

# **INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

*Spring Quarter 2008*

*Department of Political Science*

*University of Cincinnati*

15-POL-553

Instructor: Ivan Dinev Ivanov

Office Hours: Mon & Thu 2-4:00 pm

Or by appointment

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\* If you prefer to contact me via email and I should be able to respond you within next 12-24 hrs.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course is designed as the first from a sequence of several methods classes and is intended to introduce students with a wide variety of research methods and styles used in political science. The course comprises into two parts. The first part is more theoretically oriented and deals with core topics of social science theory such as philosophy of science and approaches to studying political science with special attention to behavioralism, formal theory, interpretative and normative theories. The second half of the quarter will focus on specific issues and methods for conducting research such as descriptive and causal inference, as well as quantitative, qualitative, mixed and comparative methods. Because of their importance to studying political science and international affairs, special attention will be paid to the methodology of case studies.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

Since introduction to research methods is the first course in a sequence of methods courses, students are expected to become familiar with ontology and epistemology in social sciences and major analytical approaches to social and behavioral sciences. Specifically, they should be able to discuss the goals of political science, what approaches are most beneficial in generating knowledge and on what criteria should political and social research be evaluated. Furthermore, in the second part of the course, the students should be able to identify various components and stages of political inquiry such as the research question, hypotheses, alternative explanations and data collection. By the end of the course they are expected to develop skills that will enable them to identify specific research questions and apply and critique the various methods (qualitative, formal and mixed) used to answer these questions. Finally, at the end of the class the students should be able to produce a design of an acceptable research proposal on a topic in which they are most interested.

## REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

<i>Course Requirements:</i>	<u>% of final grade</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
Three Homework Assignments	30%	
Assignment One	10%	Week 3
Assignment Two	10%	Week 6
Assignment Three	10%	Week 8
In-class midterm exam	25%	Week 5
Take-home final exam (research proposal)	35%	
First draft due Week 9; final draft due Exam Week		
Attendance and participation	10%	throughout the quarter

### *Grading Scale:*

93-100%	A	73-76%	C
90-92%	A-	70-72%	C-
87-89%	B+	67-69%	D+
83-86%	B	63-66%	D
80-82%	B-	60-62%	D-
77-79%	C+	0-59%	F

Please note that grades represent **NON-NEGOTIABLE** assessments of a student's comprehension of course material.

## POLICIES AND CAVEATS:

If you have a disability that affects your performance in class, please notify the instructor **at the beginning of the quarter** in order to find an accommodation that meets best student's interests. Also, for advice and assistance you may contact the university's disability services office, located in 210 University Pavilion, Phone 513 556-6823, Email: [disabisv@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:disabisv@ucmail.uc.edu).

Since this is an intensive class, students are expected to attend class. The class participation grade will be determined by the instructor's assessment of the quality of student's participation in class discussion and activities. In the case of extraordinary circumstances (medical), I should be informed **PRIOR** to the class about the student's impending absence by email and, if requested, documentation should be provided when you return to class. Absences due to illness or injury will not be excused retroactively unless documentation is provided to the instructor. A student who misses a total of **FIVE** (1/3) or more class meetings will receive a class participation grade of zero (0), and may also have his or her overall course grade reduced. A student who has a total of **SEVEN** (1/2) or more unexcused absences will receive a course grade of F.

I do **NOT** plan makeup examinations. Missing an exam without prior permission of the instructor may result in a zero on that exam. Make-up tests will only be arranged

in extreme cases, so please be sure to let me know as soon as possible if you will not be able to attend at the scheduled time. Also, please note that late submission of the homework assignments and the final project will be penalized with 15% off the overall grade for every 24 hours delay in the submission of the assignment.

The in-class midterm is structured in the form of short answers and a short essay question. The three homework assignments will be distributed in Week Two, Five and Seven and will be due at the beginning of the first meeting of Week Three, Six and Eight respectively. Generally, there will be two components in the assignments. In the first one, you will be given examples from actual research and will be required to relate them to various issues and topics discussed in class, such as identifying the ontological and epistemological foundations of the research or strengths and weaknesses of the research design, etc. The second one will require the students to conduct small individual research and collect data related to a specific topic. Finally, the final exam (35%) is the most important assignment. You need to write a short description of a design on a topic for research of your choice and contact the instructor shortly after the midterm for approval. Then, you are required to submit a preliminary draft during the first meeting in Week Nine that will be discussed in class and individually with the instructor. The final draft is due during the Exam week.

Lastly, I need to remind you that all of the work you submit in this course is expected to be your own. Students should review the UC student code of conduct and be aware of all activities defined as academic dishonesty. Although I do encourage students to exchange ideas and/or work together on certain assignments, *each student is responsible for completing and submitting his or her own homework*. Please be advised that according to the UC Student Code of Conduct plagiarism is defined as:

Submitting another's published or unpublished work in whole, in part or in paraphrase, as one's own without fully and properly crediting the author with footnotes, quotation marks, citations, or bibliographical reference.

Submitting as one's own original work, material obtained from an individual or agency without reference to the person or agency as the source of the material.

Submitting as one's own original work material that has been produced through unacknowledged collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators.<sup>1</sup>

For further information on appropriate citation visit the University of Wisconsin-Madison website and check a detailed instructional brochure about references on my webpage:

[http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPSA\\_PC.html](http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/DocAPSA_PC.html)

Please do not forget that all cell phones and pagers should be **turned off completely** (not muted!!!) during class time and I will be very disappointed to hear ring tones during our class.

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<sup>1</sup> The University of Cincinnati Student Code of Conduct, Last revised on 4/29/04. Also available on the Internet: [http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Code\\_of\\_Conduct.html](http://www.uc.edu/conduct/Code_of_Conduct.html), accessed on 06/23/2007.

## **REQUIRED READINGS:**

1) The following books are required:

David March and Gerry Stoker, "*Theory and Methods in Political Science*," Palgrave MacMillan, 2002.

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, "*Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*," Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1994.

Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, "*Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*," Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2005.

2) There are readings in addition to the required textbook. Most readings will be available on the Internet via the class web page on Blackboard or links from Blackboard. When electronic versions of readings are not available, paper copies will be distributed in class or course pack will be available in the library and/or one of the university bookstores.

### **PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

This section deals with the philosophy of social science; scientific and interpretative approaches and the growth of scientific knowledge.

March and Stoker, pp. 1-41.

King, Keohane and Verba, pp. 1-12.

Almond and Genco, "Clouds, Clocks and the Study of Politics"

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, Chapters 1-2 and 4-9.

Gabriel Almond, "Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science"

Assignment one due.

### **PART 2: APPROACHES TO STUDYING POLITICAL SCIENCE**

#### **II. Behavioralism**

March and Stoker, pp. 45-63.

Heinz Eulau, *Behavioralism in Political Science*

#### **III. Rational Choice**

March and Stoker, pp. 65-89.

Riker, "Political Science and Rational Choice"

#### **IV. Interpretive and Normative Theory**

March and Stoker, pp. 131-52 and pp. 172-93.

### **PART 3: CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH**

#### **V. Operationalization and Measurement**

King, Keohane and Verba, pp. 35-74.

Jarol B. Mannheim, Richard C. Rich, and Lars Willnat, *Empirical Political Analysis*

#### **VI. Causality and Causal Inference**

King, Keohane and Verba, pp. 75-114.

Louise White, *Political Analysis: Technique and Practice*, pp. 126-130.

#### **VII. Observations, Experiments and Quasi-Experiments**

King, Keohane and Verba, pp. 115-230.

Campbell and Stanley, *Quasi-Experimentation*

Richard Fenno, *Homestyle*, Appendix, pp 249-295.

Midterm Exam.

### **PART 4: METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

#### **VIII. Quantitative Methods (Large-N Studies)**

March and Stoker, pp. 197-215.

James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, *A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, *Political Analysis* Vol. 14, pp. 227-249.

Contact the instructor to discuss your research design project.

#### **IX. Qualitative Methods (Small-N Studies)**

March and Stoker, pp. 216-30.

Stanley Lieberman, *Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases*, *Social Forces* 70, No. 2, 1991, pp. 307-320.

Assignment two due.

#### **X. Mixed Methods**

March and Stoker, pp. 230-48.

Ann Lin and Kenyatha Loftis, *Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Political Science: A Primer*, paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September, 2005.

## **XI. Comparative Methods**

March and Stoker, pp. 249-67.

Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*, pp. 19-33, 69-102.

Charles Ragin, *Fuzzy Set Social Science*, pp. 149-202.

"Symposium: Qualitative Comparative Analysis." 2004. *Qualitative Methods* 2, No. 2, pp. 2-25.

### **PART 5: CASE STUDIES**

How to do Case Studies: George and Bennett, pp. 65-124.

Comparative Method and Congruence Method: George and Bennett, pp. 65-204.

Process-Tracing and Historical Explanation: George and Bennett, pp. 205-232.

Assignment three due.

### **PART 6: STANDARDS AND ETHICS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH**

Chava Frankfort-Nachmias and David Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, pp. 67-86 and pp. 485-98.

Discussion of the individual research designs.

### **LITERATURE:**

Gabriel Almond, "Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 21:4 (Autumn), pp. 828-842.

Gabriel Almond and Stephen Genco, "Clouds, Clocks and the Study of Politics," *World Politics* 21:4(July), pp. 489-522.

Heinz Eulau, *Behavioralism in Political Science*, Atherton Press, University of Michigan, 1969.

Richard Fenno, *Homestyle: House Members in Their Districts*, New York: Harper Collins.

Donald Fiske and Richard Shweder, "Methatheory in Social Science," University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1986.

Chava Frankfort-Nachmias and David Nachmias, "Research Methods in the Social Sciences," New York: Worth Publishers, 2000, pp. 67-86 and pp. 485-98.

Thomas Kuhn, "The Structure of Scientific Revolution," the university of Chicago Press, 1970.

Stanley Lieberman, *Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases*, Social Forces 70, No. 2, 1991, pp. 307-320.

Ann Lin and Kenyatha Loftis, *Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Political Science: A Primer*, paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, September, 2005.

James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, *A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research*, Political Analysis Vol. 14, pp. 227-249.

Jarol B. Mannheim, Richard C. Rich, and Lars Willnat, "Empirical Political Analysis," (5th edition), New York: Longman, 2002.

Charles Ragin, "Fuzzy Set Social Science," University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2000. "Symposium: Qualitative Comparative Analysis." 2004. Qualitative Methods 2, no. 2: 2-25.

Charles Ragin, "The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies," Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

William Riker, "Political Science and Rational Choice" in Perspectives on Political Economy, ed. J.E. Alt and K.E. Shepsle, Cambridge University Press.

"Symposium: Qualitative Comparative Analysis." 2004. Qualitative Methods 2, No. 2, pp. 2-25.

Louise White, Political Analysis: Technique and Practice, 4th edition, Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, pp. 126-130.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This syllabus is subject to change. I reserve the right to add supplementary readings if necessary.