

Methods in Political Science
Political Science 2000
Spring 2019

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Class time: MWF 9:00am – 9:50am
Lab Time: Thursday, 3:45 – 6:45pm
Classroom: McGannon 118L

Office Hours: Wednesdays 10 – 11am or by appointment

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.

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 systematically evaluate theories of politics.

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 10 days notice before each test. Test #3 will take place during the final exam period. The Lab Quiz will be approximately the week of March 25.

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 the week of February 18 for peer review. **The final draft is due March 8.**

- **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 better understand how to *concisely* convey to readers prior research findings and shortcomings. A draft of this paper will be due the week of April 1 for peer review. **The final draft is due April 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. **Due April 29**

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 Blackboard. 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.

Participation:

You are expected to complete the readings and contribute to class discussion. **Your participation grade is determined by more than attending class.** If you must miss a class for a legitimate reason, such as illness, family emergency, or University-sponsored activity, you should contact the professor as soon as possible.

You are permitted two unexcused absences from class. For each additional unexcused absence, your final course grade will be reduced by 0.25%. An absence is excused only if explicitly stated by Professor Rogers by email (therefore if you speak to Professor Rogers – be sure to send a follow up email to confirm excuse). Professor Rogers plans to use Tegrity to record most lectures. Students with a university approved excused absence may request recordings. It, however, will not be assured that all lectures will be recorded.

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 Feb. 25*
Lab Quiz	5%	Week of March 25*
Test 2	10%	Week of April 29*
Test 3	15%	May 8
Long Literature Review	10%	March 8
Short Literature Review	5%	April 8
Research Design	15%	April 29
Homework, Quizzes, and Lab Assignments	22.5%	Throughout Semester
Participation	7.5%	Throughout Semester

* Professor Rogers reserves the right to reschedule test pending the pace of the class. Students will have at least 10 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 Blackboard 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 to 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:

January 21: No Class ~ Martin Luther King Day

March 11 - 16: Spring Break

April 18 - 22: Easter Break

Course Evaluations

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

Academic Honesty

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.

Students with Special Needs-Disability Services

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 Disability Services to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at Disability_services@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 Disability Services 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 Disability Services. 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 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 (or that person's equivalent on your campus) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX contact 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.

For most students on the St. Louis campus, the appropriate contact is Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@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. To view SLU's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web addresses: <https://www.slu.edu/here4you> and <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel>.

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 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].

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 certain readings in class and on the Blackboard 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 Blackboard. If you have any trouble accessing any of the on-line pieces or the Blackboard 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 principle 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 relationships? [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 difference 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 ethically produce knowledge? [Fujii]
 - What are the three guiding principles for ethical research? [Fujii]
 - For the Milgram and Baumrind readings, skim the Milgram to gain an understanding of 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

"Questions to Consider while Reading" will be added before any readings are assigned

➤ 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.

➤ Topic 9: Large N-Observational Studies

- Kellstedt, p. 92 – 99.
- Bartels, Larry. *Unequal Democracy*. Chapter 4. 2008.
- Aschwanden, Christie. "Science isn't Broken." *FiveThirtyEight.com*

➤ Topic 10: Survey Research

- White, Chapter 7
- Kuklinski, James, Micheal D. Cobb, and Martin Gilens. "Racial Attitudes and the New South." *Journal of Politics*. 1997.
- Silver, Nate. "Here's Proof Some Pollsters Are Putting a Thumb on the Scale." *FiveThirtyEight.com*. 2014.

➤ Topic 11: Small-N Observational Studies

- Barakso Chapter 7
- White Chapter 8
- 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.

➤ 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.

Section C: Statistical Inference & Lab

The following lists text book readings for each Lab.

- **January 17 – SLU Library Resources**
- **January 24 – Introduction to STATA**
- **January 31 – Measures of Central Tendency**
 - Kellstedt, p. 130 – 141
- **February 7 - Probabilities and Distributions**
 - Kellstedt, Chapter 7
- **February 14 – Z-Scores**
- **February 21 – Peer Review of Paper 1 Draft**
- **February 28 – Hypothesis Testing and Z-Tests**
 - Kellstedt, p. 161 - 166
- **March 7 – Hypothesis Testing and T-Tests**
 - Kellstedt, p. 173 - 178
- **March 14 – Spring Break**
- **March 21 - Measures of Association and Correlation**
 - Kellstedt, p. 178 – 184
- **March 28 – Ordinary Least Squares – Bivariate Regression**
 - Kellstedt, p. 188 - 196
- **April 4 - Peer Review of Paper 2 Draft**
- **April 11 – Ordinary Least Squares – Multiple Regression**
 - Kellstedt, p. 196 – 199
 - Kellstedt, p. 215 - 225
- **April 18 – Easter Break**
- **April 25 – Multiple Regression Review**
- **May 2 – Lab / Class Review**