

# POLI 2000: Designing Political Research

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Fall 2017

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Office Hours: 12:30 – 15:30 M

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Class Hours: 15:30 – 16:45 MW

Class Room: 105 EPB

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## Overview

Why do candidates win elections? Why do states get involved in international crises and wars? Why do states cooperate on transnational problems like climate change? What explains differences in how countries treat their citizens? What explains the choices of violent non-state actors like terrorists? There are just some of the questions that political scientists study. The goal of this course is for you to understand how political scientists study these questions. This course will introduce students to political science research and the many different ways that research is undertaken.

This class will help students understand how social scientists study political phenomena. You will learn how to develop causal explanations about politics and society, develop testable research hypotheses, and design different approaches to empirically studying these theories. Emphasis will be on an active hands-on learning environment (TILE classroom). You will also be able to more fully understand research that is produced in Political Science.

## Requirements

I will base your grade for the course on your performance in the four areas below. For each component of the course grade, I assign a numerical score. I then calculate the course grade with the weighted average of the component scores. Scores of 90-100 correspond to A, 80-89 to B, etc., with pluses and minuses for the top and bottom third of each decile.

1. Class attendance and performance (30%: 10% participation + 10% leading discussion + 10% attendance). Regarding participation, I am looking for you to show that you have read and critically evaluated the assigned readings and are engaged with our in-class discussions. Each student will
2. In-class quizzes (24%)
3. Midterm examination (20%)
4. Final examination (26%)

## Readings

### Required textbook:

Earl R. Babbie. *The Practice of Social Research*. 13th ed. Australia: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2012. ISBN: 9781133049791 1133049796.

S. Van Evera. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Cornell paperbacks. Cornell University Press, 1997. ISBN: 9780801484575.

### Week 1 (2017-08-21~2017-08-27): Being a Political Scientist

Robert O Keohane. “Political Science as a Vocation”. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42.02 (2009), pp. 359–363.

John S Dryzek. “Revolutions without Enemies: Key Transformations in Political Science”. *American Political Science Review* 100.04 (2006), pp. 487–92.

#### *Recommended:*

Max Weber. “Politics as a Vocation”. 1968.

Max Weber. “Science as a Vocation”. In: *Science and the Quest for Reality*. Springer, 1946, pp. 382–394.

### Week 2 (2017-08-28~2017-09-03): Being Scientific

Babbie (2012), pp.1-27, 112-120.

#### *Recommended:*

Imre Lakatos and Musgrave Alan. “Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes”. *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (1970), pp. 91–180.

### Week 3 (2017-09-04~2017-09-10): What’s A Good Question (Labor Day)

Barbara Geddes. “Big Questions, Little Answers: How the Questions You Choose Affect the Answer You Get”. In: *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010. Chap. 2, pp. 27–88.

Van Evera (1997), pp.97-99.

### Week 4 (2017-09-11~2017-09-17): How to Find Research Question

Babbie (2012), pp.91-112.

Charles C Ragin and Lisa M Amoroso. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. Pine Forge Press, 2010. (Chapter 1, 2)

## **Week 5 (2017-09-18~2017-09-24): Concepts**

Babbie (2012), pp.165-177.

David Collier and Steven Levitsky. “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research”. *World politics* 49.03 (1997), pp. 430–451.

David Collier and James E Mahon. “Conceptual “Stretching” Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis”. *American Political Science Review* 87.04 (1993), pp. 845–855.

Giovanni Sartori. “Concept misformation in comparative politics”. *American political science review* 64.04 (1970), pp. 1033–1053.

*Recommended:*

Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall. “Power in International Politics”. *International Organization* 59.01 (2005), pp. 39–75.

Peter Bachrach and Morton S Baratz. “Two Faces of Power”. *American Political Science Review* 56.04 (1962), pp. 947–952.

## **Week 6 (2017-09-25~2017-10-01): Measurement**

Babbie (2012), pp.177-194, 197-223.

## **Week 7 (2017-10-02~2017-10-08): Theory**

Van Evera (1997), pp.7-50.

Midterm Review

## **Week 8 (2017-10-09~2017-10-15): Experimental Logic and Design**

Midterm.

Babbie (2012), pp.271-291.

*Recommended:*

Alex Mintz, Steven B Redd and Arnold Vedlitz. “Can We Generalize from Student Experiments to the Real World in Political Science, Military Affairs, and International Relations?” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50.5 (2006), pp. 757–776.

Alex Mintz. “Foreign Policy Decision Making in Familiar and Unfamiliar Settings”. *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48.1 (2004), pp. 91–104.

## **Week 9 (2017-10-16~2017-10-22): Principles of Case Study**

Van Evera (1997), pp.49-88.

**Week 10 (2017-10-23~2017-10-29): Case Study in Practice**

**Week 11 (2017-10-30~2017-11-05): Content Analysis**

**Week 12 (2017-11-06~2017-11-12): Large-N Analysis**

**Week 13 (2017-11-13~2017-11-19): Profession**

**Week 14 (2017-11-20~2017-11-26): Thanks Giving Week**

**Week 15 (2017-11-27~2017-12-03): Presentation**

**Week 16 (2017-12-04~2017-12-10): Presentation**

**Week 17 (2017-12-11~2017-12-17): Final Week**

Babbie, Earl R. 2012. *The Practice of Social Research*. 13th ed. Australia: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

Van Evera, S. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Cornell Paperbacks. Cornell University Press.