assignments that go astray. Instructions on how to submit documents to D2L’s Dropbox can be found here: [D2L Instructions](#). Please make sure to clearly identify your work by including your name, student number and course number on your assignment and in the file name itself.

MID-TERM

One 50-minute mid-term is scheduled in the course to take place in class on Friday, March 8. The midterm will count towards 30% of the overall course grade. The midterm will cover material presented in lectures and all assigned readings; the exact topics included covered by the mid-term will be announced in class and on D2L. The format of the midterm is short answer questions.

Students will have an opportunity to prepare a one-page (8.5x11) one-sided study sheet that they will have access to during the mid-term. This sheet (clearly labelled with their name and student number) must be submitted to D2L prior to end of business day (4:30 p.m.) on Friday, March 1 for approval (no exceptions will be made to this rule). Printed copies of each approved sheet will be distributed by the instructor to its author during the mid-term. We will discuss strategies for preparing these study sheets and students will be given class time on February 25 to work on them. Students are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity for developing effective study skills.

Makeup tests are scheduled by the Department and will take place only on certain days/times later in the term. Also note that makeup tests will differ in content from that distributed in class on March 8.

FINAL EXAM

A two-hour closed-book final exam – scheduled by the Registrar – will take place during the April examination period; the exam will account for 40% of the overall course grade. Content will include material from the lectures and assigned readings for the whole term. The format of the exam will be short answer and essay questions. Further information on the final exam will be posted to D2L later in the term.

D2L

D2L is an essential tool in this course. Students must ensure that their current University of Calgary e-mail address is on file with IT services to receive e-mail correspondence through D2L. They are also responsible for checking the site several times a week throughout the term. Updates are posted after each lecture so that you will know where we are on the syllabus.

LATE PENALTIES

Late assignments that have not been granted an extension will be penalized 5 percentage points per day (including weekends) up to a maximum of seven days. Assignments that are more than seven days late will be automatically awarded a grade of 0.

Extensions can be requested (see me early and in person during office hours). Please note that being very busy is not a valid reason for requesting an extension; budgeting your time to deal with competing demands is part of the learning that should take place at university. It is my responsibility to ensure that every student is treated fairly which necessitates denying extensions to those without a valid reason. But I am also aware of the many stresses and difficulties that students face; if you are struggling in any way with the course and its requirements, please come and chat with me.

PROPER USE OF EMAIL

Students requiring assistance are encouraged to speak with me during scheduled office hours. Should you wish to meet outside of office hours, please telephone or email to make an appointment. It is to the student's advantage to keep such appointments.

Students rely too heavily on email as a form of communication with their instructors. Email is rarely appropriate for explanations of concepts covered in the course, requests for extensions, or for personal concerns; as such, these will not be dealt with via email. Additionally, given the volume of email received on a daily basis, please ensure that you employ your U of C email account for course related correspondence, and be sure to identify your name and the course in which you are currently registered. All correspondence should be professional in tone and content.

RECORDING LECTURES

Recording of lectures and labs is allowed for accommodation purposes for students registered with SAS; allowing it for individual private study is at my discretion. Any other non-approved use of recording constitutes academic misconduct and may result in suspension or expulsion. Please see me for further information.

GRADE 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) |

All term work will receive a percentage grade, which will then be weighted according to the assignment's value towards the final grade. The total summed percentage for all term work will then be translated into an overall letter grade according to the above scale. Grades will be posted to D2L on a regular basis; students should check it regularly to ensure that their assignments have been received and grades properly recorded. Note that a posted grade of 0 on D2L normally means that the assignment was not received on the D2L site. You must notify me directly if a submitted assignment does not appear to have been received.

Note: The quality of writing, focused primarily on its role in determining the clarity of responses in assignments, quizzes and the exam, will be considered in the determination of assignment, mid-term and final exam grades.

IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATIONSupporting 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). 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.

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/n-1.html>

Please note that while the form of supporting documentation provided is at the discretion of the student, the instructor has the discretion not to accept the supporting documentation if it does not corroborate the reason(s) given for the exemption/special request.

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>.

Appeals:

If a student has a concern about the course or a grade they have been assigned, they must first discuss their concerns with the instructor. If this does not resolve the matter, the student then proceed with an academic appeal. The first step in an academic appeal is to set up a meeting with the Department Head. Appeals must be requested within 15 days of receipt of the graded assignment.

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/.

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>.

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.

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-5.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

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 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. You can also visit 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 Library Block.

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, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Students' Union URL: www.su.ucalgary.ca

Graduate Students' Association

Phone: 403-220-5997

Email: ask@gsa.ucalgary.ca

URL: www.ucalgary.ca/gsa

Student Ombudsman

Phone: 403-220-6420

Email: ombuds@ucalgary.ca

Campus Mental Health Resources:

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

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

COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

This schedule is tentative and likely to change as the need arises. All such changes will be noted on D2L and in class. All readings are required. Readings from Halperin and Heath are noted as H&H; readings from Menard are noted as MM.

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Topic</u> | <u>Required Readings</u> |
|---|----------------------------------|---|
| January 11 | Introduction and course overview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course syllabus |
| Part I: Knowledge and Knowing in the Social Sciences | | |
| January 14 | The Big Picture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 in H&H |
| January 16 & 18 | The Philosophy of Social Science | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapters 2 & 3 in H&H • Introduction in MM |
| January 21 | What is Research? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 1 in MM |

Part II: The Building Blocks of Social Science Research

| | | |
|----------------|--|--------------------|
| January 23 | Asking Questions | • Chapter 4 in H&H |
| January 25 | Using the Library to Find Existing Research Guest speaker: John Wright, Political Science Librarian | |
| January 28 | Answering Questions | • Chapter 5 in H&H |
| January 30 | Avoiding Research Pitfalls | • Chapter 2 in MM |
| February 1 | Research Design and Ethics | • Chapter 6 in H&H |
| February 4 & 6 | Research Data | • Chapter 7 in H&H |
| February 8 | Using the Library to Find Data Guest speaker: John Wright, Political Science Librarian | |

Part III: Research Methods

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|---------------------|
| February 11 & 13 | The Comparative Method: Theory and Practice | • Chapter 9 in H&H |
| February 11 | Assignment 1 due by end of workday (4:30 p.m.) | |
| February 15 | The Historical Approach in Political Science | • Chapter 10 in H&H |
| February 25 | No lecture. Students have until end of the workday (4:30 p.m.) on Friday to submit mid-term study sheet via D2L for instructor approval (details to be discussed further in class) | |
| February 27 & March 1 | Ethnography and Participant Observation | • Chapter 13 in H&H |
| March 4 & 6 | Interviewing and Focus Groups | • Chapter 12 in H&H |
| March 8 | In-class mid-term; pre-approved one-page (8.5x11) one-sided study sheet distributed in class to students with pre-approved sheets | |
| March 11 & 13 | Textual Analysis | • Chapter 14 in H&H |
| March 15 & 18 | Experiments | • Chapter 8 in H&H |
| March 18 | Assignment 2 due by end of workday (4:30 p.m.) | |
| March 20 & 22 | Surveys | • Chapter 11 in H&H |
| March 25 & 27 | Quantitative Analysis | • Chapter 15 in H&H |
| March 29 & April 1 | Basic Bivariate Analysis | • Chapter 16 in H&H |

Part IV: Writing Up Your Results to Share Your Research

| | | |
|----------------|---|------------------------|
| April 3 & 5 | The Mechanics of Writing | • Chapters 3 & 6 in MM |
| April 8 & 10 | The Mechanics of Building a Successful Argument | • Chapter 4 in MM |
| April 8 | Assignment 3 due by end of workday (4:30 p.m.) | |
| April 12 | Course Wrap-up and Exam Review | |