

Methods in Political Science
Political Science 2000
Fall 2021

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Classroom: McGannon 118L
Class time: MWF 11:00am – 11:50am
Lab Time: Tuesday, 4:15 – 5:30pm
Lab Time: Tuesday, 5:45 – 7:00pm

Course Description

This course provides an overview of research methods in Political Science. Unlike most political science courses, this class does not concentrate on a particular subject area, country, or political era. Instead, it covers how political scientists go about systematically investigating politics. This course will increase your understanding of political science and help you build skill sets that apply to political science and non-political science courses (and beyond the classroom). The course is organized into three related parts to understand the process of political science research, research designs employed by social scientists, and theory testing.

Learning Objectives

1. To understand how to apply the scientific method to questions in social science, with a focus on theory-building and hypothesis testing.
2. To understand how to construct a research design to evaluate theories of politics systematically.

Course Requirements

Tests:

There will be three tests in this course in addition to a lab quiz. Tests will be in-class, closed-book, and closed-note. The purpose of these exams is to test both your factual and conceptual understanding of course material. Tests will consist of various question types that may include: multiple choice, definition recall, short answer, short essay, and mathematical computation.

Following the below class outline, Test #1 will cover material from Section A; Test #2 will cover material from Section B; and Test #3 will be cumulative for the entire course. The days of Tests #1 and #2 will be determined based on how quickly we cover material. You will be given ten days notice before each test. Test #3 will take place during the final exam period. The Lab Quiz will be the week of November 8.

Papers:

There will be three main written assignments in the course. For these assignments, you will choose one of two political science research topics. The first topic focuses on politics outside of the United States and addresses gender quotas in legislative elections. The second topic addresses the incumbency advantage in American elections. For each of these topics, you will write a long literature review, short literature review, and research design. Each of these assignments is briefly described below and will be discussed further during the semester.

- **Long Literature Review:** The first literature review will be a 7 – 10 page paper that provides in-depth evaluations of scholarly work done on your chosen topic. You will be given five scholarly works to critique, and you must independently identify and evaluate three additional scholarly works on the topic. The purpose of the long literature review is to assess each scholarly work's theory or argument, the tests or evidence for this theory, main findings, and the strengths or weaknesses of the study. A draft of this paper will be due October 1 for peer review. **The final draft is due October 15.**

- **Short Literature Review:** The short literature review is a 3 – 4 page paper that reviews each of the eight scholarly works from the long literature review in addition to two other, newly identified scholarly works. The purpose of the short literature review is to understand better how to *concisely* convey to readers prior research findings and shortcomings. A draft of this paper will be due October 29 for peer review. **The final draft is due November 8.**
- **Research Design:** The research design is a 5 – 7 page paper. This paper should outline a theory, hypothesis, and how you will test your hypothesis to address an identified shortcoming in previous research on your chosen topic. A draft of this paper will be due the week of November 22 for peer review. **The final draft is due December 10.**

Homework, Problem Sets, and Quizzes:

Problem sets and quizzes will be completed in-class, in-lab, and as homework. Quizzes can take place both in-class (sometimes in the form of Pop Quizzes) and on Canvas. All assignments will be due by the beginning of class or lab period unless otherwise specified. You will only be able to make up an in-class assignment (e.g., lab assignment) if your absence is excused.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend lectures, complete the readings, and contribute to class discussion, but attendance is not required due to public health safety. If unable to attend a lecture, Professor Rogers will make an honest effort to post recorded lectures to Canvas. It, however, will not be assured that all lecture material will be recorded (e.g., due to technical limitations of the classroom). Regardless of attendance, all students will be responsible for all material covered in lecture.

Grades

Your grade for this course will consist of the following components and relative weights:

Item	Overall Course Grade Weight	Date
Test 1	10%	Week of October 4*
Lab Quiz	5%	Week of November 8*
Test 2	10%	Week of December 6*
Test 3	15%	December 15
Long Literature Review	10%	October 15
Short Literature Review	5%	November 8
Research Design	15%	December 10
Homework, Quizzes, and Lab Assignments	30%	Throughout Semester

* Professor Rogers reserves the right to reschedule tests pending the pace of the class. Students will have at least ten days notice of these tests or quizzes

There will be no make-up tests or deadline extensions given in this course. Exemptions will only be made with written (e.g., email) prior consent for planned events such as sponsored SLU activities or religious observances or under unusual circumstances such as a documented medical emergency. It is the student's responsibility to request and obtain this consent. Late homework assignments will be marked down 25% for each day; late papers will be marked down 10% for each day; and there will be no extensions for Canvas Quizzes. There will be no assignments designated purely as "extra credit." At times, there will be opportunities for extra credit within an assignment, but you cannot earn more than 100% credit on any assignment.

When determining the final grade, the following grading scale will be used. I will round final grades. Depending on the distribution of grades, I reserve the right to impose curves on assignments and final grades.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93% - 100%	B	83% - 86%	C	73% - 76%
A-	90% - 92%	B-	80% - 82%	C-	70% - 72%
B+	87% - 89%	C+	77% - 79%	D	60% - 69%
				F	below 60%

Key Dates

Due to the university calendar, we will not hold class or lab on the following days:

September 6: No Class ~ Labor Day

October 29: No Class ~ Fall Break

November 23: Lab Replaced by Zoom Peer Review Groups

November 24 - 26: No Class ~ Thanksgiving Break

November 29: Asynchronous Class ~ Accommodating Thanksgiving Travel

Course Evaluations

Students are requested to fill out a course evaluation at the end of the course.

Required Texts

The following text should be available from the University Bookstore or online retailers, such as Amazon.com. Other readings will be made available via Canvas.

Kellstedt, Paul, and Guy Whitten. 2018. "The Fundamentals of Political Science Research, third edition."
New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. [Kellstedt on course outline].

Course Outline

The following outlines the tentative class schedule and lab schedule for the course. Content covered in classes that meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday is divided up into three sections. We will start with Topic 1 in Section A and proceed sequentially. I will notify you throughout the semester of when you will be responsible for specific readings in class and on the Canvas calendar. I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as the semester progresses. You are responsible for any of the changes to the assigned readings. All of the articles and readings on the syllabus will be available on Canvas. If you have any trouble accessing any of the online pieces or the Canvas calendar is not updated, **please let Professor Rogers know as soon as possible.**

Content covered in the lab section will follow the calendar listed on the final page of this syllabus.

Section A: The Scientific Method

Topic 1: Political Science as a Science

- Kellstedt Chapter 1
- Smith, Rogers. “Should We Make Political Science More of a Science or More about Politics?” *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 2002.
- Putnam, Robert. “APSA Presidential Address: The Public Role of Political Science.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 2003.
- ❖ Questions to consider while reading
 - Chapter 1 of Kellstedt provides an overview of key concepts that will be covered in the first half of POLS 2000.
 - *To better understand the Smith and Putnam readings, pay attention to what “normative” means*
 - Should political science research pursue knowledge for knowledge’s own sake? [Smith]
 - What point is Smith trying to make when discussing Gerber and Green’s study of voter turnout? [Smith]
 - Does Smith present a “false dichotomy” in “Should We Make Political Science More of a Science or More about Politics?” [Putnam]
 - How can political scientists influence public life? [Putnam]

Topic 2: Research Questions

- Barakso, Sabet, Schaffner: “Chapter 2: The Research Question” p. 36-41
- Rogers, Steven. “Accountability in a Federal System.” Introduction. 2013.
- Grant, Ruth. “Political Theory, Political Science, and Politics.” *Political Theory*. 2002.
- **Suggested Reading**
 - Barakso, Sabet, Schaffner: “Chapter 2: The Research Question” p. 41-55.
- ❖ Questions to consider while reading
 - How does “Accountability in a Federal System” fulfill or not fulfill Barakso’s suggestions for a good research question [Barakso/Rogers]
 - How does Grant characterize humanities research? What is the key distinction between humanities and social science research? [Grant]
 - Why is it necessary to study politics with a humanistic approach? [Grant]

Topic 3: Previous Research

- Johnson & Reynolds. Chapter 3.
- Knopf, Jeffrey “Doing a Literature Review.” *PS: Perspectives on Politics*. 2006.
- **Suggested Reading**
 - Kellstedt: Chapter 2, p. 38-42.
- ❖ Questions to consider while reading
 - What is the difference between a scholarly and not scholarly source? [Johnson & Reynolds]
 - What “shortcuts” can one take when reading the literature? [Johnson & Reynolds/Knopf]
 - What is the “boxcar” method for writing a literature review? What alternative approaches do Johnson & Reynolds and Knopf suggest? [Johnson & Reynolds/Knopf]
 - What does it mean if there is a “gap” in knowledge or literature? [Knopf]
 - What are strategies to “pinpoint the underlying disagreements responsible for debates in the literature?” [Knopf]

Topic 4: Theory and Hypotheses

- Kellstedt Chapter 2, p. 25 – 38.
- MacRae, Duncan. “The Science of Politics and its Limits” *Political Science: The Science of Politics*. 1986.
- Mearsheimer, John and Stephen Walt. “Leaving Theory Behind: Why simplistic hypothesis testing is bad for International Relations.” *European Journal of International Relations*. 2013. p. 427-443
- **Suggested Reading**
 - Revisit Kellstedt Chapter 1, pages 3 -5.
- ❖ Questions to consider while reading
 - Can one “prove” a theory? [Kellstedt]
 - How does a “theory” differ from a “hypothesis”? [Kellstedt]
 - What is the principal problem that political science faces, according to MacRae? Is social science doomed because of this? [MacRae]
 - What is the difference between “instrumentalists” and “scientific realists” and the approaches they take? In which camp does Mearsheimer fall? [Mearsheimer]

Topic 5: Causality

- Kellstedt Chapter 3
- Fearon, James D. “Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science.” *World Politics*. 1991.
- ❖ Questions to consider while reading
 - What is the difference between a deterministic and probabilistic relationship? [Kellstedt]
 - What is the “main” or fundamental problem with causal inference? [Kellstedt]
 - How does the counterfactual strategy differ from the actual case strategy? What are the risks of these strategies? [Fearon]

Topic 6: Measurement

- Kellstedt Chapter 5
- Mayhew, David. “Divided We Govern.” Chapters 3 – 4. 2005
- Binder, Sarah. “The Dynamics of Legislative Gridlock, 1947-96” *American Political Science Review*. 1999.
- Kellstedt Chapter 6, p. 125-129
- **Suggested Reading**
 - Revisit Kellstedt Chapter 1, pages 3 -5.
- ❖ Questions to consider while reading
 - What is the difference between reliability and validity? What are the different ways we can assess validity? [Kellstedt]
 - How do Mayhew and Binder’s measurement strategies lead to different results regarding the influence of political parties? [Mayhew/Binder]
 - What are the differences between categorical, ordinal, and continuous variables? [Kellstedt]

➤ Topic 7: Ethics

- Lee Ann Fujii. 2011. “Research Ethics 101: Dilemma and Responsibilities” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 45(4): 717 – 723
- Milgram, Stanley. “Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority.” *Human Relations* 1965.
- Baumrind, Diana. “Some Thoughts on Ethics of Research: After Reading Milgram’s ‘Behavioral Study of Obedience?’” *American Psychologist*. 1964.
- ❖ Questions to consider while reading
 - Why do research ethics matter? What dilemmas do researchers face when trying to produce knowledge ethically? [Fujii]
 - What are the three guiding principles for ethical research? [Fujii]
 - For the Milgram and Baumrind readings, skim the Milgram to understand the experiment Milgram conducted and how he conducted it. Then read the Baumrind more closely to identify the ethical problems with Milgram’s study.

Section B: Approaches to Research

➤ Topic 8: Experiments

- Kellstedt, p. 77 - 92
- Iyengar, Shanto and Donald Kinder. “News that Matters.” Chapters 2 – 3. 1987.
- Conroy-Krutz, Jeffrey and Devra C. Moehler, “Moderation from Bias: A Field Experiment on Partisan Media in a New Democracy.” *Journal of Politics*. 2015.
- Gomez, Brad, Thomas Hansford, and George Krause. “The Republicans Should Pray for Rain: Weather Turnout, and Voting in U.S. Presidential Elections.” *Journal of Politics*. 2007.
- ❖ Questions to consider while reading
 - What is the difference between treatment and control groups? [Kellstedt]
 - How do experiments overcome the hurdles of causality? [Kellstedt]
 - What is the difference between a laboratory, field, and natural experiment? [Kellstedt]
 - Iyengar and Kinder acknowledge that experiments often lack external validity. As discussed in Chapter 2, how do they try to account for this in their research design? [Iyengar and Kinder]
 - Why does Conroy-Krutz believe their experiment has high external validity? How does it avoid the Hawthorne effect? [Conroy-Krutz]
 - Gomez’s study does not include any treatment or control groups, but the authors still take advantage of random assignment of their treatment variable. How is this case? [Gomez]

➤ Topic 9: Large N-Observational Studies

- Kellstedt, p. 92 – 99.
- Bartels, Larry. “Partisan Biases in Economic Accountability.” Chapter 3 in *Unequal Democracy*
- Aschwanden, Christie. “Science isn’t Broken.” *FiveThirtyEight.com*
- ❖ Questions to consider while reading
 - What is the difference between time-series and cross-sectional studies? [Kellstedt]
 - Focusing on Table 3.1, how does the relationship between cumulative disposable income growth and the incumbent party’s popular vote share margin differ from that between election-year disposable income growth and the incumbent party’s popular vote share margin? [Bartels]
 - What is p-hacking? Should we be concerned about the uncertainty in scientific studies? [Aschwanden]

➤ **Topic 10: Survey Research**

- White, Chapter 7
 - Nanes, Matthew. “Police integration and support for anti-government violence in divide societies: Evidence from Iraq.” *Journal of Peace Research*. 2015.
 - Silver, Nate. “Here’s Proof Some Pollsters Are Putting a Thumb on the Scale.” *FiveThirtyEight.com*. 2014.
- Questions to consider while reading
- How does Nanes overcome social desirability bias to study Iraqis support for violence?
 - What does Silver mean by “herding”? How is herding potentially important for our interpretation of survey results? [Silver]

➤ **Topic 11: Small-N Observational Studies**

- Barakso Chapter 7
 - He, Kai. “Case Study and the Comparative Method. Why do States Join Institutions.” *Political Science Research in Practice*. 2013.
 - Kaup, Katherine. “Field Research: Zhuang Ethnic Identity and the Chinese State.” *Political Science Research in Practice*. 2013.
- Questions to consider while reading
- For each of the He and Kaup readings, identify the author’s research question and type of research design along with the advantages and disadvantages of these research designs.

➤ **Topic 12: Formal Theory**

- Kellstedt, Chapter 2: p. 42-51
 - Wolfers, Justin. “Game Theory Says Pete Carroll’s Call at Goal Line is Defensible.” *The New York Times*. 2015.
- Question to consider while reading
- Why did it make sense for Pete Carroll to run instead of pass the ball in Superbowl 49?

Section C: Statistical Inference & Lab

The following lists textbook readings for each lab.

- **Week of August 30 – SLU Library Resources**
- **Week of September 6 – Introduction to STATA**
- **Week of September 13 – Measures of Central Tendency**
 - Kellstedt, p. 130 – 141
- **Week of September 20 - Probabilities and Distributions**
 - Kellstedt, Chapter 7
- **Week of September 27 – Z-Scores**
- **Week of October 4 – Peer Review of Paper 1 Draft**
- **Week of October 11 – Hypothesis Testing and Z-Tests**
 - Kellstedt, p. 161 - 166
- **Week of October 18 – Hypothesis Testing and T-Tests**
 - Kellstedt, p. 173 - 178
- **Week of October 25 - Measures of Association and Correlation**
 - Kellstedt, p. 178 – 184
- **Week of November 1 – Ordinary Least Squares – Bivariate Regression**
 - Kellstedt, p. 188 – 196
- **Week of November 8 – Lab Quiz**
- **Week of November 15 - Ordinary Least Squares – Multiple Regression**
 - Kellstedt, p. 196 – 199
 - Kellstedt, p. 215 - 225
- **Week of November 22 – Peer Review of Paper 3**
 - Peer review will be on Zoom due to Thanksgiving
- **Week of November 29 – Multiple Regression Review**
- **Week of December 4 – Lab / Class Review**

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern. The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost’s Office website at:

https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf.

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites.

Mandatory Syllabus Statement on Face Masks (2021 – 2022)

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, key safeguards like face masks have allowed SLU to safely maintain in-person learning. If public health conditions and local, state, and federal restrictions demand it, the University may require that all members of our campus community wear face masks indoors.

Therefore, any time a University-level face mask requirement is in effect, face masks will be required in this class. This expectation will apply to all students and instructors, unless a medical condition warrants an exemption from the face mask requirement (see below).

When a University-wide face mask requirement is in effect, the following will apply:

- Students who attempt to enter a classroom without wearing masks will be asked by the instructor to put on their masks prior to entry. Students who remove their masks during a class session will be asked by the instructor to resume wearing their masks.
- Students and instructors may remove their masks briefly to take a sip of water but should replace masks immediately. The consumption of food will not be permitted.
- Students who do not comply with the expectation that they wear a mask in accordance with the University-wide face mask requirement may be subject to disciplinary actions per the rules, regulations, and policies of Saint Louis University, including but not limited to those outlined in the *Student Handbook*. Non-compliance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including any of the following:
 - dismissal from the course(s)
 - removal from campus housing (if applicable)
 - dismissal from the University
- To immediately protect the health and well-being of all students, instructors, and staff, instructors reserve the right to cancel or terminate any class session at which any student fails to comply with a University-wide face mask requirement.

When a University-wide face mask requirement is not in effect, students and instructors may choose to wear a face mask or not, as they prefer for their own individual comfort level.

ADA Accommodations for Face Mask Requirements

Saint Louis University is committed to maintaining an inclusive and accessible environment. Individuals who are unable to wear a face mask due to medical reasons should contact the Office of Disability Services (students) or Human Resources (instructors) to initiate the accommodation process identified in the University’s [ADA Policy](#). Inquiries or concerns may also be directed to the [Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity](#). Notification to instructors of SLU-approved ADA accommodations should be made in writing prior to the first class session in any term (or as soon thereafter as possible).

2021-2022 Mandatory Syllabus Statement on In-Person Class Attendance and Participation

The health and well-being of SLU's students, staff, and faculty are critical concerns, as is the quality of our learning environments. Accordingly, the following University policy statements on in-person class attendance are designed to preserve and advance the collective health and well-being of our institutional constituencies and to create the conditions in which all students have the opportunity to learn and successfully complete their courses.

1. Students who exhibit any [potential COVID-19 symptoms](#) (those that cannot be attributed to some other medical condition the students are known to have, such as allergies, asthma, etc.) shall absent themselves from any in-person class attendance or in-person participation in any class-related activity until they have been evaluated by a qualified medical official. Students should contact the [University Student Health Center](#) for immediate assistance.
2. Students (whether exhibiting any of potential COVID-19 symptoms or not, and regardless of how they feel) who are under either an isolation or quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official must absent themselves from all in-person course activities per the stipulations of the isolation or quarantine directive.
3. Students are responsible for notifying their instructor of an absence as far in advance as possible; when advance notification is not possible, students are responsible for notifying each instructor as soon after the absence as possible. Consistent with the [University Attendance Policy](#), [students also are responsible for all material covered in class and must work with the instructor to complete any required work. In situations where students must be absent for an extended period of time due to COVID-19 isolation or quarantine, they also must work with the instructor to determine the best way to maintain progress in the course as they are able based on their health situation.](#)
4. Consistent with the [University Attendance Policy](#), [students may be asked to provide medical documentation when a medical condition impacts a student's ability to attend and/or participate in class for an extended period of time.](#)
5. As a temporary amendment to the current [University Attendance Policy](#), all absences due to illness or an isolation/quarantine directive issued by a qualified health official, or due to an adverse reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine, shall be considered "Authorized" absences

Disability Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact the Center for Accessibility and Disability Resources (CADR) to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact CADR, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at accessibility_disability@slu.edu or by phone at [314.977.3484](tel:314.977.3484). Once approved, information about a student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from CADR and within the instructor's official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to CADR. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

Title IX

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, stalking, domestic or dating violence, we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident that involves a Title IX matter, **that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX Coordinator and share the basic facts of your experience.** This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX Coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

Anna Kratky is the Title IX Coordinator at Saint Louis University (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK or make an anonymous report through SLU's Integrity Hotline by calling 1-877-525-5669 or

online at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>. To view SLU's policies, and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php> and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: SLU's Title IX Policy (formerly called the Sexual Misconduct Policy) has been significantly revised to adhere to a new federal law governing Title IX that was released on May 6, 2020. Please take a moment to review the new policy and information at the following web address: <https://www.slu.edu/about/safety/sexual-assault-resources/index.php>. Please contact Anna Kratyk, the Title IX Coordinator, with any questions or concerns.

Student Success Center

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center assists students with academic-related services. Students create an appointment with the Student Success Center to learn more about tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, and academic coaching. For more information visit: <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/index.php>

University Writing Services

Students are encouraged to take advantage of University Writing Services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with writing projects, multimedia projects, and oral presentations. University Writing Services offers one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, visit <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/academic-support/university-writing-services/index.php> or call the Student Success Center at 314-977-3484.