

# **Introduction to Research Design**

## **Undergraduate Course**

### **Course Overview**

This course is for advanced undergraduate students in the political science department who are excelling in coursework and interested in academic research. The course will cover the main components of social sciences research design, as well as analytical methodologies not covered in the other department methodology courses or the honors thesis seminar. We will learn basic skill sets for designing and critiquing research, and students will be expected to apply the skills through a variety of opportunities, including discussions of recent work in the discipline and a final assignment in which the student designs her own research project.

The goals of the course will be to prepare the students to read academic work more critically, encourage them to think about research projects that could turn into an honors thesis, expose them to a variety of timely topics in the discipline, and train them to be effective contributors to department research projects. In addition, the course will provide undergraduates who are excelling in the program with the opportunity to engage with each other, be mentored by instructors, interact with faculty, and be exposed to research projects in the department. Each enrolled undergraduate student will be assigned a mentor within the department as part of the course.

Each class session will be divided into two parts: 1) A 30-60 minute lecture on the week's research design topic; 2) 60-90 minute discussion applying the concepts of the lecture to the week's readings. Questions will be emailed in advance of each class meeting to facilitate the group discussion. The final course session will be devoted to student presentations of their research project and design to the faculty of the department.

### **Requirements and Grading**

- 40%: Class Participation – Participation will be graded on quality of the contributions and knowledge of the weekly readings. In any given week, fewer than 100 pages of reading and fewer than four different articles will be assigned. In this course, the quality of analysis is much more important than the quantity of the material covered.
- 20%: Mentorship – Students are expected to take advantage of the opportunity to meet with, get to know and seek guidance from their assigned mentor. Grading guidelines for this portion of the course are not strict: Students who make a "good faith effort" in this area will receive full

credit.

- 40%: Assignment – Students will design a research project for their final assignment. The assignment will include a write-up (five pages) and an in-class presentation (10 minutes), both to be delivered the last course session of the quarter.

### **Required Texts**

None! All readings for the course will be available to you through the library system free of charge. Navigating the library system to locate the assigned readings will cultivate another valuable research skill.

### **Weekly Schedule**

#### **Week 1: Overview of Research Design Components**

- Adida, Claire L., David D. Laitin and Marie-Anne Valfort. 2010. "Identifying Barriers to Muslim Integration in France." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 107 (52): 22384-22390.
- Laitin, David D. 2003. "Three Models of Integration and the Estonian/Russian Reality." *Journal of Baltic Studies* 34 (2): 197-222.

#### **Week 2: Theory Development**

- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pages 12-23, 28-29.
- Mutz, Diana C. 2002. "Cross-Cutting Social Networks: Testing Democratic Theory in Practice." *American Political Science Review* 96 (1): 111-126.
- Dovidio, John F., Kerry Kawakami, Craig Johnson, Brenda Johnson and Adiaiah Howard. 1997. "On the Nature of Prejudice: Automatic and Controlled Processes." *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 33: 510-540.

#### **Week 3: Possible Research Designs and Empirical Strategies**

- Driscoll, Jesse. 2009. "Inside Anarchy: Militia Incorporation as State-Building." *Working Paper*.
- Lake, David A. 1992. "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War." *American Political Science Review*. 86 (1): 24-37.

#### **Week 4: Construct Validity**

- Fearon, James D. and Laitin, David D. 2003. "Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War." *American Political Science Review* 97: 75-90.
- Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "Measuring Ethnic Fractionalization in Africa." *American Journal of Political Science* 48 (4): 849-863.

**Week 5: Sampling and Measurement**

- Trochim, William M.K. and James P. Donnelly. 2006. *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Mason, OH: Atomic Dog. Chapters 2-3.
- Przeworski, Adam, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi. 2000. *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 1, p. 13-36.

**Week 6: Internal Validity**

- Blattman, Christopher. 2009. "From Violence to Voting: War and Political Participation in Uganda." *American Political Science Review* 103 (2): 231-247.
- Hyde, Susan. 2007. "The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment." *World Politics* 60: 37-63.
- McClendon, Gwyneth. 2011. "Co-Ethnicity and Democratic Governance: An Experiment with South African Politicians." *Working Paper*.

**Week 7: External Validity**

- Slantchev, Branislav. 2003. "The Power to Hurt: Costly Conflict with Completely Informed States." *American Political Science Review* 97 (1): 123-133.
- Kramon, Eric and Daniel Posner. 2012. "Who Benefits from Distributive Politics? How the Outcomes One Studies Affect the Answers One Gets." *Working Paper*.

**Week 8: Experiment Techniques**

- Cook, Thomas D. and Donald T. Campbell. 1979. *Quasi-Experimentation: Design & Analysis Issues for Field Settings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. Pages 1-9.
- Trochim, William M.K. and James P. Donnelly. 2006. *The Research Methods Knowledge Base*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Mason, OH: Atomic Dog. Chapter 9, Section 1.
- Brader, Ted. 2005. "Striking a Responsive Chord: How Political Ads Motivate and Persuade Voters by Appealing to Emotions." *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (2): 388-405.
- Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green and Christopher W. Larimer. 2008. "Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 102 (1): 33-48.

**Week 9: Regression Techniques**

- Regression: The Econometrics

- De Veaux, Richard D., Paul F. Velleman and David E. Bock. 2008. *Intro Stats*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Boston: Addison Wesley. Chapters 7-9, 27.
- King, Gary. 1986. "How Not to Lie with Statistics: Avoiding Common Mistakes in Quantitative Political Science." *American Journal of Political Science* 30: 666-687. [Pay special attention to the Q & A on pages 676-678.]
- Applied Regression: Reading Papers in Tables
  - WikiSum of: Rosenstone, Steven J. and John Mark Hansen. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. London: Longman.
  - Jackman, Robert W. 1987. "Political Institutions and Voter Turnout in the Industrial Democracies." *American Political Science Review* 81 (2): 405-424. [Read Abstract, Data Analysis and Implications sections only.]
- Applied Regression: The Programs
  - Install and *Have Ready* a working copy of R
  - Handout Available on the Course Website

**Week 10:** *Student Presentations*