

POLI 4001: Research Methods

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:30-2:20
Room 220, Stubbs Hall

Instructor Information

Dr. Belinda Creel Davis
Office: 221 Stubbs Hall
Office Hours: T/T 9-10:30 or by appt

Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to the logic of research design and the use of qualitative and quantitative methods of political science and for investigating political issues. Over the course of the term, you will learn how to think like social scientists while developing various skills required by the discipline: how to choose which method to employ, how to undertake original research (complete with data collection and analysis), and how to present your findings to colleagues. The goal at the end of this class is to enable you to think critically about the strengths and weaknesses of various methodological approaches, identify the methodological tools that are most appropriate for your own research, apply these insights to your own work, and justify your choice to other social scientists.

Course Objectives

On successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- Describe and assess the logic of political science research in particular and of scientific research in general.
- Describe and assess the scope of political science research.
- Achieve an intuitive understanding of the central concepts and on using computers for data analysis.
- Identify critical consumers of empirical social science research and become competent producers of your own research.

Course Required Text and Materials

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, H. T. Reynolds, and Jason D. Mycoff, 2020. *Political Science Research Methods*, 9th ed. CQ Press.

Recommended Resources for Additional Exploration

The *Political Science Research Methods* student companion website:

<http://edge.sagepub.com/johnson9e>

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Homework/Quizzes: There are 11 homework or quizzes scattered across the course. They are each worth 10 points. Your top 10 scores will be used in computing your grade.

Midterm--100 points

Final Exam--100 points

Total = 300 Points

MAKEUP AND LATE WORK

The scheduled dates of all exams and homework/quizzes are clearly indicated in this syllabus. No makeup exams or late papers will be accepted without my **prior approval**.

Support for Students With Disabilities

If you have, or think you may have, a disability (including an “invisible disability” such as a learning disability, a chronic health problem, or a mental health condition) that interferes with your performance as a student in this class, you are encouraged to discuss your needs and arrange support services and/or accommodations through Disabilities Services. This instructor will be as flexible as possible to accommodate the needed services. Any student who has a concern or needs to make special arrangements for meeting the requirements of the course is encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Academic Honesty Policy

Be sure that you understand the university’s Academic Honesty Policy. It is important that you refrain from any form of academic dishonesty or deception, such as cheating or plagiarism.

Course Schedule

Session and Date	
#1	PREPARATION: Read Chapter 1 & 2
8/24-8/28	ASSIGNMENTS: See Moodle, due 8/28
	TOPICS: Introduction and The Empirical Approach to Political Science
#2	PREPARATION: Read Chapter 3

9/31-9/4	ASSIGNMENTS:	See Moodle, due 9/4
	TOPICS:	Beginning the Research Process: Identifying a Research Topic, Developing Research Questions, and Reviewing the Literature
#3	PREPARATION:	Read Chapter 4
9/9-9/11	ASSIGNMENTS:	See Moodle, due 9/11
	TOPICS:	The Building Blocks of Social Scientific Research: Hypotheses, Concepts, Variables, and Measurement
#4	PREPARATION:	Read Chapter 5
9/14-9/18	ASSIGNMENTS:	See Moodle, due 9/18
	TOPICS:	Sampling
#5	PREPARATION:	Read Chapter 6
9/21-9/25	ASSIGNMENTS:	See Moodle, due 9/25
	TOPICS:	Research Design
#6	PREPARATION:	Read Chapter 7
9/28-10/2	ASSIGNMENTS:	See Moodle, due 10/2
	TOPICS:	Qualitative Research: Case Study Designs
#7		MIDTERM EXAM
10/5-10/7		Exam on Wednesday, 10/7
#8	PREPARATION:	Read Chapters 8 and 9
10/12-10/16	ASSIGNMENTS:	None
	TOPICS:	Making Empirical Observations: Qualitative Analysis and Quantitative Research Designs
#9	PREPARATION:	Read Chapter 10
10/19-10/23	ASSIGNMENTS:	See Moodle, due 10/23
	TOPICS:	Quantitative Methods
#10	PREPARATION:	Read Chapter 11
10/26-10/30	ASSIGNMENTS:	See Moodle, due 10/30
	TOPICS:	Making Sense of Data: First Steps
#11	PREPARATION:	Read Chapter 12
11/2-11/6	ASSIGNMENTS:	See Moodle, due 11/6

	TOPICS: Testing Relationships
#12	PREPARATION: Read Chapter 13
11/9-13	ASSIGNMENTS: See Moodle, due 11/13
	TOPICS: Analyzing Relationships for Categorical Data
#13	PREPARATION: Read Chapter 14
11/16- 11/20	ASSIGNMENTS: See Moodle, due 11/20
	TOPICS: Regression
#14	PREPARATION: Read Chapter 15
11/23- 11/25	ASSIGNMENTS: None
	TOPICS: The Research Report: An Annotated Example
#15	Study Chapters 8–15
11/30- 11/12/8	Final Exam on Tuesday, December 8