

PSCI 7075: SCOPE AND METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
T 12:30PM - 3:00PM
KETCHUM 1B31
FALL 2023

Professor: Megan Shannon (she/ her)

Office: 124 Ketchum

Email: Megan.L.Shannon@colorado.edu

Office hours: Thursdays, 11:00am - 1:00pm in Ketch 124 or Zoom <https://cuboulder.zoom.us/j/97675629268> (no appointment necessary)

Course Description

This is a foundational course for graduate students in political science, where you will learn the fundamentals of research and teaching in the social sciences. In this first semester of the PhD program, you will start to become a producer of knowledge, and this is a core class in learning how to create knowledge. It is only an introduction to the mechanisms of social science, but you will develop a way of thinking that will enable you to learn and hone research skills throughout your career.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this class, successful students will be able to:

- (1) Understand the historical development of political science as well as its ongoing challenges
- (2) Identify and explain the elements of sound social science research
- (3) Name and compare the advantages and disadvantages of various methodological approaches to social science
- (4) Evaluate contemporary political science research projects in the rigor of their approach to social science
- (5) Create a social science research project that applies principles of social science research to a question or puzzle

Grades

Attendance and Participation, 20%

This class is a collaborative seminar. Attendance is expected. Participation includes asking good questions and offering sound critical analysis to further the class discussion. Please come prepared with thoughts on the readings, discussion points, and questions. Taking notes on the readings before class is a good way to prepare.

Short Assignments, each worth 5% for a total of 25%

Each short assignment is due by 8:00am on the designated day. The assignments are to be submitted via Canvas. More details on the assignment can be found in the weekly modules and assignments page on Canvas.

1. Memo on research by a CU faculty member
2. Puzzle assignment
3. Concept assignment

4. Causal analysis assignment
5. Experimental design assignment

Assignments Building Towards Your Final Paper, each worth 5% for a total of 25%

These assignments are designed to help you make progress towards writing your final paper. Each assignment is due by 8:00am on the designated day. The assignments are to be submitted via Canvas. More details on the assignment can be found in the weekly modules and assignments page on Canvas.

1. Abstracts and Research Questions
2. Literature review
3. Peer review of classmate's literature review
4. Revised literature review
5. Outline of final paper

Poster Presentation, 10%

You will present your final research project as a poster at a department-wide event.

Final Research Paper, 20%

The research design must be turned in to Canvas by 5:00pm December 19 .

Assignment	Due Date	Weight	Completed
Memo on research by CU faculty	Sept 12	5%	
Puzzle assignment	Sept 19	5%	
Abstracts	Sept 26	5%	
Literature review	Oct 10	5%	
Concept assignment	Oct 17	5%	
Peer review of literature review	Oct 24	5%	
Revised literature review	Oct 31	5%	
Causal analysis assignment	Nov 7	5%	
Experimental design assignment	Nov 28	5%	
Final paper outline	Dec 5	5%	
Poster presentation	Dec 12	10%	
Final Research Paper	Dec 19th, 8am	20%	

Grade Scale

The grading scale for the course is as follows. Grades ending in .5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole percentage point:

	B+ 89 - 87	C+ 79 - 77
A 93 - 100	B 86 - 83	C 76 - 73
A- 92 - 90	B- 82 - 80	C- 72 - 70

Assignment Policies and use of AI

Assignments must be uploaded to Canvas. Work turned in late will be docked one letter grade for each day late, beginning at the end of class on the day the assignment is due.

For this class, you may use AI programs such as ChatGPT to help generate ideas and brainstorm. However, be aware of AI's limitations. The material generated by these programs may

be inaccurate, incomplete, and may perpetuate racial, gender, ethnic, and other biases. In fact, you should not trust anything AI says, and you should confirm the information it gives you through other means. The use of AI may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity.

You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (but consider that the quality of the reference may be poor). Plagiarism or other forms of cheating will be addressed according to CU Honor Code policies (see statement later in this syllabus).

Electronic Device Policy

Research suggests that students who use electronic devices and laptops in the classroom retain less information than those who do not. Research also shows taking written notes leads to better comprehension than other methods. Moreover, electronic devices in the classroom can distract students who are not using these devices. Yet as a user of electronic devices, I understand their utility. To provide the best learning environment for all students, I expect that students will use electronic devices only as e-readers, and will take notes by hand. I will sometimes call on students if I suspect they are distracted by electronic devices. If you need to make a call, send a text, or use an electronic device during class, leave the room and return when you are finished. Students will receive a warning when violating this policy. Students who repeatedly violate this policy will be asked to leave the class. Exceptions to this policy are at my discretion. Please talk to me if you feel you cannot adhere to this policy, and we will find a workable solution.

Commitment to Inclusivity

The University of Colorado is a learning community that seeks to understand the world around us. CU cannot achieve those goals without the engagement of its graduate students. You have unique gifts, skills, and insights that advance our search for truth and knowledge. That means your participation in this class is valuable. My commitment is to make sure that you feel included enough in our class community to participate. If you feel your differences isolate you from CU's community or if you need specific accommodations, please speak with me early in the semester about what we can do together to help you engage in our class and the CU community. This class stresses active learning and we have a great deal of discussion in class.

Coming to my office hours

I will be in my office with the door open and available to talk on Thursdays from 11:00am to 1:00pm. You do not need to make an appointment or let me know you are coming in advance - just drop by. I'm a fairly nice person and I hope you will not feel intimidated to stop by my office hours. You can come alone or with a friend or classmate. You can come to talk about the class, study skills, your career goals, etc. Understandably, you may find it hard to discuss difficulties, dilemmas, and dissatisfaction with me. Please resist the temptation to remain anonymous and let problems fester. If you have concerns about your class performance, the way the class is being taught, the functionality of the class on Canvas, or anything else related to this course, email me. We will work together to find a solution.

Required Course Materials

- (1) Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press (Geddes, limited scan available from CU libraries)
- (2) Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge University Press. (Gerring, not available as an e-book from CU)

- (3) Brady, Henry and David Collier, eds. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield. (Brady and Collier, available as an e-book from CU libraries)
- (4) King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 2021. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. (KKV, not available as an e-book from CU)
- (5) Shively, W. Phillips. 2017. *The Craft of Political Research*. Routledge. (Shively, available as an e-book from CU)

Schedule of Topics and Readings

The schedule of readings may be modified as needed. For the most part, you should search for the readings on Google scholar or through the library's website if they are not posted to Canvas.

Week 1, Aug 29: Introduction - What have you gotten yourself into?

Required reading:

- Keohane, Robert. 2009. "Political Science as a Vocation." *Political Science and Politics* 42(2):9-48.
- Noel, Hans. 2010. "Ten Things Political Scientists Know that You Don't," *The Forum*: 8(3), Article 12. (Berkeley Electronic Press)

Professionalization topic: Making the Most of Your TA Assignment

- Webb, Derek. 2005. "Twelve Easy Steps to Becoming an Effective Teaching Assistant." *PS: Political Science and Politics*
- Burmila, Edward M. 2010. "Graduate Students as Independent Instructors: Seven Things to Know about Teaching Your Own Course While in Graduate School." *PS: Political Science and Politics*

Week 2, Sept 5: State of the Discipline

No assignment due this week

Required reading:

- Brady and Collier, ch 1 and 2
- KKV, ch1
- Gerring, preface and ch1
- Geddes, ch 1

Professionalization topic: Gender in the Discipline

- Monkey Cage series on the gender gap (posted to Canvas)

Additional, not required readings:

- Shively ch 1
- Smith, Rogers M. 2002. "Should we make political science more of a science or more about politics?" *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 35: 199-201.
- Monroe, Burt L, Jennifer Pan, Margaret E Roberts, Maya Sen, and Betsy Sinclair. 2015. "No! Formal Theory, Causal Inference, and Big Data Are Not Contradictory Trends in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 48 (1): 71-74.
- Shapiro, Ian. 2002. "Problems, methods, and theories in the study of politics, or what's wrong with political science and what to do about it." *Political Theory* 20: 588-611.
- Grant, J. Tobin. 2005. "What Divides Us? The Image and Organization of Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 28(July):379- 86.

Week 3, Sept 12: Racism in the Discipline

Assignment due: Memo on research by a CU faculty member

Required reading:

- McClain, Paula D., Gloria Y.A. Ayee, Taneisha N. Means, Alicia M. Reyes-Barrientez, and Nura A. Sedique. 2016. "Race, power, and knowledge: tracing the roots of exclusion in the development of political science in the United States." *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 4(3):467-482.
- Zvobgo, Kelebogile and Meredith Loken. "Why Race Matters in International Relations" <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/06/19/why-race-matters-international-relations-ir/>
- McClain, Paula D. 2021. "Crises, Race, Acknowledgement: The Centrality of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics to the Future of Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics* 19(1): 7-18.
- John Hopkins University Racism in Political Science Working Group document

Professionalization topic: How to Be an Ally

- Kivel, Paul. "Guidelines for Being Strong White Allies." <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VHw4nGfDogf7-SaftsCzxosQ191TB4uz/view>
- "Best Practices for Being an Ally" https://polisci.osu.edu/sites/default/files/2019-11/Ally_v2.pdf
- Michelson, Melissa. "How to Be An Ally for Social Justice." TEDxtalk https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_NuvHuEEgU&ab_channel=TEDxTalks

Additional, not required readings:

- Blatt, Jessica. 2018. *Race and the Making of American Political Science*. University of Pennsylvania Press. Read the introduction and another chapter if you have time (e book available from CU).
- APSA Resources on Systemic Racism and Social Justice: <https://www.apsanet.org/RESOURCES/APSA-Resources-for-Addressing-Systemic-Racism-Social-Justice>
- Look at APSA's Project on Women and Minorities Dashboard: <https://www.apsanet.org/RESOURCES/Data-on-the-Profession/Dashboards/P-WAM>

Week 4, Sept 19: Research Questions and Puzzles

Assignment due: Puzzle assignment

Required reading:

- Gerring, ch 2
- Gustafsson, K. and L. Hagstrom. 2017. "What is the Point? Teaching Graduate Students how to Construct Political Science Research Puzzles." *European Political Science*.
- Geddes, ch 2

Professionalization topic: How to write a literature review

- Golash-Boza, Tanya. Writing a Literature Review: Six Steps to Get You from Start to Finish. <https://hub.wiley.com/community/exchanges/discover/blog/2015/07/02/writing-a-literature-review-six-steps-to-get-you-from-start-to-finish>
- Knopf, Jeffrey. 2006. *Doing a Literature Review*. PS: Political Science and Politics
- Additional, but not required: All (7) blog posts on literature reviews by Raul Pacheco-Vega <http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/literature-reviews/>

Recommended reading:

- Zinnes, Dina. "Three Puzzles In Search of a Researcher: Presidential Address." *International Studies Quarterly* 24(3):315-342.

Week 5, Sept 26: Models, Theories, and Hypotheses

Assignment due: Abstracts

Required reading:

- Gerring, ch 3 and 6
- Shively, ch 1 and 2
- Clarke, K.A. and D.M. Primo. 2007. "Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach." *Perspectives on Politics*. 5(4):741- 55.
- Geddes, ch 5

Professionalization topic: Work-life balance

- New York Times guide on sleep: <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/well/how-to-sleep>
- Quick sleep tips: <https://sleepeducation.org/healthy-sleep/healthy-sleep-habits/>
- CU resources for health: <https://www.colorado.edu/health>

Week 6, Oct 3: Concepts and Construct Validity

No assignment due this week

Required reading:

- Gerring, ch 5
- Shively ch 3
- Elkins, Zachary. 2000. "Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2): 293-300.

Professionalization topic: Peer review

- Miller, B., Pevehouse, J., Rogowski, R., Tingley, D., and Wilson, R. (2013). How To Be a Peer Reviewer: A Guide for Recent and Soon-to-be PhDs. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 46(1), 120-123. doi:10.1017/S104909651200128X
- Mitchell, Sara. "An Editor's Thoughts on the Peer Review Process." <https://connect.apsanet.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/35/2018/10/Mitchell-2015.pdf>

Week 7, Oct 10: Measurement

Assignment due: Literature review

Required reading:

- Gerring Ch 7
- Shively Ch 4 and 5
- Adcock and Collier, 2001. Measurement validity: A shared standard for qualitative and quantitative research. *American Political Science Review*, 95(3): 529-546.
- Abdelal, R. Y.M. Herrera, A.I. Johnston, and R. McDermott. 2006. Identity as a Variable." *Perspectives on Politics*. 4(4):713-28.

Professionalization topic: Early steps to the job market and life after graduate school

- Drezner, Daniel. 1998. So You Want to Get a Tenure-Track Job... *PS: Political Science and Politics* 31: 609-614.
- Miller, William J., and Bobbi Gentry. 2011. Navigating the Academic Job Market in Treacherous Times. *PS: Political Science and Politics*.
- Fuerstman, Daniel, and Stephan Lavertu. 2005. The Academic Hiring Process: A Survey of Department Chairs. *PS: Political Science and Politics*

- Murakami, Michael H. 2012. The Broad Value of a PhD in Political Science. PS: Political Science and Politics
- Marshall, Bryan W. and John M. Rothgeb, Jr. 2011. So You Want Tenure? Factors Affecting Tenure Decisions in Political Science Departments. PS: Political Science and Politics
- Gadarian, Shana. 2017. The Academic Job Market.
- Kosar, Kevin R. 2016. Preparing for Unforeseen Opportunities Outside Academia. PS: Political Science and Politics 49(3).
- Becker, Megan, and Kelebogile Zvobgo. 2018. Smoothing the Pipeline: A Strategy to Match Graduate Training with the Professional Demands of Professorship. Unpublished Paper: University of Southern California.

Week 8, Oct 17: Causal Inference

Assignment due: Concept assignment

Required reading:

- KKV ch 3
- Gerring ch 8 and 9
- Shively Ch 6, pp 79-88

Professionalization topic: Publishing as a graduate student

- Rich, Timothy S. 2013. Publishing as a Graduate Student: A Quick and (Hopefully) Painless Guide to Establishing Yourself as a Scholar. PS: Political Science and Politics
- Polsky, Andrew. 2007. Seeing Your Name in Print: Unpacking the Mysteries of the Review Process at Political Science Scholarly Journals. PS: Political Science and Politics
- Giles, Micheal W., and James C. Garand. 2007. Ranking Political Science Journals: Reputational and Citational Approaches. PS: Political Science and Politics
- Garand, James C., and Micheal W. Giles. 2011. Ranking Scholarly Publishers in Political Science: An Alternative Approach. PS: Political Science and Politics

Week 9, Oct 24: Qualitative Methods

Assignment due: Peer review of literature review

Required reading:

- KKV, Ch 2
- Brady and Collier, Chapters 10, 11, and 12
- Gerring Ch 12
- Geddes Ch 4
- Fearon, James. 1991. Counterfactuals and hypothesis testing in political science. World Politics 43:169-195

Professionalization topic: Dealing with doubt

- Achen, Christopher H. 2014. "Why do we need Diversity in the Political Methodology Society?" The Political Methodologist 22(2):25-28. https://thepoliticalmethodologist.files.wordpress.com/2014/06/tpm_v21_n2_final.pdf
- Richards, Carl. 2015. Learning to Deal with Imposter Syndrome New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/26/your-money/learning-to-deal-with-the-impostor-syndrome.html?_r=0

Week 10, Oct 31: Quantitative Methods

Assignment due: Revised literature review

Required reading:

- Gerring Ch 4
- Brady and Collier, Chapter 3, 4, 13, and 14

Week 11, Nov 7: Experiments

Assignment due: Causal analysis assignment

Required reading:

- Gerring Ch 10
- Shively Ch 6, pp 89-98
- McDermott, Rose. 2002. Experimental Methodologies in Political Science. *Political Analysis* 10(4): 325-342.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet and Rocio Titiunik. 2012. When natural experiments are neither natural nor experiments. *American Political Science Review* 106: 35-57.
- Betsy Sinclair, Margaret McConnell and Donald P. Green. 2012. Detecting Spillover in Social Networks: Design and Analysis of Multilevel Experiments. *The American Journal of Political Science* 56(4):1055-1069.

Professionalization topic: How to build an effective presentation

- Salmond and Smith. 2011. Cheating Death-by-PowerPoint: Effective Use of Visual Aids at Professional Conferences. *PS: Political Science and Politics*
- Smith and Salmond. 2011. Verbal Sticks and Rhetorical Stones: Improving Conference Presentations in Political Science. *PS: Political Science and Politics*.

Week 12, Nov 14: Case Selection

Assignment due: Final paper outline

Required reading:

- KKV, Ch 4 and 6
- Shively, Chapter 7
- Geddes, Ch 3
- Gerring, John. "What is a Case Study Good For?" (reading posted to Canvas)

Professionalization topic: How to do a Poster Presentation

Week 13, Nov 28: Field work and interview research

Assignment due: Experimental design

- Mosley, Layna.
- Woliver, Laura R. 2003. "Ethical Dilemmas in Personal Interviewing." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35(4):677-678.
- Fujii, Lee Ann. "Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities." *PS* October 2012.
- Wood, Elizabeth. "The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones."

Professionalization topic: Writing in Political Science

- Stimson, James A. "Professional Writing in Political Science: A Highly Opinionated Essay."
- "Planning and Drafting." Ch 12 in *The Craft of Research*, Booth, Wayne C. et al.

Week 14, Dec 5: Design, data collection, scientific standards

Required reading:

- Nuzzo, Regina. "How Scientists Fool Themselves - and How They Can Stop." Nature, 2015.
- Walter, Maggie and Chris Anderson. 2013. Indigenous Statistics: A Quantitative Research Methodology. (Chapters 1 and 2, and more if you would like. Available as an e-book from CU)
- Foster, Drew. 2015. "Will Academia Waste the LaCour Scandal?" <https://www.thecut.com/2015/06/will-academia-waste-the-michael-lacour-scandal.html>

Professionalization topic: Effective Computing Practices for Data Analysis

- Clinton, Josh. Advice on Computing Issues.
- King, Gary. 1995. Replication, Replication. PS: Political Science and Politics
- Bowers, Jake. 2011. Six Steps to a Better Relationship with your Future Self. The Political Methodologist <http://www.jakebowers.org/PAPERS/tpmv18n2.pdf>

Week 15, Dec 12: Poster session 1:00 - 3:00pm

Final paper due Tuesday, December 19th at 8:00am

Institutional Policies

(Links available in class syllabus on Canvas)

Classroom Behavior

Students and faculty are responsible for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all instructional settings, whether in person, remote, or online. Failure to adhere to such behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy. For more information, see the classroom behavior policy, the Student Code of Conduct, and the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance.

Requirements for Infectious Diseases

Members of the CU Boulder community and visitors to campus must follow university, department, and building health and safety requirements and all public health orders to reduce the risk of spreading infectious diseases.

The CU Boulder campus is currently mask optional. However, if masks are again required in classrooms, students who fail to adhere to masking requirements will be asked to leave class. Students who do not leave class when asked or who refuse to comply with these requirements will be referred to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution. Students who require accommodation because a disability prevents them from fulfilling safety measures related to infectious disease will be asked to follow the steps in the Accommodation for Disabilities statement on this syllabus.

For those who feel ill and think you might have COVID-19 or if you have tested positive for COVID-19, please stay home and follow the further guidance of the Public Health Office. For those who have been in close contact with someone who has COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms and have not tested positive for COVID-19, you do not need to stay home.

Accommodation for Disabilities, Temporary Medical Conditions, and Medical Isolation

Disability Services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities in the academic environment. If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, submit your accommodation letter from Disability Services to your faculty member in a timely manner so your needs can be addressed. Contact Disability Services at 303-492-8671 or dsinfo@colorado.edu for further assistance.

If you have a temporary medical condition or required medical isolation for which you require accommodation, please email me immediately. Also see Temporary Medical Conditions on the Disability Services website.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

CU Boulder recognizes that students' legal information doesn't always align with how they identify. Students may update their preferred names and pronouns via the student portal; those preferred names and pronouns are listed on instructors' class rosters. In the absence of such updates, the name that appears on the class roster is the student's legal name.

Honor Code

All students enrolled in a University of Colorado Boulder course are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code may include but are not limited to: plagiarism (including use of paper writing services or technology such as essay bots),

cheating, fabrication, lying, bribery, threat, unauthorized access to academic materials, clicker fraud, submitting the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from all course instructors involved, and aiding academic dishonesty.

All incidents of academic misconduct will be reported to Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution: honor@colorado.edu, 303-492-5550. Students found responsible for violating the Honor Code will be assigned resolution outcomes from the Student Conduct & Conflict Resolution as well as be subject to academic sanctions from the faculty member. Visit for more information on the academic integrity policy.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

CU Boulder is committed to fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning, working, and living environment. University policy prohibits protected-class discrimination and harassment, sexual misconduct (harassment, exploitation, and assault), intimate partner violence (dating or domestic violence), stalking, and related retaliation by or against members of our community on- and off-campus. These behaviors harm individuals and our community. The Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIEC) addresses these concerns, and individuals who believe they have been subjected to misconduct can contact OIEC at 303-492-2127 or email cureport@colorado.edu. Information about university policies, reporting options, and support resources can be found on the OIEC website.

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents related to these policies regardless of when or where something occurred. This is to ensure that individuals impacted receive an outreach from OIEC about their options for addressing a concern and the support resources available. To learn more about reporting and support resources for a variety of issues, visit Don't Ignore It.

Please know that faculty and graduate instructors have a responsibility to inform OIEC when they are made aware of incidents of sexual misconduct, dating and domestic violence, stalking, discrimination, harassment and/or related retaliation, to ensure that individuals impacted receive information about their rights, support resources, and reporting options. To learn more about reporting and support options for a variety of concerns, visit Don't Ignore It at <https://www.colorado.edu/dontignoreit/>.

Religious Holidays

Campus policy regarding religious observances requires that faculty make every effort to deal reasonably and fairly with all students who, because of religious obligations, have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments or required attendance. Email me if religious observance conflicts with a class meeting or assignment before either takes place. See the campus policy regarding religious observances for full details.

Mental Health and Wellness

The University of Colorado Boulder is committed to the well-being of all students. If you are struggling with personal stressors, mental health or substance use concerns that are impacting academic or daily life, please contact Counseling and Psychiatric Services (CAPS) located in C4C or call (303) 492-2277, 24/7. Free and unlimited telehealth is also available through Academic Live Care Academic Live Care. The site also provides information about additional wellness services on campus that are available to students.