

Point Loma Nazarene University
Department of History and Political Science
Political Science 2070: Scope and Methods of Political Science



Instructor: Dr. Lindsey Lupo

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Fall 2021

Course Time: MWF 12:15-1:20pm

Course website: Canvas.pointloma.edu

Class Location: Colt Forum

"Political science is the study of politics through the procedures of science." – Robert O. Keohane

"Those who plow social science fields seek general truths. We look for general, or at least widespread, patterns of behavior; we seek general causes and effects. And yet we all know that everything, everywhere, is different... Can one find universals across nations or regions or cultures, or is each place different?" – Sidney Verba

PLNU Mission:

To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Department of History and Political Science Mission:

As followers of Christ, the Department of History and Political Science promotes wisdom and scholarship about historical contexts and political systems, so that graduates can become local and global leaders in the service of Christ and humanity.

Course Description:

This course offers an examination of the scope of the discipline of political science and the research methods used in the study of political phenomena. In other words, this is a course about the extent to which we can make political claims (scope) and the methods we use to make such claims (methods). It is designed to engage students in the process of studying politics, helping them to discover how knowledge about the political world is created. Is political science (and its sub-discipline international studies) a "science" as we understand the word? How do we know what we know about the political

world? If we are truly interested in solving social problems and making the world better, how do we find answers? Which research method is best for each type of question? What are the practical problems involved in conducting research? We will seek to answer these and other questions in this course. The overarching goals are to prepare students to be critical consumers of research and better prepared to conduct research of their own.

Course Format and Expectations:

This course will meet three times per week. Over the semester, we will cover the theoretical motivations driving most political research, the structure and design of inquiry, general areas of research, and numerous analytic techniques common to the social sciences. In-class discussion and exercises will draw on the readings and require students to apply this knowledge. Therefore, it is crucial that students complete all assigned readings before class and more importantly, do everything they can to be in class each day.

To understand the expectations I have for my students, you must first understand my goals as a teacher. My aim in designing this course is to familiarize you with methodological terminology, techniques, and discourse. You will become budding social scientists, capable of conducting quality social science research.

Specifically, the course learning outcomes (CLOs) for the class include the following:

- Students will be able to recognize and employ the vocabulary and concepts used to discuss research methods.
- Students will understand why approaches to the study of politics are often debated among scholars, as well as the rationale behind various approaches.
- Students will become familiar with methods of inquiry that are used to generate data in political science.
- Students will be able to recognize and employ basic statistical techniques that are used to analyze data in political science.
- Students will be able to critically read and evaluate primary political science research.
- Students will be able to discuss the value and validity of data and analysis used in specific political science research.
- Students will become comfortable with political science research methods and will propose the utilization of one or more methods for a final research design project.

This course will also help move you forward in your major. As such, the political science and international studies program learning outcomes (PLOs) that align with this course are:

- Evaluate, design, and apply social science research with respect to political phenomena (PS.PLO 2 and IS.PLO 1).
 - Assessed through: Research exercises 1-4; midterm exam; final paper
- Demonstrate social scientific information literacy (PS.PLO 4 and IS.PLO 3).
 - Assessed through: Research exercises 1 and 2; final research design paper
- Develop and express ideas in written communication in an effective and scholarly manner (PS.PLO 5 and IS.PLO 4).
 - Assessed through: Research exercise 4; midterm exam; final research design paper

- Demonstrate oral communication abilities, particularly to convey complex ideas, recognize diverse viewpoints, and offer empirical evidence of an argument (PS.PLO 6 and IS.PLO 5).
 - Assessed through: Final paper presentations

To be sure, these are ambitious goals. However, in my experience students are more than able to achieve them. Indeed, with hard work they often exceed them! As such, the basic expectation I have is that you will work hard in this course. I promise to do the same.

A word to the wise: This class is challenging, but you can do this. The best way to remain in good standing and to feel confident in your work is to be very diligent from the beginning, rather than assuming you can catch up later. Do the reading and assignments, come to every class unless there is absolutely no way to avoid missing (do not come if you are significantly ill), begin your final research design early, *and see me early and often if you have any questions or need any help at all*. This class will push you, but I will offer any help and support I can to make this a positive experience.

Course Readings:

All readings are required and are available at the bookstore, library, or on Canvas. Please bring your books to class:

1. Rich, Richard C., Craig Leonard Brians, Jarol B. Manheim, and Lars Willnat (hereafter RBMW). 2018 (9th edition). *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*. New York: Routledge.
2. Schmidt, Diane E. 2018. *Writing in Political Science: A Practical Guide*. New York: Routledge.
3. Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
4. Various digital readings – they are available on Canvas.

Assessment Requirements:

Reading questions: We will be doing some challenging reading for this class. I am going to ask you to submit reading questions intended to help you think about the reading and to give you regular practice with the more difficult concepts. Their purpose and intent is to ensure that you fully understand the reading, and thus to keep you moving toward your final research project. These reading questions are *due every day that a reading is assigned*, beginning with our second class session and ending at Thanksgiving. Everyone gets 4 days “off” from doing a reading question (your choice as to when you take a day off), though the expectation is that you still complete the assigned reading for that day. Each reading question is worth one point. Reading questions should be posted on our Canvas site and are due by the start of class. You may also respond to another student’s posted question – in other words, in order to earn a point, you may post an original question or respond to another.

Research Exercises: Occasionally, you will have a research assignment due. Some of these will stem from your RBMW text and others will be based on your reading of actual political science academic journal articles. All of the research exercise prompts are posted on Canvas and the due dates appear in the schedule below.

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will consist of 20 multiple choice questions and 2 short answer questions. You will not have a choice as to which multiple choice questions you answer but you will have a choice with the short answer questions. A study guide will be provided a few weeks before the exam.

SPSS Analysis Assignment: Democracy & Development: you will be analyzing the relationship between democratic government and development in states. Employing actual data from a large set of countries, you will evaluate this relationship. A set of “lab” pages provides the structure for your responses. It suggests how to conceptualize “democracy” and “development,” enabling you to generate a hypothesis about their relationship, guiding your construction of quantitative indices for each concept, and then showing you how to use the computer program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to do a simple statistical test of your hypothesized relationship. This assignment will be conducted during class-time and the dates appear in the schedule below. *You must collaborate with one other student on this assignment. You will submit a single assignment, with both names, and will receive the same grade.* If you are going to miss any of these three days, you must let me know ASAP and your assignment will be due *before* the due date.

Research Design (Final Paper): For your final project, you will be writing a paper that proposes research – in other words, you’ll be designing the project but not actually completing the research (we’d need another semester to do that!). The final paper prompt (with examples from previous students) is available on Canvas. The last part of this course will be dedicated to student presentations in which each of you presents your research design (perhaps not fully polished at presentation time – that’s okay) to your peers for comments, suggestions, and advice.

Participation and Attendance Policy: In this class, you are expected to attend class and contribute to the class discussions and to each other’s research with your comments and suggestions. As your participation, general interest, and respect for your fellow classmates’ work increases, so does your participation grade. More specifically, grading on participation includes an assessment of the following: asking and answering questions in class, asking questions during the student presentations, being well-prepared for your presentation, visiting office hours, emailing me questions, attending regularly, and arriving on time. In issuing a participation grade, I do consider how much you have engaged in some of these things.

Finally, I expect that you will use technology during class time only for academic purposes, as we only have 65 minutes together and my goal is to maximize this learning time. I treat all my students as the adults that they are, thus I expect you to act accordingly. I recognize that you are soon-to-be young working professionals and graduate school students, and to help prepare you for this transition, I expect an academically engaged and professional approach from each of you. At a minimum, this includes arriving on time (or early), engaging in active listening and discussion, not texting, emailing, or using social media (would you do these things in a business meeting?), and completing all assignments when due.

**All late assignments/exams (in-class and out of class) will have points deducted unless notification and arrangements are made with me at least 24 hours prior to the assignment’s due date. The instructor reserves the right to change the structure of any make-up exam or assignment given. If you have some special circumstance that might affect your ability to meet all the course’s expectations – e.g., a sister’s graduation, a learning*

disability, or whatever – come and talk to me immediately. With abundant notice, I'll be as accommodating as possible, as long as it does not compromise fairness for all.

Grade Points for Each Assignment:

Reading Questions	25 Points (1 Point Each)
Participation (includes attendance patterns)	20 Points
Research Exercises # 1-3	45 Points (15 Points Each)
Midterm Exam	50 Points
SPSS Analysis Assignment	25 Points
Research Exercises #4	20 Points
Final Research Design Paper	85 Points
TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS	270 Points

Grade Scale Based on Percentages:

A	B	C	D	F
A 93.3-100	B+ 86.6-89	C+ 76.6-79	D+ 66.6-69	F 59.9 and below
A- 90-93.2	B 83.3-86.5	C 73.3-76.5	D 63.3-66.5	
	B- 80-83.2	C- 70-73.2	D- 60-63.2	

Schedule - Full citations appear at the end of the syllabus along with URLs if available. A copy of both Van Evera and Schmidt – as well as an older edition of RBMW – are on two-hour reserve at the Ryan Library and the non-text readings are on the course Canvas site. Please complete the reading assignment before coming to class on the day it is assigned.

	Topic	Assignments
	<i>Foundations of Political Science Research</i>	
Tuesday, August 31	Introduction to the Course – Welcome!	No reading
Wednesday, September 1	Scientific Development	Kuhn, pgs. 52-65 First Reading Question due (submit on Canvas by the start of class)
September 3	How “Scientific” is Social Science? Overview of the Research Process	RBMW, chapter 1; Lynch article; Desch article; Schmidt, pgs. 1-12
September 6	No Class – Happy Labor Day!	No reading or assignments
September 8	Trends in Political Science Research	Schmidt, chapter 2
September 10	Theories and Hypotheses Part I	RBMW, chapter 2 Research Exercise #1 due (submit on Canvas by the start of class)

September 13	Theories and Hypotheses Part II	Van Evera, pages 7-27; Schmidt, chapter 3
September 15	Foundations of Research – Library Visit	Schmidt, chapter 4
September 17	The Pluses and Perils of Internet Research; Avoiding Plagiarism	Schmidt, pgs. 13-25 and 194-216
September 20	Operationalization and Measurement	RBMW, pgs. 69-75 and chapter 5; Sanger, Shanker, and Schmitt article
September 22	Preparing to do Research	RBMW, chapter 6
September 24	Choosing a Research Question Part I	Schmidt, pgs. 265-269 Research Exercise #2 due (submit assignment on Canvas by the start of class and bring to class a hard copy of the entire article you analyzed).
September 27	Choosing a Research Question Part II	No reading Bring to class a potential research question and annotated bibliography (2 sources only) for your final research design paper.
September 29	Sampling	RBMW, chapter 7
<i>Quantitative Methods</i>		
October 1	Survey Research	RBMW, chapter 8; Rochefort, chapter 9 (Authors: Traugott, et al)
October 4	Scaling	RBMW, chapter 9
October 6	Content Analysis	RBMW, chapter 10
October 8	Comparative Research	RBMW, chapter 12 Research Exercise #3 due (can be completed as a pair or individually; submit on Canvas by the start of class)
October 11	Aggregate Data	RBMW, chapter 11; Schmidt, pgs 101-105 and 246-251

October 13	Midterm Exam	No reading – study for today's Midterm Exam!
October 15	Data Preparation, Processing, and Description	RBMW, chapters 13-14; Schmidt, pgs. 124-129
October 18	Statistics I: Univariate Statistics	RBMW, chapter 15; Schmidt, pgs. 130-132; Gould Article
October 20	Statistics II: Bivariate Statistics	RBMW, chapter 16; Rochefort, chapter 7 (Authors: Russett, Hartlet, and Murray)
October 22	No Class – Fall Break!	No reading, BUT be sure to continue thinking about your final research question – is it finalized? Do you have your variables? Are you reading some <i>academic</i> (peer-reviewed, scholarly, high-quality) literature in this field? Now is the time to see me if you have questions or need help.
October 25	Statistics II: Bivariate Statistics (Part II)	Fowler article; Schmidt, pgs. 132-136
October 27	SPSS Analysis Assignment	No reading
October 29	SPSS Analysis Assignment	No reading
November 1	SPSS Analysis Assignment	No reading SPSS Analysis due (turn in the hard-copy of the whole assignment at the end of today's class session)
<i>Qualitative Methods</i>		
November 3	Introduction to Qualitative Methods	RBMW, pages 75-81; King, Keohane, and Verba, pgs. 3-12 <i>By this point, you should have your final research question solidified, your theory formulated, and an idea of how you will operationalize your variables in your final research project.</i>
November 5	Direct Observation	RBMW, chapter 18
November 8	Focus Groups	RBMW, chapter 19

November 10	Case Studies	Van Evera, pages 49-67; Schmidt, pgs. 354-367 (<u>Heads up!</u> The process tracing paper that Schmidt uses as an example here focuses on rape as a tool of war and to some extent, genocide and infanticide. Not feeling up for reading such a heavy paper? That's okay - you can skip it and only read the Van Evera selection. Also, any reading questions posted on the Schmidt selection should focus on process tracing as a research method, not on the Bosnian war).
November 12	Elite Interviews	RBMW, chapter 20; Rochefort, chapter 5 (Authors: Rivera, Kozyreva, and Sarovskii)
November 15	Literature Reviews	Steinberg piece; Schmidt, pgs. 313-25; One journal article from the list of choices on Canvas (your choice of which one you want to deconstruct for Research Exercise #4) <i>By this point, you should have your final research question solidified, your theory formulated, your variables operationalized, and your research methods selected for your final research project. <u>You should also be deep into the academic literature that surrounds this topic.</u></i>
<i>Preparing your Research Design</i>		
November 17	Sample Research Reports	RBMW, chapter 21; Schmidt, chapter 6
November 19	Overview of Concepts	RBMW, chapter 22; Schmidt, pgs. 300-310
November 22	Writing a Political Science Paper	Van Evera, appendix; Schmidt, pgs. 394-419 (Note: You are not being asked to write a policy evaluation in this class, but these pages offer a good example of high quality, sophisticated writing in political science). Research Exercise #4 Due (Submit on Canvas)

		<p>Continued on next page... Please bring in a written copy of your research question and proposed methodology.</p> <p>Last day of submitting a daily reading question.</p>
November 24 & November 26	No Class - Happy Thanksgiving!	No reading, but consider reading Schmidt's chapters 14 and 15 to help you think through how to transfer what you have learned in this class to your future professional life (aka "the real world.") These chapters offer wonderful guidance on professional writing.
November 29	Student research presentations	No reading - work on your research design
December 1	Student research presentations	No reading - work on your research design
December 3	Student research presentations	No reading - work on your research design
December 6	Student research presentations	No reading - work on your research design
December 8	Student research presentations	No reading - work on your research design
December 10	Student research presentations	No reading - work on your research design
Wednesday, December 15	You made it!	Research Design (Final Paper) due by 10:30am on Canvas. We will also meet at 10:45am in the classroom to discuss our papers (and celebrate!).

Full Citations:

Desch, Michael C. 2019. "[How Political Science Became Irrelevant: The Field Turned its Back on the Beltway.](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 27, 2019.

Fowler, James H. 2008. "[The Colbert Bump in Campaign Donations: More Truthful than Truthy.](#)" *PS: Political Science and Politics* XLI, no. 3 (July): 533-539.

Gould, Stephen Jay. 2013. "[The Median Isn't the Message.](#)" *AMA Journal of Ethics*, January 2013.

Lynch, Marc. March 23, 2016. "[After the Political Science Relevance Revolution.](#)" *Washington Post*, March 23, 2016.

Rocheftort, David A. 2005. *Quantitative Methods in Practice: Readings in PS*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.

Sanger, David E., Thom Shanker, and Eric Schmitt. 2009. "[Obama Offers Ways to Rate Efforts in Afghan Region.](#)" *New York Times*, September 17, 2009.

Steinberg, G. "[Rhetoric II: Sample Literature Reviews.](#)"

Course Website and Email:

Please check your PLNU email regularly for class announcements. You should also check Canvas for announcements, links, lecture PowerPoints, and assignments.

Incompletes and Late Assignments:

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due – including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

PLNU Copyright Policy:

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy:

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See [Academic Policies](#) for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy:

PLNU is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all its programs, services, and activities. Students with disabilities may request course-related accommodations by contacting the Educational Access Center (EAC), located in the Bond Academic Center (EAC@pointloma.edu or 619-849-2486). Once a student's eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, the EAC will issue

an academic accommodation plan (“AP”) to all faculty who teach courses in which the student is enrolled each semester.

PLNU highly recommends that students speak with their professors during the first two weeks of each semester/term about the implementation of their AP in that particular course and/or if they do not wish to utilize some or all of the elements of their AP in that course.

Students who need accommodations for a disability should contact the EAC as early as possible (i.e., ideally before the beginning of the semester) to assure appropriate accommodations can be provided. It is the student’s responsibility to make the first contact with the EAC.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy:

Regular and punctual attendance at all class sessions is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent for more than 10 percent of class sessions, the faculty member will issue a written warning of de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation.

Spiritual Care:

Please be aware PLNU strives to be a place where you grow as whole persons. To this end, we provide resources for our students to encounter God and grow in their Christian faith.

If students have questions, a desire to meet with the chaplain or have prayer requests you can contact the [Office of Spiritual Development](#)

Campus Resources:

Research librarians are available to help you with your research papers and projects in Ryan Library. You can reach them by phone at (619) 849-2337, by text at (619) 592-8884, or by email at reflib@pointloma.edu. To search the library for books and articles, please click here to visit their [main website](#).

The Wellness Center is available for medical, counseling and nutrition services to students. Many college students experience strained relationships, stress, anxiety, depression, physical health challenges, and other barriers to learning. The Wellness Center offers help and resources to deal with these kind of issues. The Wellness Center is located on the first floor of Nicholson Commons and is open Monday-Friday, 8 am-12:30 pm and 1:30-4 pm. They can be reached at sdwellnesscenter@pointloma.edu or at (619) 849-2574. In an emergency after hours, call 911 and PLNU Public Safety at (619) 849-2525.

Any student who has *difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day*, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to [contact the Dean of Students](#), Dr. Jake Gilbertson, for support. Furthermore, please note that PLNU’s on-campus food pantry (“Loma Shares”) helps provide food insecure students with weekly food assistance. Loma Shares currently operates Mondays from 11-2pm and Tuesdays from 3-6pm in front of the Arc. Students are welcome to swipe in once a week, with no questions asked, as the PLNU community is working to destigmatize the shame that is often associated with food insecurity. For

more information on Loma Shares, please contact Resident Director Jong Yoon (jyoon@pointloma.edu). Finally, if you struggle with food insecurity or unstable housing, please let me know if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to better understand the hardships you are navigating and to help connect you to available resources.

Title IX of the Education Amendments (1972) protects your right to an educational experience that is free from sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual violence. As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep any information you share private to the greatest extent possible. You should know that I have a mandatory reporting responsibility under PLNU policy and federal law, and am required to share any information I receive regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, and related conduct with PLNU's Title IX Coordinator.

PLNU strives to provide a learning and living environment that promotes *safety, transparency, personal integrity, civility, mutual respect, and freedom from unlawful discrimination or sexual harassment*. Detailed information on discrimination, harassment, and sexual assault policies and processes for getting help and for reporting are available on the [PLNU website](#). PLNU's Title IX Coordinator is Danielle Brown Friberg and she can be reached at titleix@pointloma.edu or (619) 849-2313. The Title IX office will seek to maintain your privacy to the greatest extent possible, but cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Students can receive *confidential* support (with the exception of a few critical situations) from the Wellness Center (619-849-2574) or campus pastors in the Office of Spiritual Development (619-849-2655).
