

## **POLS 2000: Research Methods**

Spring 2017

TR 2:15-3:30

W 3:45-6:45 (LAB)

McGannon Computer Lab

**Instructor:** Dr. Jason Windett

**Office:** McGannon Hall 152

**Office Hours:** TR 3:30-5 and by appt..

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### **Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to research methods, qualitative and quantitative analysis for social science. In particular, we will focus on (1) theory and research design, (2) qualitative research methods, and 3) data analysis. These are the key components of scientific research on political phenomena, but many of the tools learned will be applicable to other social and behavioral sciences as well as the humanities. The tools you will learn in fact form the foundation of empirical research methods in all forms of scientific inquiry. Research design, as we address it, involves the exploration of such matters as theory construction, hypothesis formulation, how to pose proper research questions, and pay attention to the complicated issues of cause and effect. The second component of the class is an introduction and overview of qualitative research methods, such as the elite and citizen interviews, case study, design of surveys, sampling methods, and experiments. The final component of the class is data analysis based in large part on statistical methods and reasoning. This necessarily involves some math, but relatively little mathematical background is assumed. I assume only that you are familiar with high school level algebra. This is not to say that having mastered algebra (or even calculus) automatically means you will not struggle with the material; while statistics employs the language of mathematics, it is not simply a branch of mathematics. In fact, while the algebra we will use will be relatively straightforward, its application in the course of interpreting data can be quite conceptually challenging.

### **Course Objectives**

This course is designed to help students broaden their knowledge, skills, and values so that will be able to:

- understand the role of theory in empirical research.
- discern the ethical concerns regarding research and means of addressing such concerns.
- identify and describe major qualitative and quantitative approaches to the study of Political Science.
- assess strengths and weaknesses of the major qualitative and quantitative approaches to the study of Political Science.

- consume empirical evidence in a sophisticated manner, including ability to identify methodological shortcomings.
- understand the fundamentals of statistical analysis, including the underlying assumptions of such work.
- devise appropriate methodological means to answer meaningful questions related to Political Science.
- develop, plan, and defend a research project, and present the results appropriately.
- carry out analyses using relevant software.
- present evidence using both written and visual representations.

## My Teaching Philosophy

I believe that my role in the classroom is to help you learn the class material, as well as skills such as clear writing, speaking, and critical thinking. Towards this end, I develop a class that calls upon students to engage in reading, writing, talking, and listening. I want you to learn; I try to help make the material and tasks as clear as possible so that you are able to learn. I have an open door policy and will work with you to help you master class and reading material.

## Your Learning Philosophy

If you want a high grade with a minimum amount of work, you should enroll in another section of research methods. You will need to be dedicated to keeping up with the reading load and course assignments. If you want to be better prepared for future classes in the major, have a higher understanding of quantitative research methods, and enhanced writing skills, this is a class you will do well in. As upper-level students, I expect that you will consistently come to class prepared and ready to participate. All work turned in will be your own. If you are caught cheating or plagiarizing, you will automatically fail the course.

## Course Materials Required for Purchase

1. Pollock, Philip H. III. 2016. *The Essentials of Political Analysis, 5th edition*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. (Hereafter EPA)
2. Pollock, Philip, H. III. 2015. *A STATA Companion to Political Analysis, 3rd edition*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. (Hereafter SCPA)

## Recommended

- Acock, Alan C. 2010. *A Gentle Introduction to Stata, 3rd edition*. College Station, TX: Stata Press.
- Baglione, Lisa A. 2011. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

## Course Assessment

Lab Assignments:	20%
Research Project:	35%
Midterm:	15%
Final:	20%
Participation:	10%

### Lab Assignments

Each student should be enrolled in the Wednesday lab session. You will gain hands on experience using STATA software. This is a statistical package that will allow you to manipulate and analyze data. At the beginning of the semester, you will choose a lab partner. You and your lab partner will turn in a single assignment for the given week's lab exercises. All labs will be started with a brief introduction to the topic/skills you will need to complete the exercises. You will turn in the completed assignments at the start of the following lab session. The computer lab will be available during the 150 minute class period and I reserved the lab for additional lab time. This will allow you to complete the assignment in the week between lab meetings. Late labs will not be accepted and you will receive a zero for the lab.

### Research Project

There is one major written assignment for this class which will culminate in a 10-12 page research design. This design will be worth 35% of your overall grade. This is not a book review or a summary of a specific research topic, but a plan for original research. This is not something you will throw together at the last second. Your project should focus on a topic in political science that interests you. The specific topic of the paper will be of your choosing (with my prior approval).

To help you produce the highest quality work, various assignments pertaining to the project will be due throughout the semester, including the research question and bibliography, literature review, rough draft, final draft, and presentation. Additional information regarding these assignments will be provided to you. All assignments are due in hard copy form in class. All of these assignments should be typed and double-spaced with 1-inch margins in all directions. This may seem long, but as you will see below, the course assignments all build towards this page length. A 10 point deduction will be made for every half page less than the assigned length. I also reserve the right to deduct fractions of this amount. **Assignments turned in late will not be accepted and you will receive a zero.**

At the end of the semester, you will present your work to your peers in an 6-8 minute presentation. Listed below are due dates and the value for each assignment. We will talk in greater detail about each of these assignments as the due date approaches.

1. Research Question and Bibliography: A single, well crafted research question, and a bibliography containing a minimum of 10 articles or books you will use in your research. **Due Feb 9th. 5% of your final grade.**

2. Literature Review: A 3-4 page, (double spaced) review of literature that will be a review of previous scholarly work in your research area. **Due Mar 2nd. 5% of your final grade.**
3. Research Design Draft: A 3-4 page, (double spaced) plan for your analysis that begins with an outline of your theory, hypotheses, and how you will test your hypotheses. Be sure to discuss the type of data you will need to conduct your analysis. **Due Apr 6. 5% of your final grade.**
4. Final Design: A complete and polished 10-12 page (double spaced) research design that includes an introduction, literature review, theory section, and a data and methods section. **Due May 8th. 15% of your final grade.**
5. Presentation: A 6-8 minute presentation with visual aids regarding your research design followed by a question and answer period. April 26th (lab) 5% of your final grade.

## Exams

Both the midterm and the final exams will be in-class, closed-book, closed-note exams. Performance will be assessed by your responses to questions in a variety of formats. These may include but are not limited to the following formats: multiple choice, definition recall, short answer, short essay and *mathematical computations*. We will discuss the exams and their formats in more detail in class prior to the exam. In grading written responses, emphasis will be placed on the clarity of your reasoning and communication; only those that exceed expectations will be deemed excellent. As a concrete example, when reviewing a short essay worth 15 pts., I may choose to award 12 points for answers deemed competent and essentially correct while reserving 14 or 15 pts for those that are exceptional.

**Note: You should bring a scientific calculator to class for the exam. You can purchase a good one for about \$10. You may not use a smart-phone as your calculator for the exam!** If you do not bring a calculator, you may not borrow a classmates during the exam, you will simply do without.

The final exam will be cumulative. **Missing either exam will result in a score of zero.** Makeup exams will not be provided without proper documentation, and the student must notify the instructor of the conflict *before* the scheduled exam takes place.

## Participation

All students are expected to complete assigned readings, regularly attend class, and participate in discussion. While I do not wish to pressure you to speak when you do not feel compelled to do so, we will all benefit from hearing a wide range of perspectives. If you are someone who prefers not to speak up in class, I would urge you to step outside your comfort zone and answer (or ask) a question from time to time. If, on the other hand, you are a frequent contributor to class discussion, please be aware of your fellow classmates and make sure you are allowing them a chance to speak when they wish to do so.

Class attendance is required. Your attendance will constitute 10% of your final grade in this course. You will be allowed two unexcused absence over the course of the semester. After that, each additional unexcused absence will lower your attendance grade by one letter grade. **You may not miss any lab sessions. If you miss a lab session, you will receive a 0 for that week's assignment.** If you know you will be missing a class, please let me know as soon as possible. You may not show up to class late. If you are not in class at the start of lecture or lab, you will be counted absent—so do not bother interrupting the class if you are late, I will ask you to leave.

## Writing Services

I encourage you to take advantage of the writing services in the Student Success Center; getting feedback benefits writers at all skill levels. Trained writing consultants can help with any kind of writing project, multimedia project, and/or oral presentation. They offer one-on-one consultations that address everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. For more information, call 977-3484 or visit <http://www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml>.

## Grade Scale

Final grades for the course will be based on the following scale. I reserve the right to make adjustments to grades based on overall performance in the course. There will be no extra credit offered in the course, nor will there be curving grades.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100	B-	80-82	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	C+	77-79	D	63-66
B+	87-89	C	73-76	F	62 or below
B	83-87	C-	70-72		

## Expectations and Procedures

### Technology

Put everything on mute and in your bag. I do not want to see cell phones in the class at all. You do not need to use your lap top for this course. Please take notes the old fashion way. This will dissuade the trend of college students to browse the web, check e-mail, and frequent social networking sites during lecture. I will post all lecture powerpoints on blackboard after the daily lecture. If I use additional material I will post it on blackboard so you may access it at a later point.

### Communication

I will post grades, send class e-mails, etc... with Blackboard. Be sure that you can access the e-mail address listed. I will only send e-mail out to your SLU e-mail accounts listed on the course roster in Blackboard. I will not keep track of any other e-mail addresses you may use.

I am very accessible both during and after normal work days. Please feel free to contact me or stop by my office if you need to talk. Also, please contact me immediately if you are going to miss an exam or need to reschedule. I do not like to give make up exams, but under extenuating situations, I will make allowances. Please contact me prior to the exam if you need to reschedule, I will not allow make up exams if contacted after the exam period.

## Academic Integrity Syllabus Statement

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 via which SLU embodies 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 governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office website at:

[http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic\\_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%2006-26-15.pdf](http://www.slu.edu/Documents/provost/academic_affairs/University-wide%20Academic%20Integrity%20Policy%20FINAL%20%2006-26-15.pdf).

Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

Specific College of Arts and Sciences Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures may be found at:

<http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml>

## Title IX Syllabus Statement

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) 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-sexual-misconduct-policy> and [www.slu.edu/here4you](http://www.slu.edu/here4you) .

## Student Success Center Syllabi Statements

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)

## Student Success Center Syllabus Statement

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 Syllabus Statement

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 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.

## Readings

In addition to the readings required for lecture from the text, you will also be assigned additional readings. Each day we will spend part of the time discussing these readings. I may add readings to the syllabus as the semester moves along to fit into the weekly discussions.

## Tentative Course Schedule

### Jan 17 Course overview

**Jan 19-24: Topic 1: Introduction to Research Methods: The Central Role of Theory and Plurality of Research Methods**

EPA Intro

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. Excerpt from Ch. 1, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. On Blackboard.

Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. Rethinking Representation. *American Political Science Review*, Issue 4: 515-528.

**Jan 26-Feb: Topic 2: Overview of Research, Research Ethics, and Introduction to Qualitative Research**

CITI

The Belmont Report: <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/>

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.

**Feb 7-9: Topic 3: Qualitative Methods: Interviews**

Windett, Jason H. "Differing Paths to the Top: Gender, Ambition, and Running for Governor." *The Journal of Women, Politics and Policy*. 35(4). pgs 287-314. 2014

Bowen, James D. "The Right and Nonparty Forms of Representation and Participation: Bolivia and Ecuador Compared." In *The Resilience of the Latin American Right*, ed Juan Pablo Luna and Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser

Guest Lecture: Dr. J.D. Bowen

**Research Question and Bibliography due Feb 9th**

**Feb 14-16: Topic 4: Qualitative Methods: Surveys and Experiments**

Chapter 2 and 3 of Baglione, Lisa A. 2011. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

**Feb 21-23: Topic 5: Definition and Measurement**

EPA 1

**Feb 28-Mar 7 Topic 6: Definition, Measurement, and Variables**

EPA 2

**Literature Review due in class Mar 2nd**

**Mar 9 Midterm Exam**

**Mar 13-17** SLU Spring Break

**Mar 21-23 Topic 7: Explanations, Hypotheses and Comparisons**

EPA 3

**Mar 28-30 Topic 8: Making Controlled Comparisons**

EPA 4 and 5

**Apr 4-6 Topic 9: Foundations of Statistical Inference**  
EPA 6  
**Research Design Draft due in class, April 6**

**Apr 11-18 Topic 10: Tests of Significance**  
EPA 7, pgs 156-170

**Apr 13** No class. University Holiday

**Apr 20-25: Topic 11: Significance and Association**  
EPA 7, pgs 171-181 and 8, pgs 183-188

**Apr 27-May 8: Topic 12: Linear Regression**  
EPA 8, 189-213  
**Final Design due in class, May 8th**

**May 11: Final Exam, 2 p.m**