

# Political Science 501: Methods of Political Analysis

## Fall 2017

Professor: Allison P. Harris  
Office: 227 Pond Lab  
auh323@psu.edu  
Office Hours: M&W 3-4PM

Class Meetings:  
M & W 5-6:30PM  
Room: 301 Boucke

### Seminar Description

This course is designed to introduce you to the ways that political scientists study politics. We will consider the components of good research design as we survey a variety of research methods used in the discipline. Hopefully, this course will help as you think about your own research projects, and also improve your ability to evaluate others' research.

### Seminar Requirements

Five assignments:	75%
Participation:	20%
Presentation:	5%

### Required Readings

Geddes, Barbara. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press, 2003. (e-book available on library website)

Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia, eds. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press, 2011. (Full text available on Canvas)

Trochim, William MK, and James P. Donnelly. "Research methods knowledge base." (2001). (Web-based version here: <https://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/>)

Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Commonly referred to as KKV)

Brady, Henry E., and David Collier, eds. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010. (e-book available on library website)

The additional required readings are either available for download through the Penn State Library website or Google Scholar (journal articles) or on the Canvas site. Come to class having read the assigned readings for that day.

### Assignments

You are required to write three short linked papers, write a research proposal, and present your proposed research to your classmates. The idea behind the assignments is to force you to become very familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of an empirical article of your choice; and then use that process to help you think about your own research. Here is some detail about the assignments:

- 1.** Find a journal article on which to base your response papers. Find any empirical article that you find interesting, published in the last five years in a major political science journal, such as the *American Political Science Review*, *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, etc. The article can fall into any area of political science long as the article makes an argument, assembles evidence in support of or against that argument, and evaluates the results. Upload your selected article to Canvas by 5PM on **September 5<sup>th</sup>**.
- 2.** In no more than 5 double-spaced pages identify the general topic, specific research question, and argument of the article. This paper must also critique the article's argument in terms of its Lave and March "beauty." An excellent first paper will offer not only an accurate summary of the argument and insightful critique of it, but will also provide creative suggestions for improving the argument. Upload your paper to Canvas by 5PM on **September 21<sup>st</sup>**.
- 3.** In no more than 5 double-spaced pages identify the main concepts in the article. Describe these important concepts, and describe how the author(s) measures them. Are the measures valid; to what extent do they reflect the key concepts in the study? Do you have concerns with respect to the validity of any measures? Why? How would you suggest addressing these concerns? Upload your paper to Canvas by 5PM on **October 26<sup>th</sup>**.
- 4.** In no more than 5-7 double-spaced pages provide an overall critique of the article. What is the unit of analysis? What is the author's methodological approach? What are the main findings of the research report? Do the findings have any real-world implications, i.e. for policy makers? What is your overall evaluation of this article, and how much confidence do you have in its conclusions? To what degree does the article realize its objectives? Upload your paper to Canvas by 5PM on **November 16<sup>th</sup>**.
- 5.** Write a research proposal. Use this assignment as an opportunity to think carefully about what you will need to do to complete your own research project. This should be a small project (a standalone paper or a piece of what you think will be your dissertation project). In no more than 5 pages present your research puzzle and question; expectations and hypotheses; and data and research design. Upload one paragraph describing research question, puzzle, and areas of literature to which it relates to Canvas by 5pm **October 5<sup>th</sup>**. Upload your paper to Canvas by 5PM on **December 1<sup>st</sup>**.
- 6.** Present your research proposal. You will each have 8 minutes to present your research to the class using a prepared slide deck. Model this presentation after a

conference presentation. We will discuss this in more detail before the assignment is due. However, feel free to ask your graduate colleagues and advisors about their APSA and MPSA presentations. The important things to include are: research question, research puzzle, data, data sources, hypotheses, and early thoughts regarding your proposed method of analysis.

## **Week 1: The Scientific Method and Studying Politics**

August 21<sup>st</sup>

Introduction

August 23<sup>rd</sup>

Readings:

- Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava, and David Nachmias. *Study Guide for Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. Macmillan, 2007. Chapters. 1-3 (Available on Canvas).

## **Week 2: Developing Theory**

August 28<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Lave, Charles A., and James G. March. *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*. University Press of America, 1993. Chapters 1-3 (Available on Canvas).

August 30<sup>th</sup>: **No class.**

Readings:

- Geddes. Chapters 1-2.
- Van Belle, Douglas A. "Dinosaurs and the Democratic Peace: Paleontological Lessons for Avoiding the Extinction of Theory in Political Science." *International Studies Perspectives* 7, no. 3 (2006): 287-306.

## **Week 3: More Theory**

September 4<sup>th</sup>: **Labor Day. No class.**

September 6<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Geddes. Chapter 5.
- Trochim and Donnelly. Chapter 1, "Foundations."

## **Week 4: Causal Inference Experimental Design**

September 11th

Readings:

- *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, Chapters 1- 5

September 13<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, Chapters 6, 8, and 9
- Morton, Rebecca B., and Joshua A. Tucker. "Experiments, Journals, and Ethics." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 1, no. 2 (2014): 99-103.

### **Week 5: Political Science Experiments**

September 18<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- White, Ismail K., Chryl N. Laird, and Troy D. Allen. "Selling Out?: the Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest." *American Political Science Review* 108, no. 4 (2014): 783-800.
- Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 3 (2000): 653-663.
- Corbacho, Ana, Daniel W. Gingerich, Virginia Oliveros, and Mauricio Ruiz-Vega. "Corruption as a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Costa Rica." *American Journal of Political Science* 60, no. 4 (2016): 1077-1092.

September 20<sup>th</sup>

Readings: Class presentations

- Carlson, Elizabeth. "Ethnic Voting and Accountability in Africa: A Choice Experiment in Uganda." *World Politics* 67, no. 2 (2015): 353-385.
- Pérez, Efrén O., and Margit Tavits. "Language Shapes People's Time Perspective and Support for Future-Oriented Policies." *American Journal of Political Science* (2017).
- Valentino, Nicholas A., Vincent L. Hutchings, and Ismail K. White. "Cues that Matter: How Political Ads Prime Racial Attitudes during Campaigns." *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 1 (2002): 75-90.
- Malesky, Edmund, Paul Schuler, and Anh Tran. "The Adverse Effects of Sunshine: a Field Experiment on Legislative Transparency in an Authoritarian Assembly." *American Political Science Review* 106, no. 4 (2012): 762-786.

- Margolis, Michele. "How Far Does Social Group Influence Reach? Elites, Evangelicals, and Immigration Attitudes." Forthcoming. *The Journal of Politics*.
- Bahry, Donna, Mikhail Kosolapov, Polina Kozyreva, and Rick K. Wilson. "Ethnicity and trust: Evidence from Russia." *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 4 (2005): 521-532.

## **Week 6: "Natural", Quasi-Experiments**

September 25<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Dunning. Chapters 1-2.

September 27<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Loewen, Peter John, Royce Koop, Jaime Settle, and James H. Fowler. "A Natural Experiment in Proposal Power and Electoral Success." *American Journal of Political Science* 58, no. 1 (2014): 189-196.
- Bhavnani, Rikhil R. "Do Electoral Quotas Work after They are Withdrawn? Evidence from a Natural Experiment in India." *American Political Science Review* 103, no. 1 (2009): 23-35.

## **Week 7: Quasi-Experiments**

October 2<sup>nd</sup>

Readings:

- Dunning. Chapters 3-4.

October 4<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Miguel, Edward, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti. "Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach." *Journal of Political Economy* 112, no. 4 (2004): 725-753.
- Hall, Andrew B. "What Happens When Extremists Win Primaries?" *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 1 (2015): 18-42.
- Harris, Allison P. "Voter Response to Salient Judicial Decisions in Retention Elections." 2017.

## **Week 8: Measurement**

October 9<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95(3):529-546.

October 11<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Hudson, Valerie M., and Hilary Matfess. "In Plain Sight: The Neglected Linkage between Brideprice and Violent Conflict." *International Security* (2017).
- Marks, Zoe. "Sexual violence in Sierra Leone's civil war: 'Virgination', rape, and marriage." *African Affairs* 113, no. 450 (2013): 67-87.

### **Week 9: Measurement: Unobservable Constructs**

October 16<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Brysk, Allison. 1994. "The Politics of Measurement: The Contested Count of the Disappearance in Argentina." *Human Rights Quarterly*, 16(4):676-692.
- Borsboom, Denny. *Measuring the Mind: Conceptual Issues in Contemporary Psychometrics*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. Chapter 3. (Available on Canvas)
- Trochim and Donnelly. Chapter 5, "Scales and Indexes."

October 18<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Bond, Robert, and Solomon Messing. "Quantifying Social Media's Political Space: Estimating Ideology from Publicly Revealed Preferences on Facebook." *American Political Science Review* 109, no. 1 (2015): 62-78.
- Gay, Claudine, Jennifer Hochschild, and Ariel White. "Americans' Belief in Linked Fate: Does the Measure Capture the Concept?" *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Politics* 1, no. 1 (2016): 117-144.
- Fariss, Christopher J. "The Changing Standard of Accountability and the Positive Relationship between Human Rights Treaty Ratification and Compliance." *British Journal of Political Science* (2017): 1-33.

### **Week 10: Surveys**

October 23<sup>rd</sup>

Readings:

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- Albertson, Bethany, and Adria Lawrence. "After the Credits Roll: The Long-Term Effects of Educational Television on Public Knowledge and Attitudes." *American Politics Research* 37 (2009): 275-300.

- Liu, Shan-Jan Sarah, and Lee Ann Banaszak. "Do Government Positions Held by Women Matter? A Cross-National Examination of Female Ministers' Impacts on Women's Political Participation." *Politics & Gender* 13, no. 1 (2017): 132-162.
- Prior, Markus, and Arthur Lupia. "Money, time, and political knowledge: Distinguishing quick recall and political learning skills." *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 1 (2008): 169-183.

October 25<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Tourangeau, Roger, and Tom W. Smith. "Asking Sensitive Questions: The Impact of Data Collection Mode, Question Format, and Question Context." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60 (1996): 275-304.
- Keeter, Scott, Courtney Kennedy, Michael Dimock, Jonathan Best, and Peyton Craighill. "Gauging the Impact of Growing Nonresponse on Estimates from a National RDD Telephone Survey." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 70(5) (2006): 759-779

### **Week 11: Observational Studies: Correlation vs. Causation**

October 30<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

- Taubes, G. 2007. "Do We Really Know What Makes Us Healthy?" *New York Times Magazine*, 1-15.
- Levitt, Steven D. "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s: Four Factors that Explain the Decline and Six that Do Not." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18, no. 1 (2004): 163-190.

November 1<sup>st</sup>

Readings:

- Boix, Carles, and Susan C. Stokes. "Endogenous Democratization." *World politics* 55, no. 4 (2003): 517-549.
- White, Ariel. "When Threat Mobilizes: Immigration Enforcement and Latino Voter Turnout." *Political Behavior* 38, no. 2 (2016): 355-382.

### **Week 12: Unifying Research? KKV**

November 6<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

KKV, chs. 1-3.

November 8<sup>th</sup>

Readings:

KKV, chs. 4-6.

### **Week 13: KKV**

November 13<sup>th</sup>: **No Class**

November 15<sup>th</sup>: One-on-one meetings

### **Week 14**

Thanksgiving break.

### **Week 16: Responding to KKV?**

November 27<sup>th</sup>

Reading:

- Brady, Henry E., and David Collier. (sections TBA)

November 29<sup>th</sup>

Reading:

- Brady, Henry E., and David Collier. (sections TBA)

### **Week 17: Proposal Presentations**

December 4<sup>th</sup>: Presentations

December 6<sup>th</sup>: Presentations

### **Academic integrity:**

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment by all members of the University community not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

### **Disability accommodation:**



Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has an office for students with disabilities. Student Disability Resources (SDR) website provides [contact information for every Penn State campus](#)

(<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/disability-coordinator>). For further information, please visit [Student Disability Resources website](#) (<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/>).

In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: [See documentation guidelines](#)

(<http://equity.psu.edu/sdr/guidelines>). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus disability services office will provide you with an accommodation letter. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early as possible. You must follow this process for every semester that you request accommodations.

### **Counseling and psychological services:**

Many students at Penn State face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academic progress, social development, or emotional wellbeing. The university offers a variety of confidential services to help you through difficult times, including individual and group counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, online chats, and mental health screenings. These services are provided by staff who welcome all students and embrace a philosophy respectful of clients' cultural and religious backgrounds, and sensitive to differences in race, ability, gender identity and sexual orientation.

[Counseling and Psychological Services at University Park \(CAPS\): 814-863-0395](#)

Penn State Crisis Line (24 hours/7 days/week): [877-229-6400](#)

Crisis Text Line (24 hours/7 days/week): Text LIONS to 741741

### **Educational Equity and Reporting Bias Incidents:**

State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, or harassment due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, gender identity, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity via the [Report Bias webpage](#). You may also contact one of the following offices:

University Police Services, University Park: [814-863-1111](#)

Multicultural Resource Center, Diversity Advocate for Students: [814-865-1773](#)

Office of the Vice Provost for Educational Equity: [814-865-5906](#)

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs: [814-865-0909](#)

Affirmative Action Office: [814-863-0471](#)

Call 911 in cases where physical injury has occurred or is imminent.