



**POL 262**  
**Methods and Approaches to Political Science**

Department of Politics and International Studies  
Fall 2019

**Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30 – 10:00 AM**  
**Molson Fine Arts 010**

**Instructor:** Dr. Jerald Sabin  
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**Office:** McGreer 130A  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:10-11:10 AM or by appointment

*I would like to acknowledge that the land on which our class gathers is the traditional and unceded territory of the Abenaki People.*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

An introduction to research methods in Political Science. This course covers the basic concepts and practices for the scientific and interpretive approaches to studying politics from the development of research projects through the different techniques for conducting empirical research.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course has several academic learning objectives. The purpose of the course is to familiarize students with political science research and writing. By the end of the course, students will learn about the development, design, and conduct of political science research. This includes understanding and differentiating among various paradigms, approaches, methods, and means of analysis in the conduct of political science research. Students will learn how to read, analyze, and use political science research in their academic, civic, and personal pursuits. Students will learn about the many subfields within political science, the types of research questions they each pursue, and the contributions of each subfield to our understanding of political phenomena.

## READING REQUIREMENTS

In this course, there is one required text and several supplementary readings and podcasts. The text book can be purchased in-person or online through **Doolittle's Co-op/Bookstore** (Modular Complex), accessed in the course reserves at the **John Bassett Memorial Library**, or ordered through online retailers. You may use either the print or electronic versions of the text. Other readings will be posted on Moodle and Slack.

- Babbie, Earl and Lance W. Roberts. 2018. *Fundamentals of Social Research*. Fourth Canadian Edition. Toronto: Nelson Education, 508 pp.

Readings have been limited to ~30 pp. per week. Students are expected to attend classes prepared to engage these assigned materials through lectures, classroom discussion, and breakout groups.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Requirement	Due Date	Value
1. Publication analysis	October 8	20%
2. Midterm exam	October 22 (60 min)	35%
3. Final exam	Dec. exam period (90 min)	45%

1. *Publication analysis (20%)* – You will write a 500 word (~2 pp.) analysis of a peer-reviewed journal article or research study. You will be asked to identify and critique the study's research question(s), design, method, argument, and conclusions. Instructions and rubric will be distributed in class.
2. *Midterm exam (35%)* – To be held during regular classroom hours. The midterm will cover the first half of the course, including all assigned readings, lectures, and additional materials distributed in class or through Slack.
3. *Final exam (45%)* – To be scheduled during December exam period. The final exam will be cumulative, two-hour exam, and include short and long answer questions.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Academic accommodations.** The Student Accessibility & Accommodation Services helps ensure that all students with disabilities have equal access to programs at Bishop's University. They arrange for reasonable accommodations in accordance with *Quebec Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, the new *Act Respecting Equal Access to Employment in Public Bodies* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. For more information: <http://www.ubishops.ca/future-current-students/student-campus-life/student-services/student-accessibility-accommodation-services/>

The University values the mental health and wellbeing of its students. Professional counsellors are available to help students deal with personal concerns related to adapting to University life, family problems, relationships, difficulties with drugs and alcohol, depression, anxiety and other matters, all of which are handled in complete confidentiality. To book an appointment with one of these counsellors, contact Ms. Francine Hamel by email (Francine.hamel@ubishops.ca) or by phone at (819) 822-9600 ext. 2695.

**Assignment submission guidelines.** All written assignments must be submitted through Moodle. Assignments will not be accepted by email or under my office door. Please see late penalty for more information.

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments must conform to the stipulated page length, and must be typed using **12 point Times New Roman font (or open-source equivalent), one inch margins, and double spacing of the lines**. Failure to comply with the length or format requirements will result in one of the following penalties, depending on my assessment of the seriousness of the departure from the requirements:

- (a) rejection of the assignment in its entirety and entry of a grade of zero for the assignment;
- (b) refusal to grade those portions of the assignment that fail to comply with the length or format requirements; or
- (c) imposition of a grade penalty reflecting the failure to comply with the length or format requirements, having regard to the nature and extent of the non-compliance.

All written assignments will be marked in accordance with rubrics distributed with assignment instructions and posted on Slack. Grade appeals should be made to me, accompanied by a one-page (~ 250 words) write-up outlining why the assignment grade should be appealed. Once appealed, the grade will be reconsidered and could go up or down.

**Classroom community and participation.** The classroom should be an anti-oppressive learning environment. We will adhere at all times to a policy of mutual respect in sharing opinions and ideas, in accordance with Bishop's University's Policy on the Prevention of Harassment (<https://www.ubishops.ca/about-bu/bishops-university-leadership-and-vision/governance-and-administration/harassment/>). Rude, discriminatory, oppressive, or otherwise marginalizing comments or language will not be tolerated.

**Email Policy.** I will respond to emails within 48 hours during weekdays. I will only respond sporadically to emails sent on weekends. You should note the course code ('POL 123') in the subject line of your email.

**Grading.** Grading in this course will be done using percentage grades. See below for this course's grading scheme:

Passing grade.....	50% – 100%; P (pass)
Failing grade.....	0% – 49%; F (failure)
80%–100%.....	(equivalent to A)
70%–79%.....	(equivalent to B)
60%–69%.....	(equivalent to C)
50%–59%.....	(equivalent to D)

**I'll use your pronoun.** It's no big deal. See [www.nbdcampaign.ca](http://www.nbdcampaign.ca). In addition, class rosters and University data systems are provided to instructors with students' legal names and gender identifications. However, knowing that not all students use their legal names or sex/gender assigned at birth, I am happy to use the name and/or pronouns you use. We will take time during our first class together to do introductions, at which point you can share with all members of our learning community what name and pronouns you use. If these change at any point during the semester, please let me know and we can develop a way to share this information with others in a way that is comfortable and safe for you.

**Late penalties.** Late assignments will be penalized 10% per day, including weekend days. In exceptional circumstances, I will consider extensions. Appropriate official documentation must be provided. Extensions cannot be granted beyond the end of term.

**Language of instruction.** The language of instruction of the institution is English. Nonetheless, students have the option to submit individual written work in either English or French, except where a knowledge or competency in a language is an object of the course. Students who wish to submit work in French must notify their instructor by the Add/Drop deadline so that, if necessary, special arrangements can be made for the evaluation of their work. Please see the Academic Calendar for more information.

**Make-up tests.** Make-up tests for missed midterm exams will only be considered when appropriate official documentation is provided from a medical professional or the Dean of Arts and Sciences. If the midterm will be missed due to a pre-scheduled event (i.e. academic event, athletic event, or family emergency), arrangements should be made *before* the scheduled quiz.

**Plagiarism.** Reproduced from the Bishop's University Academic Calendar:

2.1 Plagiarism is a kind of academic dishonesty in which an individual uses the work of another without appropriate acknowledgement. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following practices:

- Using another's work without acknowledgement
- Copying material without quotation marks
- Paraphrasing too closely the exact words of the originating author
- Submitting work written in whole or in part as one's own by another individual.

2.2 The following practices related to plagiarism are also prohibited:

- Helping another student plagiarize
- Submitting in whole or in part work for which the student has received credit in another course, unless the permission of the instructor has been obtained
- Submitting any statement of fact known to be false or providing a fabricated reference to a source.

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

**Religious observance.** Students requesting accommodation for religious observances should apply in writing to their instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist, but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

**Slack.** Slack is an online tool that allows users to chat, share content, and direct messages through their browser, desktop, tablet, or smartphone app. Slack has been widely adopted as a means of office communications across the private sector and particularly by journalism, media, and internet companies. We'll be using Slack to facilitate participation outside the classroom. I will also hold online office hours concurrently with my office hours in McGreer and at other times. Supplementary readings and materials will be distributed through Slack. You can download the desktop or mobile app here: [www.slack.com](http://www.slack.com).

**Writing Centre.** The Writing Centre is located in the Library. Get help with planning, organizing, outlining, sentence structure, grammar, referencing and citations. This service is free.

Make an appointment with writing centre staff by using the online booking system (<http://buwritingcenter.simplybook.me>). Appointments are available from Mondays to Friday. Planning in advance is the key to your success; last minute appointments are hard to obtain, especially near the end of the session.

## OUTLINE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week	Dates	Topics	Required Reading/Assessments
<i>Unit 1: An introduction to inquiry</i>			
Week 1	Sept. 5	How do we know what we know?	Chapter 1 (24 pp.)
Week 2	Sept. 10	Paradigms, theory, and research	Chapter 2 (23 pp.)
	Sept. 12	Paradigms, theory, and research (cont.)	
Week 3	Sept. 17	Research ethics	Chapter 3 (16 pp.) – Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. 1999. <i>Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples</i> . New York: Zed Books. (16 pp.) [Slack]
	Sept. 19	Research with Indigenous peoples	
<i>Unit 2: The structuring of inquiry</i>			
Week 4	Sept. 24	Causation	Chapter 4 (30 pp.)
	Sept. 26	Causation (cont.)	
Week 5	Oct. 1	Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement	Chapter 5 (30 pp.)
	Oct. 3	Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement (cont.)	
Week 6	Oct. 8	Falsified data in political science	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>***PUBLICATION ANALYSIS DUE***</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Listen:</b> <i>This American Life</i>, “The incredible rarity of changing your mind.” (Apr. 24, 2015) [Prologue, Act 1] <a href="https://www.thisamericanlife.org/555/the-incredible-rarity-of-changing-your-mind">https://www.thisamericanlife.org/555/the-incredible-rarity-of-changing-your-mind</a></li> <li>– <b>Listen:</b> <i>This American Life</i>, “For your reconsideration” (Apr. 8, 2016) [Prologue, Act 1] <a href="https://www.thisamericanlife.org/584/for-your-reconsideration">https://www.thisamericanlife.org/584/for-your-reconsideration</a></li> </ul>
	Oct. 10		<b>***CLASS CANCELLED***</b>
Week 7	Oct. 15	Sampling	Chapter 6 (29 pp.)
	Oct. 17	Sampling (cont.)	

Unit 3: Methods of inquiry			
Week 8	Oct. 22	***MIDTERM EXAM (60 min)***	
	Oct. 24	Field research	Chapter 10 (25 pp.)
Week 9	Oct. 29	Survey research	Chapter 8 (30 pp.)
	Oct. 31	Survey research (cont.)	
Week 10	Nov. 5	Study day	
	Nov. 7	Qualitative interviewing	Chapter 11 (16 pp.)
Week 11	Nov. 12	Non-reactive research	Chapter 9 (26 pp.)
	Nov. 14	Non-reactive research (cont.)	

Unit 4: Data analysis				
Week 12	Nov. 19	Quantitative Data Analysis	Chapter 14 (25 pp.)	
	Nov. 21	Quantitative Data Analysis (cont.)		
Week 13	Nov. 26	Is there a replication “crisis” in the social sciences?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Resnick, Brian. 2016. “What psychology’s crisis means for the future of science.” <i>Vox</i> (Mar. 25) <a href="https://www.vox.com/2016/3/14/11219446/psychology-replication-crisis">https://www.vox.com/2016/3/14/11219446/psychology-replication-crisis</a> [Slack]</li> <li>– Resnick, Brian. 2018. “The ‘marshmallow test’ said patience was a key to success. A new replication tells us s’more.” <i>Vox</i> (Jun. 6) <a href="https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/6/17413000/marshmallow-test-replication-mischel-psychology">https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/6/6/17413000/marshmallow-test-replication-mischel-psychology</a> [Slack]</li> <li>– Listen: <i>Vox’s The Weeds</i>. “#FakeScience.” (Aug. 10, 2018) <a href="https://art19.com/shows/the-weeds/episodes/19474240-83bd-4998-96e1-d20201eaede0">https://art19.com/shows/the-weeds/episodes/19474240-83bd-4998-96e1-d20201eaede0</a></li> </ul>	
	<i>Review class</i>			
		Nov. 28	So you want to go to graduate school?	Exam review

## Appendix A – Online Code of Conduct

In this course, you will be participating in course discussions and assignments in-person and through a variety of online tools. I expect you to adhere to the same standards of behaviour and engagement that you would follow in person and on campus.

### 1. Respectful conduct

- a. All participants in online discussions should maintain an environment that is *free of harassment* towards the teaching team and members of the class. This includes demeaning written or oral comments based on ability, age, ancestry, citizenship, colour, creed, ethnic origin, family status, gender, gender expression, gender identity, language group, marital status, place of origin, race, receipt of public assistance, record of offences, religion, religious dress, religious practice, sex, and/or sexual orientation of that individual or those individuals. All participants must abide by the Bishop's University Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.ubishops.ca/wp-content/uploads/Code-of-Student-Conduct.pdf>). Please refer to the Code for additional information.
- b. All participants should *respect the views of others* and respond in a courteous manner in our discussions about the materials and issues explored in the course.
- c. All participants should make *valuable contributions* to online discussions. Contributions should be thoughtful and in keeping with the tone and direction of our discussions.
- d. All participants should respect the privacy of other members of the class by not sharing or spreading private information.
- e. All participants should respect the integrity of Bishop University's computer systems, such as Moodle, and the online discussion tool slack.com.