Course description

The objective of this course is to provide students with an introduction to empirical research in political science. Students will learn how political scientists formulate research questions, develop theories to answer those questions, and use empirical techniques to test the validity of those theories. Specifically, the student will learn how to craft a research question, define and measure concepts, formulate a theory and hypotheses, create a research design to collect data, and test theoretically driven hypotheses with empirical (observed) evidence. The goal of this entire endeavor is to create knowledge about the world of politics using the scientific process.

Course goals

• To help you consume academic political science research
• To help you become a better consumer of information
• To start you on the road to becoming a producer of scientific research on politics

Required readings

The following text is available at the campus bookstore:


The following articles are required and free for download at either www.jstor.com or google scholar:


Article questions: When you read each research article, you should be prepared to answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. What is the research question? Specifically, what is the basic information the researchers are seeking in their project?
2. What are the key concepts - the phenomena implicitly or explicitly referenced in the research question?
3. What are the key variables? That is, what do the numerical scales that measure the concepts look like?
4. What is the theory - the logical explanation of how and why the concepts are related?
5. What are the hypotheses - the statements predicting a relationship between two or more variables?
6. How is the data collected? That is, how are cases identified and selected to be included in the study?
7. What research method or methods do the researchers use to test their hypotheses?
8. What are the key empirical findings? That is, do the authors present convincing evidence that supports their hypotheses? If not, why not?
Course requirements and grading

Attendance, Preparation, and Participation: Students are expected to complete and understand the readings, attend class on a regular basis, and contribute to classroom discussions. Students will be awarded 10 extra credit points toward their final grade based on class attendance, participation, and completing the required reading (as measured by in-class pop quizzes). I will not redistribute materials, lecture notes, or assignments to students that miss class. Students should come to class having read the material assigned for that day. I will automatically deduct these points for any student I see using a cell phone during class or disrupting other students during class. You will not receive any warning.

Exams: There will be four in-class exams based on the readings (including articles) and class materials. Each exam is worth 100 points and will compose 25% of your grade. The exams will include definitions, multiple choice questions, and short answer questions. The first three exams are not cumulative, but some material from earlier exams will be helpful in understanding the material in later exams. The final exam is cumulative. Students do not need a scantron, but should bring a pencil for the exam. Students requiring special needs for the exam must contact me immediately. Students should come to exams on time and will not be allowed to leave the classroom while taking the exam for any purpose. Computers, notes, cell phones, and other mobile devices are not allowed during exams. The use of any such device during an exam will be viewed as cheating.

Arizona State University uses a plus/minus grading system. For this course, the following scores translate into the following grading scale:

- A+ 95-100 (Excellent)
- A 90-94
- B+ 87-89
- B 84-86 (Good)
- B - 80-83
- C 70-79 (Passing for majors)
- D 60-69 (Passing for non-majors only)
- E 59 and below (Failure)

Under very rare circumstances, I will consider changing grades given on exams. However, any request for a re-evaluation must 1) be in writing (typed), justifying why you believe you deserve a better grade (NO E-MAIL) and 2) turned in to me in one of the two class session immediately following when the exam is returned. Be warned: if your request is reasonable, the entire exam will be re-evaluated. This may cause your grade to go up, but it may cause it to go down.
**Make up Policy:** There are NO makeup examinations. If an emergency prevents you from taking the first, second, or third exam, you must contact me **prior** to the exam (and receive confirmation from me regarding such contact), explain the nature of the emergency, and subsequently present documentation verifying the explanation. If the emergency proves valid you will not be penalized, and your course grade will reflect your performance on the other exams. Invalid excuses or excuses after the fact will result in a 0 score for the missed exam. Everyone is required to take the final exam.

**Academic integrity:** There are severe sanctions for cheating, plagiarizing and any other form of dishonesty (see [http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy/Sanctions](http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity/policy/Sanctions)). Any cheating incident will result in a failure (E or possibly an XE— failure for academic dishonesty) for the course. All work must be yours and it must be original to this class. If you have questions about this, please ask. All instances of academic dishonesty will, per CLAS policy, be reported to the appropriate authority in CLAS.

**Course calendar**

The course calendar is an outline and subject to change. Changes in the course calendar will be announced in class. All readings listed are required and may be included on an exam.

**Friday, August 19th: Course Overview**

Required Reading: Syllabus

**Monday, August 22: What Do We Study?**

Required Reading: Syllabus

**Wednesday, August 24: Why the Scientific Method**

Required reading for this class: Babbie, Chapter 1, pages 1-14.

**Friday, August 26: The Scientific Method**

Required reading: Babbie, “How to Design a Research Project,” pp 112-120.

**Monday, August 29: The Scientific Method**


**Wednesday, August 31: Research questions I**

Required reading: Babbie Chapter 4, pp 91-112

Focus on “Three Purposes of Research,” pp 92-94 and “Unit of Analysis,” pp 98-104
Friday, September 2: Research questions II

Required reading: Babbie Chapter 4, pp 91-112

Focus on “Three Purposes of Research,” pp 92-94 and “Unit of Analysis,” pp 98-104

Monday, September 5

Labor Day Observed

Wednesday, September 7: Unit of Analysis and Concepts

Required reading: Babbie, Earl. Chapter 5. pp 125-130 (up to Indicators and Dimensions section)

Friday, September 9: Concepts

Required reading: Babbie, Earl. Chapter 5. pp 125-130

Monday, September 12: Theory I


Wednesday, September 14: Theory II


Friday, September 16: Hypotheses and Variables


Monday, September 19: Research example


Be able to 1) Identify the research question, 2) how the authors define the key concepts in the research question, 3) the theoretical explanation that they test and 4) the key hypotheses derived from their theory.

Wednesday, September 21

Review
Friday, September 23

Exam 1

Monday, September 26: Measurement

Wednesday, September 28: Measurement

Friday, September 30: Levels of Measurement

Monday, October 3: Measurement Quality

Wednesday, October 5: Measurement
Required Reading: Earl Babbie. Chapter 6: pp. 161-171

Friday, October 7: Measurement

Monday, October 10: Data Collection
Required Reading: Earl Babbie. Chapter 7. pp. 188-225

Wednesday, October 12: Population Sampling
Required Reading: Earl Babbie. Chapter 7. pp. 188-225

Friday, October 14: Principles of Survey Research

Monday, October 17: Problems of Survey Research: Question Wording

Wednesday, October 19: Survey Interview & Context Effects
Friday, October 21: Survey Research


Monday, October 24: Survey Research in Practice


Wednesday, October 26: Exam Review

Review: Measurement, Sampling, and Survey Research

Friday, October 28: Exam 2

Exam 2: Measurement, Sampling, and Survey Research

Monday, October 31: Experiments

Required Reading: TBA

Wednesday, November 2: Experiments


Friday, November 4: Experiments


Monday, November 7: Quasi and Field Experiments


Wednesday, November 9: Quasi-Experiments


Friday, November 11:

Veterans Day - No Class

Monday, November 14: Document Analysis


Wednesday, November 16; Document Analysis

Friday, November 18: Exam Review

Exam Review: Experiments, Quasi-Experiments, and Document Analysis

Monday, November 21: Exam 3

Exam 3: Experiments, Quasi-Experiments, and Document Analysis

Wednesday, November 24: Post-exam 3 Review

Required Reading: TBA

Friday, November 26

Thanksgiving Holiday Observed

Monday, November 29: Qualitative Research


Wednesday, December 1: Linking Theory to Research


Friday, December 3: Linking Theory to Research


Monday, December 5: Last Day of Class

Exam 4: This exam is cumulative and covers the last two articles

Further considerations

How to access articles in JSTOR

You will need to access articles from JSTOR, a scholarly journal database. Being able to successfully navigate library materials and scholarly journal articles is an important part of your college training. You should consult the Arizona State University Libraries Staff for help on how to access these and other materials should you encounter any difficulties. Note, newer articles within the last several years are not archived in JSTOR. These will have to be directly obtained from the relevant journal using the libraries on-line journal access.
• Go to the JSTOR homepage at www.jstor.org from any ASU computer and click on the Search option. Then click on Advanced Search on the next page that appears.

• On the next page that appears list the author of the article you are seeking, e.g. Segal, Jeffrey A., in the all of these words line. Then check the boxes for Author and Articles. Then check the box associated with Political Science journals from the list of scholarly disciplines that follows. You can also search using keywords in the title of the article.

**Statement about students with disabilities**

_Disability Accommodations:_ Qualified students with disabilities who will require disability accommodations in this class **must** to make their requests to me at the beginning of the semester either during office hours or by appointment. Note: Prior to receiving disability accommodations, verification of eligibility from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) is required. Disability information is confidential.

_Establishing Eligibility for Disability Accommodations:_ Students who feel they will need disability accommodations in this class should contact DRC immediately. Their office is located on the first floor of the Matthews Center Building. DRC staff can also be reached at: 480-965-1234 (V), 480-965-9000 (TTY). For additional information, visit: [www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc](http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc). Their hours are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

**University Academic Integrity Policy**

Each student must act with honesty and integrity, and must respect the rights of others in carrying out all academic assignments. A student may be found to have engaged in academic dishonesty if, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or academic or research assignment (including a paid research position), he or she:

1. Engages in any form of academic deceit;
2. Refers to materials or sources or uses devices (e.g., computer disks, audio recorders, camera phones, text messages, crib sheets, calculators, solution manuals, materials from previous classes, or commercial research services) not authorized by the instructor for use during the Academic Evaluation or assignment;
3. Possesses, reviews, buys, sells, obtains, or uses, without appropriate authorization, any materials intended to be used for an Academic Evaluation or assignment in advance of its administration;
4. Acts as a substitute for another person in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
5. Uses a substitute in any Academic Evaluation or assignment;
6. Depends on the aid of others, including other students or tutors, in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment to the extent that the work is not representative of the student’s abilities;
7. Provides inappropriate aid to another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, including the unauthorized use of camera phones, text messages, photocopies, notes or other means to copy or photograph materials used or intended for Academic Evaluation;

8. Engages in Plagiarism;

9. Uses materials from the Internet or any other source without full and appropriate attribution;

10. Permits his or her work to be submitted by another person in connection with any Academic Evaluation or assignment, without authorization;

11. Claims credit for or submits work done by another;

12. Signs an attendance sheet for another student, allows another student to sign on the student’s behalf, or otherwise participates in gaining credit for attendance for oneself or another without actually attending;

13. Falsifying or misrepresenting hours or activities in relationship to an internship, externship, field experience, clinical activity or similar activity; or

14. Attempts to influence or change any Academic Evaluation, assignment or academic record for reasons having no relevance to academic achievement.

Copyright statement

The materials used in this course are copyrighted. By materials, I mean all products generated for this class, which include but are not limited to syllabi, web pages, multimedia files, presentations, quizzes, exams, lab problems, in-class materials review sheets, lectures and additional problem sets. Because these are copyrighted, you do not have the right to copy the handouts, unless I expressly grant permission. Students are prohibited from selling or distributing lecture notes or other material generated from this course. Moreover, it is illegal to record and videotape course lectures and discussions and distribute such recordings on any multimedia device including the internet, unless I expressly grant permission.