

# POLS 208: Research Design and Methods

Spring 2018

Emory University- White Hall 112  
Monday & Wednesday 2:30-3:45 pm

## **Instructor:**

**Lauren Mattioli**

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## **Graders:**

Maggie Macdonald

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**Office Hours: Wednesdays 4-6pm**

**Or by Appointment**

Office Hours by Appointment

113C Tarbuton Hall

## **Course Description**

This course provides an introduction to theory and method of contemporary political analysis. It prepares students to conduct independent, original, high-quality empirical research. By tracing the research process students will learn how to: formulate research questions and subsequent hypotheses, design a research plan, determine appropriate methodologies and employ strategies and techniques for collecting data. The course introduces research strategies for valid inference (both descriptive and causal), which students will use to design an original research project within small groups. POLS 208 is mandatory for majors in Political Science or International Studies at Emory University. The department strongly encourages all students to take this course during their first two years to prepare themselves for upper-level coursework.

QTM 100- Introduction to Statistical Inference is a prerequisite for this course. I will assume that students are familiar with the subjects covered and have maintained the skills they acquired in QTM 100.

## **Learning Objectives**

- Identify and explain the advantages and challenges of applying the scientific method to the study of politics
- Understand the role of theory and hypotheses in addressing research questions

- Appreciate the challenges of defining and measuring abstract political science concepts
- Understand and apply a variety of techniques for testing causal hypotheses
- Evaluate the internal and external validity of different types of research designs—experimental and observational; quantitative and qualitative
- Working collaboratively with other students, design a study that can: address an important political question or puzzle; build upon the strengths and weaknesses of existing research; and make a significant contribution to our knowledge and understanding of politics – past, present, and future

## Readings

We will use one primary textbook:

Remler, Dahlia K., and Gregg G. Van Ryzin. 2015. *Research Methods in Practice: Strategies for Description and Causation*, 2nd edition. Los Angeles, Sage Publications. [hereafter referred to as 'RvR']

All other readings are available (free of charge) via eJournals, Library Course Reserves, or other online sources as noted.

## Grading

Your final grade is a weighted average of the following components:

### *Class Preparation & Participation 10%*

You should come to class ready to participate. Participation can mean responding to questions I ask, but can also mean asking questions of your own. The best way to prepare for class is to actively read the assigned materials. We will read a number of academic articles throughout the semester. For every assigned article, you should:

1. Identify the Research Topic & Question
2. Describe the theory
3. List the research and null hypothesis(es)
4. Describe the major features of the research design
  - a. Data
  - b. Method
  - c. Scope (spatial, temporal)
5. Highlight the main findings, results, and conclusions of the paper
6. Think carefully about how the article relates to other readings that week and what you've already learned in the course.

Attendance in this class is expected. To encourage you to be present and prepared, short quizzes based on the course materials will happen at random intervals throughout the semester. They will not be announced in advance. Your ability to perform well on these quizzes will rest entirely on whether you have attended and are prepared for class. Your final participation grade will be based on attendance for the quizzes (75%) and performance on the quizzes (25%).

***Exams- Best Two out of Three (55%)***

There will be three exams administered in this class. Two will be during normal class times. A third exam will be administered during the regularly scheduled final exam period for this class. Your course exam grade will only include your two highest exam grades. Details on the format of exams will be discussed as each approach.

***Group Research Design Project: 35%***

Each student will complete a research design paper as a member of a team. **You will receive a lengthy, detailed document describing the assignment separately. This is just a preview.** The multiple stages are designed to reduce the likelihood of an overburdened final week in the course, provide opportunities for group collaboration, and establish individual contributions. You are encouraged to work with the course instructor and graders throughout the process. Items 1, 4, 8 and 10 on the list below should be completed *independently*.

Projects will develop in the following stages. Unless otherwise noted, all deadlines are noon (12:00 pm) on the due-date specified in the course schedule.

- 1. Individual Project Survey**
2. Group Contract
3. Topic Proposal
- 4. Individual Literature Review**
5. Research Question
6. Theoretical Argument and Hypothesis(es)
7. Variable Description, Data, and Method plan
8. Annotated Paper Outline
- 9. Workshop Preparation Worksheet**
10. Final Paper
- 11. Group Member and Self-Assessment**

Date	Readings	Due by Noon
1/17	<b>Introduction</b>	
1/22	<b>The Science in Political Science</b> <b>RvR Ch. 1</b> King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. <i>Designing Social Inquiry</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. p. 3-12 (KKV)	
1/24	<b>Theory and Models</b> <b>RvR 25-30 and 49-52</b> KKV p. 12-28	<b>Project Survey (Individual)</b>
1/29	<b>The Literature &amp; Identifying Sources</b> <b>RvR p. 529-540</b> Iyengar, Shanto, Mark D. Peters, and Donald R. Kinder. 1982. "Experimental Demonstrations of the 'Not-So-Minimal' Consequences of Television News Programs." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 76(December): pp. 848-849	
1/31	<b>Hypotheses</b> <b>RvR p. 30-49</b> Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 102(1). Skim the empirics- we will revisit them later.	
2/5	<b>Descriptive Inference- Measurement and Conceptualization</b> <b>RvR Ch. 4</b> Ziblatt, Daniel. 2009. "Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 103(1). P 1-9	<b>Group Contract</b>
2/7	<b>Essential Statistics</b> <b>RvR. Ch. 8 and p. 280-290</b>	
2/12	<b>Descriptive Inference- Sampling and Statistical Significance</b> <b>RvR. Ch 5 and p. 291-304.</b>	
2/14	<b>Exam 1</b>	
2/19	<b>Gathering Data</b> <b>RvR Ch. 7 &amp; p. 67-81</b>	
2/21	<b>Causal Inference &amp; Experimental Design</b> <b>RvR. Ch 11 and 14.</b> Iyengar, Peters and Kinder (from 9/6). Pages 849-858	<b>Topic Proposal</b>
2/26	<b>Field Experiments</b> Review Gerber, Green and Larimer from 9/11.	

2/28	<b>Natural and Quasi Experiments</b>	<b>RvR ch p. 466-484</b> Choose 2 of the following 3 Articles. Adam N Glynn and Maya Sen. 2015. Identifying judicial empathy: Does having daughters cause judges to rule for women's issues? American Journal of Political Science, 59(1):37-54.  Hyde, Susan D. 2007. "The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment." World Politics 60(1): 37-63.  Daniel Posner. 2004. The political salience of cultural difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and adversaries in Malawi. American Political Science Review, p. 529-545.	
3/5	<b>Observational Studies</b>	<b>RvR ch. 12</b> Ziblatt (from 9/11). P. 8-12	<b>Lit Review (Individual)</b>
3/7	<b>Linear Regression</b>	<b>RvR ch. 13</b> <b>(Review your QTM 100 notes if necessary)</b>	
3/12 & 3/14	<b>Spring Break- No Class</b>		
3/19	<b>Difference in Differences</b>	<b>RvR p. 484-490</b> Lyall, Jason. 2009. "Does Indiscriminate Violence Incite Insurgent Attacks? Evidence from Chechnya." Journal of Conflict Resolution 53(3): 331-362  Alan B. Krueger David Card. 1994. Minimum wages and employment: A case study of the fast-food industry in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. The American Economic Review, 84(4):772-793.	
3/21	<b>Regression Discontinuity Design</b>	<b>RvR p. 490-492</b> Hopkins, Daniel J. 2011. "Translating into Votes: The Electoral Impacts of Spanish-Language Ballots." American Journal of Political Science 55(4): 813-829.	<b>Research Question</b>
3/26	<b>Instrumental Variables</b>	Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. 2001. The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation. American Economic Review, 91(5):1369-1401.	
3/28	<b>Exam 2</b>		

4/2	<b>Gathering Data II</b>	<b>Robert O'Reilly Visiting</b>	<b>Theoretical Argument and Hypothesis</b>
4/4	<b>Comparative Case Studies</b>	<b>RvR p. 76-86</b> Liu, Amy H., and Jacob I. Ricks. 2012. "Coalitions and Language Politics: Policy Shifts in Southeast Asia." <i>World Politics</i> 64(3): 476-506.	
4/9	<b>Process Tracing and Triangulation</b>	Chapters 10 and 12 of <i>Rethinking Social Inquiry</i> Henry E Brady and David Collier. 2010. <i>Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards.</i> Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. Ziblatt (From 9/11) p. 12-18	
4/11	<b>American Politics Research at Emory</b>	<b>Readings TBA</b>	<b>Variable Description, Data, and Method Plan</b>
4/16	<b>Comparative Politics Research at Emory</b>	<b>Readings TBA</b>	
4/18	<b>International Relations Research at Emory</b>	<b>Readings TBA</b>	<b>Annotated Paper Outline</b>
4/23	<b>Ethics and Politics of Research</b>	<b>RvR Ch. 16</b>	
4/25	<b>Workshop</b>		<b>Workshop Preparation Worksheet</b>
4/30	<b>Final Class</b>		
5/9		<b>Exam 3- 3:00 pm</b>	
5/12			<b>Final Group Paper</b>
5/13			<b>Group Member and Self-Assessments (Individual)</b>
5/14		<b>Term Ends</b>	

## **Course Policies**

### **Assignment Submission**

All written assignments for this class should be typed, double spaced, contain proper citations in accordance with the APSR (American Political Science Review) style manual, proofread for mistakes, and neatly presented with page numbers. Only electronic submissions to the course Canvas site will be graded.

### **Missed Evaluations and Late Assignments**

There will be no opportunities for makeup quizzes. Makeup exams will only be granted in the instance of a documented serious illness or pre-excused absence for specific Emory University activities. Makeup exams will be essay based. Late assignments, including group work, will be penalized one letter grade per day (including weekends and holidays).

### **Extra-Credit Work**

There will be no opportunities for extra credit in this class.

### **Incomplete grades**

No incomplete grades will be given unless there is an agreement between the instructor and student **prior** to the end of the course. The instructor retains the right to determine legitimate reasons for an incomplete grade. Furthermore, the Office for Undergraduate Education will need to sign off on all such requests.

### **Email and Course Website**

I expect you to check your email and the Canvas site. You are responsible for material sent electronically and posted to the course Canvas site.

### **Academic Integrity**

The honor code is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the teacher is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>

### **Access, Disability Services, and Resources**

Emory University is committed under the Americans with Disabilities Act and its Amendments and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to providing appropriate accommodations to individuals with documented disabilities. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, provide the instructor(s) with an accommodation notification letter from Access, Disabilities Services and Resources office. Students are expected to give two weeks-notice of the need for accommodations. If you need immediate accommodations or physical access, please arrange to meet with instructor as soon as your accommodations have been finalized.