

Poli 210: Political Science Research Methods

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McGill

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Plan for Today

- Introduction
- Goals of the Course
- Course Structure
- Requirements

What can we gain from studying political science research methods?

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Using Polling in the Classroom

<http://www.mcgill.ca/polling/>

No additional device necessary! Just use your phone, laptop etc.

You need to register!!! Please do it carefully!!

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My Research

Fields: Comparative Politics, Political Behavior,
Where: Advanced Democracies

Themes: Diversity, Immigration, Racism, Social Capital, Political Participation, Populism, Attitudinal Democratic Backsliding

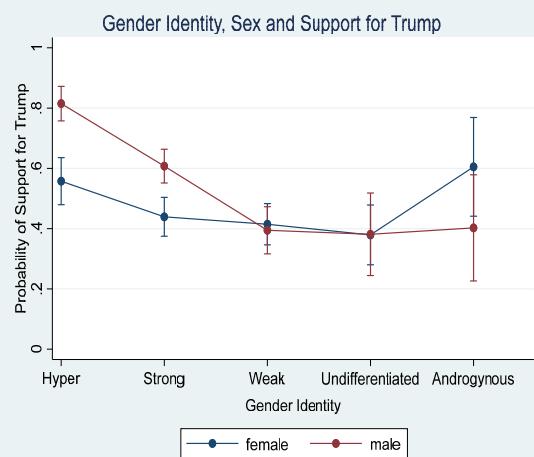
Canada: Previously Canadian Election Study

Political Participation/Behavior: Political Consumerism, Youth, Student movement, Internet activism, Neuro-science, Political Communication

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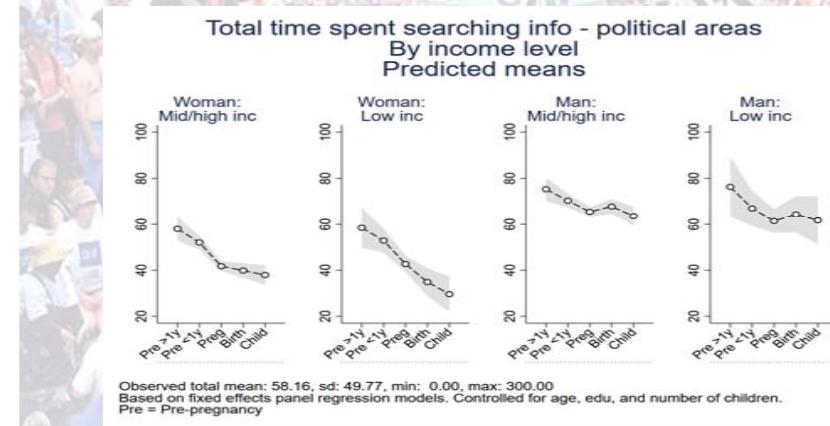
Gidengil and Stolle 2019

“Gender Identity and Vote for Trump”



Political Information Intake by Pregnancy Status

Naurin, Stolle and Marksetdt, 2019



Others Examples of Projects

Studying the first years of Syrian Refugees in Canada (with Thomas Soehl, Sociology)

Examining support for religious violence in 7 countries (with Ruud Koopmans and others)

Political Consumerism-Lifestyle politics, about how we might act politically when we go shopping. Study on Vegetarians (with Michele Micheletti)

Political Disagreement on the Trans-Mountain Pipeline in Canada (with Edana Beauvais)

Some questions on the political science as a science

- What does it mean to study something scientifically?
- What speaks for or against the scientific way of studying politics?

Learning Outcomes Poli 210

- Linking ideas discussed in current politics to a research approach
- Ability to explain current academic research projects
- Enhance critical and social scientific thinking skills (party talk versus serious research)
- Develop research questions that are answerable with a variety of methods
- Learn to use some methods in social science (e.g. qualitative and quantitative)
- Develop skills in designing a research project

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Examples of Research Questions

- Why are citizens of different Western democracies differently engaged in politics?
- What is the first step if we want to answer this question?
 - Define political engagement?
 - E.g. Activities directed at government and policy (can expand)
- How do we measure it? Measure across countries, why?
 - E.g. voter turnout, or turnout to protests, etc. joining political groups

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In which of the following regions of Western democracies are citizens most active in political life?

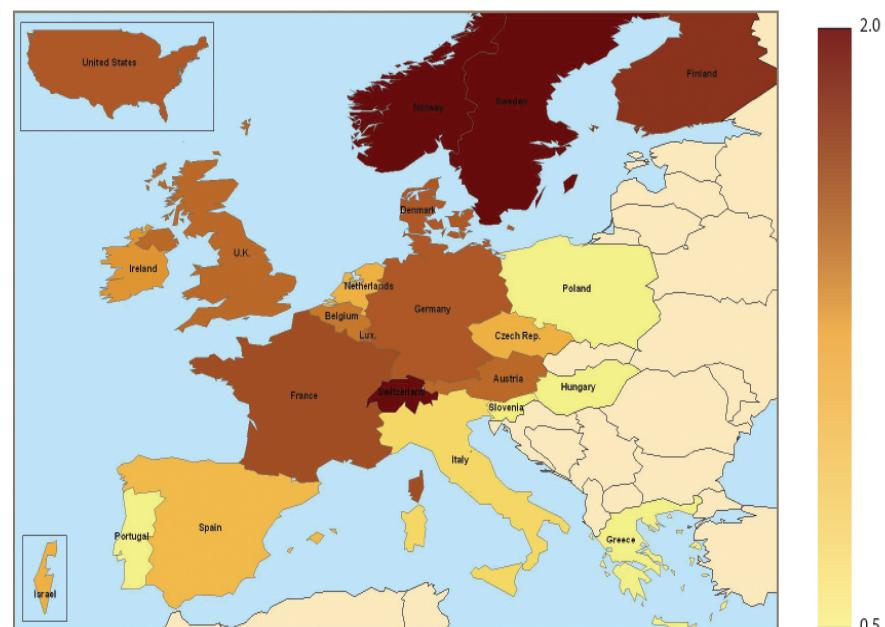
- ✓ 1. Scandinavia
- 2. Eastern Europe
- 3. Southern Europe
- 4. North America

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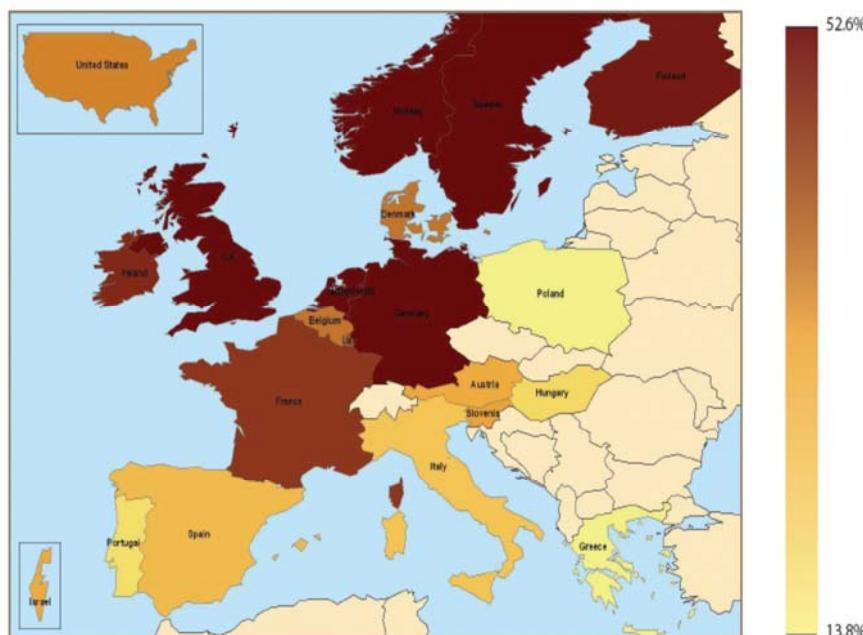
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3. POLITICAL ACTION



2. A CIVIC INVOLVEMENT INDEX



How do we learn in this course?

→ INTERACTIVITY

- Lectures (2 x per week)
- Pre and Post-test
- Readings
- Reading quizzes
- Participation in lectures and conferences
- Polls--Response technology
- My Courses: Online Videos, Self-tests, Resources
- Guest lectures
- Various Small Assignments
- Conferences—Learning Quant Methods in R

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General Structure of the Course

PART I: Introduction Foundations of Research Methods

PART II: Research Design & Measurement

Part III: Variety of Data Collections and Analysis

Part IV: Quantitative Analysis

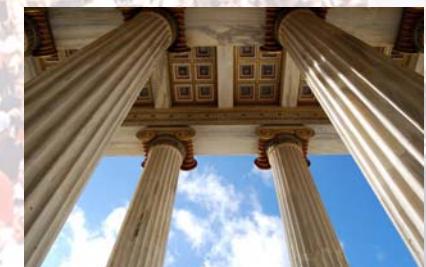
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Part 1: Introduction & Foundations of Research Methods

- The Scientific Method
- Theory Building
- Hypothesis testing
- Research Design
- Causality and Causal Inference?



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PART II: Research Design & Measurement

- Measuring Variables
- Observational Studies
- Experiments
- Quasi-Experiments
- Case Studies, Comparative Method



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Part III: Data Collections and Qual Analysis

- Participant Observations
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Survey research
- Collecting Databases
- Doing Different Types of Qual Analysis (Discourse, Mixed)



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Part IV: Quantitative Analysis

- Statistical methods
- Content Analysis

automated data mining survey
responses computer transcripts
qualitative root cause
classification insights
ad-hoc analysis product
reviews sentiment voice of the
customer dashboards consumer
trends ad-hoc analysis early warning

text analysis

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A Note on Statistics

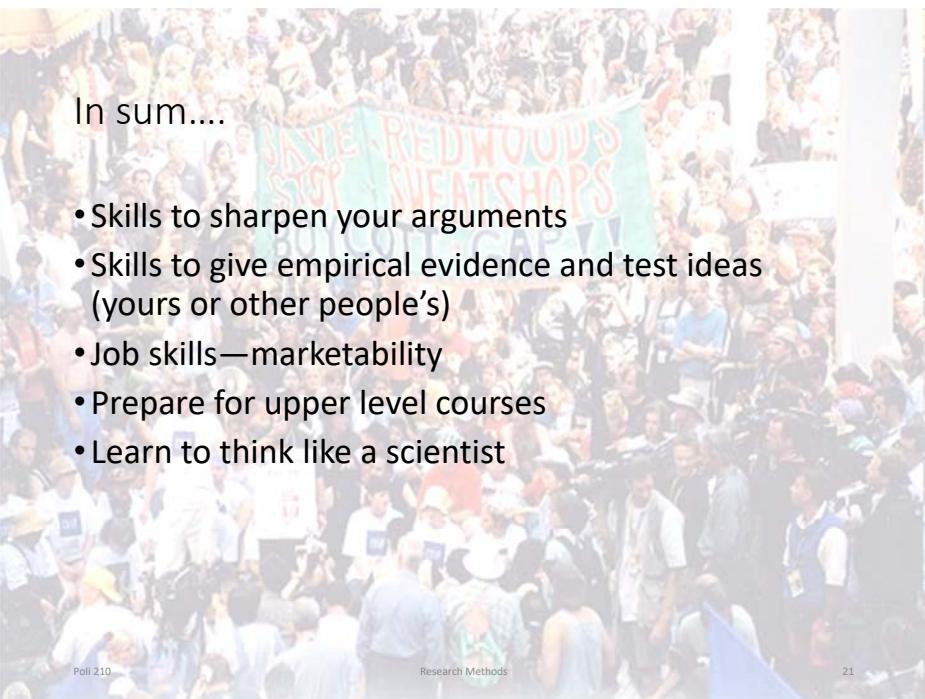
- We are not doing math and formulas per se
- We do:
 - Create our own data set
 - Fill in a survey
 - Learn how to work with data files
 - Learn how to display quantitative data
 - Analyzing quantitative data
 - We are using some formulas for better understanding of what we analyze but we do not do proofs or mathematical manipulations
 - ->marketable skill



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In sum....

- Skills to sharpen your arguments
- Skills to give empirical evidence and test ideas (yours or other people's)
- Job skills—marketability
- Prepare for upper level courses
- Learn to think like a scientist

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Requirements

- Overview
 - Everyone:
 - Attends lectures, Participates, Reads, etc.
 - Takes the Reading quizzes
 - Uses polling in the lectures (5%)
 - Takes the first Midterm exam on October 17
 - Takes the second Midterm exam on November 28
 - Prepares and Attends conferences/labs
 - Completes various assignments throughout the course
 - Visits *myCourses* regularly

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Reading Quizzes on *myCourses*

- Take before the lectures indicated (last submission 3pm)
- Questions about the reading
- New tool: incentive to do reading on time, better learning experience
- Each correct answer 1 point, accumulates over course
- 10% of course grade
- See test quiz for Thursday

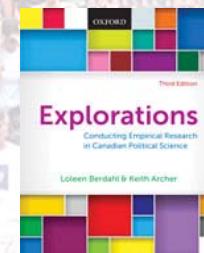
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Textbook and Readings

Canadian Author



Oxford University Press

- **Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science, Third Edition**
- Loleen Berdahl and Keith Archer
- Other readings online

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www.oupcanada.com/higher_education/companion/politics/9780199008988/student_resources.html

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► Canadian Democracy

Student Study Guide
by Ruben Zaiotti, Dalhousie University

[Chapter 1](#) [Chapter 2](#) [Chapter 3](#) [Chapter 4](#)
[Chapter 5](#) [Chapter 6](#) [Chapter 7](#) [Chapter 8](#)
[Chapter 9](#) [Chapter 10](#) [Chapter 11](#) [Chapter 12](#)
[Chapter 13](#) [Chapter 14](#) [Chapter 15](#) [Chapter 16](#)
[Chapter 17](#) [Chapter 18](#)

(continued) [A Concrete Edition](#) [Research Methods](#)

If you learn that the tax return that you prepared for your client last year contained the following:
1. Properly inform your clients
2. Inform the IRS
3. Amend the return
4. All of the above
None of the above

Exciting: Polls

- No purchase needed
- We will use it in many lectures (including guest lectures)
- 5% of your course grade will be based on poll use
- Need to create your account correctly and sync with Turning point (test on syllabus)

Assignments

- Two types:
- 6x Graded with pass/fail (10%)
- 2x Graded with points out of 100 (2x7.5% = 15%)

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conferences

- When do conferences start, and how do I prepare?
- 3d week of courses
- Sign-up on Minerva
- Conference topics posted on myCourses
- Learn how to use stats software R
- Assignments
- Leacock 212
- 4 TA's, one head-TA

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myCourses

- Regularly check myCourses for updates, additional notices and materials
- Make it a habit to check for this course
- Syllabus (can change or can be updated)



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grading

Grading:

Midterm I	25%
Midterm II.....	25%
Participation in Conferences.....	10%
Polls.....	.5%
Reading and lecture quizzes on myCourses.....	10%
Assignments (pass/fail).....	10%
Assignments graded.....	$2 \times 7.5\% = 15\%$

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Contact

- Whom do I contact and how when I have any questions about this course?
 - Now: Contact me via myCourses e-mail or in office hours, or after class
 - Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday after class in classroom, or wait for me at 3610 McTavish Street, room 24-2 (until 6.30pm)
 - When conferences start: contact your TA (Colin Scott and others) or myself

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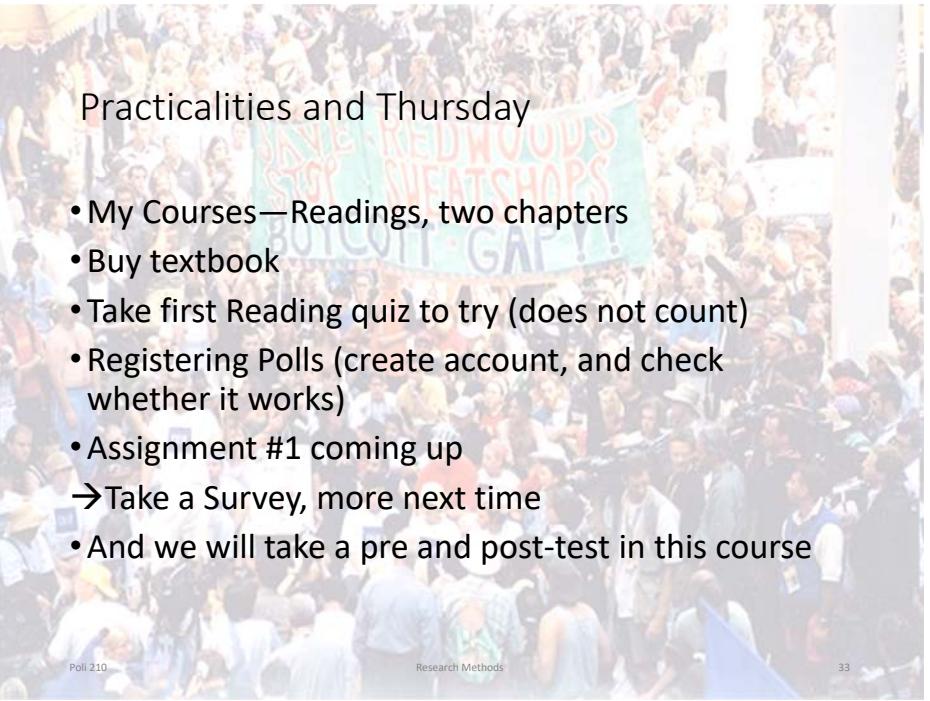
Some Principles

- Give and take
- Participation
- Using electronic devices for other purposes than course
- Lecture time-Punctuality
- Enthusiasm
- Integrity

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Practicalities and Thursday

- My Courses—Readings, two chapters
- Buy textbook
- Take first Reading quiz to try (does not count)
- Registering Polls (create account, and check whether it works)
- Assignment #1 coming up
- Take a Survey, more next time
- And we will take a pre and post-test in this course