Introduction to Political Inquiry
RPOS 516 – Fall 2018

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Seminar: Husted Hall 017
Tuesday 5:45PM-9:25PM
Office Hours: By appointment
Credits: 4

Course Description
This course is designed to provide students with an introduction to political inquiry in the social sciences. Students will learn how to ask and answer empirical research questions, using different approaches to explore political phenomenon across different subfields of political science. Students will also evaluate the merits of a wide range of methods including experiments; large-n statistical analysis; historical case studies; content analysis; field research and ethnography; and interview and survey research. Students will be expected to construct research designs suitable for answering different research questions. Students will be exposed to different software tools for conducting empirical research and analyzing data. Finally, students will examine the ontological and epistemological debates relevant to the discipline of political science. This is a required course in the Department’s doctoral program curriculum.

Goals
After taking this course, students will be able to:

1. Ask and defend interesting research questions related to empirical political phenomenon;
2. Evaluate the merits of different methodological choices;
3. Propose a range of research design strategies to answer different research questions;
4. Use software to manage research, analyze data, and communicate findings;
5. Provide constructive feedback to improve colleagues’ research projects;
6. Construct research projects related to students’ interests; and
7. Demonstrate mastery of foundational debates about the study of the social world.

Assignments
Aside from completing weekly readings, students will be expected to contribute to weekly discussions and complete weekly assignments, which are listed on the syllabus.

Students are also expected to submit at least one research prospectus. For this assignment, students will propose an argument about the empirical world; defend the argument’s importance; identify evidence necessary to determine whether the argument is correct; and explain how you propose to collect the evidence. Each prospectus must be limited to five pages. The first prospectus is due on October 17, 2017. If the class decides to retain the current course structure, the second prospectus will be due on November 21, 2017.
Finally, students will compose a draft grant application based on a prospectus. The grant application is limited to fifteen pages (all inclusive) and is due on **December 15, 2018**. If you find it useful, consider as a guide: Pzreworski, Adam and Salomon, Frank, “On the Art of Writing Proposals” (Social Science Research Council, 1995 rev., 1988), available at:


**Grading & Evaluations**

You will be evaluated according to your progress toward the goals of this course. Evaluations will occur regularly in class, on quizzes and exams, and on your final paper. The relative weights of each portion of the evaluation are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercises</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prospectus</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant Application</td>
<td>30%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Materials & Resources**

Most of the readings will be made available via the course Blackboard website. Please obtain copies of the following books:


**Policies**

Student participation in this course is governed by the University’s Standard of Academic Integrity. Failure to comply with the Standard of Academic Integrity can result in a failing grade and dismissal from the course. Other academic discipline by the University may also result. Those standards are outlined here:


Every Student is expected to go through the following tutorial:

Schedule

August 28. Introduction.

September 4. Research Ethics.


National Science Foundation. n.d. “Interpreting the Common Rule for the Protection of Human Subjects for Behavioral and Social Science Research.” Available at:
www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/hsfaqs.jsp

www.apsanet.org/content_53646.cfm

Brooks, Sarah. 2010. “Interview Research and IRBs: Navigating the Regulations for the Ethical Treatment of Human Subjects in Social Science Field Research.” In Mosley, Layna, ed. Interview Research in Political Science. [Chapter 4].

MacLean, Lauren Morris. 2010. “Neither God, Nor Native: The Power of the Interviewer in Political Science Research.” In Mosley, Layna, ed. Interview Research in Political Science. [Chapter 5].


Assignment: Complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) available at:
https://www.citiprogram.org/

September 11. Research and Its Implications for Knowledge.


September 18. Multiple Research Traditions.


September 25. From Theories and Hypotheses to Concepts and Measurements.


October 2. Causation.


October 9. Observational Research I.
Presentations from Casey Marvell, Isis McIntosh Green, and Dingnan Zhang.


Assignment: Find a political science article in an area related to your prospectus proposal that uses large-N statistical analysis. Prepare a short (5 minute) presentation for class about the article and be prepared to defend the article’s argument to your colleagues.

October 16. Observational Research II.
Due: First Prospectus (via email).


**Assignment:** Find a political science article or chapter in an area related to your prospectus proposal that uses a case study. Prepare a short (5 minute) presentation for class about the article and be prepared to defend the article’s argument to your colleagues.

**October 23. Experiments.**


**October 30. Case Selection & Sampling.**


**November 6. Foundations I.**


**November 13. Foundations II.**


**November 20. Presentations I.**

**November 27. Presentations II.**

**December 4. Review Session.**

Last updated: August 22, 2018