

PAIR1005 Introduction to Political Inquiry (201516)

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Module title	Introduction to Political Inquiry
Module code	PAIR1005
Module lead	Justin Murphy
Module lead profile url:	http://www.southampton.ac.uk/politics/about/staff/jmm2e13.page?
External Examiner:	William Maloney
Faculty	Social, Human & Mathem Sciences
Academic unit	Social Sciences
Academic session first offered	201516
Credit Points	ECTS 7.5
Level	Undergraduate
When will the module be taught	Semester 1
Contact hours	Teaching: 12 Placement: 0 Independent: 138 Total: 150
Pre-requisite and/or co-requisite modules	
Programmes in which the module is core	
Programmes in which the module is compulsory	BScSoc Politics (year 1) BScSoc Polit & Internat Rel (year 1) BSc(SocSci) Internatl Relations (year 1) BA Philosophy & Pol (Yr Abd) (year 1)
Programmes in which the module is optional	
Date of last edit	2nd Oct 2015 - 2:10pm

Module overview

This module introduces the basic concepts required for evaluating and designing research on political phenomena. Students will be equipped with the vocabulary and basic logical framework required to critically assess academic research, and to design their dissertation research in an independent and rigorous fashion. Key concepts will include: theory, data, case, independent variable, dependent variable, scientific method, description, inference, causality, and methodology. This module will serve as a basis for a subsequent module on research methods.

Aims and learning outcomes

Knowledge and Understanding

Having successfully completed this module, you will be able to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:

- - Students will gain an understanding of the types of research questions which can be asked of political phenomena (knowledge and understanding; subject specific intellectual).
- - Students will learn the inherent problems and dilemmas of drawing inferences from data (knowledge and understanding; transferable and generic).
- - Students will gain the working vocabulary required to think and speak about the quality and limitations of previous research (knowledge and understanding; transferable and generic).
- - Students will gain a working knowledge of how to develop a research strategy given a research question (knowledge and understanding; transferable and generic).

Graduate Attributes

Graduate Attributes are the personal qualities, skills and understandings that University of Southampton students have the opportunity to develop. They include but extend beyond subject-specific knowledge of an academic discipline and its technical proficiencies. The Graduate Attributes are achieved through the successful attainment of the learning outcomes of the programmes, and successful engagement with the University's co-curriculum e.g. the Graduate Passport.

A checklist for embedding the graduate attributes is available at:

https://sharepoint.soton.ac.uk/sites/ease/quality_handbook/Handbook/Employability%20Statement.aspx

Summary of syllabus content

Each week will be devoted to a conceptual issue related to political inquiry. Lectures will synthesize selected texts to guide the module through a logical sequence of issues, emphasising examples from various literatures in political research.

Week 1: Introductory

Week 2: Academic Research

Week 3: Building Blocks

Week 4: Descriptive Inference

Week 5: Causal Inference

Week 6: Research Design

Week 7: Experimental Designs

Week 8: Large-N Observational

Week 9: Small-N Observational

Week 10: Writing a Research Paper 1

Week 11: Writing a Research Paper 2

Week 12: Writing a Research Paper 3

Summary of teaching and learning methods

Focused, directed readings which students complete before each session will provide the core material around which each session will be organized. Each session will include a lecture providing a general overview of the main points which will be followed by discussion questions in response to which students will exercise their command of the material. These teaching and learning methods will achieve the aims and learning outcomes of the module by providing a focused, consistent, and supportive environment where students engage with the material in multiple ways (through reading, audible/visual lectures, and through their own speaking).

Summary of assessment and Feedback methods

Assessment Method	Number	% contribution to final mark	Final assessment (✓)	Feedback Method
In-Class Questions and Answers		10%		Students will receive automatic feedback on the assessment.
Research Design Proposal (500 words)		40%		Students will receive written feedback and marks.
Short Research Paper (1,500 words)		50%		Students will receive written feedback and marks.

Other Assessment Notes

Short research paper must be passed for successful completion of the module.

Referral Method

By set coursework assignment(s)

2 x 1,000 word essays = 50% per assignment

Method of Repeat Year

Learning Resources

Resource type: Core textbook

Featured Texts (Examples)

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Barakso, Maryann, Daniel M. Sabet, Brian Schaffner. 2013. *Understanding Political Science Research Methods*. New York: Routledge.

Kellstedt, Paul M., Guy D. Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baglione, Lisa A. 2016. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. Los Angeles: Sage.

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Stephen Van Evra. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca.

Featured Journal Articles (Examples)

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Eckstein. 1975. "Case Study and Theory in Political Science". *The Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. 1 Addison-Wesley: 79-138

Paul Holland. 1986. "Statistics and Causal Inference," with comments and rejoinder. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 81, 396 (December): 945-70.

David Dessler. 1991. "Beyond Correlations: A Causal Theory of War," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 35, n 3: 337-355

Cost Implications

Library copies of textbooks have been requested. For students who wish to buy personal copies, the total sum for books does not exceed £60.