

POLS 670: Research Design

Fall 2020

Tuesday 5:30–8:15 p.m.

407 Ford Hall

Professor: Adam Enders

Office: 105 Ford Hall

Office Hours: Thursday, 12–1 PM (Collaborate) or by appointment

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Course Description

“Analyzing human behavior isn’t rocket science. It’s harder than rocket science.”
–Edward Tufte

The goals of this course are threefold: 1) motivate why we need the scientific process to guide inferences about the world, 2) explore what exactly “science” entails and how it differs from related enterprises, and 3) survey various scientific tools and perspectives frequently employed in political science research. By the end of the course, students will have a more refined grasp of what science is and how it is practiced. To that end, students will complete a research design for their final project, whereby they propose a social scientific question, relate it to extant literature, develop a theory and related hypotheses, and lay the groundwork for data collection and analysis. The ultimate objective is to weave all of goals listed above into a coherent understanding of the ‘discipline’ of political science. In doing so, we will see if the day-to-day research that we *do* corresponds with the high goals we have set for ourselves as social scientists (who we *want to be*), and if not, why?

Class Meetings

This course is designated as “hybrid,” meaning that at least 25% of instruction is to be delivered face-to-face. For the time being, we will be meeting in person at the designated meeting time. Minimally, this will allow us to build some rapport with one another in the event that all courses are forced online. If and when we meet virtually, we will continue to meet at the designating meeting times using Blackboard Collaborate. Students can access online meetings using the following steps:

1. Open the Blackboard course
2. Select **Tools** in the left hand menu
3. Select either of the **Blackboard Collaborate Ultra** links
4. Select the session to open
5. Select **Join Session**

*Note that this is also how you can access my regularly schedule office hours on Thursdays at 12:00 PM. These will be scheduled on Blackboard so that you have access any time.

Course Materials

We will primarily be using the two books listed below, though these will be supplemented with other materials that will be posted to the course Blackboard page.

King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press.

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, H.T. Reynolds, and Jason D. Mycoff. 2019. *Political Science Research Methods (9th edition)*. SAGE.

I have listed the 9th edition of the Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff book, but the 8th or 7th editions are also fine if you can find them cheaper.

Course Requirements

Participation: While attendance will not be formally recorded, systematic absences and lack of participation will be obvious in such a small class, and those absences will be reflected in the participation component of the student's final grade.

Discussion Papers (2): Students must choose two different weeks to write a brief discussion paper about the readings. Students may write on any topic that is addressed in one or several of the readings from a given week. However, these papers should not attempt to summarize all readings. Rather, they should be focused on exploring a question that students had while reading or critically examining an idea or particular reading.

Midterm Exam: Students will complete a timed, essay-style midterm exam near the middle of the semester.

Research Design: Students will complete a research design for their final project. A research design is basically even part of a research paper except data analysis. Students will define a social scientific problem they are interested in solving, discuss existing literature and theories that speak to this problem, and then carefully lay out a plan for collecting and analyzing data to test their hypotheses. If done well, this paper can be used as a jumping off point for actual data analysis and completion of a Master's thesis.

Grades

Distribution

Participation	10%
Discussion papers	20% (10% each)
Midterm Exam	30%
Research Design	40%

Scale

94-100 = A	75-78 = C+
90-93 = A-	71-74 = C
86-89 = B+	68-70 = C-
82-85 = B	60-67 = D
79-81 = B-	60 and below = F

Class Schedule

All of the following reading assignments are to be completed *before* attending class on the associated date/week. The material not included in the texts listed above (journal articles and book chapters) are available for download on the course Blackboard page.

Week 1: Introduction (August 18)

Johnson et al. Chapter 1

Week 2: Why Do We Need Science? (August 25)

Kida, Thomas. 2006. *Don't Believe Everything You Think*. Prometheus Books. (Introduction and Chapter 1)

Friedman, Hershey H. 2017. "Cognitive Biases that Interfere with Critical Thinking and Scientific Reasoning: A Course Module." *SSRN Electronic Journal*.

al Gharbi, Musa. 2018. "Race and the Race for the White House: On Social Research in the Age of Trump." *The American Sociologist* 49: 496-519.

Week 3: Science vs. Pseudo-Science (September 1)

Johnson et al. Chapter 2

KKV Chapter 1

Hill, Kim Quaille. 2004. "Myths about the Physical Sciences and Their Implications for Teaching Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 37(3): 467-471.

Reply to Hill 2004

Popper, Karl. "Science: Conjectures and Refutations." In *Philosophy of Science: The Central Issues*. Eds. Martin Curd and J. A. Cover. W. W. Norton & Company.

Week 4: Theory & Theoretical Change (September 8)

Hill, Kim Quaile. 2012. "In Search of General Theory." *Journal of Politics* 74(4): 917-931.

Kuhn, Thomas S. "Objectivity, Value Judgment, and Theory Choice." In *The Essential Tension: Selected Studies in Scientific Tradition and Change*. Ed. Thomas S. Kuhn. University of Chicago Press.

Feyerabend, Paul. 2010. *Against Method*. Verso. (skim 1-8, read 9-23)

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press. (Chapter 1)

Week 5: Descriptive and Causal Inference (September 15)

Johnson et al. Chapters 4 and 6

KKV Chapters 2 and 3

Abramowitz, Alan I. and Kyle L. Saunders. 2008. "Is Polarization a Myth?" *Journal of Politics* 70(2): 542-555.

Fiorina, Morris P., Samuel A. Abrams, and Jeremy C. Pope. 2008. "Polarization in the American Public: Misconceptions and Misreadings." *Journal of Politics* 70(2): 556-560.

Week 6: Measurement (September 22)

Johnson et al. Chapter 5

KKV Chapter 4

Jacoby, William G. 1999. "Levels of Measurement and Political Research: An Optimistic View." *American Journal of Political Science* 43: 271-301.

Kalmoe, Nathan P. 2020. "Uses and Abuses of Ideology in Political Psychology." *Political Psychology* 41(4): 771-793.

Week 7: Experiments (September 29)

KKV Chapter 5

Iyengar, Shanto. 2011. "Laboratory Experiments in Political Science." In *The Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press.

Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2011. "Field Experiments and Natural Experiments." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. Ed. Robert E. Goodin. Oxford University Press.

Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Journal of Political Science* 102(1): 33-48.

Week 8: Fall Break (October 6)

No class!

Johnson et al. Chapter 3

Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 127-132.

Week 9: Midterm (October 13)

No class!

Research Design proposal due October 13

Week 10: Sampling (October 20)

Johnson et al. Chapter 7

Weisberg, Herbert F. 2005. *The Total Survey Error Approach: A Guide to The New Science of Survey Research*. University of Chicago Press. (Chapters 2 and 3)

Pew Research Center, [Key Things to Know About Election Polling in the United States](#)"

Berinsky, Adam J. 2002. "Silent Voices: Social Welfare Policy Opinions and Political Equality in America." *American Journal of Political Science* 46(2): 276-287.

Week 11: Non-Experimental Methods – Surveys (October 27)

Johnson et al. Chapter 10

Berinsky, Adam J. 2017. "Measuring Public Opinion with Surveys." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 309-329.

Feldman, Stanley. 1995. "Answering Questions." In *Political Judgement: Structure and Process*. Eds. Milton Lodge and Kathleen McGraw. University of Michigan Press.

Bullock, John G., Alan S. Gerber, Seth J. Hill, and Gregory A. Huber. 2015. "Partisan Bias in Factual Beliefs about Politics." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 10(4): 519-578.

Week 12: Non-Experimental Methods – Observation (November 3)

Johnson et al. Chapters 8 and 9

Fenno Jr., Richard F. 1990. *Watching Politicians: Essays on Participant Observation*. IGS Press. (Introduction and Chapter 1)

Content Analysis Symposium (read 15-38)

Black, Ryan C., Sarah A. Treul, Timothy R. Johnson, and Jerry Goldman. 2011. “Emotions, Oral Arguments, and Supreme Court Decision Making.” *Journal of Politics* 73(2): 572-581.

Week 13: Qualitative Methods – Case Studies & Field Research (November 10)

Johnson et al. Chapter 5

KKV Chapter 6

Gerring, John. 2017. “Qualitative Methods.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 15-36.

Johnson, Cathryn Evangeline. 2021. “Connecting Malian and Burkinabe Women’s Local Experiences of Livelihood Security to How They Participate in Politics.” *World Development* 137: 105157.

Research Design first draft due November 10

Week 14: Ethics & Science in Practice (November 17)

Metcalf, Jacob and Kate Crawford. 2016. “Where Are Human Subjects in Big Data Research? The Emerging Ethics Divide” *Big Data & Society* January-June 2016: 1-14.

Franco, Annie, Neil Malhotra, Gabor Simonovits. 2014. “Publication Bias in the Social Sciences: Unlocking the File Drawer.” *Science* 345(6203): 1502-1505.

Lupia, Arthur. 2017. “Now Is the Time: How to Increase the Value of Social Science.” *Social Research: An International Quarterly* 84(3): 669-694.

King, Desmond. 1998. “The Politics of Social Research: Institutionalizing Public Funding Regimes in the United States and Britain.” *British Journal of Political Science* 28(3): 415-444.

Week 15: Student Presentations (November 24)

Students will present their research designs to the class

Research Design due Friday, December 4 @ 5:00 PM

Course Policies

Title IX/Clery Act Notification: Sexual misconduct (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, and any other nonconsensual behavior of a sexual nature) and sex discrimination violate University policies. Students experiencing such behavior may obtain **confidential** support from the PEACC Program (852-2663), Counseling Center (852-6585), and Campus Health Services (852-6479). To report sexual misconduct or sex discrimination, contact the Dean of Students (852-5787) or University of Louisville Police (852-6111).

Disclosure to **University faculty or instructors** of sexual misconduct, domestic violence, dating violence, or sex discrimination occurring on campus, in a University-sponsored program, or involving a campus visitor or University student or employee (whether current or former) is **not confidential** under Title IX. Faculty and instructors must forward such reports, including names and circumstances, to the University's Title IX officer.

For more information, see the **Sexual Misconduct Resource Guide**.

Academic Integrity: Academic dishonesty is prohibited at the University of Louisville. It is a serious offense because it diminishes the quality of scholarship, makes accurate evaluation of student progress impossible, and defrauds those in society who must ultimately depend upon the knowledge and integrity of the institution and its students and faculty. For more information, see the **Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities**.

Disabilities Accommodation: The University of Louisville is committed to providing access to programs and services for qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a disability and require accommodation to participate and complete requirements for this class, notify me immediately and contact the Disability Resource Center (Stevenson Hall, 502-852-6938) for verification of eligibility and determination of specific accommodations. For more information, visit the **Disability Resource Center**.

Religious Observation Policy: Federal law and university policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious belief. It is the policy of the University of Louisville to accommodate students, faculty, and staff who observe religious work-restricted holy days. Students who need to alter a quiz/exam deadline due to religious observations must, however, bring the matter to the attention of the instructor during the first week of the semester.

Final Caveat: While this course has been devised carefully, the instructor does reserve the right to amend the assignments or schedule as presented above.