



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAMME INTP/POLS 383: RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE 20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 2 2014

Important dates

Trimester dates: 14 July to 16 November 2014

Teaching dates: 14 July to 17 October 2014

Mid-trimester break: 25 August to 7 September 2014

Last assessment item due: 17 October 2014 (in class test)

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

Lectures: Friday, 1:10 pm – 3:00 pm
Venue: HULT 119

Names and contact details

Hilde Coffé

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Phone: 463 6681

Murphy Building, Level 5, Room 535

Office Hours: Monday 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Communication of additional information

This course uses Blackboard and presumes that all enrolled students have valid myvuw.ac.nz addresses. Please check that this account is active and you have organised email forwarding. Additional information and any changes to the timetable or lecture and seminar programme will be advised by email, announced in lectures, and posted on the course Blackboard site.

Prescription

This course enables us to uncover evidence and to better understand how the (political) world operates. This course introduces some of the basic research tools used in the study of politics. Along the way, students will learn how to pose and answer empirical research questions using appropriated evidence and arguments.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students passing the course should be able to:

1. understand the research process.
2. read, search through and summarise other research.
3. judge the quality of research.
4. see how theory and data fit together.
5. be familiar with the different types of research methods.
6. formulate appropriate research questions.
7. design research studies which answer the question they want answered.

Teaching format

INTP/POLS 383 is taught in one 100-minute lecture per week. A Lecture Programme is appended to this Course Outline and will be available on Blackboard.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Submit a research question
- Submit a Research proposal
- Sit the in-class tests

Workload

This course has been designed on the assumption that students will devote approximately 200 hours to it throughout the trimester. This is an average of 14 hours per week across the 14 weeks of trimester and includes attendance of classes, preparing for lectures, working on assignments and preparing in-class tests.

The 200 hours can be divided approximately as follows:

- 24 hours attendance classes
- 48 hours lecture preparation
- 20 hours writing research question
- 74 hours writing research proposal
- 34 hours in class tests preparation

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Research Question (maximum 500 words)	10%	1,2,3,6	11 August 12pm
2	1-hour in-class test	25%	1,2,3,5,6,7	22 August
3	Research Proposal (maximum 2000 words)	40%	1,2,3,4,6,7	14 October 12pm
4	1-hour in-class test	25%	1,2,3,5,5.7	17 October

Research question:

Maximum 500 words – to be submitted no later than 12.00 pm **11 August 2014**.

Students will have to think about the research topic they want to address in their research proposal and formulate clear research questions.

Research proposal: (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7):

Maximum 2,000 words - to be submitted no later than 12.00 pm **14 October 2014**.

Students will have to write a research proposal taking insights from the content of the lectures. The assignment will allow students to introduce a research topic of their own interest. Students will have to formulate appropriate research questions related to their topic, frame this topic within the current literature and theory, and suggest a method of analysis and research design.

In-class tests:

The 1-hour in-class tests will be held on **22 August** and **17 October 2014** and will test the knowledge of students about the topics discussed during the lecture programme.

Submission and return of work

Essays should be submitted in hard copy through the School office essay drop-off point, Murphy Room 518 and electronically through Blackboard. The hard copy should be handed in together with a completed cover sheet which is available from the office.

When marked, assignments will be returned to you in tutorials. Marked assignments and tests will be available from the Office, MY 518, between 2.00-3.00 pm.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

The course expects students to submit their assignments on time. Requests for extensions should be made with the lecturer in person with proper documentation **before** the due date. Extensions are normally given only to those with a medical certificate, or of other evidence of forces beyond your control.

Penalties

Students will be penalised for late submission of assignments – **a deduction of 5% for the first day late, and 2% per day thereafter, up to a maximum of 8 days**. Work that is more than 10 weekdays late can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but may not be marked.

Penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds (for example, illness [presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary] or similar other contingencies). In all such cases, prior information will be necessary.

Set texts

A list of required readings will be provided on Blackboard at the start of trimester. All required readings will be accessible online via VUW Library E-Reserves.

Students must read all the literature to prepare for the lectures. Lectures will explain these readings, place them in context, and clarify questions students may have.

Recommended reading

Bryman, Alan. 2012. *Social Research Methods. Fourth Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

Student feedback

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be covered during the course.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz

Appendix: Course Outline

The outline below gives basic information about the topics (and related questions and issues) that will be covered in each week of the course and some suggested readings. A detailed outline with weekly topics and required readings will be provided in the first class.

Day	Topic
18 July	<p>General Introduction to Course <i>How research is defined and what some of its purposes are.</i> <i>The different steps in the research process.</i> <i>Start of the research process: how to select a research problem and how to translate a research problem into research questions.</i></p>
25 July	<p>Collecting Data <i>Overview of the different types of data collection methods (qualitative and quantitative).</i> Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." <i>Political Analysis</i> 14: 227-249.</p>
1 August	<p>Survey Research <i>Discussion of characteristics of survey research.</i> <i>The difference between a survey sample and a population.</i> <i>Is a survey sample representative for the population?</i> <i>Discussion of studies based on survey research.</i> E.g., Denmark, D. and Shaun Bowler. "Minor Parties and Protest Votes in Australia and New Zealand: Locating Populist Parties." <i>Electoral Studies</i> 21: 47-67.</p>
8 August	<p>Experimental Research <i>Discussion of characteristics of experimental research and different types of experiments (e.g., field experiments, survey experiments).</i> <i>When is an experimental research design most appropriate?</i> <i>Discussion of studies using these different types of methods.</i> E.g., Matland, Richard E. 1994. "Putting Scandinavian Equality to the Test: An Experimental Evaluation of Gender Stereotyping of Political Candidates in a Sample of Norwegian Voters." <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> 24: 273-292.</p>
15 August	<p>Texts, Discourse and Media <i>Discussion of characteristics of methods related to text, discourse and media analysis.</i> <i>Discussion of studies using these different types of methods.</i> E.g., McMillan, Kate. 2009. "Newsflash: 'Men and Women Still Unequal!' New Zealand and the Global Media Monitoring Project 2005." In McMillan, Kate, John Leslie and Elizabeth McLeay (Eds.) <i>Rethinking Women and Politics. New Zealand and Comparative Perspectives</i>. Wellington: Victoria University Press, Pp. 302-331.</p>
22 August	In Class Test (1), and Discussion Research Question and Progress Research Proposal
25 August – 7 September	MID-TRIMESTER BREAK

12 September	<p>Field Research</p> <p><i>Discussion of characteristics of field research.</i> <i>Discussion of studies using field research.</i></p> <p>Rhodes, Rod A.W. 2011. <i>Everyday Life in British Government</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1: "Observing Government Elite", Pp. 1-18. Chapter 2: "The Minister", Pp. 75-108.</p>
19 September	<p>In Depth Interviews</p> <p><i>Discussion of characteristics of in depth interviews.</i> <i>Discussion of studies using in depth interviews.</i></p> <p>E.g., Goldstein, Kenneth. 2002. "Getting in the Door: Sampling and Completing Elite Interviews." <i>Political Science and Politics</i> 35(4): 669-672.</p>
26 September	<p>Focus Groups Q Method</p> <p><i>Discussion of characteristics of these different types of methods.</i> <i>Discussion of studies using these different types of methods.</i></p> <p>E.g., Conover, Pamela Johnston, Ivor M. Crewe and Donald D. Searing. 1991. "The Nature of Citizenship in the United States and Great Britain: Empirical Comments on Theoretical Themes." <i>Journal of Politics</i> 53(3): 800-832. Coffé, Hilde. 2012. "Conceptions of female political representation. Perspectives of Rwandan female representatives." <i>Women's Studies International Forum</i> 35: 286-297.</p>
3 October	<p>Data Management and Analysis</p> <p><i>How to manage and analyse data?</i> <i>Presentation of different statistical programmes and tools used to analyse collected data.</i></p>
10 October	<p>Presenting Findings</p> <p><i>Scientific Writing: How to write a research proposal and scientific article?</i> <i>Discussion of different parts of a proposal and manuscript and how they should be prepared.</i></p> <p>Thunder, David. 2004. "Back to Basics: Twelve Rules for Writing a Publishable Article." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>, 37(3): 493-495.</p>
17 October	In Class Test (2)