

# **INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL INQUIRY**

PSC 3500 – Fall 2022

University of Colorado, Colorado Springs

Wednesday, 10:50am – 1:30pm

Columbine Hall 317

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Office Hours: by appointment only

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course serves as an introduction to the logic and methods of inquiry in the field of political science. Whereas the majority of political science courses cover substantive issues, this course emphasizes methodological issues. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to provide students with the necessary skills to construct and evaluate arguments.

The course contains four major sections. First, the course begins with a discussion of foundational principles for research methods in political science. Second, the course covers the core components of research in political science, including description, causation, and data. Third, the course addresses the major principles of case-based qualitative research methods. Fourth, the course concludes with an introduction to quantitative research methods, with an emphasis on statistical inference and linear regression.

This course is approved for the quantitative reasoning component of the university's Compass Curriculum.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Construct a logical argument based on the rules of inference
- Analyze and interpret numerical data
- Analyze and interpret qualitative data
- Apply mathematical methods to solve problems in university work and daily life
- Gather, critically analyze, and evaluate quantitative information within relevant disciplinary contexts
- Demonstrate the core ethical principles and responsible methods of the discipline of political science

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **GRADING POLICY**

In the case of grading disputes, students must e-mail the professor a 100- to 500-word written rationale for the dispute within 48 hours of receiving the contested grade to request clarification and reevaluation. If the instructor deems the justification for re-grading as compelling, the instructor will then re-grade the disputed work and may assign a grade that is higher, lower, or the same as the original.

### **EXTRA CREDIT POLICY**

There are no extra credit opportunities for this course. All requests for extra credit will be denied by the professor. There will be no exceptions to this policy.

### **LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY**

Assignments that are turned in 1 minute to 24 hours late after their due date will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade. Assignments will be marked down a full letter grade for each additional 24-hour period they are late. Assignments will not be accepted more than 72 hours after the due date.

When submitting assignments electronically, it is the student's responsibility to ensure that the correct file is attached and submitted on time. Failing to attach a file or attaching the wrong file will result in a penalty as identified above. Students should also adopt the practice of saving files on multiple platforms, as corrupted files, crashed computers, etc. will not be exempted from the late assignment policy.

### **TECHNOLOGY POLICY**

The use of cell phones during class is prohibited. Students using cell phones will be asked to leave class for the day and will receive a 0 for that day's attendance.

Students may use laptops and tablets for readings or note-taking. However, if a student is using their laptop for purposes not related to class (social media, e-mail, etc.), that student will be asked to leave class for the day and will receive a 0 for that day's attendance.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University of Colorado, Colorado Springs academic honor code holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. The university policy governs several forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and falsification, multiple submission, misuse of academic materials, and complicity in academic dishonesty. The presumptive penalty for a first offense by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of the academic integrity policy. Students should be familiar with the policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about course-specific expectations, as well as about university policy.

## DISABILITY-RELATED ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to register with Disability Services and provide them with documentation of your disability. They will work with you to determine what accommodations are appropriate for your situation. To avoid any delay, you should contact Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and disability accommodations cannot be provided until a Faculty Accommodation Letter has been given to the professor. Please contact Disability Services for more information at Main Hall, room 105, 719-255-3354, or [dservice@uccs.edu](mailto:dservice@uccs.edu).

## RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE POLICY

The University of Colorado, Colorado Springs upholds the principle that a climate of respect for cultural and ideological diversity extends to the diversity of religious practices observed by members of our campus community. The religious observance policy protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Students are required to provide advance notification—preferably during the first week of classes—to the professor regarding necessary absences for religious or spiritual observances. Students are responsible for making up any work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule between the student and professor.

## COVID-19 POLICIES

Students in this class are expected to adhere to university policies regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategies. Students that refuse to comply with university policies will be dismissed from class without credit for attendance. A refusal to comply will also result in additional disciplinary action in accordance with the student code of conduct.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

### BOOKS

The following books are required for this course:

Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).

### GRADING

Grades are comprised of six components:

Participation	20%
Quizzes	30% (5 quizzes, 6% each)
Research question	5%
Research proposal	10%
Research design	35%

### PARTICIPATION (20%)

As an upper-division course, this class is reading intensive. The course is built around readings and discussion, rather than lecture. Accordingly, active participation is required to accomplish the objectives of the course. Students are expected to read all material before each class and arrive prepared to actively discuss the readings. Students will be graded for each class on the following scale:

3 points	Thoughtful engagement with readings and class discussion
2 points	Satisfactory participation and engagement
1 point	Present for class, but lack of preparation and engagement
0 points	Absent or dismissed from class

Please note that attendance is a necessary but not sufficient condition for participation scores. All students will be given one (1) free absence from the course without question. For students seeking additional excused absences, however, those absences must be reported within 24 hours of the class period, if possible, and accompanied by documentation to justify the excuse (e.g., doctor's note, confirmation of court date, etc.).

## QUIZZES (30%)

This course consists of five (5) quizzes, each of which will be worth six (6) percent of the final course grade. These take-home quizzes are open book and meant to reinforce core concepts from the course readings and classroom discussions. Each quiz will be made available on Canvas one week before the submission deadline. Quizzes will be due before the start of class on their due dates.

The quiz topics and their deadlines are as follows:

1. Foundations (September 14)
2. Description (September 28)
3. Causation and data (October 19)
4. Qualitative methods (November 2)
5. Quantitative methods (December 7)

## RESEARCH QUESTION (5%)

Students will submit a research question early in the semester to begin developing their research design projects. This assignment will be submitted via Canvas before class begins on Wednesday, September 7.

In this assignment, students should submit no more than one (1) page outlining the following aspects of their research question:

1. Formal statement of the research question
2. Identification of the independent variable
3. Identification of the dependent variable

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL (10%)

Students will submit a research proposal that builds upon the research question assignment to show progress and further elaborate the plan for the final research design assignment. This research proposal is due via Canvas before class begins on Wednesday, November 9. Further guidelines will be provided as the deadline approaches.

In this assignment, students should submit no more than three (3) pages outlining the following aspects of their research plan:

1. Formal statement of the research question
2. Identification and operationalization of the independent variable
3. Identification and operationalization of the dependent variable
4. Hypothesis statement
5. Literature review
6. Data collection plan

## RESEARCH DESIGN (35%)

The final assignment for this course is a research design. In this assignment, students will outline the methodological foundations for answering an empirical question of interest to political science, broadly defined (including American politics, comparative politics, and international relations). The goal of this assignment is to create a template for conducting research, rather than fully executing the research plan. Further details for this assignment will be provided during the semester.

Research designs are due via Canvas by 11:59pm MT on Wednesday, December 14.

## I. FOUNDATIONS

### WEEK 1 (AUGUST 24) – THE “SCIENCE” IN POLITICAL SCIENCE

1. Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 1-20.
2. Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 1-12.
3. John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 27-36.

### WEEK 2 (AUGUST 31) – FUNDAMENTALS OF RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 25-41.
2. Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (Ann Arbor, M.I.: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp. 27-43.
3. John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 58-73.
4. Jeffrey W. Knopf, “Doing a Literature Review,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (January 2006), pp. 127-132.

### WEEK 3 (SEPTEMBER 7) – MICROFOUNDATIONS: RATIONAL CHOICE

#### *Assignment*

1. Research question due

#### *Readings*

1. Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics* (Ann Arbor, M.I.: University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp. 175-193.
2. Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven, C.T.: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 33-46, 179-204.

## II. DESCRIPTION, CAUSATION, AND DATA

### WEEK 4 (SEPTEMBER 14) – CONCEPTS AND MEASUREMENT

#### *Assignment*

1. Quiz 1 (foundations) due

#### *Readings*

1. Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 104-120, 125-140.
2. Michael Coppedge, *Democratization and Research Methods* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 14-23.

### WEEK 5 (SEPTEMBER 21) – DESCRIPTIVE INFERENCE

1. Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 143-160.
2. Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 46-49, 55-74.

### WEEK 6 (SEPTEMBER 28) – CAUSATION I: FUNDAMENTALS

#### *Assignment*

1. Quiz 2 (description) due

#### *Readings*

1. Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 56-74.
2. Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 99-114.



#### WEEK 7 (OCTOBER 5) – CAUSATION II: THE EXPERIMENTAL IDEAL

1. Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 77-100.
2. Rose McDermott, “Experimental Methodology in Political Science,” *Political Analysis*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Autumn 2002), pp. 325-326, 331-341.

#### WEEK 8 (OCTOBER 12) – DATA AND DATA GENERATION

1. W. Phillips Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, 10th ed. (New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2017), pp. 101-116.
2. Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 208-230.
3. David Collier, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright, “Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference: Toward an Alternative View of Methodology,” in Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2d ed. (Lanham, M.D.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), pp. 188-196.

### III. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

#### WEEK 9 (OCTOBER 19) – COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES

##### *Assignment*

1. Quiz 3 (causation and data) due

##### *Readings*

1. Arend Lijphart, “II. The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (July 1975), pp. 158-173.
2. Jason Seawright and John Gerring, “Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options,” *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (June 2008), pp. 294-295, 304-306.
3. Dan Slater and Daniel Ziblatt, “The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 10 (January 2013), pp. 1301-1322.

WEEK 10 (OCTOBER 26) – PROCESS TRACING

1. Andrew Bennett, “Process Tracing and Causal Inference,” in Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2d ed. (Lanham, M.D.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), pp. 207-219.
2. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, “Process Tracing: From Philosophical Roots to Best Practices,” in Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 17-31.
3. Jason Seawright and John Gerring, “Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options,” *Political Research Quarterly*, Vol. 61, No. 2 (June 2008), pp. 294-304, 306-307.

Week 11 (November 2) – NO CLASS: PROF. ARCENEUX AT CONFERENCE

*Assignment*

1. Quiz 4 (qualitative methods) due

**IV. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS**

WEEK 12 (NOVEMBER 9) – PROBABILITY, STATISTICAL INFERENCE, AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

*Assignment*

1. Research proposal due

*Readings*

1. Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 143-185.

WEEK 13 (NOVEMBER 16) – TWO-VARIABLE REGRESSION MODELS

1. Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 188-213.

WEEK 14 (NOVEMBER 23) – NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 15 (NOVEMBER 30) – MULTIPLE REGRESSION

1. Paul M. Kellstedt and Guy D. Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 3d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp. 215-243.

WEEK 16 (DECEMBER 7) – RESEARCH WORKSHOP

*Assignment*

1. Quiz 5 (quantitative methods) due

*Readings*

1. No readings: this class is optional. The professor will be present in the classroom during the regular class period on this day to answer any questions that students might have regarding their research design assignments. Students may skip this class without penalty.

WEEK 17 (DECEMBER 14) – NO CLASS: FINALS WEEK

*Assignment*

1. Research design due