

Last updated: Tuesday, September 8, 2015



Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Political Studies

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POL2156A
Emily Regan Wills
Fall 2015

Course Hours

Tuesday 11:30 - 13:00
Location: HGN-302
Type: LEC 1

Friday 13:00 - 14:30
Location: HGN-302
Type: LEC 2

Professor

Regan Wills, Emily (emily.wills@uottawa.ca)

Phone Number:

Office Hours

Monday 14:00 - 16:00
Location: FSS 7065

Wednesday 10:00 - 12:00
Location: FSS 7065

Teaching Assistant

Kirkpatrick, Erika (ekirk040@uottawa.ca)

Phone Number:

Office Hours

Sotiriu, Sabrina (ssoti026@uottawa.ca)

Phone Number:

Office Hours

Course Description

Introduction to the fundamental dimensions of research. Presentation of several epistemological approaches and the questions they raise. Study of diverse logics of enquiry and their modes of inference. Introduction to some techniques and methods. Elaboration of a research project covering all of the required steps.

General and Specific Objectives

The goal of this course is to give you a general introduction to how professional researchers (in academia and outside it) use systematic methods to learn about the world and draw conclusions about it. We will focus on the foundational issues that underpin all research--questions of meaning, causation, time, and ethics--and then examine specific research methods in order to understand how they derive new knowledge about the world. This course will include an introduction to the broad

diversity of social science research approaches, including positivist and interpretivist methodologies and both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, student will be able to :

understand the epistemological and methodological backgrounds to key research methods.

identify what methods are being used in a piece of research and what some of the implications of that are.

determine what sorts of methods would provide answers to important questions about politics.

Required Material

We have one textbook for the class: Ian Greener, *Designing Social Research: A Guide for the Bewildered*. The book is available for purchase at Benjamin Books, 122 Osgoode St, Ottawa, ON. It may also be purchased in Kindle format via Amazon. (If you are going to buy a paper version, please give your money to Benjamin Books, rather than Amazon.)

Other readings will be posted on Blackboard in pdf. Both the textbook and pdf readings are equally required.

Evaluations

Participation

Evaluation Date: Ongoing

Evaluation Percentage: 10

The participation grade is a combination of attendance (have you come to class for almost all sessions?) and participation (are you an active participant who contributes meaningfully to the class conversation?). Student attendance will be measured using LectureTools. You **MUST** create a LectureTools account (free for you) and sign into it every class session via text message, phone, tablet, or computer to be counted as present. Technical problems will not be accepted as an excuse. (If you do not have any of those devices available to you, talk to me and we can work out an alternative.) While the base percentage of attendance will be used as the core of your mark, positive participation will increase your mark, while being a detriment to the classroom environment may lead to a lowering of it.

Written assignment (e.g. essay, term paper)

Evaluation Date: Friday, October 2, 2015

Evaluation Percentage: 20

You will choose one of a selection of political science articles (from a set posted to Blackboard), and write a three page essay answering some methodological questions about it, especially about what types of methods it uses and how it understands questions about epistemology and causality. Articles will be posted by September 18.

Written exam (e.g. exam, long answer)

Evaluation Date: Friday, October 23, 2015

Evaluation Percentage: 30

Midterm exam, which will include short answer questions and (likely) a very short essay, testing concepts from the material covered up to that point.

Project

Evaluation Date: Monday, December 21, 2015

Evaluation Percentage: 40

Students will work in groups (assigned by the professor) on a multi-part research proposal. Working from a single broad political topic (such as "legislatures" or "elections" or "participation" or "violence,"), each team will create an annotated bibliography of current literature on the subject, develop three different research questions and write brief plans to research all of them, and then expand one of those plans into a pilot project, which will include preparing research materials (identifying a data set, designing a survey, selecting a site for ethnographic research) and laying out a detailed plan for how you would carry the research project out.

Instructional Approach

This course will be an interactive lecture, including traditional lecture presentations, multimedia screenings, and discussion and student interaction. Central to the course's functioning will be LectureTools, a presentation/participation software program that allows students to respond to questions in real time. My approach to teaching emphasizes the role of the professor as guide to the learning experience, and of students as active participants in shaping the classroom environment, discussion, and priorities.

Course Calendar

Friday, September 11, 2015	Introductory Lecture; no reading. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students must have joined LectureTools before this point, and should bring a cell phone (registered, if you'll be responding by text), tablet, or computer with them to class in order to be counted as present.
Tuesday, September 15, 2015	Topic: What is Research Design? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: DSR 1
Friday, September 18, 2015	Topic: How do we choose our questions? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: Ian Shapiro, "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do about It" (PDF)
Tuesday, September 22, 2015	Theme: What is Causality? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: DSR 7
Friday, September 25, 2015	Theme: Positivism and causality <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: King, Keohane, and Verba, "Causality and Causal Inference"
Tuesday, September 29, 2015	Theme: Time and Control <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading: DSR 8

Friday, October 2, 2015	Theme: Using History to Understand Politics • Reading: Mahoney and Villegas, "Historical Enquiry and Comparative Politics" (PDF)
Tuesday, October 6, 2015	Theme: Understanding Research Ethics • Reading: DSR 9
Friday, October 9, 2015	Theme: Situating the (ethical) researcher • Reading: Carpenter, "'You Talk Of Terrible Things So Matter-of-Factly in This Language of Science": Constructing Human Rights in the Academy" (PDF)
Tuesday, October 13, 2015	Theme: Working from the literature • Reading: DSR 2
Friday, October 16, 2015	Theme: Replication: Possible or Impossible? • Readings on "DA-RT" (PDF)
Tuesday, October 20, 2015	Midterm Review; no reading.
Friday, October 23, 2015	Midterm Exam
Tuesday, November 3, 2015	Theme: Survey Research 1 • Reading: DSR 3
Friday, November 6, 2015	Theme: Survey Research 2 • Reading: "Comparative Opinion Surveys" AND/OR "Instrument Design: Question Form, Wording, and Context Effects"
Tuesday, November 10, 2015	Theme: Quantitative Analysis 1 • Reading: DSR 4
Friday, November 13, 2015	Theme: Quantitative Analysis 2 • Reading: "Words as Data: Content Analysis in Legislative Studies"
Tuesday, November 17, 2015	Theme: Ethnography 1 • Reading: DSR 5
Friday, November 20, 2015	Theme: Ethnography 2 • Reading: Jan Kubik, "Ethnography of Politics: Foundations, Applications, Prospects."
Tuesday, November 24, 2015	Theme: Discourse Analysis 1 • Reading: DSR 6
Friday, November 27, 2015	Theme: Discourse Analysis 2 • Reading: Schaffer, "Ordinary Language Interviewing"
Tuesday, December 1, 2015	Theme: The Art of the Research Proposal • Reading: DSR 11
Friday, December 4, 2015	Theme: Presenting Your Research • Reading: DSR 10
Tuesday, December 8, 2015	Conclusion. • Reading: DSR 12

Plagiarism

Beware of academic fraud!

Academic fraud is an act by a student that may result in a false evaluation (including papers, tests, examinations, etc.). It is not tolerated by the University. Any person found guilty of academic fraud will be subject to severe sanctions.

Here are some examples of academic fraud:

- Plagiarism or cheating of any kind;
- Present research data that has been falsified;
- Submit a work for which you are not the author, in whole or part;
- Submit the same piece of work for more than one course without the written consent of the professors concerned.

Please consult [this webpage](#): it contains regulations and tool to help you avoid plagiarism. An individual who commits or attempts to commit academic fraud, or who is an accomplice, will be penalized. Here are some examples of possible sanctions:

- Receive an “F” for the work or in the course in question;
- Imposition of additional requirements (from 3 to 30 credits) to the program of study;
- Suspension or expulsion from the Faculty.

You can refer to the regulations on [this webpage](#).

Student Services

[Academic Writing Help Centre](#)

At the AWHC you will learn how to identify, correct and ultimately avoid errors in your writing and become an autonomous writer.

In working with our Writing Advisors, you will be able to acquire the abilities, strategies and writing tools that will enable you to:

- Master the written language of your choice
- Expand your critical thinking abilities
- Develop your argumentation skills
- Learn what the expectations are for academic writing

[Career Services](#)

Career Services offers various services and a career development program to enable you to recognize and enhance the employability skills you need in today's world of work.

[Counselling Service](#)

There are many reasons to take advantage of the Counselling Service. We offer:

- Personal counselling
- Career counselling
- Study skills counselling

[Access Service](#)

The Access Service acts as intermediary between students, their faculty and other University offices to ensure that the special needs of these students are addressed and that the best possible learning conditions are being offered.

Note that the University of Ottawa is affiliated with [AERO](#) and [ACE](#) services for the adaptation of accessible academic materials for students with perceptual disabilities. If you have any questions, please contact the [Accessibility Librarian](#) or the [Access services](#) for textbooks.