

SCOPE AND METHODS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE (POLS 2010)
FALL 2018
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 12:00-12:50
Lindy Boggs Energy Center 104

Professor: Virginia Oliveros

Email: volivero@tulane.edu

Office: Political Science Department, 311 Norman Mayer Building

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00

Teaching Assistants:

Students A to L (up to Latham)

Lidia Abel, label@tulane.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00 at Norman Mayer 318

Students L (from Leblanc) to Z

Wesley Hill, whill3@tulane.edu

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00-1:00 at Norman Mayer 318

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is an introduction to research in political science. Its goal is to familiarize you with the scientific study of politics. We will apply a scientific approach to questions about political phenomena, instead of the more familiar approaches taken by politicians, interest groups, and popular media. We will learn why we ask empirical questions about politics (the “scope” part), and how to answer these questions scientifically using the appropriate types of evidence (the “methods” part). We also cover how to clearly convey our arguments to others. The course topics will include the logic of the scientific method, the measurement of political concepts, research design and methods of data collection, statistical techniques for analyzing data, and various quantitative and qualitative practices in the field of political science. At the end of the course, you should be comfortable reading and critiquing arguments about real world political problems. Learning to think scientifically in this manner is a skill that you will find useful in other political science courses and in your career (and life!). No background in statistics or mathematics beyond high school algebra is assumed. There are no prerequisites other than a desire to think about political problems in a systematic and critical fashion.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Identify and explain different subfields in political science, dominant research designs used in the field, and diverse methods of inquiry.
2. Compare the merits and drawbacks of different evaluative approaches to political science, and make informed choices about how to best pursue scholarly research in topics of interest to them.
3. Synthesize a literature review, hypothesis, argument, and research methods in a semester-long research design project.
4. Apply critical perspectives to methods used in various political science papers discussed in class.
5. Identify and apply norms of ethical research, including the use of humans as research subjects.

TEACHING ASSISTANTS

On Mondays and Wednesdays, class will be a lecture with Prof. Oliveros. On most Fridays (except those designated on the schedule below), we will have a more practical approach to the topics of the week. Teaching Assistants will have a more active role on these days.

Your TA is the point person for this course. Students whose last names start with the letters A to L (up to Latham) will be working with Lidia; students whose last names start with L (from Leblanc) to Z will be working with Wesley. If you have questions or concerns about course material, class absences, your performance, or any other class-related issue, you should **FIRST** go to your TA. In most cases, he or she will be able to help you with any issue that arises, particularly as it related to class material and performance. You can come to Prof. Oliveros if you are unable to resolve the issue with the TA. If you come to Prof. Oliveros first, you will be asked to go back to your TA.

REQUIRED READINGS

Students are expected to read each of the required readings carefully before coming to class. The format of the course will combine lecture and discussion and students should be prepared to engage in discussion. There is one required textbook:

Johnson, Janet B. and Reynolds, H.T. 2016. *Political Science Research Methods*, (8th edition).
Los Angeles: CQ Press. (JR in syllabus)

The rest of the assigned readings are available on Canvas.

REQUIREMENTS

	Date	Percent
Attendance and Participation		5%
Assignments	Various	10%
Midterm exam	October 5	20%
Literature review	November 2	15%
Research proposal paper	December 8	20%
Final exam	December 11	30%

1. ATTENDANCE, AND PARTICIPATION (5%)

Regular attendance is required. If you miss a class or two, you do not need to tell your TA. If absences, tardiness, or under-preparation becomes a problem, your grade will suffer.

You are expected to do the readings prior to class and come to class prepared to discuss the materials and class work.

2. ASSIGNMENTS (10%)

There will be a number of assignments during the course of the semester. All assignments **are due on Canvas before class on the date indicated in the syllabus**. These homework assignments are graded as satisfactory/unsatisfactory. The first exercises are designed to help you hone skills, organize your thoughts, and come up with a research question and testable

hypotheses for your final paper. Later in the semester, we will be working on components to your research papers and methodological skills. You are expected to bring your assignments to class and be prepared to discuss the answers.

3. IN-CLASS MIDTERM EXAM (20%)

The midterm exam will take place on **October 5th**. The format of the exam will be discussed the week before the exam. There will be no make-up exams unless you have a documented medical excuse. The exam will include material presented both in the readings and in the lectures and will cover the material discussed up to Week 6.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW (15%)

A literature review on your intended research topic. Detailed instructions will be provided. Due on **November 2nd**.

5. RESEARCH PROPOSAL PAPER (20%)

This requirement consists on a series of assignments that culminate in the writing of a research proposal paper. The research proposal paper will be on a topic of interest to you in political science and will build on established research on that question in the field. To develop this assignment, students are first required to submit an initial summary of a few possible topics/questions of interest. Once the TA has approved the question, you will (1) write an annotated bibliography on that topic, (2) create a literature review, (3) discuss your tentative research plan, and finally (4) write an original research proposal paper. Final research proposal paper will be due on **December 8th**.

The final research proposal should include a statement of the question, why it is of interest (to academics and/or the “real world”), a revised and focused (brief) literature review, a hypothesis or hypotheses, a description and justification of the methodology you propose to use, and how it can be reasonably carried out. This final research proposal should incorporate comments and suggestions received from the TAs and your classmates.

6. IN-CLASS CUMULATIVE FINAL (30%)

The cumulative final exam will be a closed-book exam covering material from the entire semester. The format of the exam will be discussed the last day of classes. The final exam, as set by the registrar, will take place on **Tuesday, December 12th, 1:00-3:00**

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

1. Please, do not eat during class. Beverages are fine.
2. Students are not allowed to use laptops in class. For details on why I do not allow laptops, see: <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away>
3. Make sure your cell phone is turned off and do not text during class.
4. Attendance is mandatory and part of your participation grade. If you missed a class, please get the notes from another student.

POLICIES

Attendance. Attendance is mandatory and extremely important to succeed in this class. During class we will cover some material that is not in the readings and they will be part of the exams. If you missed a class, ask another student for the notes. We will mark you as absent if you attend class but cannot or will not participate or are obviously unprepared. If absences, tardiness, or under-preparation becomes a problem, your grade will suffer.

Make-up Exams. There will be no make-up exams unless you have a documented medical emergency. Make travel plans accordingly.

Late Policy. Late assignments will not be accepted. On your **literature reviews** and your **final research paper**, for each day the assignment is late, one-third of a letter grade is deducted from the final grade on the assignment *up to five days late*. After that point, the papers will not be accepted. I strongly encourage you to discuss any problems with your TA *before* the papers are due.

Grading. This course will be grade according to the following scale:

A	>=93	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D+	67-69
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	D	63-66
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72	D-	60-62

F= 59 & below

Disputing grades. The teaching assistants will be happy to go over any exam or assignment with you to help you to improve for the following assignment or the final. Indeed, I encourage you to go to office hours to do so, especially if you think that you did study hard but did not get the expected results. Request for re-grading, though, must be done in writing. Any student requesting re-grading should describe (based on the class' materials) what he/she feels constitute the correct answer and how his/hers work meets the standard described.

Academic Honesty. Students are required to act in accordance with the Code of Academic Conduct. Any suspected violations will be brought before the Newcomb-Tulane College Honor Board. Please familiarize yourself with the Code of Academic Conduct:

<http://tulane.edu/college/code.cfm>.

Goldman Office of Disability Services (ODS)

The ODS' mission is to provide services and promote an accessible environment to all members of the Tulane community. Students with psychological, medical/physical, and learning/developmental disabilities who need accommodations must be registered with the Office of Disability Services and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance. See:

<http://tulane.edu/studentaffairs/disability/index.cfm>

If you have any kind of special circumstances, such as a disability, illness or handicap, let me know as soon as possible. This information is confidential. Students needing accommodations must provide me with a Course Accommodation Form and if applicable, an Exam Request Form ("blue sheet") in order to schedule an exam to be taken at ODS. Accommodations involving exams must be requested to me at least four days before a test or seven days before a final exam. Any student receiving an exam-related accommodation should plan to take the exam at ODS.

Respect for all people

Tulane University recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. As “One Wave,” Tulane is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, creed, religion, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as all forms of sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences discrimination, domestic violence, sexual assault or sexual harassment, know that you are not alone. Resources and support are available. Learn more at onewave.tulane.edu. Any and all of your communications on these matters will be treated as either “Strictly Confidential” or “Mostly Confidential” as explained in the chart below.

Strictly Confidential	Mostly Confidential
<i>Except in extreme circumstances, involving imminent danger to one’s self or others, nothing will be shared without your explicit permission.</i>	<i>Conversations are kept as confidential as possible, but information is shared with key staff members so the University can offer resources and accommodations and take action if necessary for safety reasons.</i>
<i>Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) (504) 314-2277</i>	<i>Coordinator of Violence Prevention (504) 314-2161</i>
<i>Student Health Center (504) 865-5255</i>	<i>Tulane University Police (TUPD) (504) 865-5911</i>
<i>Sexual Aggression Peer Hotline and Education (SAPHE) (504) 654-9543</i>	<i>Office of Institutional Equity (504) 862-8083</i>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction [August 27-31]

Monday: Introduction

Wednesday: The Science of Political Science

JR, Chapter 2

Friday

AUGUST 31: APSA CONFERENCE – NO CLASS

Week 2: Research Questions [September 3-7]

Monday

SEPTEMBER 3: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS

Wednesday

JR, Chapter 1, pp. 1-22 (skim the rest of the chapter)

JR, Chapter 3, pp. 74-82

Friday

Baglione, Lisa A. 2012. *Writing a research paper in political science: a practical guide to inquiry, structure, and methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Chapter 2

**Assignment 1 (Research Questions) is due. Bring your assignment to class and be prepared to discuss the answers.*

Week 3 [September 10-14]

Monday: Research Questions II

Putnam, Robert. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 65-78.

Wednesday: Hypotheses, Concepts and Variables

JR, Chapter 4, pp. 104-121

Fisman, Raymond and Edward Miguel. 2007. "Corruption, Norms and Legal Enforcement: Evidence from Diplomatic Parking Tickets," *Journal of Political Economy* 115(6): 1020-1048 (Read pages 1-8 carefully; feel free to read/skim the rest).

Friday

**Assignment 2 (Research Questions II) is due. Bring your assignment to class and be prepared to discuss the answers.*

Week 4 [September 17-21]

Monday: Hypotheses, Concepts and Variables II

JR, Chapter 4, pp. 121-127

Dahl, Robert. 1971. *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Chapter 1

Wednesday: Literature Review

JR, Chapter 3, pp. 82-102.

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

Friday: Library Session - Literature Review

Eric Wedig, coordinator for Scholarly Resources for the Social Sciences at the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, will join us.

Week 5 [September 24-28]

Monday: Conceptualization and Measurement

JR, Chapter 5.

Paxton, Pamela. 2000. "Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 35(3): 92-111.

Wednesday: Causal Inference

JR, Chapter 6, pp. 166- 179

Friday

Kastellec, Jonathan P. 2013. "Racial diversity and judicial influence on appellate courts." *American Journal of Political Science* 57(1): 167-183.

**Revised version of Assignment 2 (for those who needed to revise it)*

**Assignment 3 (Causality) is due. Bring your assignment to class and be prepared to discuss the answers.*

Week 6 [October 1-5]

Monday: Causal Inference II

No readings, revise the notes from the last class

Wednesday

REVIEW FOR MIDTERM

Friday

OCTOBER 5: IN-CLASS MIDTERM

Week 7: Forms of Data: Observational Data and Experiments [October 8-12]

Monday

Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural experiments in the social sciences*. New York: Cambridge U Press. Chapter 1.

Freedman et al. 2007. *Statistics*, 4th Edition. (Norton). Chapter 2: Observational Studies

Wednesday

Bertrand, Marianne and Sendhil Mullainathan. 2004. "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." *The American Economic Review*: 991-1013.

Friday

OCTOBER 12: FALL BREAK – NO CLASS

Week 8: Qualitative Methods [October 15-19]

Monday: Single Case Study method and Process Tracing

Gerring, John. 2006. "What is a case study?" In *Case Study Research*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2: 17-36.

Brady, Henry. 2010. "Data-Set Observations versus Causal- Process Observations: The 2000 U.S. Presidential Election." In Henry Brady and David Collier (eds): *Rethinking Social Inquiry*. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Chapter 12: 237-244.

Wednesday: Case Selection and the Comparative Method

Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-93.

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2(1): 131-150.

Friday: Post Midterm Review – DO NOT MISS THIS ONE!

Week 9: Strategies to collect qualitative data: Archival research, ethnography, surveys, and interviewing [October 22-26]

Monday

JR, Chapters 8, pp. 244-262 & Chapter 9, pp. 287-292.

Symposium: "Interview Methods in Political Science." 2002. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35 (4): 663-688.

Wednesday

JR, Chapters 10

Friday

**Assignment 4 (Annotated Bibliography) is due. Bring your assignment to class and be prepared to discuss the answers.*

Week 10: Strategies to Collect Quantitative Data: Survey Research and Sampling [October 29-November 2]

Monday

JR, Chapters 7, pp. 212-230

Wednesday

JR, Chapters 7, pp. 230-240

Holden, C. 2009. "The 2010 census: America's uncounted millions." *Science* 324: 1008-1009.

Friday

**Literature review is due on Canvas and in hard copy. Bring your assignment to class.*

Week 11: Descriptive Statistics and Statistical Inference [November 5-9]

Monday

JR, Chapters 11

Ross, Michael L. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53(3): 325-361.

Wednesday

JR, Chapters 13, pp. 412-438.

Friday

**Assignment 5 (Research Design) is due. Bring your assignment to class and be prepared to discuss the answers.*

Week 12: Bivariate and Multivariate Analysis [November 12-16]

Monday

JR, Chapters 13, pp. 478-515.

Wednesday

JR, Chapters 14

Friday: Library Session - Large N data

Eric Wedig, coordinator for Scholarly Resources for the Social Sciences at the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, will join us.

Week 13 [November 19-23]

Monday: Peer review of assignments

**Assignment 6 (Research Design II) is due. Bring your assignment to class and be prepared to discuss the answers with other students.*

Wednesday

THANKSGIVING

Friday

THANKSGIVING

Week 14: Who does what? [November 26-30]

Monday: Methods in Theory and International Relations

Forestal, Jeni. 2017. "The Architecture of Political Spaces: Trolls, Digital Media, and Deweyan Democracy." *American Political Science Review* 111(1): 149-161.

Dancy, Geoff. 2017. "Searching for Deterrence at the International Criminal Court." *International Criminal Law Review* 17(4): 625-655.

Wednesday: Methods in American Politics and Comparative Politics

Lay, J. Celeste. 2009. "Race, retrospective voting, and disasters: The re-election of C. Ray Nagin after Hurricane Katrina." *Urban Affairs Review* 44(5): 645-662.

Ross, Michael L. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?" *World Politics* 53(3): 325-361. (Skim it again before class)

Friday

**Assignment 7 (Final outline) is due. Outline of your final paper. Peer review of assignment in class. Bring your assignment to class and be prepared to give a 3-minute synopsis of your research design to another student and get their feedback.*

Week 15: [December 3-7]

Monday: Ethics

JR, Chapter 8, pp. 262-265.

Wednesday

DECEMBER 6: REVIEW FOR FINAL EXAM

Friday

DECEMBER 8: LAST DAY OF CLASSES!

*** Final paper is due to Canvas and in hard copy.*

DECEMBER 11 [TUESDAY]: 1:00-3:00 PM. FINAL CUMULATIVE EXAM