

# POLS 2000: Research Methods in Political Science

## Spring 2021

**INSTRUCTOR:** Professor Norrenberns

**OFFICE HOURS** by appointment

**CLASS LOCATION:** McGannon Hall 260 (McG 118L for Lab)

**CLASS TIME:** MWF 2:00 to 2:50, Thursdays 4:15 to 7:00\*

**\*Lab will be split into 2 75-minute sessions. Half the class will attend each session.**

### 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. Rather, 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 are applicable to political science and non-political science courses (and beyond the classroom). The course is organized in three related parts to understand the process of political science research, research designs employed by social scientists, and theory testing.

### PREREQUISITES

The course is open to undergraduate students and has no prerequisites.

### 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 systematically evaluate theories of politics.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODS

**Lecture and Discussion.** Lecture and discussion will be the primary methods of teaching and learning. Lectures are based on the readings that include the text and additional readings found on Blackboard. Weekly discussions facilitate a closer dialogue among professor and students to develop higher order and competency based understanding of the material.

**Class Attendance:** Attendance is taken. Students will routinely complete graded in-class exercises that may not be made up. In addition, assessment exercises will be used to gauge the level of teaching and learning in the course. Missing class means missing your education and the opportunity to be involved in an experiment. Our new hybrid, synchronous model (discussed at length later in this syllabus) presents challenges to students and faculty alike, but with tenacity and honest effort on all our parts, high quality education is achievable.

**Class Participation:** The classroom is a setting for the exchange of information which includes lectures and discussions involving the professor and the students. Verbal communication of questions, answers and ideas is an important skill developed in a liberal education. Participation in this course takes several forms: completing assignments and exercises, and actively discussing issues and topics in groups or in the class as a whole help contribute to the intellectual development of the students and the class as whole.

## TEXTS

### Required:

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

Kellstedt, Paul, and Guy Whitten. 2018. "The Fundamentals of Political Science Research, third edition." New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. [Kellstedt on course outline]. **Optional but highly recommended:** The STATA Companion for Kellstedt.

## METHODS OF EVALUATION

**Exams:** There are frequent quizzes and homework assignments over the assigned readings, a mid-term test, and a final exam. All examinations may consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions.

**Final Project:** You will design and write a research paper using the principles you learn in this course. It will not be turned in all at once at the end of the course. Rather, you will submit sections periodically throughout the semester. You will receive feedback on each section, then compile them for a final grade. You will receive credit for each section completed on time, and separate credit for the resulting full paper. Details on this project will be provided in a separate document on Blackboard.

**Participation:** Actively engaging in class discussion will be an integral part of your education. Time will be set aside most days for student interaction on specific topics and impromptu discussion is likely to take place as lecture materials prompt interest.

Your final grade will be weighted as follows:

### **GRADING:**

Quizzes & Homework	20% (cumulative toward the final grade)
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Final Project	25%
Class Participation	10%
Final exam	25%

This course uses the College of Arts & Sciences Grading Scale.

## OTHER COURSE 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](https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_academic-integrity_6-26-2015.pdf).

### **Mandatory Statement on Face Masks (Fall 2020)**

The University's [Interim Policy on Face Masks](#) governs all students, faculty, staff, and campus visitors in all University-owned, leased, or operated facilities. All persons physically present in any such University facility associated with this course shall comply fully with this policy at all times. Masks must be worn before entry to all such University facilities (as well as outdoors on all University property when six feet of distance is unpredictable or cannot be maintained).

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 or Human Resources 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).

As the instructor of this course, I shall comply fully with SLU's policy and all related ADA regulations.

Students who attempt to enter a classroom without wearing masks will be asked by the instructor to wear masks prior to entry. Students who remove their masks at any time during a class session will be asked by the instructor to resume wearing their masks.

***Note: Accordingly, no consumption of any food will be allowed in class.***

Students who do not comply with a request by a SLU instructor to wear a mask in accordance with the University's *Interim Policy on Face Masks* may be subject to disciplinary actions per the rules, regulations, and policies of Saint Louis University, including but not limited to 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 faculty or staff request to wear a mask in accordance with University policy.

Students are strongly encouraged to identify to their instructor any student or instructor not in compliance. Non-compliance may be anonymously reported via the SLU Integrity Hotline at 1-877-525-5669 (or confidentially via the Integrity Hotline's website at <http://www.lighthouse-services.com/slu>).

## **Attendance**

The health and well-being of SLU's students, staff, and faculty are critical concerns. 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.

1. Students who exhibit any [potential COVID 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 who exhibit any [potential COVID symptoms](#) (those that cannot be attributed to some other medical condition the students are known to have, such as allergies, asthma, etc.) but who feel well enough to a) attend the course synchronously in an online class session or b) participate in asynchronous online class activities, are expected to do so. Those who do not feel well enough to do so should absent themselves accordingly.
3. Students (whether exhibiting any of potential COVID 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 activity per the stipulations of the isolation or quarantine directive. They are expected to participate in synchronous or asynchronous online class activities as they feel able to do so, or absent themselves accordingly.
4. Students are responsible for notifying each 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.
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 shall be considered "Authorized" absences (effective August 2020 through May 2021).

## **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 misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; [akratky@slu.edu](mailto:akratky@slu.edu); [314-977-3886](tel:314-977-3886)) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. 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.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address:  
<http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy> [www.slu.edu/here4you](http://www.slu.edu/here4you) .

### **Distance Education Etiquette**

Your actions in distance education contexts are just as important as in on-ground, face-to-face educational contexts – and sometimes require additional attention and commitment, as some distance education technologies might be less familiar to us. Accordingly, all students are expected to follow the guidelines below:

#### **Synchronous Video Contexts (Zoom, etc.)**

1. Mute your microphone when you are not speaking. Remember to “un-mute” yourself just prior to speaking. Identify yourself when you begin speaking.
2. Expect a few seconds of delay in getting a response from the instructor or another class member to a question; wait before repeating your question or assuming it was not heard.
3. If possible, position your camera such that your video feed does not capture too much of your surroundings or other activity/sound from your home/location. Be conscious of posters, art, or other surroundings that others might find offensive or inappropriate for an educational context.
4. Use the “Raise Hand” and “Chat” (or similar) features of your video-conferencing tool. This limits verbal interruptions and the confusion generated when multiple people try to speak at once.
5. Just as in an on-ground, face-to-face class, limit side conversations, multi-tasking (on your computer or otherwise), and use of your cellphone.
6. Temporarily turn off your video feed and mute your microphone when engaged in any non-class conversation or activity.
7. Respect and be attentive to the diversity of your classmates and instructor. Before communicating, consider your message in the context of the class' diversity in race, ethnicity, religion, disabilities, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, marital status, geography, etc. Consider the diversity you can see or know – as well as that you cannot.
8. Remember that video-based class sessions (including chat transcripts) may be recorded and retrieved for later viewing.

#### **Non-Video & Asynchronous Contexts (Blackboard, Canvas, Online Chats, Discussion Boards, etc.)**

1. When using the “Chat” or “Discussion Board” (or similar) features of your course management system, remember that your course-related communications to the instructor or other students should be considered “professional” (they are not like texts to your friends). Remember that course context and all related written work – including chat and discussion board transcripts – can be recorded and retrieved.
2. Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm; without the context of facial expressions or other body language, your tone or intent could be missed or misunderstood by others.
3. Respect and be attentive to the diversity of your classmates and instructor. Before communicating, consider your message in the context of the class’ diversity in race, ethnicity, religion, disabilities, gender, sexual orientation, age, social class, marital status, geography, etc. Consider the diversity you can see or know – as well as that you cannot.
4. Respect others’ time and life circumstances, which often don’t allow for an immediate response to a question or comment.

### **Student Success Center**

In an effort to be inclusive of students' learning styles and needs with regard to academic support, the following statement has been developed for use in course syllabi which identifies resources for student support in various areas of learning. As faculty members construct their syllabi for future courses, it is requested that they update materials to include new language regarding academic and career related support offered to students through the Student Success Center.

The syllabus statement will be available throughout the year by visiting the following websites, but we encourage you to place these resources on any departmental websites you feel necessary:

- Student Success Center: [www.slu.edu/success](http://www.slu.edu/success)
- Reinert Center for Transformative Teaching & Learning: [www.slu.edu/ctl](http://www.slu.edu/ctl)

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, a one-stop shop, which assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning) by visiting the Student Success Center or by going to [www.slu.edu/success](http://www.slu.edu/success).

## **Disability Services Academic Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at [Disability\\_services@slu.edu](mailto:Disability_services@slu.edu) or [314.977.3484](tel:314.977.3484) to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor's course roster.

## Outcomes Assessment

For each of the units of the course, the instructor will state a set of specific learning objectives and will include questions on these specific learning objectives on the test for that unit of the course.

For example, the first unit of the course will introduce the students to basic perspectives in the development of sociology: societal evolution, functionalism and conflict theory. Students will be asked to define, explain and apply these theories on the first exam. Each exam will include a sample of questions from all the materials from the corresponding section. This procedure will be followed for each of the three units of the course.

## Instructor/Course Evaluation

The instructor and course will be evaluated at the end of the term. Each evaluation will cover the quality and relevance of course material and the quality of instruction. The intent is to seek information which will help to improve both the quality of the course and the instructor's competence in teaching the materials. In completing these evaluations each student should be mindful of the extent to which the course objectives have been met.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week and Topic**

### **Readings**

Week 1

Jan. 29

Introduction and Syllabus Review

Week 2

Feb. 1, 3, 5

Kellstedt Chapter 1 The Scientific Study of Politics

Week 3

Feb. 8, 10, 12

Kellstedt Chapter 2 The Art of Theory Building

Week 4

Feb. 15, 19 (No Class 17th)

Feb. 18

Kellstedt Chapter 3 Evaluating Causal Relationships

First Lab Session STATA Companion Ch. 1

Week 5

Feb. 22, 24, 26

Feb. 25

Kellstedt Chapter 4 **Literature Review Due Feb. 26**

Lab STATA Companion Ch. 2

Week 6 Mar. 1, 3, 5 Mar. 4	Kellstedt Chapter 5 Measuring Concepts of Interest Lab STATA Companion Ch. 3
Week 7 Mar. 8, 10, 12 No Lab Mar. 11	Kellstedt Chapter 6 Getting to Know Your Data
Week 8 Mar. 15, 17, 19 Mar. 18	Review & <b>Mid-Term</b> Lab STATA Companion Ch. 4
Week 9 Mar. 22, 24, 26 Mar. 25	Kellstedt Chapter 7 Probability & Statistical Inference Lab STATA Companion Ch. 5
Week 10 Mar. 29, 31 Apr. 1	Kellstedt Chapter 8 <b>Research Design Due Mar. 31</b> Lab STATA Companion Ch. 6
Week 11 Apr. 5, 7, 9 Apr. 8	Kellstedt Chapter 9 Two Variable Regression Models Lab STATA Companion Ch. 7
Week 12 Apr. 12, 14, 16 Apr. 15	Kellstedt Chapter 10 Multiple Regression: The Basics Lab STATA Companion Ch. 8
Week 13 Apr. 19, 21, 23 Apr. 22	Kellstedt Chapter 11 Model Specification Lab STATA Companion Ch. 9
Week 14 Apr. 26, 28, 30 Apr. 29	Kellstedt Chapter 12 Limited Variables & Time Series Data Lab STATA Companion Ch. 10
Week 15 May 3, 5, 7 May 6	Revision Week <b>Interpretations Due May 3</b> Lab Assignment Due
Week 16 May 10	Review Day <b>Final Paper Due</b>
Finals Week May 12-18	TBD