



Political Science 3324F (550) Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science

1. Course Information

Political Science 3324F, Section 550

Instructor: Dr. Laszlo Sarkany

Contact Information: lsarkan@uwo.ca

Office: V125

Office Hours: Available on request – in-person, or over Zoom

Class Location: H227

Scheduled Class Times (including lab or tutorial hours): Thursdays, 2:30pm – 4:30pm

2. Course Description

The aim of this course is to familiarize the students with both, quantitative and qualitative methodologies used for scholarly inquiry relevant for political science. The course will begin with an overview of theories of knowledge, or how do we know what we know. Next, emphasis will be placed on how are we able to acquire such knowledge, as well as how best to communicate this knowledge. In practical terms, students will be asked to uncover their topic(s) of research interests relevant for political science, conduct a literature review, choose appropriate methodologies to conduct this research, and finally communicate their research agendas in the form of a research proposal, or, alternately, a grant proposal. While enrolled in the course, students will also be exposed to software relevant for quantitative and qualitative research, and software used for data visualization as well.

3. Textbooks and Course Materials

Required:

Loleen Berdahl and Jason Roy, *“Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science,”* 4th edition, Oxford University Press Canada, 2021.

Recommended:

Cresswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches.* 4th ed. SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA: 2013. [Available to download as a PDF.]

Margot Northey, Lorne Tepperman and Patrizia Albanese. *Making Sense in the Social Sciences: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*, Fifth Edition. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Wheelan, Charles. *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York: 2014.

I strongly encourage you to purchase the books and keep them for future reference, **in addition to reading them for the lectures.** I will also assign additional readings which will be marked with an asterisk (*). These readings will be available in the library under course reserves.

*****The rest of the readings assigned are accessible on-line in the appropriate journals, which are available electronically through UWO library web page.**

Recommended:

Margot Northey, Lorne Tepperman and Patrizia Albanese. *Making Sense in the Social Sciences: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*, Fifth Edition. Oxford University Press, 2012.

4. Methods of Evaluation

GRADING	VALUE	Due Date:
Self-Reflection	15 %	September 22 nd
Literature Review	25%	October 13 th
Research Design	30 %	November 10 th
Final Project	30%	December 8 th

ASSIGNMENTS:

I) SELF-REFELCTION: ‘What are my research interests?’

- i. Your task for this assignment is to write a 500-word exposition (2 double-spaced pages) of what your research interests are with respect to political science. In order to complete this assignment, you should identify topics of interests, key questions or puzzles you find interesting, and general approaches as to how you would go about answering the questions and solving the puzzles. The assignment needs to be written in a formal essay format.

II) LITERATURE REVIEW: ‘What others are arguing, and how I fit in the debate.’

- i. For this assignment your task is to narrow down your research questions to one specific question, and then provide a summary of the 10 most pertinent scholarly sources on the research question of your choice. In this assignment your task will be, first, to clearly and succinctly identify the exact research question you would like to answer. Second, you will then need to explain what others have stated, argued, or wrote in general about

that question. Your review needs to be 500-words, maximum (2 double-spaced pages).

III) GROUP PROJECT: Qualitative and/or quantitative data gathering and research design

- i. In groups of 2 or more students, your task is to provide an exposition of how you would approach answering your research question with the help of at least two (2) different qualitative or quantitative research methods. Your further task here will also be to explain what sources you would use to gather the information. For example, if you would like to use discourse analysis, you will then need to identify the texts (at least 2 sources, but perhaps more – depending on the research question) you would like to analyze, and provide the reasons as to why you would want to use these texts. Alternately, if you would like to use process tracing and interviews, you will then need to explain what processes you would like to analyze, using what sources, and whom you would like to interview and why. Finally, if you choose to conduct survey research and quantitative analysis, your task will be to explain – and justify – what sources of data you would use, and what type(s) of analyses you would conduct with the help of the data.
- ii. The length of this assignment should not exceed 500 words, or 2 double-spaced pages.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>

FINAL PROJECT

The aim of this project is to essentially compose either a research proposal, or a grant proposal, based on the work you have done thus far in the course. The format and content of the assignment will be as follows: (please note that you must use these subheadings):

- a. **'INTRODUCTION'** – In this section you will outline the study – or proposal – in broad and general terms.
 - i. Maximum space allotted: 1 double-spaced page or 250 words.
- b. **'PURPOSE STATEMENT'** – In this section your task is to explain why this question is important to study, or why this project is important to fund.
 - i. Maximum space allotted: 1 double-spaced page, or 250 words

- c. **'LITERATURE REVIEW'** – In this section, your aim is to use at most 15 scholarly sources to highlight what others have argued or stated about your research question. If you are writing a grant proposal, your task then is to show how your 'cause' is unique, compared to other similar 'causes'. This section of the proposal will differ from the previous one in that in this section you are not only providing the reasons why your question or cause is important in general, but here you are also explaining how your question or cause compares to how others have approached the question, or approached the social justice and peace issue. In essence, you are here conducting a 'market research', if you will.
- i. Maximum space allotted: 2 double-spaced page, or 500 words
- d. **'METHODOLOGY'** – Your task in this section is to clearly outline what methods you have chosen for your study, and why. These methods can be quantitative, qualitative, or both. If you are writing a grant proposal, your task here is to provide a detailed explanation as to what you would like to spend the funds on.
- i. Maximum space allotted: 2 double-spaced page, or 500 words
- e. **'CONCLUSION'** – Your task here is to provide a few brief concluding remarks.
- i. Maximum space allotted: 1/2 double-spaced page, or about 150 words

******PLEASE NOTE: In order to complete the final project, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO REUSE any of the assignments you completed up to this point in the course. The caveat here is that you MUST show that you have taken into consideration the edits and comments of the instructor. Any attempt to hand back in any one of the 5 assignments without making the necessary changes will be considered plagiarism!**

WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS:

SEPTEMBER 8th: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

- Introductions
- Organizational overview of the course
- Explanation of grading
- Overview of research methods

Babbie and Benaquisto, chapter 1

SEPTEMBER 15th – Political Science or Political Studies...or both?

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 1

SEPTEMBER 22nd – Theories, Measures, Designs, and Concepts

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 4

SEPTEMBER 29th – Research Designs, Part 1: Documents, Text and Interviews

Berdahl and Roy, chapters 6 and 7

Mahoney, James. The Logic of Process Tracing Tests in the Social Sciences. *Sociological Methods & Research*. Vol. 41, No. 4. November 2012: 570 – 597.

Van Dijk, Teun A. Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse and Society*. Vol. 4, No. 2, April 1993: 249 – 283.

OCTOBER 6th – Research Designs, Part 2: Case Studies and Comparative Research

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 10

OCTOBER 13th – Research Designs, Part 3: Surveys

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 8

OCTOBER 20th – Data Analysis, Part 1: Qualitative Data

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 11

OCTOBER 27th – Data Analysis, Part 2: Quantitative Analysis

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 12

***** OCTOBER 31st – November 4th – FALL STUDY BREAK *****

NOVEMBER 10th - Data Analysis, Part 3: Multivariate Analysis

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 13

NOVEMBER 17th – REVIEW: Designs and Analysis

Readings TBA

NOVEMBER 24th – Research Ethics

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 3

DECEMBER 1st – Social Network Analysis

Readings TBA

DECEMBER 8th – Political Science as Craft

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 14

5. FASS Appendix



Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations Fall/Winter 2022

Pandemic Contingency

Huron will continue to follow the guidance of public health and government officials. It is anticipated that there will be no further disruptions to in-person instruction. This is subject to change.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#). The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as

more generally at the following website:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, tablets, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence

- (a) Consideration on **Medical Grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade:
Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the [Student Medical Certificate](#). The instructor may **not** collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

b) Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go Directly to Academic Advising

University Senate policy, which can be found at [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#) requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Dean.

c) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email huronsss@uwo.ca.

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [accommodation_medical.pdf \(uwo.ca\)](#). Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at huronsss@uwo.ca for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron’s Student Support Services at

huronsss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website, <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here: <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/> Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>
Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1> Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>
Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>
Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Wellness and Health Supports at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. All Huron staff and faculty have received training on responding to disclosures of Gender-Based Sexual Violence (GBSV); students should know that the Community Safety Office is a resource for survivors, providing support and, if desired, guidance while referring them to the further supports that they may require. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services:

huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca Community

Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca

Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Western Calendar - Policy Pages -

[Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)