

Scope and Methods of Political Science

PSCI 7075-001
Fall 2020
Meets Remotely
Tuesdays, 2:00-4:30 PM

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Course Description

This is a graduate-level course on political science methodology, with a subsequent focus on professional development.¹ Over the semester, students will be introduced to different styles of research, to the central methodological points surrounding (and differentiating) these styles, and to standards for evaluating research, regardless of approach or content. Students will learn how to formulate research questions, to develop and address these questions within theoretical frameworks, and to gather evidence to test theories. We will focus largely on empirical research, though we will discuss other epistemological approaches as we move through the course material.

PSCI 7075 is mandatory, and is intended 1) to prepare you for further methodological and substantive instruction, and 2) to help you better understand and interact with the profession. Portions of the course requirements are coordinated with PSCI 7085 (Data Analysis I), which is also mandatory. As this course is—by necessity—only an introduction to research design and political science methods, I encourage you to explore the recommended readings, and to take additional methods courses outside of those required in CU's first-year sequence.

Required Books

Please purchase the following books from the merchant of your choice:

1. Brady, H. and D. Collier, eds. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, 2nd ed. Rowman and Littlefield.
2. George and Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. MIT. (GB)
3. Gerring, J. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*, 2nd ed. Cambridge. (SSM)
4. King, Keohane, and Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton. (KKV)
5. Shively. 2017. *The Craft of Political Research*. 10th ed. Routledge. (Shively)
6. Recommended: Booth et al. *The Craft of Research*, Chicago. (excerpts from the 2nd ed. will be made available) (CoR)

¹Over the years, many have influenced my approach to this course—I thank Ken Bickers, Michael Giles, Kathleen McGraw, and Scott McClurg (among others) for sharing their syllabi and ideas at different points in time.

A variety of other assigned readings will be available through the CU library (and reserve) system, as well as the course website on *Canvas*. Please note that readings may be added, dropped, and re-arranged based on the pace and performance of the class. Please familiarize yourself with *Canvas* and check it regularly for updates and announcements.

Requirements and Grading

Grading System:

- A: 94 and up
- A-:90-93
- B+:87-89
- B: 84-86
- B-:80-83
- C+:77-79
- and so on...

Final grades will be assigned as follows, and you must complete all assignments to pass the course:²

1. Participation (15%) and Preparation (20%): 35% total

I expect serious class-preparation and thoughtful participation, which means taking notes on/thinking about the readings ahead of time. Discussion will be an important component of this course, and thus participation counts for a sizable portion of your final grade (15%)—I will take notes on class discussion for purposes of evaluation. To aid in your preparation, 1 page reaction papers will be due at the start of every class (save the first and last weeks of the semester)—note: *late assignments will not be accepted*. These papers will be graded on a check-plus (exceeds expectations), check (meets expectations), or check-minus system (does not meet expectations), and will be considered when I calculate the preparation portion of your grade (20%). Additional details on the reaction papers will be provided at the first meeting.

2. Short Assignments: 20%

Over the semester there will be 4 short assignments, each worth 5% of your final grade. These assignments are designed to help you make progress towards your final paper, to instruct you in the process of research, and to assist you in the development of skills that you will need and use as a professional political scientist. Detailed instructions and due-dates will be announced at least one week ahead of time; *see below for my policy on late short assignments*. You may discuss assignments with your classmates, but all final work must be your own (unless otherwise noted).

²I reserve the right to adjust grades (round up) based on effort and improvement. Grades are not automatically rounded up — any adjustments are done solely at my discretion.

3. Final Paper: 30%

This class is intended to help you conduct your own research, ultimately resulting in (at least the start of) a publication-quality paper/project. The final paper should be approximately 20 pages in-length, and (in broad brush) should accomplish the following:

- state a research question
- motivate the question (by grounding it in previous literature)
- provide testable hypotheses
- describe data and methods that will address the hypotheses

More details on the paper will be provided later in the semester. You will write the same paper for this course as for PSCI 7085 (“checkpoint” assignments will be coordinated between the classes). You will be graded on different criteria between the two seminars, though Dr. Hunter and I expect quality work as a result of this “doubling-up.” The final paper is due by **5 p.m. on Friday, 12/11/20.**

4. Poster Presentation: 15%

Everyone is expected to give the equivalent of a professional conference poster presentation on their final paper/project. The poster session will occur online during our last class meeting (12/1, ~ 2-3:30 p.m.), and will be coordinated with PSCI 7085. We will discuss professional posters in the weeks before and after fall break.

Special Accommodations/Disability

I am more than happy to make special arrangements for students with disabilities that have been documented through Disability Services (colorado.edu/disabilityservices). If you have a disability, please contact me as soon as possible with proper documentation so that I have sufficient time to make any necessary arrangements for you.

Discrimination and Harassment

The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination Harassment, the CU policy on Sexual Harassment, and the CU policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all members of the university community. More information is available at: <http://www.colorado.edu/odh>.

Academic Honesty

Cheating on assignments (whether on papers, class exercises, etc.) will not be tolerated, and can seriously damage (and even end) your graduate career. All students of the University of Colorado at Boulder are responsible for knowing and adhering to the Honor Code of the institution. All incidents of academic misconduct—this

includes lying, as well as more conventional cases of cheating and plagiarism —will result in failure for the applicable portion of the course, and may be reported to the Honor Code Council (honor@colorado.edu). For more information on the Honor Code, please see colorado.edu/academics/honorcode.

All work submitted for the course is expected to be original (i.e., work not submitted for a previous course), *unless* all applicable instructors approve.

Late Work

I will *not* accept late reaction papers. I will accept late short assignments, but will take off one full letter grade for every day that an assignment is late (the same policy applies to the course paper). Please note that being late — even by just a few minutes — counts as a day late. (This policy is intended to 1) keep you on track and 2) help you get the most out of seminar, as serious preparation is essential for success. That said, this is an exceptional semester and moment in time—if you are facing an exceptional situation, I’m a reasonable person (let’s talk about it).)

COVID-19

This class will meet remotely, so health and safety procedures for campus behavior and interaction do not apply directly. That said, I urge you to be familiar with the university’s policies on COVID-19, including the procedures for working on campus, the guidelines for interaction, and CU’s requests for self-monitoring of symptoms/exposure.

Course Outline

1. Week 1 (8/25): Introductions and an Introduction to the Course.
2. Week 2 (9/1): Political Science and Social Science
 - Required: Almond, G. 1988. “Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 21(4):828-42.
 - Required: SSM, Preface, Chapter 1
 - Required: Grant, J. Tobin. 2005. “What Divides Us? The Image and Organization of Political Science.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 28(July):379-86.
 - Required: Ball, T. 1976. “From Paradigms to Research Programs: Toward a Post-Kuhnian Political Science.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 20: 151-77.
 - Required: Schatz, E. and I. Schatz. 2003. “Medicine and Political Science: Parallel Lessons in Methodological Excess.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 36(3): 417-22.

- Required: Teele, D. and K. Thelen. 2017. “Gender in the Journals: Publication Patterns in Political Science.” *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 50(2): 443-447.
- Recommended: Weisberg, H., ed. 1986. *Political Science*. Agathon Press.
- Recommended: Grofman, B. 1997. “Seven Durable Axes of Cleavage in Political Science.” In *Contemporary Empirical Political Theory*. K. Monroe, ed. University of California.
- Recommended: 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.

3. Week 3 (9/8): Types of Political Science Research

- Required: KKV, Chapter 1.
- Required: Liberman, E.S. 2005. “Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research.” *American Political Science Review*. 99(3): 435-52.
- Required: GB, Chapter 1.
- Required: Shively, Chapter 1.
- Required: Rogowski, R. 2004. “How Inference in the Social (but not the physical) Sciences Neglects Theoretical Anomaly.” In Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.
- Required: *Skim* chapters 8-10 of Shively—this will give you a sense of where things are headed between this class and 7085.
- Recommended: Gibbons, M.T. 2006. “Hermeneutics, Political Inquiry, and Practical Reason: An Evolving Challenge to Political Science.” *American Political Science Review*. 100(4):563-72.

Required: Professional Development—Chs. 1-2 of *CoR* (to be distributed)

Professional Activity: Research Ethics

4. Week 4 (9/15): Asking the Right Questions...

- Required: SSM, Chapter 2
- Required: Gibson, J.L. 2006. “Enigmas of Intolerance: Fifty Years after Stouffer’s Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 4(1):21-34.
- Required: Frymer, Paul. 2005. “Racism Revised: Courts, Labor Law, and the Institutional Construction of Racial Animus.” *American Political Science Review*. 99(3):373-88.
- Required: Putnam, R.D. 2003. “The Public Role of Political Science.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 1(2):249-56.

- Required: Mead, Lawrence. 2010. “Scholasticism in Political Science.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 8(2):453-64.
- Required: Gustafsson, K. and L. Hagstrom. 2017. “What is the Point? Teaching Graduate Students how to Construct Political Science Research Puzzles.” *European Political Science*.
- Recommended: “Top Twenty’ Commentaries” in the *American Political Science Review*, 100(4):667-89.

Professional Activity: Writing Abstracts

Required: Professional Development—Chs. 3-4 of *CoR* (to be distributed)

Short Assignment 1 due by 9/15 at 5 p.m.

5. Week 5 (9/22): Causality and Logic

- Required: DeFelice, E. 1986. “Causal Inference and Comparative Methods.” *Comparative Political Studies*. 19(3): 415-37
- Required: SSM, Chapter 3, 8
- Required: KKV, Chapter 3.
- Required: Part 3 of *CoR* (pgs. 111-181) (to be distributed)
- Recommended: Fisher, Alec. Chapters 1-5 of *The Logic of Real Arguments*, 2nd ed. (available on *Canvas*)

6. Week 6 (9/29): Models, Theories and Hypotheses

- Required: Clarke, K.A. and D.M. Primo. 2007. “Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 5(4):741-55.
- Required: SSM, Chapters 4, 6
- Required: Shively, Chapter 2.
- Required: Fiorina, M. 1975. “Formal Models in Political Science.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 19(1): 133-159.
- Required: de Marchi, S. 2005. Prelude to *Computational and Mathematical Modeling in the Social Sciences*. (to be distributed)

Professional Activity: “Your 1st 3 years as a graduate student”

Short Assignment 2 Due by 10/1 at the start of class

7. Week 7 (10/6): Concepts, Concepts, Concepts!

- Required: SSM, Chapter 5
- Required: Collier, D. and R. Adcock. 1999. “Democracy and Dichotomies: A Pragmatic Approach to Choices about Concepts.” *Annual Review of Political Science*. 2: 537-565.

- Required: Sartori, G. 1970. “Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics.” *American Political Science Review*. 64:1033-1053.
- Required: Shively, Chapter 3.
- Recommended: Collier, D. and J. Mahon, Jr. 1993. “Conceptual ‘Stretching’ Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Politics.” *American Political Science Review*. 87(4): 845-55.

We will hold the “firing squad” at some point this week—i.e., Dr. Hunter and I will zoom with you to discuss your abstracts/paper ideas.

8. Week 8 (10/13): Review and Catch-Up; Focusing Projects

- No seminar meeting, but:

focus on 7085 midterm *and* on thinking about next steps for your project

9. Week 9 (10/20): Measurement and the Basics of Research Design

- Required: Abdelal, R. Y.M. Herrera, A.I. Johnston, and R. McDermott. 2006. “Identity as a Variable.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 4(4):713-28.
- Required: Adcock, R. and D. Collier. 2001. “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research.” *American Political Science Review*. 95(3):529-46.
- Required: KKV, Chapter 2.
- Required: Shively, Chapters 4-5.
- Required: SSM, Chapter 7.
- Required: KKV: “The Importance of Research Design.” Chapter 7 in *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.
- Recommended: Elkins, Z. 2000. “Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 44:293-300.
- Recommended: Sniderman, P.M., T. Piazza, P.E. Tetlock, and A. Kendrick. 1991. “The New Racism.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 35(2):423-47.

Required: Professional Development—Ch. 12 of *CoR* (to be distributed)

10. Week 10 (10/27): Experiments and Observational Research (oh My!)

- Required: Druckman, J.N., D.P. Green, J.H. Kuklinski, and A. Lupia. 2006. “The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science.” *American Political Science Review*. 100(4):627-36.
- Required: KKV, Chapter 5.
- Required: GB: Chapters 5 and 6.

- Required: McGraw, K. 1996. "Political Methodology: Research Design and Experimental Methods." In *A New Handbook of Political Science*. Goodin and Klingemann, eds. New York: Oxford.
- Required: SSM, Chapters 9-10
- Required: Shively, Ch.6
- Recommended: McDermott, R. 2002. "Experimental Methodology in Political Science." *Political Analysis*. 10(4):325-61.

Professional Activity: "The Conference Circuit"

11. Week 11 (11/3): Case Selection

- Required: KKV, Chapters 4 and 6.
- Required: Slantchev, B., A. Alexandrova, and E. Gartzke. 2005. "Probabilistic Causality, Selection Bias, and the Logic of the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review*. 99(3):459-62.
- Required: Geddes, B. 1990. "How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics." *Political Analysis*. 2: 131-50.
- Required: Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2004. "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review*. 98(4):633-52.
- Required: Shively, Chapter 7.
- Required: SSM, Chapter 11

12. Week 12 (11/10): Non-Observational Research Designs

- Required: GB, Chapter 10.
- Required: Hacker, Jacob S. 2001. "Learning from Defeat? Political Analysis and the Failure of Health Care Reform in the United States." *British Journal of Political Science*. 31: 61-94.
- Required: Lustick, Ian S. 1996. "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review*. 90(3): 605-18.
- Required: Buthe, T. 2002. "Taking Temporality Seriously: Modeling History and the Use of Narratives as Evidence." *American Political Science Review*. 96(3):481-94.

Professional Activity: "Posters 101"

Required: Professional Development—Ch. 15 of *CoR* (to be distributed)

Short Assignment 3 (next iteration, building off 7085 "prospectus") is due 11/12, 5 PM via *Canvas*

13. Week 13 (11/17): Observation: Qualitative

- Required: GB, Chapter 2.
 - Required: Chapters 10-12 (+ addendum) in *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.
 - Required: SSM, Chapter 12
 - Recommended: Walsh, K. 2004. *Talking about Politics*. Chicago.
14. Week 14 (11/24): Observation: Quantitative; Review and Prepare for Poster Session
- Required: Groves et al. 2004. “An Introduction to Survey Research.” Ch. 1 in *Survey Methodology*. Wiley. (to be distributed)
 - Required: King, Gary. 1986. “How Not To Lie With Statistics: Avoiding Common Mistakes in Quantitative Political Science.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 30:666-687.
 - Required: prefaces, Chapters 1-2 of *The People’s Choice*. Lazarsfeld et al., 1944. (to be distributed)
 - Required: SSM, Chapter 13-14
 - Required: *Skim* (again) Chs. 8-10 of Shively. (Do you have a deeper level of understanding than you did in September?)
 - Recommended: Chapter 2 of *Citizens, Politics, and Communication*. Huckfeldt and Sprague. 1995. (available on *Canvas*)

Professional Activity: “How to Critique”

15. Week 15 (12/1): Poster Session — During Normal Class Session (2:00-3:30)

Short Assignment 4 is due by **5 pm** on 12/11/20

Final Paper is due at **5 pm** on 12/11/20

The content of “science” is primarily the methods and rules, not the subject matter, since we can use these methods to study virtually anything.

—King, Keohane, and Verba, *DSI*, pg. 9