DALHOUSIE **1818**
UNIVERSITY **2018**

POLITICAL SCIENCE 5100

RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN

Fall 2017

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This course is designed to assist graduate students in thinking about the process of designing and implementing major research projects. It asks students to engage in the broader political science community by critically assessing the discipline, and by understanding precisely how to situate their research within it. It provides an overview of some of the most common qualitative research methods and designs among political scientists, and it facilitates the develop of specific skills including grant writing, data collection, poster presentation, social media utilization, knowledge transfer, policy brief design, and publication.

Students will be able to use the class to develop their own research proposals, but they are also expected to engage in the collegial process of providing constructive feedback for their peers. The seminar will also provide professional development for young scholars beyond technical methodological issues. Attendance is mandatory.

TEXTS:

- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press.
- Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath. 2016. *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. OUP (2nd edition)
- Mark Carrigan, *Social Media for Academics.* Sage, 2016.

  All of these texts are available to purchase via Amazon.ca or other online booksellers (electronic versions are also available for immediate download)

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES:

Grant application	Due 31 Oct 2017	10%
In-class proposal presentation	3 Nov 2017	10%
Research matrix	Due 10 Nov 2017	10%
Literature review	Due 12 Jan 2018	10%
Final thesis proposal	Due 26 Jan 2018	20%
Policy brief	Due 16 Feb 2018	10%
Poster presentation	To be scheduled (Feb)	10%
Social media component	To 1 April 2018	10%
Attendance & participation		10%

DETAILED INFORMATION ON ASSIGNMENTS

1. **GRANT APPLICATION:** (31 Oct 2017)

   Students will identify at least one funding opportunity that is relevant to them (eg., SSHRCC, Killam, NSGS, etc) and prepare a completed grant application using the techniques and strategies outlined in the grant-writing boot camp.

2. **IN-CLASS PROPOSAL PRESENTATION (3 November 2017)**

   Using the information presented in the Oct 13th seminar, students will verbally present the various components of their research proposal. Each of these components is listed in the research matrix (Appendix A).

3. RESEARCH MATRIX (10 November 2017)

Based on the feedback of their verbal presentation, students will submit a written summary of their research proposal based on the research matrix (Appendix A). Students are encouraged to do this in consultation with their thesis supervisors.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW (12 January 2018)

How has the problem you have identified been addressed by other theorists? Where are the tensions in these accounts, and where are the gaps? What are the strengths and the weakness of these accounts? Has the problem been addressed in any other disciplines? This literature review should be about 1500-1800 words in length.

5. FULL THESIS PROPOSAL (26 January 2018)

Pull together all of the previous elements in order to construct your formal thesis proposal, based on the template attached as Appendix B. For Masters students, this is the formal proposal which you will be publicly presenting. **PhD students will also be submitting a proposal based on the template in Appendix B**, and they will also be presenting it in the poster session, **but for them it is only a practice run**. The template for the formal PhD thesis proposal is slightly different, and is posted on the grad students' website (POLI 9000). The formal version of the thesis proposal for PhD students will be written after comprehensive exams are completed. Please give an electronic AND a hard copy of your thesis proposal to the graduate coordinator, and give a copy to your supervisor in the format they request.

6. POLICY BRIEF (16 February 2018)

In this assignment, students are asked to think how best to communicate complicated policy issues in the most efficient form. Using information drawn from the seminar, students will write a policy brief based on a paper they have written (or are preparing). These briefs will be posted publicly.

7. POSTER SESSION (TBA, mid-February)

The poster session is the formal presentation of MA thesis proposals. For PhD students, the poster session is more of a practice exercise in presenting in poster format. It will also permit wider feedback from faculty regarding students' proposed thesis topics. These posters will be displayed publicly.

8. **SOCIAL MEDIA COMPONENT (ongoing throughout fall and winter terms)**

Social media has become increasingly important in academic life, not only in diffusing research results, but also as a method of horizon scanning, and as a means of forming research networks across disciplines and geography. For this assignment, you will be asked to open a twitter account (if you do not already have one), to follow 25 individuals whom you believe are pertinent to your research, and to post 25 tweets (these may simply be retweets of research-relevant information). Students will also be asked to attend two academic talks (either on or outside of campus) and to post a very brief blog (100-300 words) discussing this talk on a specific website (you may also tweet this blog).

GRADUATE GRADING RUBRIC

Written work:

A+ Assignments that earn the highest grade are usually somewhat rare; they are original and innovative, and add to the scholarly discussion on the topic(s) at hand. They also show considerable command of critical and other secondary material. Depending on the type of assignment, these papers could, with no or minor revisions, be considered publishable in academic journals specific to the field.

A These assignments constitute excellent graduate work. They are original and strongly written, and show considerable command of critical and other secondary material, but would need significant revision before being considered publishable.

A- This grade denotes very good graduate level work, and are well written and researched, offering a good understanding of the primary material and the scholarly discussion thereof.

B+ Items in the B+ range may be considered good graduate work, but show weaknesses in terms of research, argumentation or writing.

B Assignments in this category comprise satisfactory graduate work, but with substantial flaws in one or more areas of research, argumentation or writing. They may indicate difficulty in moving beyond undergraduate-level work.

B- Items in this range are minimally passable graduate work, showing considerable weaknesses or errors in research, argumentation, and writing. These essays demonstrate difficulty in moving beyond undergraduate-level work.

"There's a flaw in your experimental design. All the mice are scorpios."

Presentations:

10 Points	8 Points	6 Points	4 Points	2 Point	0 Points
Content is complete, relevant & accurate. An exceptional command & depth of the material is presented in a logical & organized manner. More than one aspect of the content shows good critical thinking or an original perspective. Outstanding oral presentation skills and engagement of class.	Content is complete, relevant & accurate. A few minor pieces of information may be missing, but command & depth of the material is presented in a logical & organized manner. Some aspect of the content shows good critical thinking or an original perspective. Very good oral presentation skills and engagement of class.	Content is appropriate. Although some pieces of information may be missing, or irrelevant material included, adequate command of the material is demonstrated. The content may not be demonstrated in a way that maintains focus and may be disorganized. The content shows that the person thought about the information. Adequate oral presentation skills and engagement of class.	Some content is inappropriate. Marginally adequate command of the material is demonstrated. Important pieces of information are missing, or irrelevant material included. The content is disorganized and is not presented in a way that maintains focus. Weak oral presentation skills and engagement of class.	Content is weak because material is omitted, inaccurate or marginally relevant, demonstrating limited understanding of the material and/or limited ability to apply the material. Organization is a problem. Major deficiencies in oral presentation skills. Class is not engaged.	Lecture component absent.

<u>SEMINARS</u>

☞ **PLEASE NOTE THAT POLI 5100 WILL BE RUNNING FROM SEPTEMBER 2017 TO APRIL 2018**

<u>September 1</u> (1.30-3.00, Political Science Lounge): *Introduction to the graduate program in Political Science*

<u>September 15th</u> (12.00-2.00, Political Science Lounge): *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*

<u>Readings:</u>

- APSA. 1962. "Political Science as a Discipline," *American Political Science Review* 56/2: 417-21
- Theodore Lowi, 1992. "The State in Political Science: how we become what we study," *American Political Science Review* 86/1: 1-7
- Peter Aucoin. 1996. "Political Science and Democratic Governance," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. 29, 4: 643-660.
- Tom Pocklington. 1998. "The Place of Political Science in Canadian Universities," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. 31/4: 643-658.
- Gabriel Almond. 1998. "Separate Tables: schools and sects in political science," *PS: Political Science & Politics*. Fall: 828-842.
- Robert O. Keohane. 2009. "Political Science as a Vocation" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42/2 (April): 359-363.

<u>September 22nd</u> (11.00-2.00, Political Science Lounge): *Identifying Your Research Question and Positioning Your Research*

<u>Readings:</u>

- Jonathan Kirshnew. 1996. "Alfred Hitchcock and the Art of Research," *PS: Political Science & Politics.* 29: 511-513.
- Halperin and Heath, *Political Research*, chapters 1-14
- Iain Mcmenamin. 2006. "Process and Text: Teaching Students to Review the Literature," *PS: Political Science and Politics.* 39/1: 133-35.
- Jeffrey Knopf. 2006."Doing a Literature Review," *PS: Political Science & Politics.* 39/1: 127-33.

October 6th (11.00-2.00): *Grant-Writing Bootcamp*

- **Readings:** To be distributed

October 13th (11.15-2.15): *Designing Your Research Project 1: Understanding the Component Parts of Your Research*

Readings:

- King, Keohane and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, ch 1-4
- Daniel Beland and Michael Howlett. 2016. "The Role and Impact of the Multiple-Streams Approach in Comparative Policy Analysis." *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice* 18/3:221-227.
- Peter Hall and Rosemary Taylor.1996. "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms." *Political Studies* 64: 936-957.
- Vivien Schmidt. 2008. "Discursive Institutionalism: The Explanatory Power of Ideas and Discourse." *American Review of Political Science* 11: 303-26.
- John Gerring. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?" *American Political Science Review.* 98:2 (May 2004), pp. 341-54.
- Arend Lijphart. 1975. "The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," *Comparative Political Studies* 8/2: 158-177.
- Lieberman, E.S. (2005). Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research. *American Political Science Review, 99*, 435-452.
- B. Prodinger and S.M. Turner. 2013. "Using Institutional Ethnography to Explore How Social Policies Infiltrate into Daily Life." *Journal of Occupational Science* 20/4:357-369.

[deadline for grant applications to be submitted to grad coordinator: October 31]

November 3rd (11.00-2.00): *Designing Your Research Project 2: Presenting the Component Parts of Your Research*

[deadline for submitting matrix to supervisor and graduate coordinator: November 10th]

November 17th (11.30-1.30): *The 21st Century Academy: Social Media in Academia*

Readings:

- Mark Carrigan, *Social Media for Academics.* Sage, 2016.

[deadline for submitting literature review to graduate coordinator: January 12th]

January 19th (2.00-4.00): *Finding Your Data*

Readings:

- Beth Leech, ed. 2002. Symposium on "Interview Methods in Political Science" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35:4 (December 2002), pp. 663-688.
- Symposium on "Field Work in Political Science: Encountering Challenges and Crafting Solutions" *PS: Political Science* 47:2 (April 2014), pp.391-417.
- Jean Adams et al. 2016. "Searching and synthesizing 'grey literature' and 'grey information' in public health: critical reflections on three case studies." *Systematic Reviews* 5: 164-175.
- Barbara Geddes. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2: pp. 131-150.
- Arthur Vidich. "Participant Observation and the Collection and Interpretation of Data." *American Journal of Sociology* 60/4 (January 1955), 354-60.
- Ruth McAreavey and Jenny Muir. 2011. "Research Ethics Committees: Values and Power in Higher Education." International Journal of Social Research Methodology 14/5: 391-405.
- Lee Monaghan, Mario O'Dwyer, and Jonathan Gabe. 2013. "Seeking University Research Ethics Committee Approval: the emotional vissicitudes of a 'rationalised' process." International Journal of Social Research Methodology 16/1:65-80/

[deadline for submitting formal thesis proposal to graduate coordinator and thesis supervisor: January 26]

February 9th (2.00-4.00): *Skills bootcamp (posters, policy briefs, prezies, and gantts)*

Readings: to be distributed

[deadline for policy brief to be submitted to graduate coordinator: 16 February]

March 16th (2.00-4.00): *Knowledge diffusion and evidence-based policy making*

<u>Readings:</u>

- Michael Howlett and Joshua Newman. 2010. "Policy analysis and policy work in federal systems: policy advice and its contribution of evidence-based policy making in multi-level governance systems." *Policy and Society* 29/2:123-36.
- Kathryn Oliver et al. 2014. "New directions in evidence-based policy research: a critical analysis of the literature." *Health Research Policy and Systems* 12/1.
- Kathryn Oliver et al. 2014. "A systematic review of barriers to and facilitators of the use of evidence by policymakers." *BMC Health Services Research* 14/1.
- Vicky Ward et al. 2012. "Exploring knowledge exchange: a useful framework for practice and policy." *Social Science and Medicine* 74/3: 297-304.
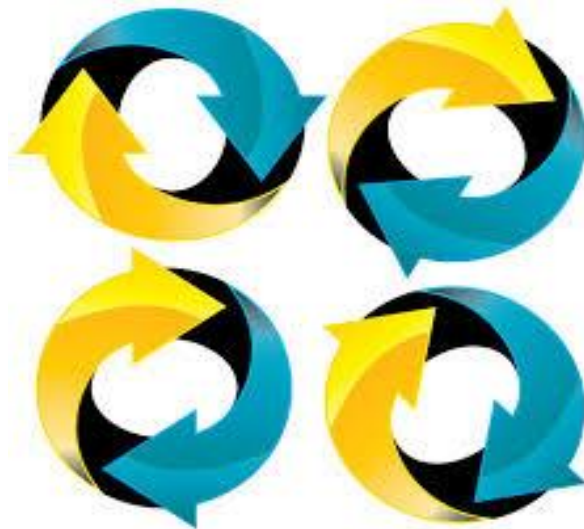
APPENDIX A: MATRIX FOR SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Topic area	
Problematic	
Research question	
Sub-questions	
Hypothesis	
Dependent variable(s)	
Independent variables	
Theoretical framework	
Method	
Scope/unit of analysis	
Participants	
Research contribution	

APPENDIX B: THESIS PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

MA THESIS PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Thesis proposals should be 15-20 pages + bibliography (double spaced; 1 inch margins; 12 pt font).

1. Thesis Statement and Research Objectives (2-3 pages):

The main purpose of the MA proposal is to convince your thesis committee that you have identified an 'important' question that demands a clear answer, and you are the right person, with the right approach, to provide that answer. You should begin with a very clear description of the problem(s) you intend to address in your thesis, and an explanation for why they are important. Try to be as precise as you can about your questions, puzzles, hypotheses, perspective or the debates you will engage (or resolve) through your research.

- what is the purpose of your study?
- what do you wish to prove or disprove?
- what is your thesis/hypothesis? how conventional or counterintuitive is this thesis?
- why do you want to undertake this particular project?
- why is it important/relevant and what do you hope to contribute?
- do you expect to uncover/reveal key policy recommendation?

2. Relation to Current Knowledge/Literature/Theoretical Perspectives (8-10 pages):

You will need to provide a detailed overview and assessment of the relevant literature. The only way to establish the originality and/or importance of your 'contribution to knowledge' is to situate your research within the literature. It is imperative in this section to clearly establish how your research will challenge, critique, reinterpret, build on or deconstruct conventional wisdom on the topic, puzzle or cases you've selected.

- what is the received/accepted/conventional wisdom in the literature on the issue? How do other authors explain/address the issue in which you are interested (or do they)?

- what are the strengths and weaknesses of the current state of knowledge on the subject?
- what central puzzles will you be focusing on or attempting to resolve?
- how will your study, approach or case contribute to or challenge conventional wisdom?
- how will your research create new knowledge on the subject?
- why is your work original and important?

3. Methodology (3-5 pages):

This is perhaps the most important part of the proposal and thesis -- the quality of your conclusions depends heavily on the logical and empirical soundness of your methodology. It is imperative that you provide a crystal clear explanation of the methods you will use to collect the data, facts, evidence you need to support your theory, interpretations, conclusions or policy recommendations. It would help to provide in this section a brief (critical) review of the methods and approaches used by others to answers similar questions.

- what are the problems/impediments with approaches previously used?
- how will your approach overcome these impediments?
- where will you go to find the information you need?
- what types of data are pertinent?
- what variables and concepts are relevant?
- how will you collect and process the data/information on these variables?
- what are the limitations of your methodological approach? How serious are they? And how will they be addressed?

4. Chapter Outline (1 page):

Include brief summary paragraphs describing each chapter, explain how the chapters are connected, and provide an outline of how the arguments will unfold.

- how will you structure your argument?
- how do you intend to break down the content of your study?
- what will the chapters include and how are they related to the main thesis?

5. Timetable and Research Strategy (1 page):

Briefly describe your schedule over the next several months with a monthly breakdown of research plans, priorities, and expectations.

6. Bibliography (3-5 pages):

Provide a list of references cited in the proposal, preliminary sources you think might be useful, and any other material you plan to review.

APPENDIX C: USEFUL SOURCES

Cairney, Paul. 2016. *The Politics of Evidence-Based Policy Making*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mahoney J. and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences.* Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press.

Milliken, J. "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods." *European Journal of International Relations* vol.5 no.2 (June 1999): 225-254.

Mosley, Layna, ed. 2013. *Interview Research in Political Science.* Cornell University Press

Parkhurst, Justin. 2016. *The Politics of Evidence: From Evidence-Based Policy to the Good Governance of Evidence.* London: Routledge.

Przeworski, Adam and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Rhodes, RAW, Sarah A. Binder, and Bert A. Rockman. Eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Schatz. Edward, ed. 2009. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.

Tansey, Oisín. "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-Probability Sampling" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40:4 (October 2007), pp.765-772.

Aaron Wildavsky, *Craftways: On the Organization of Scholarly Work.* New Brunswick, USA: Transaction Publisher

Yoshiko M. Herrera, and Bear F. Braumoeller, eds. "Symposium: Discourse and Content Analysis." *Qualitative Methods: Newsletter of the Organized Section on Qualitative Methods of the APSA* vol.2 no.1 (Spring 2004): 15-39, esp. 15-22.

APPENDIX D: STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

<u>Academic Integrity</u>
At Dalhousie University, we are guided in all of our work by the values of academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, responsibility and respect *(The Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University, 1999)*. As a student, you are required to demonstrate these values in all of the work you do. The University provides policies and procedures that every member of the university community is required to follow to ensure academic integrity.

<u>What does academic integrity mean?</u>
At university we advance knowledge by building on the work of other people. Academic integrity means that we are honest and accurate in creating and communicating all academic products. Acknowledgement of other people's work must be done in a way that does not leave the reader in any doubt as to whose work it is. Academic integrity means trustworthy conduct such as not cheating on examinations and not misrepresenting information. It is the student's responsibility to seek assistance to ensure that these standards are met.

<u>How can you achieve academic integrity?</u>
We must all work together to prevent academic dishonesty because it is unfair to honest students. The following are some ways that you can achieve academic integrity; some may not be applicable in all circumstances.
• Make sure you understand Dalhousie's policies on academic integrity (http://academicintegrity.dal.ca/Policies/*)*
• Do not cheat in examinations or write an exam or test for someone else
• Do not falsify data or lab results
• Be sure not to plagiarize, intentionally or unintentionally, for example…
• Clearly indicate the sources used in your written or oral work. This includes computer codes/ programs, artistic or architectural works, scientific projects, performances, web page designs, graphical representations, diagrams, videos, and images
• Do not use the work of another from the Internet or any other source and submit it as your own
• When you use the ideas of other people (paraphrasing), make sure to acknowledge the source
• Do not submit work that has been completed through collaboration or previously submitted for another assignment without permission from your instructor (These examples should be considered only as a guide and not an exhaustive list.)

<u>Where can you turn for help?</u>
If you are ever unsure about any aspect of your academic work, contact me (or the TA):
• Academic Integrity website http://academicintegrity.dal.ca/
Links to policies, definitions, online tutorials, tips on citing and paraphrasing
• Writing Centre (http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/academic-support/writing-and-study-skills.html)
Assistance with learning to write academic documents, reviewing papers for discipline-specific writing standards, organization, argument, transititions, writing styles and citations
• Dalhousie Libraries Workshops (http://libraries.dal.ca/)
Online tutorials, citation guides, Assignment Calculator, RefWorks
• Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service (http://studentservices.dal.ca/services/advocacy.html)
Assists students with academic appeals and student discipline procedures.
• Senate Office (http://senate.dal.ca*)*
List of Academic Integrity Officers, discipline flowchart, Senate Discipline Committee

<u>What will happen if an allegation of an academic offence is made against you?</u>
As your instructor, I am required to report every suspected offence. The full process is outlined in the Faculty Discipline Flow Chart (http://senate.dal.ca/Files/AIO_/AcademicDisciplineProcess_Flowchart_updated_July_2011.pdf) and includes the following:

• Each Faculty has an Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) who receives allegations from instructors
• Based on the evidence provided, the AIO decides if there is evidence to proceed with the allegation and you will be notified of the process
• If the case proceeds, you will receive a PENDING grade until the matter is resolved
• If you are found guilty of an offence, a penalty will be assigned ranging from a warning, to failure of the assignment or failure of the class, to expulsion from the University. Penalties may also include a notation on your transcript that indicates that you have committed an academic offence. Updated August 2011.