

PS 3001

Research Methods in Political Science



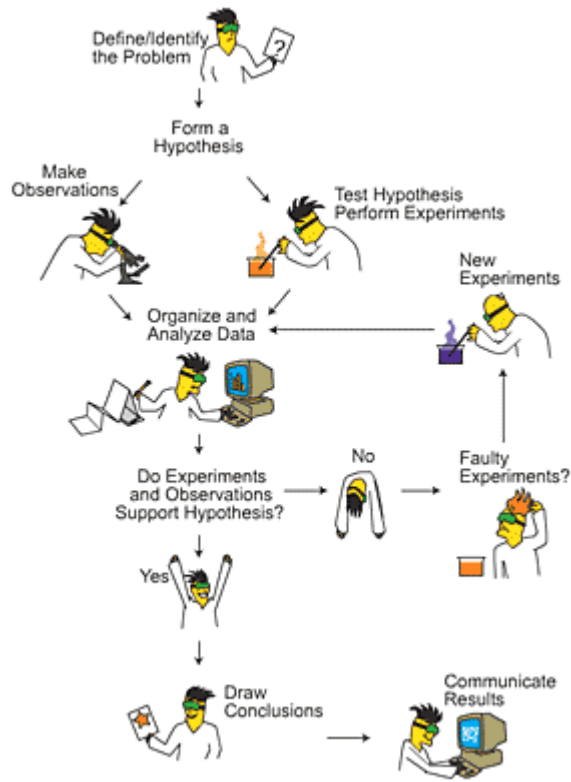
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Office Hours: MWF 9:00-11:30; TR 9:30-11:30

Spring 2011
Room 320 PH
MW 2:20-3:45

Course web site: www.elearn.mtsu.edu

Syllabus



Introduction

This is a required course for political science and international relations majors. The purpose of the course is to acquaint you with the scientific method and the varying research methods used in political science, and provide you with the knowledge and skills needed to engage in critical analysis and understand and conduct basic research. The knowledge and skills learned in this course should help you in future undergraduate or graduate course work and help you analyze and address problems systematically in any area of work you go into.

Course Objectives

1. understand the nature of the scientific method
2. learn to think critically
3. learn concepts and skills that will enhance your ability to analyze politics at any level
4. understand both quantitative and qualitative research methods used in the field of political science
5. be able to design a basic research project
6. be able to engage in quantitative and qualitative

analyses

7. understand the ethics of doing research
8. understand the role of research in the discipline and in politics in general

Methods

We will employ an array of approaches and exercises in pursuit of these objectives. These include: readings on the different research methods, reviews of research employing different research methods, lab exercises focused on quantitative analysis, the crafting of a research design, interviews with colleagues, short papers and presentations, and on-line discussion forum.

Texts

- LeRoy and Corbett, *Research Methods in Political Science: An Introduction Using MicroCase*. Cengage, 2009.
- Other readings are available on D2L.

Assignments

We will try to make this a hands-on course with a number of exercises, a limited number of readings, and few formal examinations. You will therefore be assessed on the quality of your work on the various assignments and your ability to demonstrate the knowledge and skills developed in class. SEE COURSE WEB PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS, INSTRUCTIONS, AND FORMS.

I. Participation

Discussion of the assigned readings and commenting on the work of others are important aspects of this class. Participation is more than showing up and even speaking-up, though both are necessary conditions for participation. It also means demonstrating your comprehension of the material, asking relevant questions, respecting others' opinions, and thinking intelligently about the material.

II. Short Assignments

- Short Exercises. There will be 4 short exercises to be completed outside of class that will help you practice some of the skills learned in class.
- 2 Brief Article Reviews/Analyses. Select an article from a major political science journal (a list of acceptable journals will be provided). In a one page format, you will identify the research question, the main variables, and the method used. You will be expected to briefly present one of these studies to the class. The other will be part of the final exam.

Grading Formula

Attendance/Participation	10%
Research Design	20%
Short Assignments	20%
Labs	20%
1st Article Review	10%
Final Exam (includes 2 nd Article Review)	20%

III. More Extensive (Semester) Assignments

- Research Design. Everyone will develop and draft a research design. Additional information and instructions are on the course web page while supplemental readings on doing research and literature reviews are available on D2L under Week 4.
- Lab Worksheets. The LeRoy/Corbett text will cover much of the mechanics of quantitative research methods. Each chapter reviews basic ideas and then asks the student to complete a series of tasks using the data that accompanies the text. After working on the first one together in class, you must turn in the completed workbook pages and computer printouts every Wednesday. Each question is worth one point, and at the end of the semester a percentage correct will be calculated for the ten exercises. The course material builds upon itself, with each section dependent on an understanding of the prior sections. If you miss more than a day or two, therefore, you will find yourself in a deep, deep hole.

IV. Final Exam

Had to be here somewhere! The final exam will draw on all these assignments and all the materials from the class. Details and format of the exam will be determined during the course of the semester.

Students with Disabilities

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodations, or if you have any questions related to any accommodation for testing, note taking, reading, etc., please speak with me as soon as possible. You may also contact the Office of Disabled Student Services (898-2783) with any questions about such services.

Other

Do you have a lottery scholarship? To retain Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship eligibility, you must earn a cumulative TELS GPA of 2.75 after 24 and 48 attempted hours and a cumulative TELS GPA of 3.0 thereafter. You may qualify with a 2.75 cumulative GPA after 72 attempted hours (and subsequent semesters), if you are enrolled full-time and maintain a semester GPA of at least 3.0. A grade of C, D, F, or I in this class may negatively impact TELS eligibility. Dropping a class after 14 days may also impact eligibility; if you withdraw from this class and it results in an enrollment status of less than full time, you may lose eligibility for your lottery scholarship. Lottery recipients are eligible to receive the scholarship for a maximum of five years from the date of initial enrollment, or until a bachelor degree is earned. For additional Lottery rules, please refer to your Lottery Statement of Understanding form, review lottery requirements on the web at <http://scholarships.web.mtsu.edu/telsconteligibility.htm>, or contact the Financial Aid Office at 898-2830.

Schedule

Dates	Topics (<u>Monday</u> <u>Wednesday</u>)	Readings --- *** = scan/review these readings for discussion	Assignment
Week 1 Jan 19	Course Introduction and Overview of Research Methods in Political Science		<u>Short reflective paper/ on-line discussion</u> ;... How can we know how much someone has learned in this class?
Week 2 Jan 24, 26	Role of Research in Politics and Political Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barber, Benjamin R. 2010. "America's Knowledge Deficit" <i>The Nation</i>, November 29. • Browning, Lynnley. 2002. "Professors Offer a Reality Check for Politicians." <i>The New York Times</i>, August 31. • Cohen, Patricia. 2009. "Field Study: Just How Relevant is Political Science?" <i>The New York Times</i> October 20. • Cohn, Jonathan. 1999. "When did political science forget about politics? Irrational Exuberance." <i>The New Republic</i> October 25: 25-31. • Smith, Rogers M. 2002. "Should we make Political Science more of a Science or More about Politics?" <i>PS Online</i> June. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Walt. 2005. "The Relationship Between Theory and Policy in International Relations." <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 8: 23-48. 	
	Measurement I: The Basic Ideas.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapters 1 & 2	Lab Worksheet
Week 3 Jan 31, Feb 2	Thinking Critically: the Scientific Method	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gladwell, Malcolm. 2001. "Examined Life: What Stanley H. Kaplan taught us about the S.A.T." <i>The New Yorker</i>, December 17.*** • "The Common Fallacies of Logic" – The Social Science Student Blog http://socscistudent.wordpress.com/tag/fallacies/ • Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. "Hypotheses, Laws, and Theories: A User's Guide" from <i>Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science</i>. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 8-48. 	<i>Short Assignments #1: Identifying independent and dependent variables</i>
	Measurement II: Types of Data.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 3	Lab Worksheet

<p>Week 4 Feb 7, 9</p>	<p>Information Literacy and Writing a Research Paper</p>	<p><u>Read at least ONE in each category</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Information Literacy Skills” -- SCORE-History/Social Science http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/infolit/ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The Information Literacy Game” – UNC Greensboro http://library.uncg.edu/game/ • “What is Information Literacy and Why Should I Care” – Springfiled Township Virtual Library http://www.sdst.org/shs/library/infolit.html <p>{</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baglione, 2007. “Getting Started: Finding a Research Question.” From <i>Writing a Research Paper in Political Science</i>. <p>{</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • McCall, Charles. 1998. “How to Write Research Designs and Research Reports” (http://www.csub.edu/ssricrem/howto/mccall.htm) • “Writing in Political Science” – University of North Carolina http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/polisci.html • Andrew J. Enterline, “A Guide to Writing Research Projects in Graduate Political Science Courses” pp. 8-10. http://www.psci.unt.edu/enterline/projectguidev4b.pdf <p>{</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Video: Literature Reviews: An Overview for Graduate Students http://libguides.merrimack.edu/content.php?pid=153890&sid=1304789 • Writing A Literature Review and Using a Synthesis Matrix http://www.ncsu.edu/tutorial_center/writespeak/download/Synthesisis.pdf 	<p><i>Short Assignments #2: Operationalizing variables</i></p> <p><i>Research Paper Assignment #1 due Feb. 9</i></p>
	<p>Variables, Variation, and Explanation.</p>	<p>LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 4</p>	<p>Lab Worksheet</p>
<p>Week 5 Feb 14, 16</p>	<p>Concepts (Operationalizations and Role of Values)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gerring, John. 1999. "What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences." <i>Polity</i> 31 (3): 357-93. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collier and Adcock. 1999. “Democracy and Dichotomies: A Pragmatic Approach to Choices about Concepts.” <i>American Review of Political Science</i> 2: 537-65. *** ○ Morris, 2008. “Disaggregating Corruption” <i>Bulletin of Latin American Research</i> 27 (3): 388-409.*** 	
	<p>Hypotheses.</p>	<p>LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 5</p>	<p>Lab Worksheet</p>
	<p>Concepts (Operationalizations and Role</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anderson, Elizabeth. 2004. “Uses of Value Judgments in Science: A 	<p><i>Short Assignment #3.</i></p>

Week 6 Feb 21, 23	of Values), continued...	General Argument, with Lessons from a Case Study of Feminist Research on Divorce," <i>Hypatia</i> 19 (1): 1-24.***	<i>Using value statements</i>
	Sampling.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 6	Lab Worksheet
Week 7 Feb 28, Mar 2	Quantitative v Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research" <i>Political Analysis</i>: 1-23. 	<i>Short Assignments #4: Analyzing an article</i>
	Data Preparation and Entry.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 7	Lab Worksheet
Week 8 Mar 14, 16	Qualitative Methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case Study Experimental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gerring, John. 2004. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?" <i>American Political Science Review</i> 98 (2): 341-354. *Milgram Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fowler, James H. and Cindy D. Kam. 2007. "Beyond the Self: Social Identity, Altruism, and Political Participation." <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 69 (3): 813-827. [experiment]*** 	<i>Research Paper Assignment #2 due March 14</i>
	Descriptive Statistics.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 8	Lab Worksheet
Week 9 Mar 21, 23	Qualitative Methods, continued... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ethnographic Interviews Process-Tracing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bayard de Volo and Edward Schatz. 2004. "From the Inside Out: Ethnographic Methods in Political Research." <i>PS Online</i> April. Leech, Beth and Kenneth Goldstein. 2002. "Symposium: Interview Methods in Political Science." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i> 35 (4): 663-672. Bennett, Andrew. 2010. "Process Tracing and Causal Inference." In Brady and Collier, eds. <i>Rethinking Social Inquiry</i>, pp. 207-219. 	
	How to Read a Cross-tabulation.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 9	Lab Worksheet

Week 10 Mar 28, 30	Qualitative Methods continued... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis • Discourse Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “An Introduction to Content Analysis” Writing@ CSU (http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/research/content/pop2a.cfm, accessed November 14, 2010) • “Discourse Analysis” (http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~palmquis/courses/discourse.htm, accessed November 14, 2010). • Van Dijk, Teun A. 1993. “Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis.” <i>Discourse & Society</i> 4, no. 2: 249-283. • Chapter from Edward Said, <i>Culture and Imperialism</i>. *** 	
	Tests of Statistical Significance and Measures of Association.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 10	Lab Worksheet
Week 11 Apr 4, 6	Qualitative Methods continued... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourse analysis, continued • Cartoons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanchez, Rosaura and Beatrice Pita. 1995. “Cartooning and Other Graphic Arts: An Introduction.” <i>The Americas Review</i> 23 (1-2): 7-27. • Long, Mark, Rich Bunch, and Robert Lloyd. 2009. “Measuring Anti-Americanism in Editorial Cartoons.” <i>Social Science Quarterly</i> 90 (3): 652-73. • Chapter in <i>Gringolandia</i> *** 	
	Bivariate Analysis Using ANOVA.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 11	Lab Worksheet
Week 12 Apr 11, 13	Research Designs Presentations		<i>Research Paper Assignment #3 (Rough Draft) due April 11</i>
	Cross-tabulation and Statistics: Controlling for a Third Variable.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 12	Lab Worksheet
Week 13 Apr 18, 20	Research Designs Presentations		
	Correlation and Regression.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 13	Lab Worksheet

Week 14 Apr 25, 27	Professional Ethics & Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van Evera, Stephen “Professional Ethics,” from <i>Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science</i>. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997, pp. 117-21. • David B. Resnik, “What is Ethics in Research & Why is It Important?” (http://www.niehs.nih.gov/research/resources/bioethics/whatis.cfm) 	<i>Research Design due April 27</i>
	The Overall Process.	LeRoy/Corbett, Chapter 14	Lab Worksheet
Final Exam Wednesday. May 4 @ 12:30			Article Review (take home portion of the exam)

Jan. 26 – last day to drop without grade; March 25 – last day to drop with ‘W’

** Please see me before you drop this course – things are not always as they may appear or you may fear. It is my assignment to help you understand the material.*