

Government 301
Research Design and Methods
Office: Morton #31 (MW 10-11:30)

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Government 301 is an introduction to the study of politics. It is designed to prepare undergraduates for the task of doing scholarly research. For most students this means preparation for an Honors Thesis or continued study of political science in graduate school. In this course you will explore the philosophy of science and the various tools of the methodologist that are used to study politics scientifically. You will also participate in the scientific study of politics and observe others as they attempt to do the same. You will find that political science (like all science) is a social enterprise.

Upon completion of this course you should be able to: Assess the state of a particular literature; identify interesting and researchable questions; formulate strategies to answer these questions; search for various types of information; create an organized data set; analyze both qualitative and quantitative data; and work with your colleagues on research questions. You will examine a particular literature from American Politics, Comparative Politics or International Relations depending on your sub-field of interest and the specific research interests of class members. For this reason the “first edition” of the syllabus has not been completely filled in with substantive readings. Instead, the readings will be interspersed with chapters from the two required texts. King Keohane and Verba’s *Designing Social Inquiry*, and Johnson and Joslyn’s *Political Science Research Methods* are both available at the College bookstore. We will also read portions of an unpublished manuscript by Collier and Brady entitled, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. All other required readings will be made available in a reading packet from Staples Office Supply store, the Government Department Copy Room (#19) and/or through the course web page.

Student Responsibilities and Course Assignments

This course will be conducted as a research seminar (with a healthy dose of short lectures on the nuts and bolts of methodology). The interests and research projects of individual students will dictate the content of the course (or at least the exemplary articles that we read in order to illustrate certain methods). Therefore students are responsible for locating interesting articles and books within their sub-field that illuminate the issues we are discussing in class for that week. This will help to familiarize you with your chosen sub-field, and it will also provide us with fodder for discussion using data and models that are directly related to your own research projects. Specific graded assignments follow:

Class Participation	15%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Literature Review and Analysis of an empirical field of study (7-10 pages)	10%
Thesis Prospectus (10-20 pages)	10%
Revised Thesis Prospectus with Initial Findings (15-30 pages)	20%
Oral Presentation of Prospectus and Findings (During Finals)	10%

Discussion and Analysis of Colleague's Research	10%
Computer Proficiency Homework Assignments	5%

Brief Outline of the Course As Of August 24, 2003

I. Science and the Study of Politics: One Epistemology or Many?

A. Standard Positivist Approaches to Knowledge

Required Reading: JJR Chapters 1 and 2; KKV Chapter 1
 Recommended Reading: JJR Chapter 6 (Literature Review)

Assignment: First cut at your research question

Issues for Discussion: Knowledge through Science; Normative vs Positive Theory; Inductive and Deductive Reasoning; What is theory and why bother with it?

B. Alternative Approaches to Knowledge in the Study of Politics

Reading: Kuhn Chapter 1
 Kazsa Letter on the Perestroika Movement in the APSA
 "Mr. Pravda's" Satire of the Perestroika Movement in APSA
 Geertz, "Thick Description"
 Geertz, "Notes on a Balinese Cockfight"
 Schwartz, "Participation and Multisubjective Understanding"

Issues for Discussion: Scientific Revolutions; Normal Science; Objective Reality and Constructed Reality; Testing and Falsifying Theories

II. The Building Blocks of Scientific Research

A. Assumptions, Concepts, Variables and Hypotheses

Reading: JJR Chapter 3

Assignment: Turn In Your Initial Arrow Diagram and revised research question

B. Literature Review

Reading: JJR Chapter 6
 Numerous Examples from all Sub-fields Posted under "Assignments"

Assignment: Employ Computer based searches using ALL of the following tools: Annual Reviews, APSA Proceedings, Social Science Citation Index, First Search (Article First), Infotrac, Lexis-Nexis Academic, PAIS, Ingenta, Project Muse, JSTOR, Lion, and

Google. Pare down a list of 20 papers or books that you intend to consult as you write your literature review. You will start with many more than 20, but I would like you to submit a list with your “Top 20” sources at this point.

C. Measurement

Reading: JJR Chapter 4
McDonald and Popkin, “Voter Turnout”
Chris Howard, “Cross National Measures of the Welfare State”
Joel Schwartz on “Participation and Multi-subjective Understanding”

Descriptive Inference and Causal Inference

A. Descriptive Inference

Reading: KKV Chapter 2.
Dimock, “Screening Likely Voters: A Survey Experiment”

Assignment: Locate quantitative data relevant to your research – Submit report with variable description, scatterplots, and frequency distribution

B. Statistics, Causal Inference, and Counterfactual Analysis

Reading: KKV Chapter 3.
Fearon, “Causes and Counterfactuals in Social Science”
Cederman, “Re-Running History”
Dawes, “Counterfactual Inferences”
Jervis, “Counterfactuals and Complexity”

C. Alternative Approaches to Causality

Reading: Collier and Brady Chapter 6 (posted on web site)

IV. The Research Process: Starting From Scratch

A. Research Design and Choosing a Researchable Question

Reading: JJR Chapter 5;
KKV Chapter 4
Examples of Multi-Method Research Design: (You read one!)
Joe Soss, “Lessons From the Welfare Debate”
Fenno, *Homestyle*
Schultz, *Crisis Bargaining*
Stone, *Lending Credibility*
Martin, *Democratic Commitments*
Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*

B. Case Study Method and Experimental Methods

Reading: KKV Chapter 6
Iyengar, Peters and Kinder, "Experiment on Media Exposure"
Bennett and Leggold, "Burden Sharing in the Gulf War"
Legro, "Least Likely Case Method"
McFaul, "Privatization in Russia"
Bennett, "Case Study Research"

C. Sampling and Variable Bias

Reading: JJR Chapter 7; KKV Chapter 5
Geddes, "Selection Bias"

D. Data Collection Techniques

Reading: JJR Chapters 8, 9, 10
John Gilmour (Document Analysis) and Larry Evans (Elite Interviews)

V. Analyzing Data: Correlation, Causation and Hypothesis Testing

A. Descriptive Statistics

Reading: JJR Chapter 11

B. Bivariate Data Analysis

Reading: JJR Chapter 12

C. Multivariate Data Analysis

Reading: JJR Chapter 13

Assignment: Analyze quantitative data from your project using one or more techniques discussed in class. Minimum requirement is cross-tab with controls.

VI. Presenting A Research Proposal and Initial Findings

A. Presentation Skills

B. Serving as a Discussant

List of Potential Vistors/Presenters: (Final Schedule Subject to Change) As part of this course you will be required to attend the Government Department Research Seminar which meets every other Friday from 12 to 1:30 pm. (Lunch will be served). These

meetings will consist of presentations by scholars of their ongoing research projects followed by Q&A session. If there is a paper to be distributed ahead of time, I'll make it available on the web site. The seminar meets in Morton rm. 37. In addition, I'll attempt to schedule some class visits from W&M faculty to discuss particular methods they employ in their own research

From William and Mary:

John Gilmour – Studies U.S. Congress – Discussing Document Analysis and Coding for his project on Presidential Vetoes.

Stephen Ndegwa – Studies Comparative Politics and Africa. Temporarily on leave and working at the World Bank. He will present his research on “Constitutionalism in African Politics.” (Tentatively scheduled for September 5th.)

David Dessler – International Relations – “A Frequentist Logic of Scientific Inference.” (Scheduled for September 19th)

Simon Stow – Political Theory – “Interpreting and Re-interpreting Texts or Why are Red Pencils Red? (Hey, he is a theorist.) (Scheduled for September 26th)

Larry Evans – U.S. Congress – Creating usable data through semi-structured elite interviews. He interviews both members and their staffs in order to generate his data.

Jenny Kehl – Comparative Politics of Development – “Explaining Patterns of Foreign Direct Investment in Developing Countries.”

Steven Shellman – International Relations and Intrastate Conflict – “Whither Will They Go? Refugees and Intra-state Conflict.”

Outside Visitors

Jim Wright – Former Speaker of the House of Representatives. No paper, probably just cool war stories. (September 12th)

Debbie Avant – George Washington University, International Relations, “Explaining the Rise of Mercenary Military Forces in the International System” (October 17th)

Kurt Gaubatz – Old Dominion University, International Relations, “Domestic Politics and the Prospects for International Cooperation”

Michael McDonald – George Mason University, October, TBA, “Measuring Voter Turnout in the United States: Implications for Democratic Theory”

Rebecca Bill – U.S. Naval Academy, TBA, “Judicial Politics in Comparative Perspective”