



Course Number: POLI 5P81
Term/Year/Duration: Winter 2022
Course Title: Research and Research Methods

Instructor Name: Dr. Blayne Haggart
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Office Location: Online, link to be provided
Contact: Office Hours: Thursdays, 3-4 pm, via the class Microsoft Teams link, or by appointment

Time and Location:
Fridays, 9 am - 12 pm
MCC304

Course description

The undertaking of good research and the production of new knowledge is essential to the advancement of political science and its sub-disciplines. This course provides an advanced introduction to the conduct of political research, designed to help students become better researchers, knowledge producers, and knowledge consumers. It touches on all major aspects of research design, culminating in the creation of research designs for student MRPs. It offers a predominantly positivist (i.e., scientific) approach to political research, covering some of the most common qualitative and quantitative research tools used in political science.

Course Learning objectives

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

- Develop a research design for investigating political research questions
- Critically evaluate others' research designs for investigating political research questions § Critically evaluate (proposed) causal relationships
- Develop sound concepts, identify variables, and undertake variable measurement
- Identify and utilize a variety of case selection strategies
- Identify and utilize a variety of data collection and analysis techniques
- Identify and manage ethical issues in research with human subjects
- Write a comprehensive and critical literature review
- Design an effective poster to present their research

Required Texts:

For this course we will be referring to the following text, which is available for purchase at the campus bookstore and is available online in both a physical format and as an ebook, at the usual booksellers. Please make sure you purchase the proper (4th) edition:

Vivian Lowndes, David Marsh, and Gerry Stoker, eds. (2018). *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. 4th ed. London: Palgrave.

Seminar readings will also be taken from a variety of sources. Unless otherwise indicated, they are accessible in electronic format through the course Sakai page, or via the library (online).

Course Communications:

Students with questions or concerns related to the course should first consult the course syllabus and the course Sakai page and the various resources contained therein. After consulting these resources, students are encouraged to contact the course instructor. Emailed questions will normally be answered within one business day.

Evaluation Components and Due Dates

Evaluation Component	Grade Weight	Due Date
Seminar participation	25%	n/a
Memos	15%	Weekly (mostly)
CORE Research Ethics Training	5%	January 28
MRP Literature Review	20%	March 4
MRP Proposal Poster Presentation - Preliminary	10%	Classes 10-12
MRP Proposal Poster Presentation - Final	25%	March-April TBA
Total	100%	

Seminar Participation

This is a seminar-based course, so attendance and participation in the weekly seminars is extremely important. Students need to be aware that seminar participation is not synonymous with seminar attendance: your attendance at seminars is the minimum expectation and attendance alone will not ensure you a good seminar participation grade. Students are expected to come well prepared for seminars by completing the weekly readings and reflecting upon issues and questions that will stimulate discussion. Students are expected to be active participants, making weekly contributions to seminar discussions. Students are also expected to

engage their discussions in a respectful manner, feeling free to explore and debate a variety of issues and ideas, but never resorting to personal slights or attacks.

Weekly Memos

Between Weeks Two and Nine, students are expected to write **seven** short memos (about 2 pages each, or 300-400 words), analyzing that week's readings. **Note: this works out to seven memos over eight weeks; students will have the opportunity not to submit memos for one class.** Only your top seven memo grades will be recorded.

The purpose of the memos is not so much to summarize the readings (although you can briefly summarize the topic), but to encourage you to relate the readings to your own research interests. Each memo should consider how the readings connect to other readings in the course, seminar discussions, your own research interests, and the research you are reading outside the course. Doing these memos will also help ensure that class participants are prepared to enter into good and productive discussions.

Memos must be submitted via the course's Sakai Assignment tab for this course by **noon on the Thursday before** the respective seminar. Late penalties apply.

TCPS2 Core Training

The Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (or TCPS2, for short) is the governing document for ethical research in Canada. In order to familiarize new researchers with TCPS2 requirements, a Course on Research Ethics (or CORE) has been created online. At Brock University, all graduate students applying for research ethics approval must complete CORE training prior to their application. Similarly, all students in this class are required to complete CORE training prior to the due date specified above. All modules of CORE training must be completed in order to meet this requirement. When you have completed the CORE training, keep an electronic copy of your CORE training certificate, and upload it to the Assignments section of the course Sakai page in order to receive 5 percent of your final course grade. To access CORE training go to: <https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>. You will need to create a CORE account prior to completing the training. Completion of CORE training takes approximately three hours.

MRP Literature Review

The purpose of the literature review is to allow students to familiarize themselves with the existing literature pertaining to their chosen MRP topic, to critically analyze this literature, and to discuss how their research will make a contribution to this literature. A brief, point-form version of the literature review will appear in each student's MRP proposal poster. All literature reviews should contain a brief description of the research topic being investigated, as well as a thorough analysis of the relevant literature on the topic. Analyses should strive to synthesize the relevant literature by identifying the prevalent theoretical/analytical approaches in the

literature, by identifying the methodologies utilized in the literature, by identifying common or important findings in the literature, and by identifying apparent gaps or shortcomings in the literature. Based on this analysis, students should then discuss what potential contributions their research might make to the established literature. All literature reviews should be no more than five pages in length (double-spaced), and should be referenced using the Chicago parenthetical referencing format. Completed literature reviews should be submitted electronically, through the Assignments section of the course Sakai site, on the assigned due date.

MRP/Thesis Proposal Posters/Website

The MRP/thesis proposal poster serves two purposes. First, all graduate students in political science are required to do a proposal for their MRP/thesis research, and the proposal poster meets this requirement. Second, it is increasingly common for young scholars at scholarly conferences to present their research in poster format, so this assignment will provide students with these skills. The proposal poster requires students to think through the various elements of research design for their MRP/thesis projects, and to present their research designs in a clear and succinct manner. Students will also be required to explain their research design to colleagues, to respond to questions about their research design, and to revise their research design, if necessary.

There are three steps - each of them graded - in the poster development process.

1. Students will develop a draft poster and present it to their colleagues in class, during classes 10-12. This is a PowerPoint presentation of the draft poster; the draft posters are not printed. Each student will have 10 minutes to present their poster and 10 minutes to field questions about their poster. These time limits will be strictly enforced. The draft poster presentation is intended to provide students with feedback on their research design (and poster) and they can use this feedback to make revisions, as appropriate.
1. Students will present their final posters as web pages, to be completed for the end of March/beginning of April (exact period TBD - you will be notified of the exact date far in advance). These web pages will be open for faculty and invited guests (students are encouraged to invite their families and friends to view them), but will be otherwise password-protected. People viewing the web pages will leave questions for students, which they will be expected to answer.
2. At the conclusion of the poster session, the instructor will grade the websites based on their content and the students' replies to questions.

Students will be provided with some basic WordPress training (it's a very intuitive system), as well as examples from last year's classes. WordPress training will be provided in Week Eight.

In terms of content, posters/PowerPoints/web pages should address the aspects of research design relevant to each project, as listed below. The main sections in this list (numbered) are mandatory; the sub-sections in this list (lettered) are only suggested:

1. Background
 - a. Context
 - b. Research problem
 - c. Social significance
2. Research Question
 - a. Sub-questions
3. Literature Review
4. Hypothesis/Purpose
5. Research Design
 - a. Ontological/epistemological foundations
 - b. Concepts, variables, operationalization
 - c. Case selection
 - d. Strategy for investigating causality
 - e. Data sources
 - f. Data collection
 - g. Data analysis
6. Ethical Considerations

Late Submission Policy:

Since all assignments for this course are to be submitted electronically - through the course Sakai site - **they are due to be uploaded by midnight on the specified due dates** (see above for the specific dates). **Late assignments will be penalized 5 percent per day until they are submitted.** No assignments will be accepted two weeks after the due date. It is expected that all **assignments will be submitted in Microsoft 'Word' or 'PowerPoint' format**, with the exception of the final poster, which will be completed via WordPress. If these formats constitute a problem, please inform the instructor.

Extensions of due dates are granted only in circumstances that are beyond the student's control, such as health problems that are supported by a medical certificate, or other, clearly equivalent situations. See Medical Exemption Policy and the medical health certificate at <https://brocku.ca/registrar/toolkit/forms/>

Time management problems are not grounds for extensions. You are strongly urged to avoid these penalties by beginning to work on essays early in the term; by setting your own target dates for completion that are several days before the due date; and by carefully budgeting your time.

Relationship between attendance and grades:

Students are expected to attend all classes and must submit all assignments in order to pass this course.

Important dates: (check the section on sessional or important dates in the relevant online University calendar at <http://brocku.ca/webcal/>)

March 4, 2022, is the date for withdrawal from the course without academic penalty. Students will have received notification of at least 15% of their final grade by February 25.

February 14-18, 2022, is the scheduled reading week.

Class Schedule

Week 1 (January 14) - Class introduction

Lowndes, Marsh and Stoker, Chapters 1, 11, 12.

Week 2 (January 21) - Research design and variables

Lowndes, Marsh and Stoker, Chapter 13.

Keith Archer and Loleen Berdahl (2011), "Chapter 4 - Defining the Political World: Measures," in *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Examples of operationalization

Sorayyah Chityal (2020), *Did Former Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin Leave a Feminist Legacy Behind? A Qualitative Interpretation of Substantive Feminist Equality and Individualism in Beverley McLachlin's Supreme Court Career (1989-2018)*. Master's Research Paper. St. Catharines: Brock University.

This week: focus on Chapter 1, but you should read the whole thing to get a sense of what a solid MRP looks like.

Randall Germain and Abdulghany Mohamed (2012), "Global Economic Crisis and Regionalism in North America: Region-ness in Question?", in *North America in Question: Regional Integration in an Era of Economic Turbulence*, edited by Jeffrey Ayres and Laura Macdonald. 33-52. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2102.
What to look for: How do they operationalize the concept of "regionness"?

Week 3 (January 28) - Writing up a literature review/Ethics

Special Guest Lecturer: Cal Murgu, Political Science Liaison Librarian (How to use the library)

Literature review:

Andrew S. Denney & Richard Tewksbury (2013), "How to Write a Literature Review," *Journal of Criminal Justice Education* 24 (2): 218-234.

Journal-length literature review example

Andreas Jungherr (2015), "Twitter use in election campaigns: A systematic literature review," *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 13 (1): 72-91.

On the drawbacks of not having a solid literature review to ground your research

Blayne Haggart (2019), "Long review: The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power (2018)." *Journal of Digital Media & Policy* 10 (2): 229-243.

Supplemental readings

See Week 3 Sakai folder for list of extra sources on how to write a literature review.

Ethics:

Complete the "TCPS 2: Core Tutorial" Brock University (2017), "REB Guideline: Conducting Research as a Course Assignment."

Blayne Haggart ethics form.

Kevin D. Haggerty, "Ethics Creep: Governing Social Science Research in the Name of Ethics," *Qualitative Sociology* 27(4): 391-414.

Recommended Readings

Willy C. Van den Hoonaard (2001), *Walking the Tightrope: Ethical Issues for Qualitative Researchers*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Tony Porter (2008), "Research Ethics Governance and Political Science in Canada," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 41 (3): 495-499.

Week 4 (February 4) - Indigenous Research Methods

Special Guest Lecturer: Dr. Liam Midzain-Gobin

Readings TBD.

Week 5 (February 11) - Content analysis

Special Guest Lecturer: Dr. Pascal Lupien

Readings TBD.

Week 6 (February 18) - Interviews/The MRP writing process

Special Guest Lecturer on the student experience: Felisia Milana (MA, 2021)

Interviews:

Lowndes, Marsh and Stoker, pp. 323-328.

Oisín Tansey (2007), "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Nonprobability Sampling," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 40 (4): 765-772.

Diana Kapiszewski, Lauren M. MacLean, and Benjamin L. Read (2015), "Interviews, oral histories, and focus groups," in *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 190-233.

Christopher Dunbar Jr., Dalia Rodriguez and Laurence Parker (2003), "Race, Subjectivity, and the Interview Process," in *The Sage Handbook of Interview Research*, edited by Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holstein. New York: Sage Publications.

Interview-based research example

Blayne Haggart (2014), "Birth of a movement: The Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement and the politicization of Mexican copyright." *Policy & Internet* 6 (1): 69-88.

Recommended Readings

Xu Liu (2018), "Interviewing Elites: Methodological Issues Confronting a Novice," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406918770323>.

Christine L. Briggs (2003), "Interviewing, Power/Knowledge and Social Inequality," in *The Sage Handbook of Interview Research*.

February 21-25: Reading week (no classes)

Week 7 (March 4) - Comparative method and qualitative research methods

Lowndes, Marsh and Stoker, Chapters 16, 14 (pp. 313-324; 329-333)

Giovanni Sartori (1991), "Comparing and Miscomparing," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 64 (4): 1033-1053.

Seeliger, Robert (1996). "Conceptualizing and Researching Policy Convergence. *Policy Studies Journal* 24:2, 287-306.

Example of comparative research:

Haggart, Blayne, (2011). "International Copyright Treaties and Digital Works: Implementation Issues in Canada and Mexico." *Australian Journal of Communication*, 38 (3): 33-46.

Week 8 (March 11) - Quantitative analysis

Special Guest Lecturer: Dr. Livianna Tossutti

Lowndes, Marsh and Stoker, Chapter 15.

Roberta Garner (2010), *The Joy of Stats: A Short Guide to Introductory Statistics in the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. [read selected pages on Sakai]

N. Graham, W.K. Carroll, D. & Chen (2019). *Big Oil's Political Reach: Mapping Fossil Fuel Lobbying from Harper to Trudeau*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

READING TBD.

For post-presentation discussion

Brian Resnick (2019), "800 Scientists Say It's Time to Abandon Statistical Significance," *Vox*, March 22, <https://www.vox.com/latest-news/2019/3/22/18275913/statistical-significance-pvaluesexplained>

For greater understanding of statistical methods

"Descriptive Statistics," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Okr4e0Yfj-M>

"Inferential Statistics," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FiXCm3nGuyI>

"Cross-Tabulations and Their Interpretation," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B6bqHNVd-Kw>

"Fisher's Exact Test," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I9KsLCc-eiQ>

"Pearson's R Correlation," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2B_UW-RweSE

"Sampling," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=be9e-Q-jC-0>

Recommended Readings

Roberta Garner (2010), *The Joy of Stats: A Short Guide to Introductory Statistics in the Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Lori Thorlakson, "Patterns of Party Integration, Influence and Autonomy in Seven Federations," *Party Politics* 15(2): 155-177.

"Introduction to Statistics... What Are They? And, How Do I Know Which One to Choose?" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpyRybBEDQ0>

Larry D. Schroeder, David L. Sjoquist, & Paula E. Stephan (1986), *Understanding Regression Analysis: An Introductory Guide Sage Research Methods Core*. Available online via the library

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

Week 9 (March 18) - Big Data Research

Lowndes, Marsh and Stoker, Chapter 18.

danah boyd and Kate Crawford, 2012. "Critical questions for big data: Provocations for acultural, technological, and scholarly phenomenon," *Information, Communication & Society* 15 (5): 662-679.

Jose Van Dijck, 2014. "Datafication, dataism and dataveillance: Big Data between scientific paradigm and ideology," *Surveillance and Society* 12 (2): 197-208.

Trenham, C., & Steer, A. (2019). "The Good Data Manifesto." In A. Daly, S. K. Devitt & M. Mann, eds., *Good Data*. (pp. 37-53). Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures. (Open Access)

Classes 10-12 - MRP Proposal Presentations

Note: Because of prior conference travel obligations on the part of the instructor, we will be holding our final three classes from March 23-25, at the indicated times.

Class 10 (Wednesday, March 23) - MRP Proposal Presentations 1

Time: 4-6 pm, **Room TBD**

Class 11 (Thursday, March 24) MRP Proposal Presentations 2

Time: 12-2 pm, **Room TBD**

Class 12 (Friday, March 25) MRP Proposal Presentations 3

Time: 9 am-12 pm, MCC 304 (usual class time and location)

Academic Policies

Academic Integrity:

Statement for graduate courses

Academic misconduct is a serious offence. The principle of academic integrity, particularly of doing one's own work, documenting properly (including use of quotation marks, appropriate paraphrasing and referencing/citation), collaborating appropriately, and avoiding misrepresentation, is a core principle in university study. Students should consult Section XVII, "Academic Misconduct", in the "Academic Regulations and University Policies" entry in the Graduate Calendar, available at <http://www.brocku.ca/webcal> to view a fuller description of prohibited actions, and the procedures and penalties. Information on what constitutes academic integrity is available at <https://brocku.ca/academic-integrity/>.

Because academic integrity is vital to the well-being of the university community, Brock University takes academic misconduct very seriously. Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, which involves presenting the words and ideas of another person as if they were your own, and other forms of cheating, such as using crib notes during a test or fabricating data for a lab assignment. The penalties for academic misconduct can be very severe. **At minimum, a finding of academic misconduct will result in a zero grade for the assignment, with a zero for the course a possibility depending on the severity of the infraction. A second offense may result in suspension from the University.**

This course may use Turnitin.com, phrase-matching software. If you object to uploading your assignments to Turnitin.com for any reason, please notify the instructor to discuss alternative submissions.

Intellectual Property Notice:

All slides, presentations, handouts, tests, exams, and other course materials created by the instructor in this course are the intellectual property of the instructor. A student who publicly posts or sells an instructor's work, without the instructor's express consent, may be charged with misconduct under Brock's Academic Integrity Policy and/or Code of Conduct, and may also face adverse legal consequences for infringement of intellectual property rights.

Special Accommodation:

The University is committed to fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for all students and will adhere to the Human Rights principles that ensure respect for dignity, individualized accommodation, inclusion and full participation. The University provides a wide range of resources to assist students, as follows:

a) If you require academic accommodation because of a disability or an ongoing health or mental health condition, please contact Student Accessibility Services at askSAS@brocku.ca or 905 688 5550 ext. 3240.

b) If you require academic accommodation because of an incapacitating medical condition, you must, as soon as practicable, inform your instructor(s) of your inability to complete your academic work. You must also submit a Brock University Student Medical Certificate (found at <https://brocku.ca/registrar/toolkit/forms>). The University may, at its discretion, request more detailed documentation in certain cases. If you are unable to write a scheduled examination due to an incapacitating medical condition, you must follow the process set out in the [Faculty Handbook III:9.4.1.](#)

c) If you are experiencing mental health concerns, contact the Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre. *Good2Talk* is a service specifically for post-secondary students, available 24/7, 365 days a year, and provides anonymous assistance: <http://www.good2talk.ca/> or call 1-866-925-5454. For information on wellness, coping and resiliency, visit: <https://brocku.ca/mental-health/>

d) If you require academic accommodation on religious grounds, you should make a formal, written request to your instructor(s) for alternative dates and/or means of satisfying requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of any given academic term, or as soon as possible after a need for accommodation is known to exist.

e) If you have been affected by sexual violence, the Human Rights & Equity Office offers support, information, reasonable accommodations, and resources through the Sexual Violence Support & Education Coordinator. For information on sexual violence, visit [Brock's Sexual Assault and Harassment Policy](#) or contact the Sexual Violence Support & Response Coordinator at humanrights@brocku.ca or 905 688 5550 ext. 4387.

f) If you feel you have experienced discrimination or harassment on any of the above grounds, including racial, gender or other forms of discrimination, contact the Human Rights and Equity Office at humanrights@brocku.ca.