POSC 230 Methods of Political Research
Locations and Times:
Willis 211 -- MW 9:50-11:00AM
Willis 211 -- F 9:40AM-10:40AM
Fall 2011
Instructor Greg Marfleet, gmarflee@carleton.edu
Office: Weitz Center 239b, x4116
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00 to 4:30
Prefect: Erik Anderson anderser@carleton.edu

This course is intended to introduce students to the science side of political science. Over the term you will be encouraged to think like social scientists, learn how to pose questions in the manner of our discipline, undertake a study of your own and present your findings in a customary fashion. You will also participate in an analysis of the work of other scholars (and your peers), a discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of various methodologies, and a broader critical evaluation of the application of the scientific method to the study of politics.
Although the topic of research methods may initially appear to be a dull one, the debates at the heart of any methods discussion are among the MOST contentious in our field. Political Science is known to be a 'borrowing discipline'. From a methodological and theoretical standpoint, it has been influenced or colonized by advances and debates in other fields of inquiry such as history, economics, psychology, sociology and anthropology.
Methodological shifts have been accompanied by departmental disputes, struggles for preeminence among journals, and the occasional war over the hearts and minds of undergraduates and graduate students. The consequence of this pattern of disciplinary development is the pluralistic, multi-methodological mix that we find among practitioners in most departments (including our own here at Carleton). Some lament over what appears to them a haphazard and inefficient mess; others celebrate the freedom to pursue interesting questions by whatever means.
The course is divided into two parts. The first addresses a 'philosophy of science' debate about the 'truth producing' value of empirical social science inquiry. At the heart of this debate is the nature of social causation and our ability to objectively evaluate social phenomena to accumulate knowledge. This first section culminates in a short paper analyzing multiple articles.
The second part of the course focuses on empirical data analysis techniques of both a quantitative and qualitative nature. This section culminates in the final poster project.
The course is organized around a regular M, W, F pattern. Monday will be comprised primarily of lecture as I introduce new topics. On Wednesday I may append Monday's lecture material briefly before we focus on discussion of an article or reading that demonstrates an approach or concept.
Our Fridays will be 'workshop days' that revolve around a series of short assignments that comprise the essential steps in the your major poster projects. These include: formulating a question, reviewing literature and identifying applicable theories, generating hypotheses, developing a testing strategy, finding and analyzing data, and presenting your findings. During these sessions I may sometimes break the class into smaller sub-groups and have you discuss your work with your peers.

Texts:
David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds), 2002. Theory and Methods in Political Science, Second Edition, 2002, Palgrave-MacMillan. OR 3rd edition 2010.
Phillip H. Pollock III. 2005. The Essentials of Political Analysis. 2nd ed. CQ Press. (TEPA)
Phillip H. Pollock III. 2005. A STATA Companion to Political Analysis. 2nd ed. CQ Press. (SCPA)

Course Grading Components

Component	Weight (%)
Participation	15
Philosophy of Social Science Paper	20
Friday Workshops (7)	25
Research Proposal	15
Final Poster Presentation	25

WEEKLY TOPIC AND READING OUTLINE

September 11 - September 17
Monday
Introduction and Syllabus
History, Foundations & Controversies of the Discipline: Is social 'science' possible?
M & S (2nd ed) Introduction & Chapter 1, M&S (3rd) Introduction and Chapter 9. TEPA Introduction
Wednesday
Ontology, Epistemology & Theory
M & S (2nd) Ch 2-4, M & S (3rd) ch 1-3 [Behav., Rat Choice, Inst]
Friday Workshop #1 Assignment

September 18 - September 24
Monday
Causality & Hypotheses
M & S (2nd ed) CH 5-7 or M & S (3rd Ed) 4-7*, TEPA CH 1, 2
* The third edition has an additional chapter on Political Psychology
Wednesday
Conceptualization, and Measurement: Reliability and Validity
TEPA CH 3 & 4
Article for Discussion
Barbara Harff; Ted Robert Gurr (1998) Toward Empirical Theory of Genocides and Politicides: Identification and Measurement of Cases Since 1945 (in Research Note) International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 32, No. 3. (Sep., 1988), pp. 359-371. (J-stor) (Note: This is a conceptual precursor to The Polity and State Failure Data sets).
Friday Workshop #2 Assignment

September 25 - October 1
Monday
Experimental logic, Observation and Research Design
TEPA Ch 2 (pp 37 -47). M&S (3rd) 15 *no 2nd version
Wednesday
Class visit from Social Science Librarian Danya Leebaw
Friday
Quasi-Experiments: Issues of Internal and External Validity
Article for Discussion:
Shanto Iyengar (1987) Television News and Citizens' Explanations of National Affairs (in Articles). The American Political Science Review, Vol. 81, No. 3. pp. 815-832. (J-Stor) (Note: Employs NES data)
Philosophy of Social Science Paper Assignment

October 2 - October 8
Monday
Sampling
TEPA Ch 5, M & S (2nd) Ch 10, M & S (3rd) 13
Wednesday
Univariate & Bivariate Analysis
TEPA Ch 3 & 6
Article for Discussion
Jonathan Wilkenfeld. (1991) Trigger-Response Transitions in Foreign Policy Crises, 1929-1985. The Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 35, No. 1. pp. 143-169. (J-Stor) (Note: Uses the ICBP Dataset)
Friday Workshop #3 Assignment

October 9 - October 15
Monday
Bivariate OLS Regression
TEPA Ch 7 pp 154- 167
Wednesday
OLS Regression with Dummy Variables
Article for Discussion
Jim Granato, Ronald Inglehart and David Leblang (1996) The Effects of Cultural Values on Economic Development: Theory, Hypotheses, and Some Empirical Tests. American Journal of Political Science, Vol. 40, No. 3 pp. 607-631 (J-Stor). (Note: Uses World Value Survey Data)
Friday Workshop #4 Assignment

October 16 - October 22
Monday
No Class - - Mid Term Break (look for feedback on your draft proposal in the Courses Folder)

Wednesday
Multivariate OLS
TEPA CH 7 (168-176), M&S (3rd) Ch 11 "The Challenge of Research Design" * no 2nd version
No article today! Your revised workshop #4 (AKA your research proposal) paper is due by the beginning of class!
Research Proposal Paper Assignment
Friday Workshop #5 Assignment

October 23 - October 29
Monday
Regression with Categorical Dependent Variables (Logistic Regression)
TEPA Ch 8
Additional support material is also included in the COURSES course materials folder.
Wednesday
Logistic Regression cont. (interpretation)
Article for Discussion
David C. Barker, (1999) Rushed Decisions: Political Talk Radio and Vote Choice, 1994-6, The Journal of Politics, Vol. 61, No. 2 pp. 527-539 (J-Stor). (Note: Uses the ANES dataset)

Friday Workshop #6 Assignment

October 30 - November 5
Monday
Small-N and Qualitative Research Design
M & S (2nd) Ch 9 & 11, M&S (3rd) Ch 12
Juliet Kaarbo; Ryan K. Beasley. 1999. A Practical Guide to the Comparative Case Study Method in Political Psychology. Political Psychology. 20, 2 : 369-391(J-Stor)
Wednesday
Comparative Methodology
M & S (2nd) Ch 12, M&S (3rd) Ch 14
Article for Discussion
Jason Seawright, John Gerring. (2008) Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options. Political Research Quarterly, Vol. 61, No. 2 (Jun., 2008), pp. 294-308(J-Stor)
Friday Workshop #7 Assignment

November 6 - November 12
Monday
Qualitative Methods (cont.)
Article for Discussion
Thies, Cameron G. (2002) A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations. International Studies Perspectives. v3, 351-372.(Ebsco)
Wednesday
Content Analysis
Article for Discussion
Deborah Welch Larson (1988) Problems of Content Analysis in Foreign- Policy Research: Notes from the Study of the Origins of Cold War Belief Systems. International Studies Quarterly. 32, 2, pp. 241-255. (J-Stor)

Friday NO WORKSHOP
NOTE Any late or otherwise incomplete workshops (1 to 7) or other assignments must be submitted 5pm this Friday or they will receive a grade of zero. NO exceptions will be made to this absolute deadline for any reason.
Ethics and Human Subjects Discussion

November 13 - November 19
Monday
Student Poster Presentations Group 1
Presenters:

Wednesday
Student Poster Presentations Group 2
Presenters:

November 20 - November 26
NO EXAM FOR THIS COURSE!