



Political Science 363

Research Design and Methods

**William O'Brochta:** obrochtawj@wustl.edu, Seigle 255 (office hours: TBA)

**Course Description:** Political scientists often contribute to pressing public policy problems by engaging with elected officials and citizens to offer recommendations for improving the way government works. These recommendations are based on political science research. As political scientists, we will be working through the research process in order for you to both understand and analyze existing scholarship and its public policy implications as well as for you to study a particular political problem and to make a policy recommendation based in sound research methods.

Throughout this course, we will be investigating and working through the political science research process. We will start at the beginning by surveying existing research and asking our own questions about political phenomena. From there, we will work together to learn and apply core research design and methods principles to both existing work and to projects you undertake. Along the way, we will explore and practice core statistical concepts, understand the diversity of research methods, and think about the ability of political science to provide answers to public policy problems. Our goal will be to develop your skills as a political scientists so that you can easily interpret ongoing political events, think critically about how these events are portrayed and analyzed, and communicate analytic thinking in a logical manner. These skills will be critical to better understanding the political world, to supporting your role in helping address public policy problems, and to fostering critical thinking and analysis skills that are key in many future courses and professions.

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Text and Software:** Lisa A. Baglione, *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*.<sup>1</sup> This book and all other readings will be posted on Canvas.

Christopher Howard, *Thinking Like a Political Scientist*.<sup>2</sup>

R and RStudio constitute the required software for this course. Both are free and work across platforms. You must install both pieces of software early in the semester.<sup>3</sup>

## Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand different political science research methods and identify key elements pertaining to each method.
2. Characterize and demonstrate the ability to complete the steps in the research article writing process.
3. Communicate political science concepts, theories, methods, and results in writing.

---

<sup>1</sup>A PDF will be posed on Canvas, but you may choose to purchase if you like. If you buy a copy, save money and buy an old edition (2nd or 3rd).

<sup>2</sup>About \$15 used.

<sup>3</sup>See <https://swirlstats.com/students.html> for instillation instructions.

4. Identify major design, methodological, and ethical issues in political science and be able to suggest possible solutions to these issues.
5. Understand and apply basic statistical analysis both in theory and using statistical software.
6. Independently gather, analyze, interpret, and present results of your own data analysis.
7. Develop policy relevant solutions to political science problems.

## Assignments:

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage
Reading Journals		10%
Class Engagement		15%
Qualitative Project	Class 18	15%
Problem Sets		15%
Research Article		45%
Research Question	Class 5	5%
Literature Review	Class 9	5%
Theory	Class 13	5%
Research Design	Class 20	10%
Results	Class 25	10%
Research Article	Class 27	10%

## Letter Grade Distribution:

$\geq 94.00$	A	73.00 - 76.99	C
90.00 - 93.99	A-	70.00 - 72.99	C-
87.00 - 89.99	B+	67.00 - 69.99	D+
83.00 - 86.99	B	63.00 - 66.99	D
80.00 - 82.99	B-	60.00 - 62.99	D-
77.00 - 79.99	C+	$\leq 59.99$	F

## Course Policies:

### • General

- Please bring your computer to class. You may use it to display the assigned readings and your reading journal, during methods workshops, when we work in R during class, and on policy day. Please take handwritten notes during class so as not to distract others in the class. Taking handwritten notes also improves retention and comprehension for many students.<sup>4</sup>
- If you have academic accommodations, you must provide me appropriate documentation within the first week of class.
- Citations should be in American Political Science Association (APSA) style. Use of this style is important, as it governs the writing of professional political science.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Smoker, Timothy J, Carrie E. Murphy, and Allison K. Rockwell. 2009. "Comparing Memory for Handwriting versus Typing," *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society Annual Meeting* 53(22):1744-1747.

<sup>5</sup>The APSA style manual is in the "Files" section of Canvas.

- Plagiarism, including inappropriate attribution, is grounds for automatic failure from the course and referral to the Dean’s office. If you are unsure if you are plagiarizing, always cite your sources. If you are unsure if you are paraphrasing, rewrite to use either a direct quotation or paraphrase differently. Baglione’s book discusses proper citation procedures; feel free to talk to me if you are unsure whether or how to cite a source. Wikipedia is not an appropriate academic source.

- **Grading Concerns**

- Coming to class prepared, completing assignments on time, working hard, and doing your best are the biggest tickets to doing well in this course.
- Grades will only be changed if I made an arithmetic error or mistake. If you feel that this happened to you, please send me an e-mail no later than three days after the assignment is returned detailing the error.
- If you are concerned about a grade you receive, please come by to discuss it with me. I am happy to discuss how you can improve in future work.
- You may rewrite your annotated bibliography/literature review and theory paper and turn them in when indicated. You may only exercise this option if you turn in a complete draft on the initial due date. I will re-grade the paper with a 5% deduction and take the higher of the original and rewrite grade as your final grade for these assignments. This is completely optional.

- **Absences and Late Work**

- You have two undocumented and unexcused absences that you may take without penalty. For documented illness, university sponsored academic endeavors, and religious holidays, you must submit an explanation and any supporting documentation to Canvas *before* the beginning of any given class you will miss. Regardless of the reason for your absence, you are responsible for turning in all work on time unless we make prior arrangements.
- All assignments in this class are most relevant to you and to the rest of the students if they are turned in the day they are due. As such, assignments will not be accepted late unless prior arrangements for an extension have been made.
- Extensions will only be given in extraordinary circumstances. Feel free to speak with me if numerous assignments are due around the same time; we can develop a plan together to help you complete everything on time. To request an extension, you must e-mail me at least 48 hours before the assignment is due with the reasons behind your request. We can then work together to figure out how you can turn the assignment in on time or make alternate arrangements in extraordinary circumstances.

- **Feedback**

- I will ask you to provide me with frequent evaluations of the course. These will include short “exit slips” on the day’s class as well as an informal mid-semester evaluation.
- We will be learning from each other during this class. Not only will I be learning your perspectives on the material in the course, but I will also be conducting research on the most effective ways to teach certain material. The purpose of this research is to see how effectively you can learn certain concepts. You will be asked to consent for your anonymized data to be used in this study. All activities in class will be the same

regardless of if you choose to participate in the study. If you do participate, your data will be protected and not identifiable in any way. I will not know who is participating in the study until after the semester is complete.

- **E-mail**

- I will respond to your e-mails as quickly as possible. In general, you can expect a response within 24 hours and that e-mails will be answered between 9AM and 5PM Monday through Friday.
- Submit absence excuses through Canvas, not e-mail. Be sure to check the syllabus before e-mailing; questions answered in the syllabus will not be answered via e-mail. You are responsible for turning in assignments on time even if you are absent.
- Often, e-mail is best used to set-up an in person meeting. It is easier for us to understand each other in a meeting rather than via lengthy e-mail exchanges.
- Please treat e-mails as professional correspondence and use proper sentence structure and tone. E-mails should only come from your wustl.edu e-mail address.

- **Class Structure and Environment**

- This class is partially flipped. Outside of class, you will be responsible for completing assigned reading and completing reading journals on assigned reading. You will also be asked to watch pre-recorded lectures from various sources that are relevant to the concepts we are studying. In class, we will discuss the material you read and apply your learning through in-class activities. We will work in groups on problem sets during class. You will need to spend some time outside of class completing these problem sets. Additionally, we will hold methods workshops devoted to each part of the research design process where you will work on your research article during class.
- I expect that you will work to maintain a positive classroom environment throughout all of our activities. This is detailed in the classroom engagement rubric. While we often use data and models to provide evidence, political scientists do not have definitive answers to any question. Thus, we will work to understand others perspectives in a constructive and respectful manner.

- **Components of the Syllabus**

- This syllabus provides an overview of course policies and outlines of the goals, assigned readings, and assignments for each class.
- The description of assignments details each component of your grade and how you will be evaluated. I will discuss each assignment before it is due, but you should read through the description carefully to make sure you fully understand my expectations for your work.

**University Policies:** By enrolling in this course, you agree that you are familiar with the below listed resources and that you will not violate any of these policies. You are always welcome to discuss concerns you have regarding any of these policies with me. As an instructor, I promise to listen to your concerns, offer support, and accommodate you in any way possible. Please note that instructors are not confidential reporters for sexual assault, though I do promise to keep all discussions with students as private and confidential as legally allowed.

- Bias Reporting System: <https://diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/brss/>
- Academic Integrity: <https://wustl.edu/policies/undergraduate-academic-integrity.html>
- Students with Disabilities: <https://cornerstone.wustl.edu>
- Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.wustl.edu>
- Preferred Names: <https://registrar.wustl.edu/student-records/ssn-name-changes/preferred-name-policy-student-information/>
- Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Center: kim\_webb@wustl.edu, jwkennedy@wustl.edu, 314-935-3118
- Mental Health: <http://shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth/Pages/default.aspx>

**Topics and Readings:** Below is the schedule of goals for each class, reading and assignments due on the date of a given class, and assignments assigned. I may change the course outline based on your interests, but I will give you plenty of prior notice.<sup>6</sup>

- “Methodology Focus” is the methods topic we will talk about on the day indicated related to the particular assigned reading. Your reading journal should discuss this methodology focus as it pertains to the research article you read.
- “Reading Due” is what you are to read for a given class. Research articles and textbook readings are assigned here.
- “Assignments Due” are assignments due at the beginning of class time, including peer reviews, problem sets, and watching video lectures.

### **Situating Yourself in Political Science Research**

#### **Class 1: Welcome**

- Goal: Introduction to the course, what is science?
- Assignments Assigned: Beginning of course survey (on Canvas).

#### **Class 2: An Overview of Political Science Research Methods**

- Methodology Focus: Describe different research methods.
- Reading Due: Pepinsky, Thomas. 2019. “The Return of the Single-Country Study.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 22: 187-203.  
Howard, Introduction.  
Baglione, Ch. 1.
- Assignments Due: Beginning of the semester survey (on Canvas)

#### **Class 3: Research Questions**

- Methodology Focus: What makes for an interesting research question?
- Reading Due: Hoover Green, Amelia. 2013. “How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps.”  
Howard, Ch. 1.  
Baglione, Ch. 2.

---

<sup>6</sup>I have made a conscious effort to represent gender and ethnic/regional diversity of scholarship in these readings.

#### **Class 4: Literature Search and Information Literacy**

- Methodology Focus: How do we find relevant scholarly sources?
- Reading Due: Baglione, Ch. 3.

#### **Class 5: Literature Reviews**

- Methodology Focus: What purpose does previous work serve in research articles?
- Reading Due: Baglione, Ch. 4.
- Assignments Due: Research Question

#### **Building an Argument**

#### **Class 6: Rational Choice**

- Methodology Focus: What are the assumptions of rational choice compared to prospect theory?
- Reading Due: Kam, Cindy D., and Elizabeth N. Simas. 2010. "Risk Orientations and Policy Frames." *The Journal of Politics* 72(2): 381-396.

#### **Class 7: Working with Data in R**

- Methodology Focus: How are datasets created?
- Reading Due: Ecker, Alejandro, and Thomas M. Meyer. 2015. "The Duration of Government Formation Processes in Europe." *Research & Politics* 2(4): 1-9.

#### **Class 8: Descriptive Statistics in R**

- Methodology Focus: How can descriptive statistics provide answers to research questions?
- Reading Due: Liu, Amy H., Anand Edward Sokhey, Joshua B. Kennedy, and Annie Miller. 2014. "Immigrant Threat and National Salience: Understanding the 'English Official' Movement in the United States." *Research & Politics* 1(1): 1-8.  
Howard, Ch. 2.

#### **Class 9: Theory**

- Methodology Focus: How can you construct a novel theoretical argument?
- Reading Due: Baglione, Ch. 5.
- Assignments Due: Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography.

### **Class 10: Measurement and Causality**

- Methodology Focus: Why is measurement error important?
- Reading Due: Carlson, Elizabeth. 2018. "The Perils of Pre-Election Polling: Election Cycles and the Exacerbation of Measurement Error in Illiberal Regimes." *Research & Politics* 5(2): 1-9.  
Howard, Ch. 3.

### **Class 11: Creating Variables in R**

- Methodology Focus: What are approaches to creating new variables?
- Reading Due: Dimitrova-Grajzl, Valentina, Jonathan Eastwood, and Peter Grajzl. 2016. "The Longevity of National Identity and National Pride: Evidence from Wider Europe." *Research & Politics* 3(2): 1-9.
- Assignments Due: (optional) Literature Review and Annotated Bibliography rewrite.

### **Class 12: Graphical Representations in R**

- Methodology Focus: How can you use graphical representations to support hypotheses?
- Reading Due: Mummolo, Jonathan. 2018. "Modern Police Tactics, Police-Citizen Interactions, and the Prospects for Reform." *The Journal of Politics* 81(1): 1-15.  
Howard, Ch 4.

## **Qualitative Methods**

### **Class 13: Research Design**

- Methodology Focus: What is the best way to test your theory?
- Reading Due: Baglione, Ch. 6 and 7.
- Assignments Due: Theory.

### **Class 14: Archives and Interviews**

- Methodology Focus: How can archival data be used to test hypotheses?
- Reading Due: Genovese, Federica. 2015. "Politics *ex Cathedra*: Religious Authority and the Pope in Modern International Relations." *Research & Politics* 2(4): 1-15.  
Howard, Ch. 6.

### **Class 15: Probability and Sampling**

- Methodology Focus: Why is the quality of your sample important?
- Reading Due: Coppock, Alexander, and Oliver A. McClellan. 2019. "Validating the Demographic, Political, Psychological, and Experimental Results Obtained from a New Source of Online Survey Respondents." *Research & Politics* 6(1): 1-14.  
Howard, Ch. 5.

## **Class 16: Surveys**

- Methodology Focus: What benefits do surveys provide over observational data?
- Reading Due: Claassen, Christopher. 2014. "Who Participates in Communal Violence? Survey Evidence from South Africa." *Research & Politics* 1(1): 1-8.
- Assignments Due: (optional) Theory rewrite.

## **Quantitative Methods**

## **Class 17: Hypothesis Testing**

- Methodology Focus: How are we sure we have supported our hypothesis?
- Reading Due: Ward, Michael D., Brian D. Greenhill, and Kristin M. Bakke. 2010. "The Perils of Policy by P-value: Predicting Civil Conflicts." *Journal of Peace Research* 47(4): 363-375.

## **Class 18: Qualitative Project**

- Methodology Focus: Demonstrating the value of qualitative research methods.
- Assignments Due: Qualitative Project.

## **Class 19: Correlation in R**

- Methodology Focus: What are t-tests used for?
- Reading Due: McConaughy, Corrine M., Ismail K. White, David L. Leal, and Jason P. Casellas. 2010. "A Latino on the Ballot: Explaining Coethnic Voting Among Latinos and the Response of White Americans." *The Journal of Politics* 72(4): 1199-1211.

## **Class 20: Results**

- Methodology Focus: How do you describe the ways you implemented your research design?
- Assignments Due: Research Design.

## **Class 21: Linear Regression**

- Methodology Focus: What are the assumptions behind linear regression?
- Reading Due: Fishkin, James S., Baogang He, Robert C. Luskin, and Alice Siu. 2010. "Deliberative Democracy in an Unlikely Place: Deliberative Polling in China." *British Journal of Political Science* 40(2): 435-448.  
Howard, Ch. 7.

## **Class 22: Regression Diagnostics in R and Survey Experiments**

- Methodology Focus: How can linear regression be used?
- Reading Due: Broockman, David E., and Daniel M. Butler. 2017. "The Causal Effects of Elite Position-Taking on Voter Attitudes: Field Experiments with Elite Communication." *American Journal of Political Science* 61(1): 208-221.



### **Class 23: Field Experiments**

- Methodology Focus: Are field experiments the “gold standard”?
- Reading Due: Fishkin, James S., Baogang He, Robert C. Luskin, and Alice Siu. 2010. “Deliberative Democracy in an Unlikely Place: Deliberative Polling in China.” *British Journal of Political Science* 40(2): 435-448.

### **Tying Your Research Together**

### **Class 24: Formal Theory**

- Methodology Focus: What is the value in formalizing your theoretical argument?
- Reading Due: Hyde, Susan. 2011. “Catch Us If You Can: Election Monitoring and International Norm Diffusion.” *American Journal of Political Science* 55(2): 356-369.

### **Class 25: Introduction, Abstract, and Conclusion**

- Methodology Focus: How do you sell your research article?
- Reading Due: Baglione, Ch. 9.
- Assignments Due: Results.

### **Class 26: Meta-Analysis**

- Methodology Focus: What can we learn from a single scholarly study?
- Reading Due: O’Brochta, William. 2019. “A Meta-Analysis of Natural Resources and Conflict.” *Research & Politics* 6(1): 1-6.

### **Class 27: Research Article Workshop**

- Methodology Focus: Presenting your research to scholars.
- Assignments Due: Research Article.



## Political Science 363

### Research Design and Methods

## Description of Assignments:

### Reading Journals (10%, Canvas)

There are two types of reading in this class: textbook reading that reviews core concepts and reading short research articles with an eye for how the research article addresses core concepts. We will frame our in-class discussion around how research articles address certain methodological issues. To help you be prepared for this discussion, you will complete a one page, double spaced reading journal related to the research article you read. Your reading journals will only cover the research articles, not the textbook readings (Baglione and Howard).

Each reading journal should contain the following two sections, which should constitute at least **one typewritten, double spaced page**. Please write in narrative form. See the example provided on Canvas.

1. Summary: a short (fewer than three sentences) summary of the reading, mentioning the main arguments and key points.
2. Question: a question related to the research design or methods employed in the article and preferably related to the methodology topic we are studying.
3. Methodology: a discussion of how the research article addresses the “methodology focus” listed on a given day. For example, if the methodology focus is writing a hypothesis, then your discussion should focus on the hypotheses in the article and your assessment of them based on what you have learned.

Submission and Evaluation: You should turn in a reading journal on Canvas for every class where there is a research article listed. Reading journals will be checked for completion and returned on Canvas. Your **two** lowest reading journal grades will be dropped (this includes any journals you do not turn in, so feel free to skip when you are busy).

I will also post a response on Canvas to several students’ reading journals each class. Even when you don’t get a response to your reading journal, you should view the journal as a way to prepare for class; you are strongly encouraged to bring up the questions and methodological connections you make in your reading journal during class.

Journals will be evaluated as follows. The numbers in parentheses represent the grades I will give to represent these evaluations on Canvas. Note that putting in consistently minimal effort on the reading journals will impact your classroom engagement evaluation.

- ✓ (90): Good entries: all components are present, material is engaged well. This will be the modal evaluation.

- ✓+ (100): Outstanding substantive entries: student went above and beyond with the connections and responses made in the journal. This evaluation is given at my discretion when a student raises a particularly important or meaningful point.
- ✓− (70): Unsatisfactory entries: missing components, poor quality responses or do not meet length requirement.
- 0: No submission.

### **Class Engagement (15%)**

I hope that class time will be a productive space to discuss readings, work in groups to complete activities, teach your peers, and relate the course to your life experiences. Class engagement goes beyond simply showing up for class; while I will take attendance, simply showing up will earn you at most 50% of the class engagement points.

I will evaluate class engagement based on the following criteria:

1. Attendance: attendance is required. Your voice and contributions are important to the rest of the class, and we want to hear from you. **You are permitted two undocumented and unexcused absences throughout the semester.** For documented illness, university sponsored academic endeavors, and religious holidays, you must submit an explanation and any supporting documentation to Canvas *before* the beginning of any given class you will miss. Assignments are still due on time unless I have approved alternate arrangements prior to your absence.
2. Ticket in/Ticket Out: I will occasionally ask you to define a term, summarize a main point, or respond to a question at the beginning or end of class. Sometimes these very short writing assignments will be anonymous and sometimes you will put your name on them. These assignments help me be sure you are learning important topics in the course.
3. Respectful listening: Respectful listeners make eye contact with the speaker, take careful notes of the speaker's points, and respond in an appropriate manner. This requires that you are not distracted by using technology, engaging in side-conversations with others, and disrupting the class by arriving late, leaving early, or frequently getting up and moving around.
4. Respectful questioning: Respectful questioners promote a constructive and healthy learning environment by asking meaningful and probing questions or asking for clarification. Stories and other life experience that is relevant to the course is welcome. I understand and appreciate that students learn in many different ways. Students who learn best by thinking aloud should be cognizant of this fact and wait to hear from other classmates before contributing. Students who feel uncomfortable asking questions during class are encouraged to rely on their discussion questions for help and to talk with me during office hours; you can still earn full credit.
5. Participation: we will conduct small and large group activities and participate in simulations and debates. Actively contributing your thoughts and coming prepared for these activities will help everyone maximize their learning.

Evaluation: The final class engagement grade will be assigned at my discretion based on a holistic evaluation of your performance. I will provide feedback in the middle of the course about your engagement, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. If you have concerns about your

engagement, please discuss them with me during the semester. We can work together to help you do well in this component of the course.

### **Problem Sets (15%, hard copy and Canvas)**

We will be learning about many methodological topics, and practicing the concepts that you learn is the only way to solidify the concepts in your head. You will be assigned to work with a group of students on problem sets at designated times during class. The purpose of these groups are to guide each other through the problem set questions and to pool your collective resources. You should seek to maximize your learning from others during the collaborative work and to stay on task. You are encouraged to make use of the group collaboration area of Canvas where you can ask questions to your group and schedule out-of-class meetings or study sessions with your group.

I will periodically ask you for evaluations of your own contributions to your team as well as the contributions of others in your team. All students have something meaningful to contribute to their team when they put in the effort to work with the group.

Though you will be working in a group, you will turn individual problem sets. These problem sets should represent your own work; you are encouraged to solve problems on the problem set as a group, but you must write up your own answer.

All problem sets should be typed and should include R code and output, if applicable. The objective in typing your responses is to clearly and professionally communicate your answers. As long as your problem sets have a professional appearance and answers are clear, you may use whatever typesetting program you like. For those with prior background in mathematics or computer science, I suggest using L<sup>A</sup>T<sub>E</sub>X and knitr.

For those without such background, a program such as Microsoft Word should suffice. If using Microsoft Word, you should insert all R code and output, including tables or figures, into the document. You may screenshot results from the R console if these results are readable and are presented professionally (i.e., no pictures of the R console you take on your phone; screenshots should show only on the R console results). Any mathematical equations should be typeset using the Microsoft equation editor.

Regardless of the method you use, you must upload a PDF of your problem set to Canvas and print a hard copy and bring it to class.

Evaluation: Problem sets will be graded based on a combination of correctness and demonstrated effort. To get full credit, you must show all your work. An incorrect answer that is fully explained will receive more credit than a correct answer with no explanation. Partial credit will be awarded.

If you are stuck on a particular problem, you should ask your group for help, refer to the textbook and your notes, and seek help online. I am also always available to help both during class and during my office hours. If you are working on a problem set close to the due date and get stuck, feel free to write down everything you tried to do to solve the problem, what you think the solution is, and why you are confused or got stuck. Doing so will often result in being awarded partial credit.

## Qualitative Project (15%, Canvas)

When you think of political science research methods, many of you may think of interviews, focus groups, and archival research. These qualitative research methods are frequently used in political science, but they tend to get overshadowed by the quantitative techniques we will also learn about later in the semester. Since your research article uses these quantitative skills, we will apply our knowledge of qualitative research methods to a public policy focused community engagement project.

This project has a number of interrelated goals. First, it seeks to expose you to using qualitative research methods. Second, you will conduct qualitative research in the community to develop relevant public policy solutions to those who need them. Third, it will help you communicate your research to the public and to public policy practitioners.

You will work with a group of students who are writing a research article on a topic similar to yours. In your group, you will decide on a common hypothesis that you can test using qualitative research methods. Your group must conduct at least two in-person or phone interviews or at least one focus group. In addition, your group must systematically analyze either primary source documents or secondary source newspaper articles. Your group will develop a research design and an interview protocol before conducting the research. After the research is complete, your group will develop an infographic that describes your findings. You will also develop a public policy briefing paper that offers policy recommendations based on your research.

This project will work as follows:

1. Group assignment: Everyone in the class will divide into groups based on the topic most related to the research question they are studying in their research article. For example, those studying the executive will form a group, those studying state break-up will form a group, et. cetera. We will all try to optimize group size and the cohesiveness of groups.
2. Research design and interview protocol: Each group will turn in one research design and interview protocol. Before conducting your research, your group will write a minimum three page research design. Attached to the research design will be an interview protocol listing the questions you will be using for your interviews. Your research design will state your hypothesis and describe the people you are interviewing and the archives you are using and why these sources are the best available qualitative methods to study your research question. Much like a traditional research design, you will define your independent and dependent variable and state how they will be measured in your analysis. Attached to the research design is an interview protocol that lists the format for the interview, interview procedures, and the interview questions. There is no specified length for the interview protocol.
3. Infographic: Each group will turn in one infographic. Your team will create a visually appealing infographic type poster that is 11 inches by 17 inches (ledger size paper). Your infographic should communicate the research question and hypothesis, describe the results in a visually appealing manner, and state your conclusions as well as public policy implications. You may use software of your choice to create the infographic.
4. Briefing paper: Each individual will turn in a briefing paper. Take the main finding from your group's research and develop a briefing paper addressed to the government official most relevant to your research providing policy recommendations that derive from your finding.

In this briefing paper, act as the expert on your particular finding and make a case for the leader to take some action to address either the causes or consequences of what you have found. Your memo should contain the following parts:

- (a) Header: Include to, from, subject, and date lines. Be sure the subject line succinctly conveys the policy recommendation you are making.
- (b) Executive Summary: Provide a very brief summary that highlights the extent of the problem your policy addresses and how your policy solves this problem. Bullet points are preferred.
- (c) Body: Define the problem your policy is trying to address and the scope of the problem. Explicitly describe your hypothesis, the research you conducted, and your main results. Discuss how your results relate to the policy proposal you make.

Consider at least one other policy that could also address your findings. Develop several criteria that demonstrate why your proposed policy best addresses the problem you have identified based on your research findings. Make a strong recommendation for the policy solution you have chosen based on your findings. Use narrative style.

- (d) Writing style: Be direct and convincing. Use short sentences, make concrete claims, and highlight important points. Policymakers do not have time to read complicated arguments. Distill your research findings into as concise a narrative as possible and be extremely clear how your proposed policy solves the problem identified in your findings. There is a hard word limit of 1,000 words including all text and any appendices.

Evaluation: Your evaluation will be based on your group's research design and interview protocol (30%) and infographic (30%) and your individual briefing paper (40%). You will also be asked to complete a self and peer evaluation describing the division of labor in your group. Individual grades may be adjusted up or down if there is evidence of wide discrepancies in the division of labor.

A rubric for each component is described below.

### Research Design and Interview Protocol Grading Rubric

113 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
<b>Research Design</b>			
has an informative title	4	2	0
describes the hypothesis and motivation for studying it	10 8	6 4	2 0
describes the methodological approach and why it is appropriate	10 8	6 4	2 0
explains interview and archive selection in detail	10 8	6 4	2 0
discusses strengths and weaknesses of interview and archive selection	10 8	6 4	2 0
lists independent and dependent variables explicitly	4	2	0
describes how variables measure parts of your hypothesis	5 4	3 2	1 0
addresses validity and measurement issues with your variables	5 4	3 2	1 0
describes how well your research design can test your hypothesis	10 8	6 4	2 0
addresses weaknesses of your design and alternative research designs	10 8	6 4	2 0
concludes by explaining the advantages of your qualitative design	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>Interview Protocol</b>			
describes the interview setting	5 4	3 2	1 0
lists all questions to be asked during the interview	10 8	6 4	2 0
provides a short description of the purpose of each interview question	10 8	6 4	2 0
discusses ethical concerns of interviewing	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>APSA Citation Style</b>	+2	0	-5 -10
<b>Editing</b>	+5 +2	0	-5 -10

### Infographic Grading Rubric

68 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Informative title	4	2	0
Appropriately sized	4	2	0
Clear research question	5 4	3 2	1 0
Clear hypothesis	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes both interview and archival results	10 8	6 4	2 0
Results are displayed in a visually appealing manner	5 4	3 2	1 0
Results are contextualized	10 8	6 4	2 0
Conclusions are stated and appropriate	10 8	6 4	2 0
Public policy implications are clear and meaningful	5 4	3 2	1 0
Compelling writing style	5 4	3 2	1 0
Visually appealing overall design	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>Editing</b>	+2	0	-5

### Policy Briefing Paper Grading Rubric

59 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
Informative subject line	4	2	0
Brief executive summary	5 4	3 2	1 0
Executive summary highlights problem and solution	5 4	3 2	1 0
Problem is well defined	5 4	3 2	1 0
Describes theory and predicted findings	5 4	3 2	1 0
Discusses how findings relate to policy proposal	5 4	3 2	1 0
Analyzes alternate policy	10 8	6 4	2 0
Makes strong policy recommendation	5 4	3 2	1 0
Compelling writing style	5 4	3 2	1 0
Concise (under 1,000 words)	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>Editing</b>	+2	0	-5



## Research Article (45%, Canvas for each submission)

Political scientists conduct research. A major part of this course is to help you to enter the political science community and learn to share your own ideas and theories. Many of the skills taught in this course may be new to you and you may find them difficult. Rest assured that tenured academics who have been writing research articles for years still struggle throughout the research process.

At the end of the semester, you will turn in a research article with all the components in place. That is, you will formulate a research question, develop a literature review, articulate a theory, describe a research design, and test your research design. The audience for your article and all of the components of the article you turn in throughout the semester consists of political science students, professors, and policy makers who do not know you and who are not familiar with your research project. You should write all components of your research article with this audience in mind.

We will talk about how to craft each of the sections of your research article in class. **All research article components are due on Canvas.**

### *Research Question (5%, due June 17):*

Your research article will address a research question: a problem that you feel needs to be addressed or a puzzle you have discovered. You will use this research question to write all the other components of your research article, though it is perfectly okay if your question shifts slightly as the course progresses.

For this assignment, write a *one sentence* research question followed by a one paragraph description of your question. In the description include why you think the question is interesting and important and what existing literature may be relevant that addresses your question.

Evaluation: Your research question and paragraph description will be evaluated based on the following rubric. You will receive peer feedback on your research question in class and then turn in a revised research question based on that feedback.

### *Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review (10%, due June 24):*

A literature review serves an important purpose in a research article, but that purpose is distinct from summarizing all relevant literature about your topic. Literature reviews focus the reader's attention on research that directly attempts to address your research question; literature reviews engage the research and do not summarize it. The annotated bibliography is the place to summarize work that you think is relevant for your literature review, theory, and background information for your research article.

Your annotated bibliography should contain at least *eight* scholarly sources cited in APSA format with a several sentence explanation of how each cited paper addresses your research question. Your literature review should follow the advice in Baglione and should be three to five pages, not including the annotated bibliography. You may use the same sources in your annotated bibliography and your literature review. Turn in your annotated bibliography and literature review in one document, preferably with the literature review first.

### Research Question Grading Rubric

21 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
<b>Research Question</b>			
is concise	2	1	0
presents a puzzle/addresses a debate in the field or in public policy	5 4	3 2	1 0
sets up a project that is falsifiable, not descriptive	2	1	0
can plausibly be tested empirically	2	1	0
<b>Paragraph Description</b>			
states why the question is relevant and important	5 4	3 2	1 0
describes how the question fits into a subfield of political science and/or existing literature	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>Editing</b>	+2	0	-5

Evaluation: Your literature review and annotated bibliography will be evaluated based on the below rubric.

### Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review Grading Rubric

120 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
<b>Source Selection</b>			
uses APSA citation style	10 8	6 4	2 0
cites at least eight sources	4	2	0
includes a range of publication years	4	2	0
sources are canonical and/or closely related to the research question	5 4	3 2	1 0
sources are grouped into “schools” depending on the theoretical arguments and empirical findings	10 8	6 4	2 0
each school has a meaningful name	4	2	0
there are several sources for each school	4	2	0
<b>Paragraph Descriptions</b>			
summarize theoretical arguments and empirical findings of the works	10 8	6 4	2 0
indicate how you plan to use the work in your article	10 8	6 4	2 0
<b>Literature Review</b>			
has an appropriate title	4	2	0
begins with an introduction summarizing the “schools” and distinguishing your research question from them	10 8	6 4	2 0
does not summarize cited work	5 4	3 2	1 0
only includes relevant sources for identifying a theoretical gap in the literature and building your theoretical argument	10 8	6 4	2 0
each paragraph is directly related toward contextualizing and describing the importance of your research question	10 8	6 4	2 0
your research question is clear and clearly differentiated from prior work	10 8	6 4	2 0
minimal direct quotations are used	5 4	3 2	1 0
ends with a conclusion discussing how your research question builds on the literature	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>Editing</b>	+5 +2	0	-5 -10

*Theory (10%, due July 1):*

The theory section of your article should rely on previous literature to build an argument resulting in your hypothesis. The theory section itself should be three to five pages not including references, but you should also include a revised literature review when submitting your theory section. You need not include your annotated bibliography.

Evaluation: Your theory paper will be evaluated based on the below rubric.

Theory Section Grading Rubric

83 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
<b>Revisions to Literature Review</b>	10 8	6 4	2 0
<b>Theory Section</b>			
has an informative title	4	2	0
transitions well from the literature review	5 4	3 2	1 0
begins with a summary paragraph stating the hypothesis and describing the steps that connect the theoretical argument	10 8	6 4	2 0
uses a “flow diagram” or verbally describes such a diagram	5 4	3 2	1 0
explicitly walks through each step of the “flow diagram” (at least one paragraph per step) with appropriate justification	14 12	10 8 6	4 2 0
sources are appropriate and are cited as evidence, not summarized	10 8	6 4	2 0
addresses alternative mechanisms and explains why they are unlikely	5 4	3 2	1 0
concludes by restating your argument and how it is distinct from past explanations	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>Hypothesis</b>			
follows “if/then” format	5 4	3 2	1 0
is clear and concise	5 4	3 2	1 0
is falsifiable	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>APSA Citation Style</b>	+2	0	-5 -10
<b>Editing</b>	+5 +2	0	-5 -10

*Research Design (10%, due July 9):*

The research design section describes how you plan to test your hypothesis. You are responsible for following through with the plan you articulate in your research design. Political scientists use many different research designs, and we will discuss a multitude of methodological approaches in this class.

For your research design part of your research article, you must propose analyzing existing empirical data. Doing so may not be the absolute best research design strategy (i.e., you might need to conduct an original survey or experiment to best test your question). If this is the case for your research article, you should describe the best strategy in the robustness checks section of your research design. However, since one objective of this course is to learn and practice quantitative research methods, the primary method of analysis that you should use in your research design is some form of regression using existing data. You will have the opportunity to think about qualitative research methods in the qualitative project. Your research design should be three to five pages not including references, and should also include your literature review and a revised theory.

Evaluation: Some of what you will include in the research design section depends on the research methods you choose to employ. See below for guidance.

- **Geographic Area Unit of Analysis:** Identify datasets with the independent and dependent variables you will use, and discuss how these variables measure the concepts you are interested in. Identify control variables and justify their inclusion. Discuss the best regression method to use based on the structure of your data (see me if you need help). Mention potential problems with your dataset in terms of its coverage, quality, and availability. If you find that the variable you need does not exist in a dataset, choose the variable that makes the most sense and justify how this variable is a decent proxy for the variable you really need to measure.
- **Individual Unit of Analysis:** In addition to the criteria described above, you should describe the target survey or experimental group, the sampling strategy, and the survey or experimental protocol. Describe the survey in detail and relate your protocol back to your hypothesis. Discuss ethical concerns with using human subjects for research.

*Results (10%, due July 12):*

Unlike the other sections of a research article where there is a relatively straightforward “formula” you can follow, the results section is highly dependent on the research design you chose and the theory you are testing. We are learning more advanced statistical methods than Baglione describes, so following her advice for this section will not be helpful.

Your results section should be at least three pages long.

The “number/quality of empirical tests are appropriate to test the hypotheses” criterion in the rubric refers to the depth of your analysis. If you have a simple hypothesis, that may warrant only one main model and a robustness check model. However, if you are trying to measure a difficult concept (for example civil war), then you might need three models (one each for incidence, intensity, and duration). The number of regression models and the depth of your analysis is partially dictated by the question you ask and the research design you propose. You should discuss with me if you have questions about the depth of analysis required to adequately test your hypotheses.

### Research Design Grading Rubric

98 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
<b>Revisions to Theory Section</b>	10 8	6 4	2 0
<b>Research Design</b>			
has an informative title	4	2	0
transitions well from the theory section	5 4	3 2	1 0
describes the methodological approach you are taking and why it is appropriate	10 8	6 4	2 0
explains case selection in detail with strengths and weaknesses	10 8	6 4	2 0
precisely describes data sources	10 8	6 4	2 0
lists independent and dependent variables explicitly	4	2	0
describes how variables measure parts of your hypothesis	5 4	3 2	1 0
addresses validity and measurement issues with your variables	5 4	3 2	1 0
considers and describes control variables	5 4	3 2	1 0
discusses robustness checks or supplementary analyses	5 4	3 2	1 0
describes how well your research design can test your hypothesis particularly causation	10 8	6 4	2 0
addresses weaknesses of your design and alternative research designs	10 8	6 4	2 0
concludes by arguing why your design is preferable	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>APSA Citation Style</b>	+2	0	-5 -10
<b>Editing</b>	+5 +2	0	-5 -10

### Results Grading Rubric

138 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
<b>Revisions to Research Design Section</b>	10 8	6 4	2 0
<b>Results</b>			
has an informative title	4	2	0
transitions well from the research design section	5 4	3 2	1 0
begins with a paragraph summarizing the results and the methods used to obtain the results	5 4	3 2	1 0
uses appropriate statistical terminology	5 4	3 2	1 0
presents a table of descriptive statistics	5 4	3 2	1 0
interprets each descriptive statistic correctly and draws implications relevant to the hypotheses from the descriptive statistics	10 8	6 4	2 0
presents a separate discussion of each hypothesis with the hypothesis clearly identified	5 4	3 2	1 0
presents at least one main regression model	5 4	3 2	1 0
explicitly describes the regression method used and how it works	10 8	6 4	2 0
interprets each regression coefficient correctly and relates them to the hypotheses being tested	10 8	6 4	2 0
describes the substantive significance of each regression coefficient	10 8	6 4	2 0
presents and interprets at least one additional regression model as a robustness check	10 8	6 4	2 0
presents at least one figure	5 4	3 2	1 0
describes the figure in detail and how the figure relates to the hypothesis	10 8	6 4	2 0
contextualizes the empirical results using qualitative data	10 8	6 4	2 0
concludes by reviewing the evidence and whether each hypothesis was supported	5 4	3 2	1 0
number/quality of empirical tests are appropriate to test the hypotheses	14 12	10 8 6	4 2 0
<b>APSA Citation Style</b>	+2	0	-5 -10
<b>Editing</b>	+5 +2	0	-5 -10

*Research Article (10%, due July 12):*

Your research article should combine revised versions of your literature review, theory, research design, and results sections along with an abstract, introduction, and conclusion. Your research article should be at least fifteen pages, not including references, and read like a cohesive manuscript. You should edit and revise all parts of your article as best as possible.

Evaluation:

- Abstract: Provide a cohesive 150 word summary of your paper that states the research question, identifies a gap in the literature, describes your hypothesis and methods, and briefly states your main result (that you expect to find if you did the analysis) and contribution.
- Introduction: Begin your introduction with a compelling case study or question that frames the reason why the paper is important. Devote subsequent paragraphs to summarizing each section of your paper including the literature review, theory and hypothesis, research design and methods, results, and conclusions/implications.
- Conclusion: Briefly restate the research question, your hypothesis, and your findings. Discuss why these findings are important. You can bring in your public policy implications from your briefing paper if you like. Describe any limitations to your study, and discuss future possibilities for research related to your topic.



### Research Article Grading Rubric

110 points	Outstanding	Proficient	Needs Improvement
<b>Revisions to Results</b>	10 8	6 4	2 0
<b>Article Title</b>			
is informative about the entire research project	5 4	3 2	1 0
is appealing and interesting	4	2	0
<b>Abstract</b>			
is under 150 words	4	2	0
contains a motivating puzzle or purpose for performing the research	5 4	3 2	1 0
has a clear research question	5 4	3 2	1 0
follows the order of the major sections of the paper	4	2	0
contains simple sentences and avoids technical jargon	4	2	0
<b>Conclusion</b>			
reminds the reader of the topic, literature, hypothesis and theory, and methods	5 4	3 2	1 0
discusses avenues for future research	5 4	3 2	1 0
describes why your finding is interesting and relevant for policymakers and scholars	10 8	6 4	2 0
considers the generalizability and external validity of your expected results	5 4	3 2	1 0
<b>Introduction</b>			
begins with an anecdote, question, surprising case/fact to capture the reader's attention	5 4	3 2	1 0
states the research question clearly	5 4	3 2	1 0
discusses the importance of the research question and its relevance given previous literature	10 8	6 4	2 0
provides an overview of the entire paper	5 4	3 2	1 0
does not contain material copied from elsewhere in the article	4	2	0
<b>Cohesiveness, Creativity, and Effectiveness</b>	14 12	10 8 6	4 2 0
<b>APSA Citation Style</b>	+2	0	-5 -10
<b>Editing</b>	+5 +2	0	-5 -10