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“A fact is like a sack—it won’t stand up if it’s empty. To make it stand up, first you have to put in it all the reasons and feelings that caused it in the first place.” Luigi Pirandello, *Three Plays* (ed. 1929)

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Contemporary Political Analysis continues students’ study of the principles of social science research design and empirical analysis.

The course begins with a review of the role of research design, methods, and methodology in the social sciences that draws on examples from qualitative and quantitative political science. This discussion is complemented with an introduction to applied data analytics.

The skills, ways of thinking, and techniques learned in this course provide the necessary foundation for the more advanced application of social science research methodology used in the public and private sectors as well as honours and graduate levels of study.

My goals for this class are different than many who teach this class. I am not trying to put ten pounds of methods into a five-pound sack. Nor am I going to have you use the most complex statistical software without understanding why you are using it and why it useful. This is akin to giving a toddler a loaded gun. Occasionally things will work out okay, but the danger is real that the user will do something without fully understanding what the implications are. Instead, I will walk you through the design and execution phases of political science research so that you have the tools to (1) undertake the research process, (2) understand others’ research designs, and (3) more broadly, understand the menu of methods out there and how to choose between them according to your topic and interests.

I want to be clear—this is not the easiest class you will take. However, often the toughest part of this course’s material is *conceptual* rather than procedural. Why do people and states behave the way they do? How do we concretely define concepts (democracy, conflict, development) in a way that makes sense (to us and to others) and that we can measure out in the world? How have others approached these questions?

What I ask of you is to have an open mind and a flexible approach this term. Be open to new ways of thinking about and interacting with the political world and you never know where the next twelve weeks can take you. Oh, please be kind to yourself and to others in the class.

PART I. COURSE OVERVIEW

<i>Workload</i>	130 hours of total student learning time made up from: (a) 36 hours of contact over 12 weeks: 24 hours of lectures, and 11 hours of tutorials; and (b) 94 hours of independent student research, reading and writing.
<i>Prerequisites</i>	To enroll in this course, you must have completed POLS1002, POLS1005, POLS1006, or with permission of the convenor.
<i>Incompatible courses</i>	You are not able to enroll in this course if you have previously completed POLS3025 or SOCY2038.
Convener	Richard W. Frank
<i>Email</i>	richard.frank@anu.edu
<i>Office hours</i>	Thursdays 1-3pm, RSSS bld, Rm. 2.39
<i>Research interests</i>	Peace & Conflict Studies, Human Rights
Relevant administrators	RSSS administrators
<i>Phone</i>	6125 5111
<i>Email</i>	admin.rsss@anu.edu.au



Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion, students will have the knowledge and skills to:

1. explain the complexity of contemporary politics from the perspective of solid research design and empirical analysis;
2. apply a range of methodological approaches by which to analyse such issues;
3. generate, explain, and visualise descriptive statistics and basic inferential statistics for political phenomena using a statistical software package; and
4. apply conceptual and analytical tools to a political phenomenon at a higher level of study or in a professional working environment.

Weekly overview

Week	Topic	Assessment
1	Welcome and introduction	
2	Theories and causality	
3	Qualitative research approaches	Assessment 1 due
4	Concepts and measures	
5	Surveys and sampling	
6	Descriptive statistics	Assessment 2 due
7	Correlations and visualisation	
8	Comparing groups	Assessment 3 due
9	Univariate statistics (lecture on Tues 4/10 11am)	
10	Bivariate statistics	
11	Multivariate regression	
12	Wrapping up	Assessment 4 due

Assessment Summary

Assessment task	Value	Due date	Linked learning outcomes
Tutorial/Lab participation	10%	<i>n/a</i>	1,2,4
Problem statement (250 words)	10%	12/08	1,2,4
Qualitative paper (1,500 words)	20%	02/09	1,2,3,4
Revised problem statement (250 words)	10%	30/09	1,2,3,4
Final paper (3,000 words)	50%	04/11	1,2,3,4

PART II. READING SCHEDULE

The course outline below describes the topic of each week's lecture, the assigned readings, and additional readings. All **assigned readings** should be completed before class because lectures and tutorials will assume familiarity with the readings. **Additional readings** are relevant to the week's topic and may be of particular interest for those students thinking about related research topics. This course timeline is subject to change given students' interests and case studies.

Required Resources

All assigned readings will be made available on the course's Wattle page.

Additional course costs

There are no additional costs associated with this course.

WEEK 1: WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

“Be skeptical. But when you get proof, accept proof.” -Michael Specter

Required reading

Geertz, Clifford. 2005 (1972). “Notes on the Balinese Cock Fight.” *Daedalus* 134(4): 56-86.

The Economist. 2012. Election fighting: Violence flares in Kenya ahead of the election. September 21.

Oscar Oviedo-Trespalacios, Ali Kemal Çelik, Ana Martielda, Anna Włodarczyk, Daniel Demant, Duy Q. Nguyen-Phuoc, Elisabeth Rubie, Erkan Oktay, Gabriel Dorantes Argandar, J.E. Rod, Jean Carlos Natividade, Joonha Park, Jorge Tiago Bastos, Laura Martínez-Buelvas, Maria de Fátima Pereira da Silva, Mário Velindro, Matus Sucha, Mauricio Orozco-Fontalvo, Miguel Barboza-Palomino, Quan Yuan, Rui Mendes, Rusdi Rusli, Samira Ramezani, Sergio A. Useche, Sibele Dias de Aquino, Takashi Tsubakita, Tatiana Volkodav, Tiina Rinne, Violeta Enea, Yonggang Wang, Mark King. 2021. “Alcohol-impaired Walking in 16 Countries: A Theory-Based Investigation.” *Accident Analysis & Prevention* 159: 106212.

Recommended reading

Hoover Green, Amanda. 2013. *How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps*. Drexel University. Available at: <https://www.ameliahoovergreen.com/uploads/9/3/0/9/93091546/howtoread.pdf>.

WEEK 2: THEORIES AND CAUSALITY

“There is nothing quite as practical as a good theory.” Kurt Lewin, (1890-1947)

Required reading

Abbott, Andrew. 2004. "Chapter 7: Ideas and Puzzles," in *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. New York: W. W. Norton: 211-247.

Elster, Jon. 1989. "Chapter 1: Mechanisms," in *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Sydney: Cambridge University Press: 3-10.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. "Chapter 1: The Science in Social Science," in *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press: 3-23.

WEEK 3: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACHES

Required reading

Collier, David. (2011). "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44(4): 823-830.

Gerring, John. "The Case Study: What It Is and What It Does." *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Robert E. Goodin. Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1,132-1,165.

WEEK 4: CONCEPTS AND MEASURES

Required reading

Adcock and Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 529-546.

Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35(1): 5-34.

Paxton, Pamela. 2000. "Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35(3): 92-111.

WEEK 5: SURVEYS AND SAMPLING

Required reading

Levitt, Steven, and Sudhir Venkatesh. 2000. "An Economic Analysis of a Drug-Selling Gang's Finances." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 115: 755- 789.

Page, Stewart. 1997. "An Unobtrusive Measure of Racial Behavior in a University Cafeteria." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 27: 2,172-2,176.

Schaeffer, Nora Cate, and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 65-88.

Recommended reading

Open Science Collaboration. 2015. "Estimating the Reproducibility of Psychological Science." *Science* 349(6251).

WEEK 6: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Required reading

Gerring, John. 2012. "Mere Description." *British Journal of Political Science* 32: 1–26.

Monroe, Burt L., Jennifer Pan, Margaret E. Roberts, Maya Sen, and Betsy Sinclair. 2015. "No! Formal Theory, Causal Inference, and Big Data Are Not Contradictory Trends in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 48(1): 71-74.

Grimmer, Justin. 2015. "We Are All Social Scientists Now: How Big Data, Machine Learning, and Causal Inference Work Together." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 48(1): 80-83.

WEEK 7: CORRELATIONS AND VISUALISATION

Required reading

Wainer, Howard. 1984. "How to Display Data Badly." *The American Statistician* 38(2):137–147.

Wainer, Howard. 1992. "Understanding Graphs and Tables." *Educational Researcher* 21(1): 14-23.

Tacq, Jacques. 2004. "Correlation," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods*, edited by Michael S. Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman, and Tim Futing Liao. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 200-204.

Robinson, W.S. 1950. "Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals." *American Sociological Review* 15(3): 351–357.

WEEK 8: COMPARING GROUPS

Required reading

Posner, Dan. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-546.

Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682–693.

Diamond, Jared. 2005. "One Island, Two Peoples, Two Histories: The Dominican Republic and Haiti," in *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*. New York: Penguin Books: 329-357.

WEEK 9: PROBABILITY & UNIVARIATE STATISTICS

Required reading

Hibbs, Douglas A. 1978. "On the Political Economy of Long-run Trends in Strike Activity." *British Journal of Political Science* 8(2):153–175.

Wheelan, Charles. 2013. "Chapter 5: Basic Probability: Don't Buy the Extended Warranty on your \$99 Printer," in *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data*. London: W.W. Norton: 68-89.

WEEK 10: BIVARIATE STATISTICS

Required reading

Long, Abby. No date. "10 Things to Know About Reading a Regression Table." Berkeley: EGAP. Available at: <https://egap.org/resource/10-things-to-know-about-reading-a-regression-table/>.

Wheelan, Charles. 2013. "Chapter 11: Regression Analysis: The Miracle Elixir," in *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data*. London: W.W. Norton: 185-211.

WEEK 11: MULTIVARIATE REGRESSION

Required reading

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2009. "Chapter 3: Making Regression Make Sense," in *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton University Press: 27-110.

Reinhart, Alex. 2015. "Chapter 8: Model Abuse," in *Statistics Done Wrong: The Woefully Complete Guide*. San Francisco: No Starch Press: 79-88.

WEEK 12: WRAPPING UP

Required reading

Merriam, Charles. 1921. "The Present State of the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 15(2):173–85.

Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis* 14(3): 227–249.

Lieberman, Evan S. 2005. "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 99(3): 435-452.

Recommended reading

Prewitt, Kenneth. 2009. "Can (Should) Political Science be a Policy Science?" in *The Future of Political Science: 100 Perspectives*, edited by Gary King, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Norman H. Nie. New York: Routledge.

PART III. UNIVERSITY POLICIES & LOGISTICS

Feedback

Staff Feedback

Students will be given feedback in the following forms in this course:

- Workshops offer immediate feedback on your ideas and your understanding of course materials.
- The course convener is available to provide feedback on your essay plans prior to its due date.
- The course convener will provide written feedback on all written assignments on Wattle.

Student Feedback

ANU is committed to the demonstration of educational excellence and regularly seeks feedback from students. One of the key formal ways students have to provide feedback is through Student Experience of Learning Support (SELS) surveys. The feedback given in these surveys is anonymous and provides the Colleges, University Education Committee and Academic Board with opportunities to recognise excellent teaching, and opportunities for improvement. For more information on student surveys at ANU and reports on the feedback provided on ANU courses, go to:

<http://unistats.anu.edu.au/surveys/selt/students/> and
<http://unistats.anu.edu.au/surveys/selt/results/learning/>

Policies

ANU has educational policies, procedures and guidelines, which are designed to ensure that staff and students are aware of the University's academic standards, and implement them. You can find the University's education policies and an explanatory glossary at: <http://policies.anu.edu.au/>

Students are expected to have read the Academic Misconduct Rule before the commencement of their course.

Other key policies include:

- Student Assessment (Coursework)
- Student Surveys and Evaluations

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

The University offers a number of support services for students. Information on these is available online from <http://students.anu.edu.au/studentlife/>

PART IV. ASSESSMENT

The ANU is using Turnitin to enhance student citation and referencing techniques, and to assess assignment submissions as a component of the University's approach to managing Academic Integrity. For additional information regarding Turnitin please visit the [ANU Online](#) website.

Students may choose not to submit assessment items through Turnitin. In this instance you will be required to submit, alongside the assessment item itself, copies of all references included in the assessment item.

Assessment tasks

1. Participation

Due Date: Weekly throughout the semester

Value: 10%

Details of task: Participation marks will be based upon evidence of having done the assigned readings, evidence of having thought about the issues raised in this class, participation in and contribution to lectures and tutorials, and consideration and respect for other class members.

2. Preliminary problem statement

Due date: 12/08 3:00pm

Value: 10%

Word limit: 250 words

Estimated return date: 21/09

Details of task: In this assessment students will outline a preliminary puzzle and/or research question. They will also outline several possible answers to this question and both qualitative and quantitative ways that they might go about evaluating their proposed answers.

3. Qualitative paper

Due date: 02/09 3:00pm

Value: 20%

Word limit: 1,500 words

Estimated return date: 18/09

Details of task: Students will complete a 1,500-word paper that uses qualitative research to answer their proposed research question.

4. Revised problem statement

Due date: 30/09 3:00pm

Value: 10%

Word limit: 250 words

Estimated return date: 09/10

Details of task: Given students previous qualitative research they will revisit and revise their initial problem statement to include a quantitative research design.

5. Final paper

Due date: 04/11 3:00pm

Value: 50%

Word limit: 3,000 words

Estimated return date: Same date as final marks released.

Details of task: The final paper is the culmination of a semester's study. Students will write a final research paper that includes a clear research design and clearly described quantitative analysis.

Written assignments' rubrics

The markers for your four written assignments will be using the same rubric as that employed by CASS's honours thesis markers. This rubric (called "Instructions to Examiners") and the "Guide for awarding a percentage mark" we will also use can be found in CASS's *Masters and Honours Guide 2022*, Appendix A (pp. 17-19).

This masters and honours guide is available at:

<https://cass.anu.edu.au/sites/default/files/Honours%20and%20Masters%20Guide%202022.pdf>

For the preliminary and revised problem statements (described above) elements to consider include 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9 (pp. 17-18). For the qualitative and final papers, elements 1-9 will be used (pp. 17-18).

Assignment submission

Assignments are submitted using Turnitin in the course Wattle site. You will be required to electronically sign a declaration as part of the submission of your assignment. This declaration should not be included in the submission itself. Please keep a copy of the assignment for your records.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions and late submission of assessment pieces are covered by the Student Assessment (Coursework) Policy and Procedure.

The Course Convener may grant extensions for assessment pieces that are not examinations or take-home examinations. If you need an extension, you must request it in writing on or before the due date. If you have documented and appropriate medical evidence that demonstrates you were not able to request an extension on or before the due date, you may be able to request it after the due date. The CASS online extension request form can be found on Wattle.

Late submission of assessment tasks without an extension are penalised at the rate of 5% of the possible marks available per working day or part thereof. Late submission of assessment tasks is not accepted after 10 working days after the due date, or on or after the date specified in the course outline for the return of the assessment item.

Returning assignments

Students work will be returned with comments and marks on Turnitin.

Resubmission of assignments

Students may not resubmit assignments.

Referencing requirements

It is a requirement of this course that your essay conform to academic writing standards and referencing. The Chicago or Harvard in-text author-date referencing styles are preferred. You may contact the ANU Academic Skills and Writing Centre for further advice.

For details about both citation style please see the ANU style guide website at <https://academicskills.anu.edu.au/resources/handouts/referencing-style-guides>.

PART V. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I use myriad sources. I collect them like birds collect shiny things. These are based on several syllabi I was able to find online or were kindly shared with me. I have tried to collect a large as possible sample, but it is not the population of such classes taught. I have also benefited from methods classes at several places including Binghamton University, the University of Michigan, and Harvard University.

Course syllabi used in creating this course guide

Atkeson, Lonna. 2010. *Research Methods*. University of New Mexico.

Baumgartner, Frank R. 2001. *Methods of Political Analysis*. The Pennsylvania State University.

Bernstein, Jeffrey L. 2022. *Introduction to Political Analysis*. Eastern Michigan University.

Blackwell, Matthew. 2018. *Introduction to Political Science Research Methods*. Harvard University.

Brambor, Thomas. 2019. *Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science*. New York University.

Cleary, Matt. 2014. *The Logic of Political Inquiry*. Syracuse University.

Esarey, Justin. 2021. *Research Methods*. Wake Forest University.

Jenne, Erin. 2017. *Methods and Research Design*. Central European University.

Jordan, Jason. 2017. *Research Methods in Political Science*. Drew University.

Kamau, Casper. 2018. *Introduction to Research Methods*. University of Texas at Dallas.

King, Gary. 2021. *Designing Political Research*. Harvard University.

Leeper, Thomas. 2017-8. *Research Design in Political Science*. London School of Economics and Political Science.

Jamil Marques, Francisco Paulo. 2018. *Research Methods in Political Science*. Ponte.

Oakes, Amy. 2011. *Research Methods*. College of William and Mary.

Rienhardt, Gina Y. 2012. *Quantitative Methods I*. Texas A&M.

Schildkraut, Debbie. 2019. *Political Science Research Methods*. Tufts.

Zappile, Tina. 2017. *Introduction to Political Methodology*. Stockton University.

Methods books and textbooks

Research methodology is both a large and deep field. There are many more works out there than could ever be covered in one course. Below is a series of textbooks I found interesting or novel. A

Achen, Christopher. 1982. *Interpreting and Using Regression*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke, 2015. *Mastering 'Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Brady, Henry, and David Collier, eds. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. 2nd ed. New York; Rowman & Littlefield.

Bryman, Alan. 2016. *Social Research Methods*, 5th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Creswell, John W., and J. David. Creswell. 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 5th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Diez, David M., Christopher D. Barr, and Mine Çetinkaya-Rundel. 2015. *OpenIntro Statistics*. 4th ed. Available at <https://www.openintro.org/>.

Elster, Jon. 1989. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Field, Andy. 2016. *An Adventure in Statistics: The Reality Enigma*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Freedman, David H. 2009. *Statistical Models: Theory and Practice*. Revised edition. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Freedman, David, Robert Pisani, and Roger Purves. 2007. *Statistics*. 4th ed. New York: W.W. Norton.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigm and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Gelman, Andrew, and Jennifer L. Hill. 2006. *Data Analysis Using Regression and Multi-level/Hierarchical Models*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A United Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Green, Donald, and Ian Shapiro. 1994. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gray, Paul S., John B. Williamson, David A. Karp, and John R Dalton. 2007. *The Research Imagination: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hempel, Carl. 1966. *Philosophy of Natural Science*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Imai, Kosuke. 2018. *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Imbens, Guido W., and Donald B. Rubin. 2015. *Causal Inference in Statistics, Social, and Biomedical Sciences*. Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, Janet Buttolph, Richard A Joslyn, and H.T. Reynolds. 2008. *Political Science Research Methods*. 4th edition. Washington DC: CQ Press.

Hoover, Kenneth, and Todd Donovan. 1995. *The Elements of Social Science Thinking*. 6th ed. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

King, Gary. 1989. *Unifying Political Methodology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Lewis-Beck, Michael S. 1995. *Data Analysis: An Introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Li, Quan. 2018. *Using R for Data Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Monogan, James E. III. 2016. *Political Analysis Using R*. New York: Springer.

Morgan, Stephen L., and Christopher Winship. 2015. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Pollock, Philip H. 2015. *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*. 3rd edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Rich, Richard C., Craig Leonard Brians, Jarol B. Manheim, and Lars Willnat. 2018. *Empirical Political Analysis*. 9th edition. New York: Routledge.

Rosenbaum, Paul R. 2009. *Design of Observational Studies*. New York: Springer.

Shively, W. Phillips. 2017. *The Craft of Political Research*. 10th ed. New York: Routledge.

Salkind, Neil. 2019. *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*. 7th edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Seawright, Jason. 2016. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Shadish, William R, Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. 2001. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Toshkov, Dimiter. 2016. *Research Design in Political Science*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Wheelan, Charles. 2013. *Naked Statistics*. New York: W.W. Norton.