

**2019–2020 Academic Year  
Winter Session**



**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**POLI 397 (L01)  
Introduction to Research Methods**

**REVISED VERSION DUE TO COVID-19**

Due to the cancellation of in-class courses, three modifications have been made to the original course syllabus.

The first change relates to course instruction. We won't be meeting face to face for instruction for the remainder of the term. Instead, I'll post Power Point slides for each topic that will include accompanying online recorded audio. I will create discussion boards for each topic to allow for Q&A. I'm also hoping to record a handful of short online videos to cover main concepts and approaches as needed. I will also try to find online sources to help cover some of this as well (e.g. Sage methods is available via the U of C library). Finally, by the end of the term I should be comfortable enough with Zoom to hold a virtual review session (and hopefully record it!) to go over everything that we have covered during the term in preparation for the final exam.

The second is to move the registrar-scheduled exam to an online open book take-home exam. The final exam has the same overall weight (40%). It will be distributed via D2L at 8:00 am on Thursday April 23. It will due back to the D2L Dropbox by 10:30 am on Tuesday April 28 (the end of the originally scheduled Registrar exam). This is a big window of time to complete the exam driven solely by the desire to accommodate varying schedules; I do not expect people to spend all this time working on the final exam.

The third change involves face-to-face office hours. Instead students are encouraged to chat online with me during my regular office hours (Wednesdays 10 to 12) via Zoom in D2L (see <http://elearn.ucalgary.ca/zoom-d2l-student/>). The link for joining is <https://ucalgary.zoom.us/j/135428702> and I have enabled the waiting room. If this time doesn't work for you, send me an email and we can set up a separate meeting via Zoom.

**INSTRUCTOR  
TELEPHONE  
OFFICE  
EMAIL**

**Dr. Brenda O'Neill  
(403) 220-6710  
726 Social Sciences Building  
bloneill@ucalgary.ca**

<b>OFFICE HOURS</b>	Wednesdays 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
<b>LECTURE LOCATION</b>	EEEL 161
<b>LECTURE TIMES</b>	Monday/Wednesday/Friday 2 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.
<b>ANTI-REQUISITES/PREREQUISITES</b>	N/A
<b>TUTORIALS</b>	N/A
<b>TEACHING ASSISTANT</b>	Holly Ching ( <a href="mailto:holly.ching1@ucalgary.ca">holly.ching1@ucalgary.ca</a> ; 717 Social Sciences Building; Office Hours: Wednesdays 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This lecture course introduces students to the basics of conducting empirical research in political science. It provides an overview of the logic behind research design and a basic introduction to various quantitative and qualitative approaches including experimental methods, survey research, interviews, field research, comparative/historical comparisons, and case selection. We will also spend some time reviewing how to conduct library research, write papers and build arguments, each a central component of successfully undertaking and sharing political science research. The course adopts a lecture format but will also involve in-class group work and guest lecturers. In a nutshell, the course reviews how to successfully ask and answer political science research questions and how to write up and share the results of that research.

At the end of the term students will have:

- An understanding of the fundamental framework that lies behind empirical research in political science;
- Been introduced to a range of methods employed by political scientists when conducting research;
- An understanding of how to select the appropriate method for different types of research questions;
- The skills required to better evaluate research undertaken by others;
- Some of the basic skills and tools necessary for conducting independent research;
- Reviewed the steps to conducting a successful research project, from start to finish.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

One textbook is required for the course and it is available at the bookstore. A copy has also been placed on reserve at TFDL.

- Sandra Halperin & Oliver Heath, *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2017. The student companion site includes study guides and practice questions. Find it here:  
<https://global.oup.com/uk/orc/politics/research/halperin2e/>.

*Supplementary readings:* The following are on reserve at TFDL, as well as a copy of the course textbook. To search for these listings, go to the library website, click on the [Reserves](#) tab below the white search bar under Search Library Resources on the main page and then enter POLI and 397 as your search terms.

- Alan Bryman and Edward Bell. 2016. *Social Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian ed. Toronto, ON: Oxford

University Press.

- Loleen Berdahl and Keith Archer. 2015. *Explorations: Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Janet Buttolph Johnson and H.T. Reynolds. 2016. *Political Science Research Methods*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

## GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Requirement	Dates	Weight
Two Assignments (with choice)	See below	60%
Final Exam (2 hour)	Scheduled by Registrar	40%

## ASSIGNMENTS

Students are required to complete two assignments worth 60% of the overall course grade. Further information on the topics and requirements for these assignments will be discussed in class and posted on D2L. Students will be given a select window of time early in the term to choose which assignments they will complete on a first come, first served basis via D2L. Once the limited number of slots for a particular assignment are full, no other students will be allowed to complete that assignment.

Assignment Topic	Due Date	Spots Available
Completing an Annotated Bibliography	January 31	45
Conducting Library Searches	February 7	45
Creating a Library Guide	February 28	45
Interviewing: How Students Understand Politics	March 13	45
Ethnography: Observing Calgary City Council	March 27	45
Content Analysis: Party Platforms	April 3	45

In an effort to reduce paper waste, assignments will be submitted and returned electronically via D2L. All assignments must be saved in a common word processing program (e.g. .pdf, .doc or .rtf). Any submitted assignments that cannot be opened or that are blank will receive late penalties from the day that the assignment was due; no exceptions will be made to this rule. This means that “I sent the wrong version of the file...” is not a valid reason for having late penalties waived. Students are responsible for keeping the confirmation email sent by D2L for the receipt of assignments; this email must be produced to avoid any late penalties for assignments that go astray. Instructions on how to submit documents to D2L’s Dropbox can be found here: [D2L Instructions](#). Please make sure to clearly identify your work by including your name, student number and course number on your assignment and in the file name itself.

## FINAL EXAM

A two-hour closed-book final exam – scheduled by the Registrar – will take place during the April examination period; the exam will account for 40% of the overall course grade. Content will include material from the lectures and assigned readings for the whole term. The format of the exam will be multiple choice and short answer questions. Further information on the final exam will be posted to D2L later in the term.

## D2L

D2L is an essential tool in this course. Students must ensure that their current University of Calgary e-mail address is on file with IT services to receive e-mail correspondence through D2L. They are also responsible for checking the site several times a week throughout the term. Updates are posted after each lecture so that you will know where we are on the syllabus.

## LATE PENALTIES

Late assignments that have not been granted an extension will be penalized 5 percentage points per day (including weekends) up to a maximum of seven days. Assignments that are more than seven days late will be automatically awarded a grade of 0.

Extensions can be requested (see me early and in person during office hours). Please note that being very busy is not a valid reason for requesting an extension; budgeting your time to deal with competing demands is part of the learning that should take place at university. It is my responsibility to ensure that every student is treated fairly which necessitates denying extensions to those without a valid reason. But I am also aware of the many stresses and difficulties that students face; if you are struggling in any way with the course and its requirements, please come and chat with me.

## PROPER USE OF EMAIL

Students requiring assistance are encouraged to speak with me during scheduled office hours. Should you wish to meet outside of office hours, please telephone or email to make an appointment. It is to the student's advantage to keep such appointments.

Students rely too heavily on email as a form of communication with their instructors. Email is rarely appropriate for explanations of concepts covered in the course, requests for extensions, or for personal concerns; as such, these will not be dealt with via email. Additionally, given the volume of email received on a daily basis, please ensure that you employ your U of C email account for course related correspondence, and be sure to identify your name and the course in which you are currently registered. All correspondence should be professional in tone and content.

## RECORDING LECTURES

Recording of lectures and labs is allowed for accommodation purposes for students registered with SAS; allowing it for individual private study is at my discretion. Any other non-approved use of recording constitutes academic misconduct and may result in suspension or expulsion. Please see me for further information.

## GRADE SCALE

A+ (91-100)	B+ (77-79)	C+ (67-69)	D+ (55-59)
A (85-90)	B (73-76)	C (63-66)	D (50-54)
A- (80-84)	B- (70-72)	C- (60-62)	F (0-49)

All term work will receive a percentage grade, which will then be weighted according to the assignment's value towards the final grade. The total summed percentage for all term work will then be translated into

an overall letter grade according to the above scale. Grades will be posted to D2L on a regular basis; students should check it regularly to ensure that their assignments have been received and grades properly recorded. Note that a posted grade of 0 on D2L normally means that the assignment was not received on the D2L site. You must notify me directly if a submitted assignment does not appear to have been received.

Note: The quality of writing, focused primarily on its role in determining the clarity of responses in assignments, quizzes and the exam, will be considered in the determination of assignment, mid-term and final exam grades.

## COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

This schedule is tentative and likely to change as the need arises. All such changes will be noted on D2L and in class. All readings are required.

<u>Topic and Required Readings</u>
Introduction and course overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please read the syllabus posted to D2L</li></ul>
<b>Part I: Knowledge and Knowing in the Social Sciences</b>
The Big Picture <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chapter 1 &amp; NYT articles “An Ocean Engineer and a Nuclear Physicist Walk Into Congress” (Posted to D2L)</li></ul>
The Philosophy of Social Science: What is <i>research</i> ? <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chapters 2 &amp; 3</li><li>• <i>The Hidden Brain</i> podcast episode “How Science Spreads: Smallpox, Stomach Ulcers and the ‘Vegetable Lamb of Tartary’”, listen or read here: <a href="https://www.npr.org/transcripts/684435633?storyId=684435633?storyId=684435633">https://www.npr.org/transcripts/684435633?storyId=684435633?storyId=684435633</a></li></ul>
<b>Part II: The Building Blocks of Social Science Research</b>
Asking Questions & Avoiding Research Pitfalls <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chapter 4</li></ul>
Using the Library to Find Existing Research Guest speaker: John Wright, Political Science Librarian
Answering Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chapter 5</li><li>• Recommended Reading: Amanda Bittner and Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant. 2017. “Sex isn’t Gender: Reforming Concepts and Measurements in the Study of Public Opinion.” <i>Political Behaviour</i> 39: 1019-1041.</li></ul>
Research Design and Ethics <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chapter 6</li></ul>
Research Data

- Chapter 7

Using the Library to Find Data

Guest speaker: John Wright, Political Science Librarian

### **Part III: Research Methods**

The Comparative Method: Theory and Practice

- Chapter 9 but omit pp. 227-231 on Qualitative Comparative Analysis

The Historical Approach in Political Science

- Chapter 10 but omit pp. 248-252 on Event Structure Analysis

Ethnography and Participant Observation

- Chapter 13

Interviewing and Focus Groups

- Chapter 12

Experiments

- Chapter 8

Surveys

- Chapter 11

Textual Analysis

- Chapter 14 but omit pp. 339-344 on the Analysis of Discourse Analysis

Quantitative Analysis

- Chapter 15 but omit pp. 379-388 on Descriptive Inference

Basic Bivariate Analysis

- Chapter 16 but omit pp. 395- 414 on Bivariate Analysis

### **Part IV: Writing Up Your Results to Share Your Research**

There are multiple guides available on line devoted to assisting with writing. Here are just a few:

- <https://library.ucalgary.ca/guides/writinghelp>
- <https://www.uvm.edu/wid/writingcenter/tutortips/polsconstruct.html>
- <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/polisci/advice.html>
- <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/polisci/grading.html>

### **Part V: Course Review**

Course Wrap-up and Exam Review

## **IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION**

Supporting Documentation and the Use of a Statutory Declaration

As stated in the University Calendar:

Students may be asked to provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, third party letter of support or a statutory declaration etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note.

Students can make a Statutory Declaration as their supporting documentation (available at [ucalgary.ca/registrar](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar)). This requires students to make a declaration in the presence of a Commissioner for Oaths. It demonstrates the importance of honest and accurate information provided and is a legally binding declaration. Several registered Commissioners for Oaths are available to students at no charge, on campus. For a list of locations to access a Commissioners for Oaths, visit [ucalgary.ca/registrar](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar)).

Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

This statement is accessible at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/m-1.html>

Please note that while the form of supporting documentation provided is at the discretion of the student, the instructor has the discretion not to accept the supporting documentation if it does not corroborate the reason(s) given for the exemption/special request.

#### Absence from a Mid-term Examination

Students who are absent from a scheduled term test or quiz for legitimate reasons are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

#### Deferral of a Final Examination

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

#### Appeals

If a student has a concern about the course or a grade they have been assigned, they must first discuss their concerns with the instructor. If this does not resolve the matter, the student then proceed with an academic appeal. The first step in an academic appeal is to set up a meeting with the Department Head. Appeals must be requested within 15 days of receipt of the graded assignment.

### Student Accommodations

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

### University Regulations

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University policies found in the Academic Regulations sections of the Calendar at [www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html).

### Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>. Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

### Copyright Legislation

As stated in the University of Calgary Calendar, Academic Regulations, “students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright and requirements of the copyright act to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorised sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.”  
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/acceptable-use-of-material-protected-by-copyright.pdf> and  
<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>

### Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)

FOIP legislation requires that instructors maintain the confidentiality of student information. In practice, this means that student assignment and tests cannot be left for collection in any public place without the consent of the student. It also means that grades cannot be distributed via email. Final exams are kept by instructors but can be viewed by contacting them or the main office in the Department of Political Science. Any uncollected assignments and tests meant to be returned will be destroyed after six months from the end of term; final examinations are destroyed after one year.

### Evacuation Assembly Points

In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at [www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints) and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

#### Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources

For program planning and advice, visit the Arts Students' Centre in Social Sciences 102, call 403-220-3580 or email [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit [arts.ucalgary.ca/advising](http://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising) for program assistance.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit their office in the MacKimmie Tower Room 116.

#### Important Contact Information

Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year): (403) 220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives: (403) 220-6551; [arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca); and Students' Union website at [www.su.ucalgary.ca](http://www.su.ucalgary.ca).

Graduate Students' Association: (403) 220-5997; [askgsa@ucalgary.ca](mailto:askgsa@ucalgary.ca); and [www.ucalgary.ca/gsa](http://www.ucalgary.ca/gsa)

Student Ombudsman: (403) 220-6420; [ombuds@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ombuds@ucalgary.ca)

Campus Mental Health Resources:

SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre/>

The University of Calgary recognizes the pivotal role that student mental health plays in physical health, social connectedness and academic success, and aspires to create a caring and supportive campus community where individuals can freely talk about mental health and receive supports when needed. We encourage you to explore the excellent mental health resources available throughout the university community, such as counselling, self-help resources, peer support or skills-building available through the:

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Student Wellness Services (Room 370, MacEwan Student Centre):  
<https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/services/mental-health-services>

and the Campus Mental Health Strategy website: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth/>.