

Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science
POLS 2104-01 Fall 2018

Professor: Dr. James H. Sunday (sunday@aucegypt.edu)
Teaching Assistant: TBD
Office: HUSS 2002 (Professor)
Office Hours: U 12:00-14:00; W 15:30-17:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to the class, and for most of you, to this next step in your major in political science.

The goal of this course is to introduce students to qualitative and quantitative (empirical) research methods widely used in political science and other social science sister disciplines. The skills developed over our time together in this class should enhance both the career and academic potential of each student. In addition, methods taught in this class should help students write quality term papers in political science classes.

While in the introductory course of the Department each student is broadly taught *what* the discipline of political science is, this class focuses much more on *how* political scientists perform research. Most generally, qualitative methods include several procedures (approaches) including ethnography, interviews and focus groups, archival work, and different modes of observation.

Similarly a key method of collecting data, quantitative methods are statistical and center on numbers (what is quantifiable). Students will be introduced, step by step, to some of the preliminary techniques of reading and interpreting tables and charts, in addition to introductory descriptive and analytical quantitative techniques. Once having covered these procedures, we will end the term with lessons in mixed methods and how to write up our political science research in an effective way.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (10%)

The first step to success in this course is attendance, and each student is expected to attend all classes. Obviously things come up-- whether sickness, personal issues, or something else. As such, you are allowed in accordance with Registrar policy, the equivalence of three weeks of absences from our sessions though I encourage you to minimise the number as much as possible. Please note that any absence counts towards this three-week limit, meaning that university-sanctioned activities (e.g MUN/MAL), sickness with medical clinic documentation, and any other such absence counts. Without documentation that I approve, missed assignments are calculated as *zero* toward the final course mark. Any student missing more than the equivalent of three weeks starting at midnight following the 'add/drop' period (six sessions in a normal semester) will automatically fail the course with no exceptions. After all, I am sure we can agree that missing that much time would call into question what you are able to get out of this course.

By far the easiest way to guarantee a strong participation assessment is with substantive contribution to class discussion in our weekly meetings; that means quality takes precedence over quantity. However, I understand that in a class of close to 30 people, some students may not feel comfortable speaking in a crowd. I suggest trying to overcome that reticence, but because personalities vary, participation can also be maintained with visits to my office hours and e-mail contact which directly discuss the course readings, topics, concepts and the like. In short: make your contributions count whichever way you feel most comfortable; the point is to engage with the class and its material and to demonstrate clearly that you are doing so.

ASSIGNMENTS (40%)

There will be *three* assignments announced / counted throughout the term. As such, each will consist of 20% of the final grade. Please note that the lowest of the marks will be dropped. You may submit all three or only two, your choice.

- **Literature Review** 20%
 - **Research Journal** 20%
 - **Peer Review** 20%
-

EXAMS (50%)

There will be three exams, each one *potentially* counting 25% of the final grade, meaning that the lowest of the three exam grades will be dropped.

- **Exam 1** 25%
- **Exam 2** 25%
- **Exam 3** 25%

There will be no extra credit assignments under any circumstance.

MISCELLANEA

Finally in terms of your time in this course, please note that plagiarism is not acceptable in any form, and it will result in immediate failure of the entire course and my submitting the case to all relevant administrative bodies: the Department, HUSS Dean, and Academic Integrity Committee. If you are unsure about citations or what constitutes plagiarism, refer to the AUC policies on Academic Integrity, visit the Writing Centre, and definitely feel free to ask!

And lastly, a note about Office Hours: come to see me. You will do better in this course, and getting into the habit of engaging and talking with your professors on a regular basis will lead you to do better in your academic career. With added individual attention, I can provide you with readings on various topics, clarify things that might not be clear to you, and overall help you to do well.

READINGS FOR THE COURSE

On the general course page (website), you will find the general schedule we will follow throughout the term. For the readings themselves, everything is made available electronically via the course website, which requires you to log in with your AUC e-mail credentials:

<https://sites.google.com/a/aucegypt.edu/pols-204-research-methods/>

In addition to the Required Readings listed for each week, it is highly recommended to familiarise yourselves with the additional resources under each topic as they can help you to build your foundation in research methods.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Please note well that **ALL** of the following readings are **required** for the course. Additional 'further readings' can be found under the lecture topic for each week. For exact dates, please refer to the course website.

INDIVIDUAL LECTURES: PART I

Introduction to the Course

- Somekh, Bridget, Erica Burman, Sara Delamont, et al. (2005) "Research Communities in the Social Sciences" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin: 1-13. London: SAGE Publications.

Research Design

- Babbie, Earl R. (2007) "Research Design" in *The Practice of Social Research*: 86-119. Eleventh edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- de Vaus, David. (2001) "What Is Research Design? The Context of Design" in *Research Design in Social Research*: 1-16. London: SAGE Publications.

Literature Review

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

Research Ethics & Institutional Review Boards (IRBs)

- Berg, Bruce L. (2001) "Ethical Issues" in *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*: 39-65. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Piper, Heather, and Helen Simons. (2005) "Ethical Responsibility in Social Research" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin: 56-63. London: SAGE Publications.
- Unknown. (2012) Using Personal Data in Research: Code of Practice for SOAS Staff and Students: 1-22. London: School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS).

Case Studies & Concepts

- Corbin, Juliet, and Nicholas L. Holt. (2005) "Grounded Theory" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin: 49-55. London: SAGE Publications.
- Stark, Sheila, and Harry Torrance. (2005) "Case Study" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin: 33-40. London: SAGE Publications.

Reading & Writing Up Social Research

- Berg, Bruce L. (2001) "Writing Research Papers: Sorting the Noodles from the Soup" in *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*: 268-87. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Neuman, W. Lawrence. (2007) "Writing the Research Report" in *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*: 343-59. Boston: Pearson.

Review Session

Exam 1

INDIVIDUAL LECTURES: PART II

Basic Logic of Qualitative Inquiry

- Kalof, Linda, Amy Dan, and Thomas Dietz. (2008) "Basic Logic of Qualitative Inquiry" in *Essentials of Social Research*: 78-102. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Ethnography

- Goldbart, Juliet, and David Hustler. (2005) "Ethnography" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin: 16-23. London: SAGE Publications.
- ten Have, Paul. (2004) "Ethnography and Field Methods" in *Understanding Qualitative Research and Ethnomethodology*: 107-34. London: SAGE Publications.

Research Diaries

- Altrichter, Herbert, and Mary Louise Holly. (2005) "Research Diaries" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin: 24-32. London: SAGE Publications.

Focus Groups

- Bloor, Michael, and Fiona Wood. (2006) "Focus Groups" in *Keywords in Qualitative Methods: A Vocabulary of Research Concepts*: 88-92. London: SAGE Publications.
- Finch, Helen, and Jane Lewis. (2003) "Focus Groups" in *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*, edited by Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis: 170-98. London: SAGE Publications.

Interviews: Formal & Informal

- Barbour, Rosaline S., and John Schostak. (2005) "Interviewing and Focus Groups" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin: 41-48. London: SAGE Publications.
- ten Have, Paul. (2004) "Interviews" in *Understanding Qualitative Research and Ethnomethodology*: 56-87. London: SAGE Publications.

Historiography & Oral History

- Berg, Bruce L. (2001) "Historiography and Oral Traditions" in *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*: 210-24. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Shacklock, Geoff, and Laurie Thorp. (2005) "Life History and Narrative Approaches" in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, edited by Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin: 156-63. London: SAGE Publications.

Archival Strategies & Unobtrusive Research

- Berg, Bruce L. (2001) "Unobtrusive Measures in Research" in *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*: 199-209. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Research Journal Session (mandatory)

Review Session (optional)

Exam 2

INDIVIDUAL LECTURES: PART III

Basic Logic of Quantitative Inquiry

- Kalof, Linda, Amy Dan, and Thomas Dietz. (2008) "Basic Logic of Quantitative Inquiry" in *Essentials of Social Research*: 59-77. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Survey Research & Questionnaires

- Guthrie, Gerard. (2010) "Questionnaires" in *Basic Research Methods: An Entry to Social Science Research*: 129-38. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- _____. (2010) "Survey Method" in *Basic Research Methods: An Entry to Social Science Research*: 77-85. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

Sampling I: Introduction

- Burdess, Neil. (2010) "Introducing Sampling" in *Starting Statistics: A Short, Clear Guide*: 95-101. London: SAGE Publications.
- Mason, Jennifer. (2002) "Sampling and Selection in Qualitative Research" in *Qualitative Researching*: 120-44. London: SAGE Publications.

Sampling II: Probability

- Babbie, Earl R. (2010) "The Logic of Sampling" in *The Practice of Social Research*. Twelfth Edition. Belmont: Wadsworth: 187-227.

Estimation

- Burdess, Neil. (2010) "Estimating Numbers" in *Starting Statistics: A Short, Clear Guide*: 102-14. London: SAGE Publications.
- _____. (2010) "Estimating Categories" in *Starting Statistics: A Short, Clear Guide*: 115-23. London: SAGE Publications.

Hypothesis Testing

- Burdess, Neil. (2010) "Introducing Hypothesis Testing" in *Starting Statistics: A Short, Clear Guide*: 127-37. London: SAGE Publications.

Writing Day

Representing & Analysing Data

- Bell, Judith. (2010) "Interpreting the Evidence and Reporting the Findings" in *Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education, Health and Social Science*: 211-37. Fifth edition. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Mixed Methods I

- Elliott, Jane. (2005) "Telling Better Stories? Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Research" in *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*: 171-88. London: SAGE Publications.
- Hewson, Claire. (2006) "Mixed Methods Research" in *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, edited by Victor Jupp: 179-81. London: SAGE Publications.
- Schutz, Paul A., Courtney B. Chambless, and Jessica T. DeCuir. (2004) "Multimethods Research" in *Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences*, edited by Kathleen deMarrais and Stephen D. Lapan: 267-81. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Mixed Methods II

- House, Ernest R. (2004) "Using Multiple Methodologies: The Case of Retention in Chicago" in *Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences*, edited by Kathleen deMarrais and Stephen D. Lapan: 353-69. London: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Piore, Michael J. (2006) "Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools" in *A Handbook for Social Science Field Research: Essays & Bibliographic Sources on Research Design and Methods*, edited by Ellen Perelman and Sara R. Curran: 143-60. London: SAGE Publications.

Exam 3