



# Saint Louis University

Madrid Campus

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## **POLS 2000 Methods in Political Science**

### **Spring 2018 Schedule:**

**(Class) Tuesday and Thursday 16:00-17:15 (PAH 20)**

**(Lab, starting 1 February) Thursdays 17:30-20:15 (PAH 19)**

*(Thursday 11 January – Tuesday 3 May 2018)*

Instructor: Simona Rentea, Ph.D.

**Please contact me by email in the first instance:**

[simona.rentea@slu.edu](mailto:simona.rentea@slu.edu)

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 15:00- 16:00; Wednesday 15:00-17:00

Office: San Ignacio Hall 310

Prerequisites (for Political Science/IR Majors): POLS 1000 or 1600 and POLS 1500



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### **Introduction:**

In this course, we will be examining in detail some of the essential building blocks required to carry out political science research, the accepted methods and methodology that lie at the heart of our discipline. Understanding not only how to use these methods but also the theoretical justifications that underpin their use is essential to producing political science research in an academically acceptable format. Indeed, without these methods, producing this kind of work is impossible: no matter how strong or robust our initial ideas or inclinations in political science may be, without the ability to present them coherently, to organize them rationally, and to justify them methodology, they will remain solely that: ideas and inclinations.

As such, the course intends to offer a comprehensive overview of the main research methods and practical skills and experiences that will prepare you for independent research in political science. Consequently, the assessment for the course is structured around individual research projects, where you will be asked to choose your own topic to research, define your question, design your research plan and employ one or more of the research methods covered in the course.

**Course aims:** The aims of the course are:

1. To provide a detailed introduction to research methods in political science;
2. To examine the place of *political* science research in the *social* sciences;
3. To critically examine the theoretical justifications for political science research methods;
4. To enable the student to employ one or more of the research methods examined through independent study/or a research project.

**Learning outcomes:**

After completing the course, the student should be able to:

1. Critically evaluate the use value of research methods in political science;
2. Understand the theoretical justifications for political science research methodology;
3. Differentiate between the appropriate use of different political science research methods;
4. Conduct an independent research project using one or more of the political science research methods covered in the course.

**Arts & Sciences Grading Scale** can be accessed at: <http://www.slu.edu/x6352.xml>

**Grade Points:**

A	4.0	93%-100%
A-	3.7	90%-92%
B+	3.3	87%-89%
B	3.0	83%-86%
B-	2.7	80%-82%
C+	2.3	73%-79%
C	2.0	67%-72%
C-	1.7	60%-66%
D	1.0	50%-59%
F	0.0	0-49%

**Grade Components: Course Credits: 4**

25% Midterm Exam
10% Literature Review
5% Research Design
10% Presentation of Final Paper
10% Class Participation
40% Final Paper

**Requirements:**

- Students should complete the readings before the date for which they are listed in the course outline. Students are required to attend each class session prepared and ready to participate.
- Students will be graded on the basis of class participation (10%), a midterm exam (25%), a literature review (10%), a research design/proposal (5%), class presentation (10%), and a research paper/project (40%).
- In addition to the course textbook, students are expected to read the quality daily press and academic journals to try and identify articles or reports that contain examples of the political science research methods covered in the course. These articles will then be discussed in class and your effort will be rewarded in the class participation grade.

**Classroom Philosophy:**

- You are required to attend all sessions prepared to participate and think critically. You are required to attend all sessions prepared to participate and think critically during lecture and discussion sessions.
- I trust and expect that you will be able to sustain a mutually **respectful classroom atmosphere** by treating all classmates as equals and with due regard for their opinions.
- Except for legitimate reasons (doctor's letter certifying illness for example), you are expected to attend all sessions. If you have legitimate reasons for your absence, **an email should be sent to the tutor in advance of the class.**
- **Laptops will not be allowed in class except for taking notes** and in a manner, that would not disrupt your engagement with the class and your colleagues' efforts to concentrate. **Phones are not allowed in the classroom under any circumstances.**
- All required assignments are to be submitted on time. Essays or assignments that are handed in late will be marked down by 5% a day for every day that they are late.

**Clarification on assessment**1. Your **classroom participation mark (10%)** will reflect:

- The frequency of attendance and commitment to the course. Lateness and unexcused absences will be reflected in the final participation mark. You are permitted two unexcused absences. For each additional unexcused absence, your participation mark will drop by **10%**.
- Your consistency in covering the required reading material and ability to extract the most relevant information for the classroom discussion.
- Your ability to contribute questions in class and show an interest in taking an active role in classroom discussions.
- Completing the LAB case studies and assignments and willingness to contribute to the LAB discussion and exercises.
- In-class and in-lab quizzes that will be given at the beginning of the class or lab, without any prior announcement.

2. **Mid-term Exam (25%)** held on **Tuesday 20 February** in the normal class time.

- The midterm examinations will be written on the respective date.
- No alternative examination dates will be scheduled except in cases of excused medical absences.
- A **review sheet with the topics and questions covered** and the format for the exam will be provided prior to the examinations.
- A revisions session will also be scheduled.

3. **Literature Review (10%)** due **15 March**: 1,000 words that evaluate in depth the relevant scholarly works for your chosen topic.

- A document outlining the requirements and expectations for the project proposal is uploaded on Blackboard. It contains information on how this will be marked.

4. **Research Design (5%)** due **10 April**: 1,500 words, plus a bibliography, to include a research question, hypothesis, tentative research design, including a note on methodology, a revised literature review and a bibliography.

- A document outlining the requirements and expectations for the research design is uploaded on Blackboard. It contains information on how this will be marked.

5. **Presentation (10%)** describing the research process and analysing the initial results of the individual projects in the workshop sessions at the end of the course: 15 minutes, followed by questions.

- Do not read your presentation, by practicing and reading you will feel confident enough to present without reading it.
- You are presenting your topic, its relevance, your research question, methodology and initial findings:
  - Why is this topic important?
  - What are the different perspectives in the study of this topic?
  - What is your question and specific take on it?
  - What are you attempting to research and how?
- Make the presentation dynamic, try to engage the audience, make frequent eye contact.
- I am evaluating your knowledge of the topic, your ability to make your points clearly, develop a unique angle and present an argument.
- Failure to present on the day you have committed to will result in a mark of 0.

6. **Written project report/ final paper (40%)**: 3,200 words plus a bibliography **due Wednesday 9 May 15:30-16:30, SIH 310**. To include: an introduction, an extensive literature review (research design size), a note on relevance or significance of the topic, a clearly stated research question, a hypothesis, an analysis/support for your hypothesis, and a conclusion. Please remember to make an argument and clarify and support your position throughout the essay. Bring evidence in support of your argument. Only paper submissions, handed in during the specified time slot, will be accepted. Late submissions will incur a penalty; they will be **marked down by 5% a day** for every day they are late.

### Academic accommodation 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. 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/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to <http://www.slu.edu/madrid/learning-resources>.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 230, send an e-mail to [counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu), or to visit the Counselling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

### **Information regarding the collection of student work for assessment**

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Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, we regularly assess our teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose, we keep on file anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. *Thus, copies of your work for this course, including any exams, oral presentations, assignments, submitted papers and/or portfolios may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes.* If you prefer that Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus does not keep your work on file, you will need to communicate your decision in writing to your professor.

### **Title IX Statement**

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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 deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 ([mmaruri@slu.edu](mailto:mmaruri@slu.edu); 915-54-5858 ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy 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 counsellors at the SLU-Madrid's Counselling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall ([counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu); 915-54-5858 ext. 230) or Sinews Multipletherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counselling services for SLU-Madrid ([www.sinews.es](http://www.sinews.es); 91-700-1979) To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address:<http://www.slu.edu/Documents/Madrid/campus-life/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf>.

## **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

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The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity, such as would be expected at a Jesuit, Catholic institution. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general that soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students but also undermines the validity of the University's evaluation of students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of a faculty member or administrator.

Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student's work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in an act of academic dishonesty.

Where there is clear indication of such dishonesty, a faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply appropriate sanctions. Investigations of violations will be conducted in accord with standards and procedures of the school or college through which the course or research is offered. Recommendations of sanctions to be imposed will be made to the dean of the school or college in which the student is enrolled. Possible sanctions for a violation of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

The complete SLU Academic Honesty Policy can be found at the following link: [http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic\\_advising/docs/Academic\\_integrity.pdf](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/academic_advising/docs/Academic_integrity.pdf)

### ***Important dates:***

***Last Day to Drop a Class without a Grade of "W" and/or to Add a Class: Sunday 21 January 2018***

***Last Day to Choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) Options: Sunday 21 January 2018***

***Last Day to Drop a Class and Receive a Grade of "W": Friday 9 March 2018***

**POLS 2000 Methods in Political Science**

**Spring 2018 (Class) – Tuesday and Thursday 16:00-17:15 (PAH 20)**

**COURSE SCHEDULE FOR THE CLASS:**

**Course textbook (essential to have):**

- **Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath (2012), *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.**
- An additional list of further sources is provided at the end of the syllabus.
- Case studies and assignments for the LAB sessions will be uploaded on Blackboard and sent by email. Please check both regularly.

1. Thursday 11 January

**General Introduction to the Course**

Presentation of the course syllabus, assessment, expectations, and course format.

2. Tuesday 16 January

**Doing Political Research**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 1-9.

**Part I: Knowledge and Knowing in Political Research**

3. Thursday 18 January

**Positivism**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 27-35.

4. Tuesday 23 January

**Scientific Realism**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 35-40. Case study 3 (Blackboard).



5. Thursday 25 January

**Interpretivism**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 40-48.

6. Tuesday 30 January

**Methodological Individualism and Methodological Holism**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 78- 91. Case study 5 (Blackboard).

## Part II: The Building Blocks of Political Research

7. Thursday 1 February

### Choosing a Topic and Finding a Researchable Question

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 101- 115.

### Types of Questions

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 115- 121.



8. Tuesday 6 February

### Conducting a Literature Review

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 121- 126; Johnson et al. (Blackboard).

9. Thursday 8 February

### Answering Questions I: Formulating Hypotheses

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 129 - 144.

10. Tuesday 13 February

### Answering Questions II: Variables and Relations

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 144- 160.

11. Thursday 15 February

### Answering Questions III: Variables and Relations (cont.)

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 144- 160 + *Exam revision*

12. Tuesday 20 February

### Midterm Exam on sessions 1-11

13. Thursday 22 February

*Winter break (University Closed)*

14. Tuesday 27 February

### Introducing the final research papers: database searches and conducting literature reviews

## Part III: Research Design and Methods: How to do Research in Practice?

15. Thursday 1 March

### Comparative Research

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 202- 218.

16. Tuesday 6 March

**Surveys: Elements of a Good Survey**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 231- 242.

17. Thursday 8 March

**Surveys: Sample Designs**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 243- 250.

18. Tuesday 13 March

**Interviews**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 253- 276.

**\*\*\*Literature Review due 15 March (hard copy, in class)\*\*\***

19. Thursday 15 March

**Analysing Interviews Data**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 278- 283.

20. Tuesday 20 March

**Focus Groups**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 276- 278.

21. Thursday 22 March

**Ethnography and Participant Observation**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 288- 304.

22. Tuesday 27 March

***Semana Santa/ Easter Holiday (University Closed)***

23. Thursday 29 March

***Semana Santa/Easter Holiday (University Closed)***

24. Tuesday 3 April

**Textual Analysis: Content Analysis**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 318- 328.

25. Thursday 5 April

**Textual Analysis: Discourse Analysis**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 309- 317.

**\*\*\*Research Design due 10 April (hard copy, in class)\*\*\***

26. Tuesday 10 April

**Quantitative Analysis: Graphs and Figures**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 346- 360.

27. Thursday 12 April

**Quantitative Analysis: Descriptive and Inferential Statistics**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 338- 346.

28. Tuesday 17 April

**Bivariate Analysis**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 367-380.

**Part IV: Political Research: Practice Sessions**  
**Individual Presentation and Discussion of Individual Research Projects**

29. Thursday 19 April

Presentation of final papers/projects

30. Tuesday 24 April

Presentation of final papers/projects

31. Thursday 26 April

Presentation of final papers/projects

32. Tuesday 1 May

*Dia del Trabajador Holiday (University Closed)*

33. Thursday 3 May

Presentation of final papers/projects

**\*\*\*Wednesday 9 May 15:30-16:30,**

**Submission of Research Projects (Hard copies/in person),**

**Office SIH 310\*\*\***

**POLS 2000 Methods in Political Science**

**Spring 2018 (Lab) - Thursday 17:30- 20:15 (PAH 19)**

**COURSE SCHEDULE FOR THE LAB:**

1-2. Thursday 1 February

**Types of Questions: Finding your own research question**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 102- 121. Case study 6.

3-4. Thursday 8 February

**Conducting a Literature Review: What is your literature and how to survey it?**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 121- 126; 129 – 144; Johnson et al. (Blackboard).

5-6. Thursday 15 February

**Variables and Relations: Finding your own hypothesis**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 144- 160. Case studies 7 and 8.

7-8. Thursday 22 February

*Winter Break (University Closed)*

**Part III: Research Design and Methods: How to do research in practice?**

9-10. Thursday 1 March

**Comparative Research**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 202- 218; Case study 9 (Blackboard).

11-12. Thursday 8 March

**Surveys Design and Analysis**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 243- 250; Case study 10 (Blackboard).

13-14. Thursday 15 March

**Conducting and Analysing Interviews**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 278- 283; Case study 11 (Blackboard) and interview exercise.

15-16. Thursday 22 March

**Focus Groups and Participant Observation Research**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 276- 278; 288- 304; Case study 12 (Blackboard).

17-18. Thursday 29 March

*Semana Santa (University closed)*

19-20. Thursday 5 April

**Textual Analysis Techniques: Content and Discourse Analysis**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 309- 317. Case studies 12 & 14 (Blackboard).

21-22. Thursday 12 April

**Quantitative Analysis**

Reading: Halperin and Heath, pp. 338- 360. Case studies 15 & 16 (Blackboard).

**Part IV: Political Research: Practice Sessions**  
**Individual Presentation and Discussion of Individual Research Projects**

23-24. Thursday 19 April

**Presentation of final papers/projects**

25-26. Thursday 26 April

**Presentation of final papers/projects**

27-28. Thursday 3 May

**Presentation of final papers/projects**

**ADDITIONAL COURSE READING LIST:**

**In addition to the course books listed above, there follows below a brief list of general texts on social science research methods (incorporating political science).**

**Also, as noted at the outset, it is worth remembering that it throughout this course, you should constantly be on the lookout for articles/research findings/reports that contain examples of the methods we are studying on the course.**

Johnson, J.B. and Reynolds, H. T. (2012), *Political Science Research Methods*, Seventh edition. Los Angeles: CQ Press. *On reserve in the SLU Madrid Library for this course.*

Shively, W. P. (2009) *The Craft of Political Research*, Seventh edition. Pearson.

Bryman, A (2008), *Social Research Methods*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Corbetta, P. (2003), *Social Research: Theory, Methods and Techniques*, London: Sage.

May, T. (2001) *Social Research: Issues, Methods, Practice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Maxim, P. (1999), *Quantitative Research Methods in The Social Sciences*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Schutt, R. K. (2006), *Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research*, London: Pine Forge Press.

## Calendar

### Spring 2018

#### JANUARY

Sunday	7	Spring 2018 new student arrival and University Housing move-in date
Monday-Tuesday	8-9	Spring 2018 new student Welcome Sessions
Wednesday	10	Spring 2018 first day of classes
Sunday	21	Last day to drop a class without a grade W and /or add a class Last day to choose Audit (AU) or Pass/No Pass (P/NP) options
Friday	26	Application deadline for spring semester degree candidates No classes

#### FEBRUARY

Wednesday	14	Ash Wednesday Registration for Summer 2018 sessions begins
Thursday-Friday	22-23	No classes (Winter Break)
Tuesday	27	Professors' deadline to submit midterm grades

#### MARCH

Friday	9	Last day to drop a class and receive a grade of W
Thursday	15	Last day to submit Transfer Application for fall semester
Saturday	24	Pre- <i>Semana Santa</i> University Housing move-out date
Monday-Wednesday	26-28	<i>Semana Santa</i> holiday (University closed)
Thursday	29	<i>Jueves Santo</i> holiday (University closed)
Friday	30	<i>Viernes Santo</i> holiday (University closed)

#### APRIL

Sunday	1	Easter Post- <i>Semana Santa</i> University Housing move-in date
Monday	2	Easter Monday - classes resume
Wednesday	4	Registration for Fall 2018 semester begins

#### MAY

Tuesday	1	<i>Día del Trabajador</i> holiday (University closed)
Wednesday	2	<i>Día de la Comunidad</i> holiday (University closed)
Thursday	3	Spring 2018 final day of classes

Friday	4	Spring 2018 final exams
Monday-Thursday	7-10	Spring 2018 final exams
Friday	11	University Housing move-out date
Saturday	12	Commencement
Sunday	13	Professors' deadline to submit spring 2018 final grades

**Final Exam Schedules Spring 2018**

	<b>4 May (Fr)</b>	<b>7 May (Mn)</b>	<b>8 May (Tu)</b>	<b>9 May (Wd)</b>	<b>10 May (Th)</b>
<b>08:30-11:30</b>	Mn classes that meet at 9:00 & 9:30	Mn classes that meet at 10:00	Mn classes that meet at 11:00 & 11:30	Tu classes that meet at 9:30	Tu classes that meet at 8:00
<b>12:00-15:00</b>	Tu classes that meet at 11:00	Mn classes that meet at 13:00	Tu classes that meet at 14:30	Mn classes that meet at 12:00 & 12:30	Tu classes that meet at 12:30
<b>15:30-18:30</b>	Mn classes that meet at 14:30	Tu classes that meet at 17:00 & 17:30	Mn classes that meet at 16:00	Tu classes that meet at 16:00	Mn classes that meet at 17:30
<b>19:00-22:00</b>	---	---	Mn classes that meet at 18:30 & 19:00	Tu classes that meet at 19:00	---