

**01:790:300: Introduction to Political Science Research Methods
Fall 2020**

Professor (Primary Instructor)

Primary Instructor: Professor Christine Cahill*

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Office Hours: Thursdays from 2:30-3:30pm

Office Hour Location: Canvas Conferences

E-mail: c.cahill@rutgers.edu

*Please address the instructor as Professor Cahill in all correspondences

Teaching Assistant

Teaching Assistant: Burcu Kolcak

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Office Hours: TBA

E-mail: bk457@polisci.rutgers.edu

Office Hour Location: Canvas Conferences

*Please address the TA as Burcu in all correspondences

The graduate student Teaching Assistant will be present at all lectures and will be another source of support and assistance throughout the course. Burcu will facilitate all recitation sections and is the primary grader for all problem sets and assessments. Questions about grading or recitation section logistics should first be directed toward Burcu.

Learning Assistants

Learning Assistant:

Pronouns:

Learning Assistant:

Pronouns:

**Please address the peer learning assistants by their first names in all correspondences.

We are fortunate to have **two** talented undergraduates working in this class as Learning Assistants (LAs). The Learning Assistants have previously taken Intro to Political Science Research Methods and demonstrated mastery of the course content and strong leadership skills in helping their fellow classmates learn the material. The learning assistants are a valuable source of support and help for students. The LAs are primarily responsible for helping the instructor facilitate in-class active learning activities, including answering student questions, participating in activities, and providing guidance. The LAs will not be grading any assignments or exams.

Section 1. Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to principles of research in political science. In the course of the class, we will cover applications of the scientific method to politics, the design of theories and hypotheses, and the use of statistical techniques for analysis of political data. This course will provide students with the necessary skills to understand and evaluate political science research as well as produce research on their own. Students will learn tools for data analysis that are increasingly demanded in the workplace and in academic research. By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze data in Stata (a statistical program) and create survey experiments in Qualtrics (a survey platform).

This is an applied course and no mathematical knowledge beyond high school algebra is required. The course is broadly divided into two parts. The first part of the course will cover issues in research design. We will cover concepts in the construction of social science theories, the derivation of hypotheses from theory, and strategies for statistically analyzing and evaluating the theories. This part of the class is designed to introduce students to basic concepts in scientific research and present issues that are critical for evaluating research. Students will be provided with tools to evaluate causal relationships and developing research designs. The second part of the course will focus on statistical techniques for analyzing and evaluating data. This will include descriptive statistics, statistical graphs, test of bivariate relationships and linear regression models. By the end of this part of the class students should be able to perform basic data analysis using graphical and statistical techniques.

This course is useful for anyone wishing to learn how to conduct or evaluate research. The tools and techniques learned in this class can be used across the social sciences and will give you valuable data management skills for future employment.



The course also satisfies two SAS Core Curriculum requirements:

- QQ Quantitative and Formal Reasoning
- ITR Information Technology and Research

Section 2. Required Texts

1. Pollock, Philip H. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. (6th Edition) bundled with *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis* and
2. Baglione, Lisa. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. (4th Edition) (included in the Pollock bundle)
3. Articles listed on the syllabus can be found on the course website (Canvas).

In addition to the assigned textbooks, students are required to use Stata, a statistical software. Rutgers provides a free license to students. Please see Module #1 for a video tutorial on accessing Stata using your personal electronic device (preferably a computer, when possible).

Section 3. Assessments and Grades

Grades in the course will be based on the following items:

- 1) Lecture Activities: 50%
- 2) Section Attendance: 20%
- 3) Final Paper: 30%
 - a. Research Question & Annotated Bibliography (10%)
 - b. Final Paper (20%)

****Fall 2020 Note: There will not be any midterm or final exams this semester****

Lecture Activities (30%)

All lectures will take place **asynchronously** and can be found in the “Modules” tab on Canvas.

This means you may work through the lecture modules at your own pace throughout the week, so long your graded work is submitted by the end of the week on Sunday.

Weekly lecture modules will open up at midnight on Sundays. Each week, either one or two lecture modules will be released, depending on whether students are meeting in recitation section that week.

For example, the Week 2 modules will open up on Sunday, September 6th at midnight. You will have the entire week to complete Module 2 (our lecture for Monday, September 7th) and Module 3 (our lecture for Thursday, September 10th) at your own pace. Each lecture contains a graded component. The graded components are always due by the end of the week on Sundays at midnight. In this example, your graded work would be due on Sunday, September 13th at 11:59pm.

All lecture modules have a graded component. This could be a quiz, a problem set question, participation in a discussion forum, a response question, etc. The graded component of the modules is due at the end of the week by Sunday at midnight. **Please note that this is a STRICT deadline.**

Why such a strict deadline?

- To encourage students to stay on track in the course
- To help the instructors stay organized with the course grading.
- The correct answers to quizzes are set to be released the following Mondays at 8:00am, so the instructors cannot accept any late quizzes once those answers have been released.

Each module begins with an “Overview” page that overviews the components of the module. See an example below. I expect you to spend between 30-40 minutes on the course readings

PRIOR to beginning the lecture module. Then, you can expect each lecture module to take between 1-2 hours, depending on the content.

Overall, you should expect to dedicate approximately six hours per week to this course.

Module #2: Overview

Learning Objectives for Module #2: Components of Research Design, Part 1

- Identify independent and dependent variables in theories
- Derive hypotheses from theories using the template from Pollock
- Express variables as concepts and as values of a concept

9/7/20-9/13/20	Module #2: Components of Research Design, Part 1	<p>(1) Complete Assigned Readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skim Pollock, Chapter 3 • Skim Baglione, Chapters 1, 2, and 5 <p>(2) Watch Video Lecture, Part 1 & 2</p> <p>(3) Read: Amramowitz (1988) , pages 1 & 2 (page numbers are from pdf). Identify the research question, theory, IV & DV.</p> <p>(4) Graded Quiz on research design components of Abramowitz (1988). Due Sunday, September 13th at midnight.</p>
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Section Attendance (20%)

Recitation sections will take place **synchronously** at your assigned recitation time, according to the schedule outlined in the syllabus.

While we strongly encourage your attendance in recitation sections, we understand that students may not be able to attend some recitation due to issues pertaining to the pandemic. We will record each section and will post the recording on Canvas. Students should communicate their absence to the TA within **TWO WEEKS** of their absence to make arrangements for an alternative assignment to obtain credit for the class they missed.

Students will meet in their assigned section time SEVEN times throughout the semester (see course schedule at bottom of syllabus). Each section is worth ~3% of your overall grade (excluding the optional section). Students' recitation section attendance grade will be comprised of attendance AND participation in a recitation section activity, (examples include quizzes, discussion, and group work).

Note that there will be no lecture module on the Thursdays during the week when sections are held. You will never "meet" more than two times per week for this course.

Section Locations and Times

Section Dates: 9/10, 9/24, 10/8, 10/22 (optional), 11/12, 11/19, 12/3

01: Thursdays 9:50-11:10

02: Thursdays 11:30-12:50

03: Thursdays 2:40-4:10

How to Join Recitation Section:

1) Recitation Format:

Recitations will be held using the 'Conference' function in Canvas.

2) How to Join Recitation via Conference:

- On the day / time of your recitation you should log-in to Canvas and locate the "Conferences" tab on the left-hand tool bar.

- Once in the "Conferences" tab, you should see your recitation section's conference call. You will then click, "join".

*- When you join, please join with your microphone. If you feel you have sufficient internet speeds, etc. you may then choose to join with your video. You **MUST FIRST** join with microphone, then the option for video will appear.*

3) Attendance & Participation Assignments:

Attendance will be taken at the start of each recitation conference call.

***Each recitation section includes participation assignment(s).** You will need to go to the recitation section module, click on the assignment for your section and submit it either by the end of section, or by midnight the Thursday after your recitation (about 24 hours).*

Final Paper (30%)

Students will complete a final research project as their final assessment grade. There will NOT be a final exam in this course.

The final paper assignment is comprised of two parts:

- Research Question & Annotated Bibliography (10%)
 - due by Sunday, October 25th at 11:59pm
- Final Paper (20%)
 - Due by

Please see the "Assignments" tab on Canvas for more detailed information on the final paper:

- Final Paper Guidelines (this document provides an overview of the annotated bibliography and the final paper. It also includes detailed information on formatting your final paper, sources and citations, and the components of the final paper).
- Rubric for final paper

- Template for Annotated Bibliography assignment
- Rubric for Annotated Bibliography assignment

Final Paper must be submitted on Canvas by [redacted] (our scheduled final exam time)
Late papers will result in a one-letter grade (10%) penalty for each day the paper is late, beginning at [redacted].

Section 4: Expectations

Covid-19

The instructors recognize that the Fall 2020 semester presents unique challenges to everyone. We acknowledge the many hardships associated with the pandemic and know that everyone is likely struggling in some way during this time. With this in mind, we have adapted a few aspects of this course, including the following:

- Please contact me as soon as possible with any covid-19 related sickness that is affecting you (you or someone you care for, etc.) so we can make arrangements to support you.
- Normally I give a midterm exam during week 9 of the semester. For Fall 2020, I have decided to cancel the midterm exam and instead give everyone a mental health break. There will not be anything course-related occurring from Monday, October 26th through Sunday, November 1st. I hope that you can dedicate the hours you would normally spend in this class to do something for yourself, whether it is spending time with loved ones, going outdoors, or just giving yourself a break from Canvas/Zoom.
- On a similar note, I have also canceled all classes during the week of Thanksgiving (a university holiday).
- I firmly believe that a flexible and kind mindset is absolutely necessary to get through this pandemic. Please contact me if there is anything I can do to help support you this semester.

Mitigating and Addressing Bias in the Course

The instructors are committed to mitigating bias and providing an equitable learning experience for all students. Here are some steps the instructors are taking:

- We will blindly grade all assessments. We will not be able to see students' names when we are grading assignments.
- Research shows that active learning environments reduce learning gaps and promote equity in learning. The instructors are committed to implementing active-learning techniques based on this literature.
- The instructors will continue to take trainings on diversity and inclusion.

- The instructors are committed to ensuring balance on perspectives and diversity in authorship in the course syllabus. We will also take steps to do the same for in-class discussions.
- The instructors will solicit feedback from students midway through the semester and at the end of the semester about the course. We acknowledge that mitigating bias and promoting equity are lifelong endeavors, and we welcome ideas and feedback from students to help us improve ourselves and the course.

Regrade Policy

After receiving any grade, students must wait 24 hours before contacting the instructor or the TA regarding the grade. Students who feel their grade is incorrect must then follow these steps, within one week of the day the grade is made available.

1. After 24 hours, you may discuss your grade with your TA in office hours or an appointment.
2. Students who still feel their grade is incorrect after meeting with the TA may give the instructor the graded copy of the assignment along with a one-page document explaining why the grade is incorrect.
3. The instructor will regrade the entire response, which means the grade may go up or down.

E-mail Policy

The instructor and TA encourage e-mail and comments. The instructor and TA will respond to e-mail within 24 hours, except on weekends and holidays. **The instructor and TA will not respond via e-mail to the following:**

1. Questions that students can answer themselves by reading the syllabus
2. Questions that require more than a short paragraph to address fully. For more detailed responses, students are encouraged to see the instructor during office hours, before or after class, or by an appointment.
3. Questions that require multiple e-mail exchanges (e-mail is NOT a chat tool).

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please see the university's policies regarding plagiarism and cheating online at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

Rutgers Political Science Statement

As the state university, Rutgers is governed by the United States Constitution's First Amendment prohibition on the impairment of protected speech rights. We also recognize the importance of free speech for democratic societies and the centrality of the free exchange of ideas in the academic mission. The Department of Political Science further recognizes that this is a time when there is discussion regarding bigotry, racism, anti-Semitism, and white supremacy in our society. Rutgers University stands for dialogue and inclusion. We can and do live with disagreement and divergent ideologies, and these are welcome in the classroom. However, the department asks for and expects respectful participation in class and in class

discussions. While the full details of university policy can be found at the websites below, the department affirms the position that disruptive behavior has no place here.

<http://policies.rutgers.edu/sites/policies/files/00011251.PDF>

[University Student Life Policy Against Verbal Assault, Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying, and Defamation](#)

Section 5: Schedule

Week 1 – The Science in Political Science: Introduction

Thursday, September 3rd: Introduction, and What is Political Science?

Read: course syllabus and website. Familiarize yourself with all course policies, assessments, and deadlines.

Week 2: Components of Research Design, Part I

Monday, September 7th: Research Questions, Hypotheses, & Theories

Skim: Pollock Chapter 3 (pages 72-85)

Skim: Baglione Chapters 1, 2, and 5

Read: Abramowitz (1988); skim page 1 and the beginning of page 2 (page numbers are from PDF)

Sections meet: attend scheduled section

Topic: Introduction to Stata, datasets, and variables

Reading: Pollock Stata Companion: Chapter 1

Objectives: Learn the basics of Stata, including .do files; opening up a dataset, and locating variables

****Must have Stata downloaded to your computer PRIOR to attending section! Please see the video tutorial from Module 1.**

Recitation activities are due by Sunday, September 13th at midnight (you will work on these in class together).

Thursday, September 10th: No Class

Week 3 –Components of Research Designs, Part II

Monday, September 14th: Writing Literature Reviews Using Annotated Bibliographies

Read: Baglione Chapters 3 and 4

Thursday, September 17th: Operationalizing Concepts into Measures
Read: Pollock Chapter 1

Week 4 –Three Types of Variables

Monday, September 21st: Three Types of Measures: Categorical, Ordinal, and Continuous Variables
Read: Pollock Chapter 2

Sections meet: attend scheduled section

Topic: Describing Central Tendency & Dispersion of Categorical, Ordinal, and Continuous Variables

Reading: Pollock STATA Companion: Chapter 2

Recitation activities are due by Sunday, September 27th at midnight (you will work on these in class together).

Thursday, September 24th: *No Class*

Week 5— Summarizing Variables & Evaluating Research Designs

Monday, September 28th: Measures of Central Tendency & Dispersion, Continued
Read: Pollock Chapter 2

Thursday, October 1st: Evaluating Research Designs: Hurdles to Causality
Read: Pollock Chapter 5, carefully read pages 138-143 & Baglione Chapter 8

Week 6 – Types of Research Designs

Monday, October 5th: Types of Research Designs: Observational and Experimental
Read: Pollock Chapter 4 (pages 78 through 86)

Sections meet: attend scheduled section

Topic: Describing Variables, Continued (focus on dispersion, categorical & ordinal variables)

Reading: Pollock STATA Companion, Chapter 3. Review Chapter 1 & 2 before coming to class.

Recitation activities are due by Sunday, October 11th at midnight (you will work on these in class together).

Thursday, Thursday, October 8th: *No Class*

Week 7 –Applications of & Designing Survey Experiments

Monday, October 12th: Applications of Research Designs: Experimental and Observational Studies

Readings TBA

Thursday, October 15th: Applications of Research Designs: Designing a Survey Experiment

Week 8 – Using Qualtrics to Program Survey Experiment

Monday, October 19th: Programming Experiments into Qualtrics
Programming surveys into Qualtrics. You MUST come to class with your survey experiment completed and ready to be programmed.

Sections meet: attend scheduled section

Topic: *Optional Section: Help with Annotated Bibliography*

No graded work this week

Thursday, October 22nd: *No Class*

Annotated Bibliography is due on Sunday, October 25th by midnight.

Week 9: Mental Health Break

Monday, October 26th: No Class

Thursday, October 29th: No Class

Week 10: Univariate Hypothesis Tests & Difference in Means

Monday, November 2nd: Univariate Hypothesis Tests: Sample Means
Read Pollock Chapter 6

Thursday, November 5th: Statistical Significance—Univariate Hypothesis Tests: Sample Proportions

Read: Pollock Chapter 7 (pages 199-207)

Week 11 –Bivariate Hypothesis Tests: Difference in Means

Monday, November 9th: Difference in Means Tests

Read: Pollock Chapter 7 (pages 208-214)

Attend your assigned section.

Section Topic: Making Inferences about Sample Means

Reading: Pollock STATA Companion Chapter 6

Recitation activities are due by November 15th at midnight (you will work on these in class together).

Thursday, November 12th: *No Lecture*

Week 12 –Bivariate Hypothesis Tests: Correlations & Bivariate Regression

Monday, November 16th: Chi-Square Tests

Read: Pollock Chapter 7 (pages 215 through 222) and Licklider (1995). See Canvas for article and reading guide.

Attend your assigned section.

Section Topic: Difference in Means & Chi-Square Tests

Reading: Pollock STATA Companion Chapter 6 & 7

Recitation activities are due by November 22nd at midnight (you will work on these in class together).

Thursday, November 19th:

Week 13 – No Class (Thanksgiving Week)

Monday, November 23rd: *No class*

Thursday, November 26th: *No class*

Week 14 – Bivariate Hypothesis Tests: Multivariate Regression

Monday, November 30th: Correlations

Read: Pollock Chapter 8 (pages 239-244)

Attend your assigned section.

Section Topic: Correlations & Regression

Reading: Pollock STATA Companion Chapter 8

Recitation activities are due by December 6th at midnight (you will work on these in class together).

Thursday, December 3rd: No class

Week 15 – Final Project Work Day & Conference

Monday, December 7th: In-Class Work Day

Thursday, December 10th: In-Class Work Day

Final Papers are due on Canvas by