Point Loma Nazarene University
Department of History and Political Science
Political Science 270: Scope and Methods

Instructor: Dr. Lindsey Lupo
Office: Colt Hall 115
Office Hrs: M 1:30-2:30 and just feel free to drop in
Email: lindseylupo@pointloma.edu
Office Phone: (619) 849-7589

Fall 2016
Course Time: MWF 12:15-1:20pm
Course website: Canvas.pointloma.edu
Class Location: Colt Forum

"Political science is the study of politics through the procedures of science."– Robert O. Keohane

"Those who plow social science fields seek general truths. We look for general, or at least widespread, patterns of behavior; we seek general causes and effects. And yet we all know that everything, everywhere, is different… Can one find universals across nations or regions or cultures, or is each place different?" – Sidney Verba

PLNU Mission:
To Teach ~ To Shape ~ To Send

Point Loma Nazarene University exists to provide higher education in a vital Christian community where minds are engaged and challenged, character is modeled and formed, and service becomes an expression of faith. Being of Wesleyan heritage, we aspire to be a learning community where grace is foundational, truth is pursued, and holiness is a way of life.

Course Description:
This course is designed to engage students in the process of studying politics, helping them to discover how knowledge about the political world is created. Is political science (and its sub-discipline international studies) a "science" as we understand the word? How do we know what we know about the political world? If we are truly interested in solving social problems and making the world better, how do we find answers? Which research method is best for each type of question? What are the practical problems involved in conducting research? We will seek to answer these and other questions in this course. The overarching goals are to prepare students to be critical consumers of research and better prepared to conduct research of their own.

Course Format and Expectations:
This course will meet three times per week. Over the semester, we will cover the theoretical motivations driving most political research, the structure and design of inquiry, general areas of research, and numerous analytic techniques common to the social sciences. In-class discussion and exercises will draw on the readings and require students to apply this knowledge. Therefore it is

crucial that students complete all assigned readings before class and more importantly, do everything they can to be in class each day.

To understand the expectations I have for my students, you must first understand my goals as a teacher. My aim in designing this course is to familiarize you with methodological terminology, techniques, and discourse. You will become budding social scientists, capable of conducting quality social science research.

Specifically, the course learning outcomes (CLOs) for the class include the following:
- Students will be able to recognize and employ the vocabulary and concepts used to discuss research methods.
- Students will understand why approaches to the study of politics are controversial and the rationale behind various approaches.
- Students will become familiar with methods of inquiry that are used to generate data in political science.
- Students will be able to recognize and employ basic statistical techniques that are used to analyze data in political science.
- Students will be able to critically read and evaluate primary political science research.
- Students will be able to discuss the value and validity of data and analysis used in specific political science research.
- Students will become comfortable with political science research methods and will propose the utilization of one or more methods for a final research design project.

This course will also help move you forward in your major. As such the program learning outcomes (PLOs) that align with this course are:
- Evaluate, design, and apply social science research with respect to political phenomena (PLO 2).
- Demonstrate social scientific information literacy (PLO 4).
- Develop and express ideas in written communication in an effective and scholarly manner (PLO 5).
- Demonstrate oral communication abilities, particularly to convey complex ideas, recognize diverse viewpoints, and offer empirical evidence of an argument (PLO 6).

To be sure, these are ambitious goals. But in my experience students are more than able to achieve them. Indeed, with hard work they often exceed them! As such, the basic expectation I have is that you will work hard in this course. I promise to do the same.

A word to the wise: This class is challenging, but you <u>can</u> do this. The best way to survive in good standing is to be very diligent from the beginning, rather than assuming you can catch up later. Do the reading and assignments, come to every class unless there is absolutely no way to avoid missing (do not come if you are significantly ill), begin your final research design early, *and see me early and often if you have any questions or need any help at all.* This class will push you, but I will offer any help and support I can to make this a positive experience.

Course Readings: All readings are required and are available at the bookstore, library, or on Canvas. Please bring your books to class:

1. Brians, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich (hereafter BWMR). *Empirical Political Analysis: Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc, 2011 (8th edition).
2. Van Evera, Stephen. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997.
3. Various electronic readings – they are available on Canvas

Assessment Requirements:

Reading questions: We will be doing some challenging reading for this class. I am going to ask you to submit reading questions intended to help you think about the reading and to give you regular practice with the more difficult concepts. Their purpose and intent is to ensure that you fully understand the reading, and thus to keep you moving toward your final research project.

These reading questions are *due every day that a reading is assigned*, **beginning August 31 through November 11** (after this date, we move onto preparing your final research design). Everyone gets 4 days "off" from doing a reading question (your choice as to when you take a day off). Each reading question is worth one point. Reading questions should be posted on our Canvas site and are due by the start of class. You may also respond to another student's posted question – in other words, in order to earn a point, you may post an original question or respond to another.

Research Exercises: On five (5) days, you will have a homework assignment due. Some of these will stem from your BWMR text and others will be based on your reading of actual political science journal articles. On one of the days, you will have a research exercise due on an article of your choice. You will be deconstructing and analyzing the research design of this article.   All of the research exercise prompts are posted on Canvas. The due dates appear in the schedule below.

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will consist of 20 multiple choice questions and 2 short answer questions. You will not have a choice as to which multiple choice questions you answer but you will have a choice with the short answer questions. A study guide will be provided a few weeks before the exam.

SPSS Analysis Assignment: Democracy & Development: you will be analyzing the relationship between democratic government and development in states. Employing actual data from a large set of countries, you will evaluate this relationship. A set of "lab" pages provides the structure for your responses. It suggests how to conceptualize "democracy" and "development," enabling you to generate a hypothesis about their relationship, guiding your construction of quantitative indices for each concept, and then showing you how to use the computer program SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to do a simple statistical test of your hypothesized relationship. This assignment will be conducted during class-time and the dates appear in the schedule below. *You must collaborate with one other student on this assignment. You will submit a single assignment, with both names, and will receive the same grade.* If you are going to miss any of these three days, you must let me know ASAP and your assignment will be due *before* the due date.

Final Research Design Paper: For your final project, you will be writing a paper that proposes research – in other words, you'll be designing the project but not actually completing the research (we'd need another semester to do that!). The final paper prompt (with examples from previous students) is available on Canvas. The last part of this course will be dedicated to student presentations in which

each of you presents your research design (perhaps not fully polished at presentation time – that's okay) to your peers for comments, suggestions, and advice.

Participation and Attendance Policy: I will not grade on attendance itself. However, failure to attend class will result in (a) missed information and fewer opportunities to learn, (b) fewer opportunities to participate and demonstrate knowledge, and therefore (c) a lower grade.   Having said that, I will be grading on participation. You will each be expected to contribute to the class discussions and to each other's research with your comments and suggestions. As your participation, general interest, and respect for your fellow classmates' work declines, so does your participation grade. I also expect that you will use technology during class time only for academic purposes, as we only have 65 minutes together and my goal is to maximize this learning time. I treat all my students as the adults that they are, thus I expect you to act accordingly. I recognize that you are soon-to-be young working professionals and graduate school students, and to help prepare you for this transition, I expect an academically engaged and professional approach from each of you. At a minimum, this includes arriving on time (or early), engaging in active listening and discussion, not texting, emailing, or using social media (would you do these things in a business meeting?), and completing all assignments when due.

All late assignments/exams (in-class and out of class) will have points deducted unless notification and arrangements are made with me at least 24 hours prior to the assignment's due date. The instructor reserves the right to change the structure of any make-up exam or assignment given. If you have some special circumstance that might affect your ability to meet all the course's expectations – e.g., a sister's graduation, a learning disability, or whatever – come and talk to me immediately. With abundant notice I'll be as accommodating as possible, as long as it does not compromise fairness for all.

Grading:

Reading Questions	20 Points (1 Point Each)
Midterm Exam	40 Points
Research Exercises # 1-3	45 Points (15 Points Each)
Research Exercises #4-5	40 Points (20 points Each)
SPSS Analysis Assignment	30 Points
Research Design Paper	85 Points
Participation	20 Points
TOTAL	**280 Points**

Schedule - Full citations appear at the end of the syllabus along with URLs if available. A copy of both Rochefort and Van Evera – as well as an older edition of BWMR – are on two hour reserve at the library and the non-text readings are on the course Canvas site. Please complete the reading assignment before coming to class on the day it is assigned.

	Topic	Assignments
	Foundations of Political Science Research	
August 30	Introduction to the course – welcome!	No reading
August 31	Scientific development	Kuhn, pages 52-65 *First reading question due on Canvas*
September 2	How "scientific" is social science? Overview of the research process	BWMR, chapter 1; Cohen article

September 5	No Class – Happy Labor Day!	No reading
September 7	Trends in Political Science Research	Hoover & Donovan, pgs. 6-12 and pgs. 161-190
September 9	Theories and Hypotheses Part I	BWMR, chapter 2 **Research Exercise #1 Due (Submit on Canvas)**
September 12	Theories and Hypotheses Part II	Van Evera, pages 7-27; 35-48
September 14	Foundations of Research – Library Visit	BWMR, chapter 3
September 16	The Pluses and Perils of Internet Research; Avoiding Plagiarism	Browse the website www.plagiarism.org
September 19	Operationalization and Measurement	BWMR, pgs. 75-81 and chapter 5; Sanger, Shanker, and Schmitt article
September 21	Preparing to do Research	BWMR, chapter 6
September 23	Choosing a Research Question Part I	UNC "Annotated Bibliography" website (no reading question due today) **Research Exercise #2 Due (Submit in hard-copy)**
September 26	Choosing a Research Question Part II	No reading…BUT, bring to class a potential research question and annotated bibliography (2 sources only) for your final research design paper.
September 28	Sampling	BWMR, chapter 7
	Quantitative Methods	
September 30	Survey Research	BWMR, chapter 8; Rochefort, chapter 9
October 3	Scaling	BWMR, chapter 9 (skip the section on "semantic differentials")
October 5	Content Analysis	BWMR, chapter 10 **Research Exercise # 3 Due (can be completed as a pair or individually; submit on Canvas)**
October 7	Comparative Research	BWMR, chapter 12
October 10	Aggregate Data	BWMR, chapter 11
October 12	**Midterm Exam**	No reading – study!
October 14	Data Preparation, Processing, and Description	BWMR, chapters 14-15
October 17	Statistics I: Univariate Statistics	BWMR, chapter 16; Gould Article
October 19	Statistics II: Bivariate Statistics	BWMR, chapter 17; Rochefort, chapter 11
October 21	No Class; Fall Break	No reading, BUT be sure to continue thinking about your final research

		question – is it finalized? Do you have your variables? Are you reading some *academic* (peer-reviewed, scholarly, high-quality) literature in this field? Now is the time to see me if you have questions or need help.
October 24	Statistics II: Bivariate Statistics (Part II)	Fowler article *Mid-Semester Grades Posted on Portal*
October 26	SPSS Analysis Assignment	No reading **Research Exercise #4 Due (Submit on Canvas)**
October 28	SPSS Analysis Assignment	No reading
October 31	SPSS Analysis Assignment	No reading **SPSS Analysis Due**
	Qualitative Methods	
November 2	Introduction to Qualitative Methods	BWMR, pages 81-87; King, Keohane, and Verba, pgs. 3-12 *By this point, you should have your final research question solidified, your theory formulated, and an idea of how you will operationalize your variables in your final research project.*
November 4	Direct Observation	BWMR, chapter 19
November 7	Focus Groups	BWMR, chapter 20
November 9	Case Studies	Van Evera, pages 49-67
November 11	Elite and Specialized Interviews	BWMR, chapter 21; Rochefort, chapter 5 *Last day of submitting a daily reading question*
	Preparing your Research Design	
November 14	Literature Reviews	Lawrence piece; Steinberg piece; Article from Rochefort reader that has not yet been assigned (on 2 hour reserve in the library; your choice of which one you want to review and deconstruct for Research Exercise #5); Optional reading: UNC "Literature Reviews" website *By this point, you should have your final research question solidified, your theory formulated, your variables operationalized, and your research methods selected for your*

		final research project. You should also be deep into the academic literature that surrounds this topic.
November 16	Sample Research Reports	BWMR, chapter 22
November 18	Overview of Concepts	BWMR, chapter 23
November 21	Writing a Political Science Paper	Van Evera, appendix; UNC "Writing in Political Science" website **Research Exercise #5 Due (Submit on Canvas)** **Please also bring in a written copy of your research question and proposed methodology**
November 23 & 25	No Class; Happy Thanksgiving!	No reading
November 28	Student research presentations	No reading - work on your research design
November 30	Student research presentations	No reading – work on your research design
December 2	Student research presentations	No reading – work on your research design
December 5	Student research presentations	No reading – work on your research design
December 7	Student research presentations	No reading – work on your research design
December 9	Student research presentations	No reading – work on your research design
Tuesday, December 13	**Final Research Design Paper due at 1:00pm in my office (or slide it under the door early)**	

Full Citations

Cohen, Patricia. October 20, 2009. "Field Study: Just How Relevant is Political Science?" *New York Times.*

Fowler, James H. July 2008. "The Colbert Bump in Campaign Donations: More Truthful than Truthy." *PS: Political Science and Politics* Volume XLI , Number 3.

Gould, Stephen Jay. June 1985. "The Median Isn't the Message." *Discover*. Available at http://www.phoenix5.org/articles/GouldMessage.html.

Hoover, Kenneth and Todd Donovan. 2004. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*. Toronto, Canada: Thomson Wadsworth.

Lawrence, Christopher N. October 11, 2011. "Writing a Literature Review in the Social Sciences." Available at http://academia.edu/2911352/Writing_a_Literature_Review_in_the_Social_Sciences.

Rochefort, David A. 2005. *Quantitative Methods in Practice: Readings in PS*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press..

Sanger, David E., Thom Shanker, and Eric Schmitt. "Obama Offers Ways to Rate Efforts in Afghan Region." *New York Times,* September 17, 2009.

Steinberg, G. "Rhetoric II: Sample Literature Reviews." Available at http://gsteinbe.intrasun.tcnj.edu/tcnj/rhetoric2/litreviews.htm.

Course Website and Email:

Please check your PLNU email regularly for class announcements. You should also check Canvas for announcements, links, lecture PowerPoints, and assignments.

Incompletes and Late Assignments:

All assignments are to be submitted/turned in by the beginning of the class session when they are due—including assignments posted in Canvas. Incompletes will only be assigned in extremely unusual circumstances.

PLNU Copyright Policy:

Point Loma Nazarene University, as a non-profit educational institution, is entitled by law to use materials protected by the US Copyright Act for classroom education. Any use of those materials outside the class may violate the law.

PLNU Academic Honesty Policy:

Students should demonstrate academic honesty by doing original work and by giving appropriate credit to the ideas of others. Academic dishonesty is the act of presenting information, ideas, and/or concepts as one's own when in reality they are the results of another person's creativity and effort. A faculty member who believes a situation involving academic dishonesty has been detected may assign a failing grade for that assignment or examination, or, depending on the seriousness of the offense, for the course. Faculty should follow and students may appeal using the procedure in the university Catalog. See Academic Policies for definitions of kinds of academic dishonesty and for further policy information.

PLNU Academic Accommodations Policy:

If you have a diagnosed disability, please contact PLNU's Disability Resource Center (DRC) within the first two weeks of class to demonstrate need and to register for accommodation by phone at 619-849-2486 or by e-mail at DRC@pointloma.edu. See Disability Resource Center for additional information.

PLNU Attendance and Participation Policy:

Regular and punctual attendance at all classes is considered essential to optimum academic achievement. If the student is absent from more than 10 percent of class meetings, the faculty member can file a written report which may result in de-enrollment. If the absences exceed 20 percent, the student may be de-enrolled without notice until the university drop date or, after that date, receive the appropriate grade for their work and participation. See Academic Policies in the Undergraduate Academic Catalog.