

Political Science 700  
Fall 2021  
Scope and Methods of Political Science  
Wednesday, 4:30-7:00pm  
Location Bolton B79

Professor Paru Shah  
Office: Bolton 646  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 2-3pm and by appointment  
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This course is an introduction to the process of conducting research in political science. My goals in this course are to help you learn to think systematically about the political science topics in which you are interested, develop the skills necessary to put your ideas to the test, and to be able to critically evaluate the research of others. To do this, we will examine the central aspects of the empirical study of politics: hypothesis testing, measurement, inference, causation, research design. We will also learn about several different methods of gathering data using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, including experiments, surveys, content analysis, and case studies.

**REQUIRED BOOKS:**

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Third Edition. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

\*\*All other readings will be available on Canvas.

**Time Allocation**

This is a three credit class. Students, on average, should expect to spend nine hours a week on activities related to POL SCI 700.

**Panther Community Health and Safety Standards**

UWM has implemented reasonable health and safety protocols, taking into account recommendations by local, state and national public health authorities, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a member of our campus community, you are expected to abide by the Panther Interim COVID-Related Health & Safety Rules, which were developed in accordance with public health guidelines.

These standards apply to anyone who is physically present on campus, UWM grounds, or participating in a UWM-sponsored activity:

- All individuals visiting UWM facilities must wear face coverings while indoors;
- Unvaccinated students coming to campus are required to test weekly for COVID-19; and,
- You should check daily for COVID-19 symptoms and not come to campus if you are feeling sick.

Additional details about student and staff expectations can be found on the UWM COVID-19 webpage.

## Course Requirements

**Class Participation (10%)** – Graduate seminars cannot run effectively without the contribution of all involved. While there will be some lecturing in this course, the bulk of our time will be spent engaged in discussions about the readings among all members. Because of this, you must read all assigned readings prior to class and come to each session prepared to contribute to the evening’s discussion. Please remember that asking and answering questions is an important part of contributing to the discussion.

In addition, you will be asked to share your ideas about your own research project with the class and take comments, questions, and suggestions from the class.

If your personality is such that talking in class and taking part in discussion is difficult for you, you should consider this a skill to be developed. One cannot be successful in graduate school or in the profession without the ability to engage with others in this sort of dialogue.

**Short Papers (20%)** – Critiquing the methods and analyses of other scholars is an important part of the research enterprise and a skill that you will need to develop over time. There is a difference between being able to constructively identify limits in a piece of research and simply being critical for the sake of it and you need to become proficient at the former.

To that end, each of you will write 4 short papers in which you will address the readings for a particular week and providing a brief, cogent analysis of the quality of the research. These short papers should NOT be summaries of the articles. Instead, they should analyze some decision of the author, take issue with some aspect of the question or method, discuss potential problems with the method or findings, AND propose an improvement. Focusing on the topic of the week as it relates to the readings is a good place to start, but you are not limited to this approach. For example, if you are writing during the week on operationalization and measurement, you should think about whether and how the articles raise measurement issues, but you are not limited to only discussing the measurement issues.

These papers should be short (no more than four double-spaced pages), so you will need to get right into the meat of things and not spend time and page space on generalities or introductions. In class, we will use these papers to spark our discussions. You may be asked to summarize readings and begin the discussion on problems and improvements. These papers will serve two purposes – allowing you to develop and practice the skill of critique and providing a basis for fruitful class discussion.

Upload into “Assignments” in Canvas.

**Exams (30%)** – There will be two take-home written exams in the class (**October 27 and December 22**). These exams will include all of the substantive topics we have dealt with to that point and will cover text readings, journal articles, and class discussion. Each will be worth 15 percent of your grade.

**Original Project (40%)**

**Literature Review (15%)** – Each of you will practice the art and science of research design by working on a project of your own choosing. VERY EARLY in the semester, you should start to think about your areas of interest within political science so that you can identify a reasonable topic. Once you have a topic (which you will discuss with me), the first thing you will do is conduct a literature review to identify empirical studies that have been done on that topic by other researchers. This literature review need not cover every article written on the subject, but should be thorough enough to capture the current thinking in your area. Also, you should strive, if at all possible, to include research that uses different methodological approaches. In this part of the project, you should summarize the empirical findings, assess the methodologies employed, and discuss the strengths and limitations of these approaches. This literature review is worth 15 percent of your grade and is due **November 10**.

**Research Design (15%)** – The second part of the project, the research design, will allow you to demonstrate how you would carry out your own research on this topic. Keep in mind that you do not have to complete the research for this project, but instead will detail how you would carry it out. In this design, you will define a research question and testable hypothesis and discuss the procedures for measuring your concepts and collecting data.

For the data collection aspect, I will require you to outline **two** different methods by which you could collect data appropriate to test your hypotheses. The goal here is to get you to understand that there is rarely only one way to ask and answer a question when doing research. In this part of the project, you can also identify any unresolved issues or remaining barriers to the execution of your project. This research design will be worth 15 percent of your grade and is due **December 15**.

**Presentation (10%)** – Producing original research is one part of the job of an academic; communicating that work to the rest of the community is another part. Political scientists spend a good deal of time at academic conferences, either serving as presenters of their own work or as discussants of the work of others. You will get a chance to practice both of these skills at the end of the semester when you 1) present your research project to the class, and 2) serve as a discussant to offer feedback to one of your colleagues when s/he presents. Presenting and discussing will be worth 10 percent of your grade.

**Grade distribution:**

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following distribution:

<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D-</b>
<b>100-94%</b>	<b>93-90%</b>	<b>89-88%</b>	<b>87-82%</b>	<b>81-80%</b>	<b>79-78%</b>	<b>77-72%</b>	<b>71-70%</b>	<b>69-68%</b>	<b>67-62%</b>	<b>61-60%</b>

Students are encouraged to keep track of their progress in the course and consult with me in person should they have questions or concerns about their performance. Please note I will not discuss grades via email or telephone.

**Academic Misconduct**

I do not tolerate acts of plagiarism or any forms of cheating on assignments. If I suspect a case of academic misconduct, I will follow the academic misconduct and reporting policies of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Please see the following for details:

[http://www4.uwm.edu/acad\\_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm).

**Course Drops & Incompletes**

Please keep track of deadlines associated with dropping the course (see UWM Calendar for details). Incompletes will only be given to students who qualify for them pursuant to the Graduate School's incomplete policy.

**Submitting Course Assignments & Late Policy**

Students are expected to submit electronic assignments via Canvas (Word documents or PDFs only) at the times/dates noted on the syllabus. If a student is unable to submit an assignment on time, the student has the responsibility of notifying me **before** the due date and providing a legitimate reason for seeking an extension without late penalty. The student should also present a plan for submitting the assignment in a timely manner (within 2-5 days, if possible). If a student does not follow these guidelines and/or does not have a legitimate reason (as determined by the instructor) for a late submission, I will apply a deduction of ten-percentage points for each day the assignment is overdue, including Saturdays or Sundays. If an assignment deadline is due at the start of class (i.e., critical essays and peer review assignments), I will treat the assignment as one day late if it is submitted after 4:00 pm on a seminar day.

**Student Accommodations**

Please notify me as soon as possible if there are any accommodations that you need for the purposes of this course. Students should also contact an Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) counselor on campus (archelp@uwm.edu).

**Religious Accommodations**

UWM has a policy regarding religious accommodations. This policy, which will be followed in this class, can be found at: <https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm>

**Military Service**

Please see the following link regarding accommodations for students who are called for military service: <http://www4.uwm.edu/academics/military.cfm>

**Changes to the Course Syllabus**

In the event the instructor needs to modify the terms of this syllabus and/or adjust the course topic/reading schedule, either a syllabus addendum will be posted, or an announcement will be made on the Canvas course site.

## Course Outline and Schedule

### Week 1: Course Introduction (September 8)

1. Raff, Jennifer. 2016. "How to read and understand a scientific paper."
2. Gill, Jeff. 2021. "Political Science is Data Science."
3. Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 1

### Week 2: The Science of Political Science (September 15)

1. Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 3
2. Glenn, Norval. (1990). "What We Know, What We Say We Know: Discrepancies Between Warranted and Unwarranted Conclusions." In Heinz Eulau, ed., *Crossroads of Social Science: The ICPSR 25th Anniversary Volume*. New York, NY: Agathon Press, pp. 119-145.
3. Schwartz, Martin. 2008. "The importance of stupidity in scientific research." *Journal of Cell Science*, 121: 1771.

### Week 3: The Basics of Research: Theories and Hypotheses (September 22)

1. Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 2
2. Andersson, Henrik and Sirus Dehdari. 2021. "Workplace Contact and Support for Anti-Immigration Parties." *American Political Science Review*.
3. Canes-Wrone, Brandice, et al. 2014. "Judicial Selection and Death Penalty Decisions". *American Political Science Review* 108: 23-39.
4. Gothreau, Clair. 2021. Sex Objects: How Self-Objectification Undermines Political Efficacy and Engagement. *Journal of Women, Politics and Policy*.

### Week 4: No Class (APSA)

\*\*Individual Meetings Monday and Tuesday.

**Week 5: Research Design (October 6)**

1. Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 4
2. Campbell and Ross. 1968. "The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time Series Data in a Quasi-Experimental Analysis." *Law and Society Review*, 3(1): 33-54.
3. Gerber, Alan and Donald Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94: 653-663.
4. Mondak, Jeffery. 1995. "Newspapers and Political Awareness." *American Journal of Political Science* 39: 513-527.
5. Prior, Markus and Arthur Lupia. 2008. "Money, Time, and Political Knowledge: Distinguishing Quick Recall and Political Learning Skills." *American Journal of Political Science* 52: 169-183.

**Week 6: Concepts, Variables, Operationalization and Measurement (October 13)**

\*\* Guest – Erin Kaheny

1. Kellstedt and Whitten, Chapter 5
2. Kitchens, Karin. 2021. "Exit or Invest: Segregation Increases Investment in Public Schools." *Journal of Politics*, 83(1).
3. Coppedge, Michael et al. 2011. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach." *Perspectives on Politics* 9:247-267.
4. Kaheny, Erin, Susan Haire and Sara Benesh. 2008. "Change over Tenure: Voting, Variance, and Decision Making on the US Courts of Appeals." *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(3): 490-503.
5. Shah, Paru and Nicholas Davis. 2017. "Comparing Three Methods of Measuring Race/Ethnicity." *Journal of Race, Ethnicity and Politics*, 2: 124-139.

**Week 7: Mixed Methods (October 20)**

\*\* Guest – Natasha Sugiyama

Readings TBD

**Week 8: Individual Meetings and Exam #1 (October 27)**

### **Week 9: Survey Research (November 3)**

\*\*Guest: Tom Holbrook

1. AAPOR Task Force on 2020 Pre-Election Polling
  - Read pages 1-8
  - Skim pages 9-41
  - Closer skim 42-73
2. Davis, Darren and Brian Silver. 2003. "Stereotype Threat and Race of Interviewer Effects in a Survey on Political Knowledge." *American Journal of Political Science* 47: 33-45.
3. Box-Steffensmeier, Janet, Gary Jacobson, and J. Tobin Grant. 2000. "Question Wording and the House Vote Choice: Some Experimental Evidence." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 64: 257-270.
4. Fowler, Floyd. 1992. "How Unclear Terms Affect Survey Data" *Public Opinion Quarterly* 56: 218-231.
5. Pfanzelt, Hannah and Dennis Spies. 2019. "The Gender Gap in Youth Political Participation: Evidence from Germany." *Political Research Quarterly*, 72(1): 34-48.

### **Week 10: Experiments (November 10)**

\*\* Guest: Patrick Kraft

1. Dunning, T. 2012. *Natural experiments in the social sciences: a design-based approach*. Cambridge University Press: ch 1 (ca. 30 pages) + optional chs. 2-4 (ca. 70 pages)
2. Barabas, J. & Jerit, J. 2010. "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?" *American Political Science Review* 104: 226-242
3. Butler, Daniel and David Broockman. 2011. "Do Politicians Racially Discriminate Against Constituents? A Field Experiment on State Legislators." *American Journal of Political Science* 55: 463-477.
4. Bonilla, Tabitha and Alvin Tillery Jr. 2020. "Which Identity Frames Boost Support for and Mobilization in #BlackLivesMatter Movement? An Experimental Test." *American Political Science Review*, 114 (4): 947-962.
5. Lajevardi, Nazita. 2021. "The Media Matters: Muslim American Portrayals and the Effects on Mass Attitudes." *Journal of Politics*, 83(3).

**\*\*Literature Review Assignment Due\*\***

### **Week 11: Replication and Documentation (November 17)**

1. King, Gary. (1995). "Replication, Replication." PS: Political Science and Politics, 28(3): 541-559.
2. <https://gking.harvard.edu/pages/data-sharing-and-replication>
3. Binder, Sara. 1996. "The Partisan Basis of Procedural Choice." American Political Science Review. 90(1): 8-20.
4. Schickler, Eric. 2000. "Institutional Change in the House of Representatives." American Political Science Review, 94(2): 269-288.
5. Park, Hong Min. 2015. "Studying Rules Changes in the U.S. House". Congress and the Presidency.

### **Week 12: Thanksgiving (November 24)**

### **Week 13: Submitting your Work (December 1)**

\*\* Guest: Kathy Dolan

Readings TBD

### **Week 14: Presentations (December 8)**

**December 15 – Research Design Assignment Due**

**December 17 – Exam #2 Due**

