

PLSC-501: Methods of Political Analysis

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Course description

This course introduces students to the logic that guides the social scientific study of politics. In contrast to PLSC 502, 503, and 504, which focus on the analysis of data, this seminar focuses on the fundamentals of social scientific inquiry, theory building, and research design that precede data analysis. In 2008, Donald Rubin coined a now ubiquitous phrase: “Design trumps analysis.” In this course, we’re going to think about what this means and why this is. The course will provide students with the tools necessary to 1) distinguish theories from facts and assertions; 2) derive testable and falsifiable hypotheses from theory; and 3) design research projects, conduct research, and communicate results. We will consider the components of good research design as we cover a variety of methods used in contemporary political science research. The course is designed to encourage students to think more deeply about their own research interests and improve their ability to evaluate the research of others. Topics include concepts and measurement, design in experimental and observational settings, qualitative methodology, survey sampling and selection, comparisons of small-N and large-N designs, and approaches to scientific inference.

Objectives and learning outcomes

- Introduce students to current standards, norms, and procedures that facilitate the successful design and execution of political science research.
- Learn how to apply these methods to answer “big” questions of interest to political scientists and the public.
- Develop an understanding of how to effectively assess, critique, and improve empirical research across all fields and sub-fields in political science.

Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites to enroll in this course. With a little bit of curiosity and hard work, you can succeed in this class even if you have not taken coursework in political science or political methodology. Students who are not currently enrolled in the Department of Political Science’s PhD program must speak with the instructor before enrolling.

Class schedule

Week	Day	Date	Theme
1	Thu	28 Aug	Introduction
2	Thu	4 Sep	Research questions
3	Thu	11 Sep	No class (RD/PAP: Research questions due)
4	Thu	18 Sep	Theory and theoretical models
5	Thu	25 Sep	Concepts and operationalization (Assignment 1 due)
6	Thu	2 Oct	Measurement and validity
7	Thu	9 Oct	Writing a literature review (Assignment 2 due)
8	Thu	16 Oct	Causality and causal inference
9	Thu	23 Oct	Causal mechanisms (Zoom) (RD/PAP: Literature review due)
10	Thu	30 Oct	Regression (Assignment 3 due)
11	Thu	6 Nov	No class
12	Thu	13 Nov	Experiments (Zoom) (RD/PAP: Theory and hypotheses due)
13	Thu	20 Nov	Observational data
14	Thu	4 Dec	Qualitative and mixed methods (Assignment 4 due)
15	Thu	11 Dec	Final paper presentations

Course requirements

Your grade will be based on the following items:

1. In-class participation: **20%**

This is a seminar-style class that centers the lively (and respectful) exchange of ideas, reflections, and arguments. Students should come to class having done all the required readings. As students, it is your collective responsibility to contribute to our discussions. Your experience in this course will be more productive and intellectually rewarding if you participate. You are welcome to pose questions for discussion, as well: questions can be as generative as explanations.

The following rubric will be used to grade in-class participation:

- *Attendance: 50%*
- *Active participation: 25%*
- *Mastery of course material: 25%*

Students will receive a class participation grade three times over the course of the semester: after Week 5 (covering Weeks 1-5), after Week 10 (covering Weeks 6-10), and after Week 15 (covering Weeks 11-15).

2. Assignments (4): **40%**

Over the course of the semester, each student will be asked to complete four (4) assignments. These exercises are designed to assess your understanding of key course themes and concepts. You may discuss these assignments with your classmates, professors, and others—but your written submission must be your own work.

3. Research design / pre-analysis plan (RD/PAP): **40%**

Students will write one (1) research design / pre-analysis plan on a topic of their choosing. Because this class is designed to be helpful for your research, the paper should aim to answer a “big” question in any subfield of political science. Ideally, you could pursue this project in a subsequent class. With some revisions, the final product could—with some revisions—be used to develop a master’s thesis, dissertation chapter, or journal article.

The research design / pre-analysis plan should outline the basic elements of an original research project. We will discuss the components of a successful project over the course of the semester. At a minimum, the design should include a research question, literature review, theoretical contribution, at least two (2) observable implications or falsifiable hypotheses, and a description of the proposed data collection and analysis. The proposed data collection and analysis must include a means—such as an experiment, quasi-experiment, or other data collection plan—to answer your research question (and test your hypotheses). Ideally, the proposed data collection and analysis will exhibit a depth of understanding of a smaller set of ideas that will be raised in the course. Throughout the semester, draft components of your research design will be submitted (and graded) well in advance of the final paper deadline. These components include the following:

- *Research questions: 5%* (1,000-1,500 words)

You will write a short description of three (3) research questions that you are interested in. Each question should include a short, paragraph-length description of the question that specifies both the independent and dependent variables. The paper should close with a short, paragraph-length discussion of which research question you are most interested in and why. Though this is a short writing assignment, it will require some background reading and research. You are encouraged to confer with faculty who work actively in these research areas for suggestions on what to read and/or which questions you are exploring have not yet been answered satisfactorily.

- *Literature review: 5%* (2,000-2,500 words)

You will write a literature review that summarizes past research on the research question you choose. You should start this assignment by reading at least ten (10) published articles or books related to your chosen research question. How do you plan to situate your research design in this literature? What have other scholars already argued and found? How can their theoretical approaches be improved or grouped into “buckets” of existing approaches? Are there common shortcomings in these approaches that can be improved with better data, a better design, or something else? Please note that literature reviews are not simply annotated

bibliographies that summarize the work of others. Good literature reviews identify the state of knowledge, communicate important shortcomings and/or possible openings, and provide a roadmap that sets up your own theoretical thinking.

– *Theory and hypotheses: 5%* (1,000-1,500 words)

You will present an argument that provides an answer to your research question. You will develop one or more claims which follow logically from this answer in the form of either a) a set of at least two (2) observable implications of the argument or b) a set of at least two (2) hypotheses that follow from the argument. Students are encouraged—though not required—to develop a *causal* argument. We will discuss what these means over the course of the semester.

– *Presentation: 5%*

During the last meeting of the semester, you will present your research design to the class. These conference-style presentations are designed to mirror those at the annual meeting of APSA and other professional associations. You should aim to present for 10-12 minutes with no more than ten (10) slides. More information about the presentations will be shared later in the semester.

– *Final paper: 20%* (6,000-8,000 words)

The final submission should 1) incorporate both feedback and changes to your own thinking from the above components of the design and 2) include a description of the proposed data collection and analysis. The final paper should not include verbatim copies of the above, submitted components. Ideally, your own knowledge and thinking about your research question will expand and evolve over the course of the semester.

Assignment schedule

Week	Day	Date	Assignment	Percent
3	Thu	11 Sep	RD/PAP: Research questions	5
5	Thu	25 Sep	Assignment 1	10
7	Thu	9 Oct	Assignment 2	10
9	Thu	23 Oct	RD/PAP: Literature review	5
10	Thu	30 Oct	Assignment 3	10
12	Thu	13 Nov	RD/PAP: Theory and hypotheses	5
14	Thu	4 Dec	Assignment 4	10
15	Thu	11 Dec	RD/PAP: Presentation	5
	Mon	15 Dec	RD/PAP: Final paper	20

Grading

All assignments will be graded on a 100 point scale. All letter grades (including the final course grade) will be calculated using the following scale:

	A	100-93%	A-	92-90%	
B+	89-87%	B	86-83%	B-	82-80%
C+	79-77%	C	76-70%		
		D	69-60%		
		F	<60%		

If you would like to dispute the grade you receive on an assignment, you must wait at least two (2) full days after you receive your grade to submit a grade dispute. If you plan to dispute your grade, you must do so in writing via email. The email must contain a detailed explanation for each item you think was incorrectly marked. Where applicable, you must reference specific passages in course readings and explain your logic. I will then review the dispute and issue a decision within one (1) week. Any dispute must be sent not later than two (2) weeks after receiving the grade. Disputes submitted after this time will not be accepted.

Reference material

Throughout the semester, we will at times read excerpts from a variety of textbooks focused on research design, methodology, and the logic of causal inference in political science. A list of these textbooks—and others—are included below. You are strongly encouraged to consult these textbooks if you need more background information or guidance throughout the semester:

- Cunningham, Scott. 2021. *Causal Inference: The Mixtape*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan and Anthony Fowler. 2021. *Thinking Clearly with Data: A Guide to Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goertz, Gary. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gray, Paul S., John B. Williamson, David A. Karp, and John R. Dalphin. 2007. *The Research Imagination: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hernán, Miguel A. and James M. Robins. 2024. *Causal Inference: What If*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.
- Huntington-Klein, Nick. 2021. *The Effect: An Introduction to Research Design and Causality*. Boca Raton: CRC Press.
- Imai, Kosuke. 2018. *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 3rd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rosenbaum, Paul R. 2017. *Observation and Experiment: An Introduction to Causal Inference*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Shively, W. Phillips. 2019. *The Craft of Political Research*. 10th edition. London: Routledge.
- Toshkov, Dimiter. 2016. *Research Design in Political Science*. London: Palgrave.

Course policies and procedures

Attendance

This class will be taught in-person. Attendance is required at each meeting. If you cannot attend class due to an extracurricular activity, athletic event, or religious holiday, please notify me in the first two (2) weeks of class or at least a week prior so we can make alternative arrangements if necessary. Unexcused absences will result in a reduction of your class participation and attendance grade.

Course communication

We will use Canvas to communicate with each other throughout the course. The course website contains the syllabus, course readings, and links to Perusall and Top Hat.

If you have a quick or non-substantive question about the course, email is the best way to reach me. I typically respond to email messages quickly, but if you do not hear back from me within 48 hours, please follow up with a reminder. Students are encouraged to read Laura Portwood-Stacer's article on email communication: "[How to Email Your Professor \(without being annoying AF\)](#)."

To the best of your ability, avoid sending last-minute emails prior to assignment due dates. I may not be able to help you. Please familiarize yourself with important dates, add them to your calendars, and give yourself enough time to work on course assignments. I realize this may not always be possible. If you have questions about course material or your performance, please make an appointment to speak with me during office hours. If you cannot meet during office hours, appointments can be made during weekdays with some notice.

Deadlines, late assignments, and incomplete grades

Unless otherwise noted, assignments must be submitted by 11:59pm EST on the date they are due. Late assignments will face a ten (10) point penalty for each day late without a prior extension. If you have a personal problem that precludes you from completing coursework on time, please send me an email immediately. A doctor's note, or note from a dean, may be requested. Please familiarize yourself with the university's policies for [incomplete work](#). **Please note: In order to receive a passing grade in this course, all course requirements must be completed by the end of the semester.**

Responsible uses of artificial intelligence

Students are permitted to use artificial intelligence (AI) tools in this course. But please note that it is a violation of university policy to misrepresent work that you submit or exchange with your instructor by characterizing it as your own: this includes submitting responses to assignments that do not acknowledge the use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT).

Students must acknowledge the use of and give credit to AI tools whenever they are used, even if only to generate ideas rather than usable text or illustrations. When using AI tools for written assignments, please consult the following [reference guide](#) and add an appendix that describes:

- the entire exchange (i.e., your prompts and responses) with the most relevant sections highlighted
- a description of precisely which AI tools were used (i.e., ChatGPT, Cursor, or something else)
- an explanation of how the AI tools were used (i.e., to generate ideas, phrases, elements of text, long text blocks, lines of arguments, pieces of evidence, illustrations of key concepts, etc.)
- an explanation of why AI tools were used (i.e., to save time, to overcome writer's block, to stimulate thinking, to handle stress, to clarify prose, to translate something, or to experiment for fun)

In general, AI tools should be used wisely and reflexively with an aim to deepen your understanding of course material. Keep in mind, though, that AI tools may generate inaccurate information.

Laptops, mobile devices and technology

You may use your laptop to take notes during class meetings. Laptops can be a useful learning tool, but they can also distract you (and others). Before the start of class, please silence your mobile

devices, disable notifications, and close applications that will prevent you from participating actively during class meetings. Audio and video recording devices are prohibited unless previously approved by Student Disability Resources (SDR) in advance. This will encourage the development of a learning environment conducive to the free and open exchange of ideas without fear that student and faculty contributions will be reproduced or distributed without consent. This policy applies to class meetings, office hours, and other informal or group meetings outside of scheduled class meetings.

Collaboration

Course assignments present many opportunities to work together and share ideas. Students are encouraged to collaborate and consult readings and resources not included on this syllabus. However, as with any course that includes coding, computer programming, and data analysis, there is a clear distinction between permissible collaboration and unacceptable copying or plagiarism. Assignments are designed to allow you to reach your own understanding of the question or problem and discover a solution. Conversations with your professor(s), instructional staff, and classmates are acceptable. But when writing code, reactions, and other written assignments, these conversations are no longer appropriate. The code and written work must be your own work. Under no circumstances should you copy code. Incorporating someone else's code into your work in any form is plagiarism. Sharing code in digital form with your classmates is especially prohibited: you should not e-mail your code to anyone. Please take this policy seriously. It supplements (and does not replace) the Penn State [Code of Conduct](#) described below. If you have any questions, please speak with me before submitting your work.

Reading and studying

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before each class meeting and to contribute to class discussions. Students are not expected to understand every theoretical or technical detail that appears in each reading, but you should read each piece carefully. Reading academic or scientific articles can be difficult. The following guides present different approaches that will help you identify the main ideas, key concepts, and central arguments in each reading.

- [“How to Read in College,”](#) by Timothy Burke
- [“Beyond the Abstract: Reading for Meaning in Academia,”](#) by Jessica Calarco
- [“How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps,”](#) by Amelia Hoover Green
- [“How to Read a \(Quantitative\) Journal Article,”](#) by Greta Krippner
- [“Reading and Understanding Political Science,”](#) by Leanne C. Powner
- [“Reading a Journal Article,”](#) by Chad Raymond
- [“Professional Writing in Political Science: A Highly Opinionated Essay,”](#) by James A. Stimson

You may also want to consult this Vox guide on how to study smarter: [“Re-reading is inefficient. Here are 8 tips for studying smarter.”](#) For more information, please consult the university's [learning resources](#).

Inclement weather

According to [updated university guidance](#) for students, faculty and staff, “In the event that normal operations at a Penn State location are disrupted due to snow or other weather or emergency conditions, individuals are urged to avoid coming to campus, if possible, and those who must visit campus should remain alert and avoid sections of campus that may be covered in snow or ice.” Class cancellations will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Please note that in the event class is cancelled, in-person meetings cannot be moved to synchronous remote meetings.

Academic integrity

The Penn State [Code of Conduct](#) defines academic integrity as: “the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, students should act with personal integrity, respect other students’ dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.”

Violations of academic integrity “include, but are not limited to, copying, plagiarism, fabrication of information or citations, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, and tampering with the academic work of other students.” Please familiarize yourself with these policies. Students are strongly encouraged to consult the College of the Liberal Arts’ [academic integrity resources](#).

Commitment to an equitable and inclusive learning environment

Penn State adheres to the philosophy that all community members should enjoy a learning environment free from harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or violence of any kind. If you encounter sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability, please contact the [Office of Educational Equity](#) or the [Office of Sexual Misconduct Prevention and Response](#).

Counseling & psychological services

Many students at Penn State face personal, emotional, or psychological challenges or difficulties that may interfere with their academic progress, emotional well-being, or social or professional development. [Counseling & Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) offers students a variety of confidential services provided by trained staff who welcome all students and embrace an approach grounded in an understanding of different cultural and religious backgrounds and a respect for differences in race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and disability. CAPS services include wellness and self-help options; group, individual, and couples counseling; crisis intervention; psychiatric services; virtual services; and community education and outreach services for the University community. If you need [immediate support](#) you may call CAPS at +1 814 863 0395 (M-F, 8:00am-5:00pm), call the Penn State Crisis Line at +1 877 229 6400 (24/7), or text “LIONS” to the Crisis Text Line at 741741 (24/7).

Disability accommodation and accessibility services

I am committed to ensuring your experience in this class is an enjoyable one. Students with disabilities that have been documented by Student Disability Resources (SDR) will be appropriately accommodated. The primary mission of [Student Disability Resources \(SDR\)](#) is to “explore individualized reasonable accommodations for equal access and full participation in academic pursuits; seek interactions with peers or study space; connect with on- and off-campus resources; and promote disability as an important aspect of diversity.” In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodation, students should inform

SDR as soon as possible of their needs. If you have not yet contacted SDR but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodation, please do so during the first week of the course. Currently, students can choose either in-person or virtual appointments with SDR staff. Please call SDR at +1 814 863 1807 to schedule an appointment or email upsdr@psu.edu with any questions. SDR will provide you with a letter that will describe the accommodations I will be able to make. You must follow this process for every semester that you request reasonable accommodation.

Course materials and schedule

1. Introduction

28 Aug

Discussion:

- ① Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Read pp. 1-26 in “Research Design and the Accumulation of Knowledge.”
- ② King, Gary. 2020. “So You’re A Grad Student Now? Maybe You Should Do This.” In *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*, eds. Robert J. Franzese, Jr. and Luigi Curini. London: Sage Publications, pp. 1-4.
- ③ King, Gary. 2006. “Publication, Publication.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 119-125.
- ④ Popper, Karl R. 1962. *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. New York: Basic Books. Read pp. 33-59 in “Science: Conjectures and Refutations.”

2. Research questions

4 Sep

Lecture:

- ① Toshkov, Dimitar. 2016. *Research Design in Political Science*. London: Palgrave. Read pp. 23-55 in “Types of Research and Research Questions.”
- ② Huntington-Klein, Nick. 2021. *The Effect: An Introduction to Research Design and Causality*. Boca Raton: CRC Press. Read pp. 1-7 in “Designing Research,” pp. 9-18 in “Research questions,” and pp. 19-43 in “Describing Variables.”

Discussion:

- ① Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan and Anthony Fowler. 2021. *Thinking Clearly with Data: A Guide to Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Read pp. 1-9 in “Thinking Clearly in a Data-Driven Age.”
- ② Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Read pp. 27-44 and skim pp. 44-88 in “Big Questions, Little Answers: How the Questions You Choose Affect the Answers You Get.”
- ③ Rozenas, Arturas and Yuri M. Zhukov. 2019. “Mass Repression and Political Loyalty: Evidence from Stalin’s ‘Terror by Hunger.’” *American Political Science Review* 113(2):569-583.

3. No class (RD/PAP: Research questions due)

11 Sep

4. Theory and theoretical models

18 Sep

Lecture:

- ① Shively, W. Phillips. 2019. *The Craft of Political Research*. 10th edition. London: Routledge. Read pp. 14-33 in “Political Theories and Research Topics.”
- ② Rosenbaum, Paul R. 2017. *Observation and Experiment: An Introduction to Causal Inference*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Read pp. 118-141 in “Elaborate Theories.”
- ③ Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 3rd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Read pp. 25-55 in “The Art of Theory Building.”

Discussion:

- ① Clarke, Kevin A. and David M. Primo. 2007. “Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach.” *Perspectives on Politics* 5(4): 741-753.
- ② Huber, John. 2013. “Is Theory Getting Lost in the Identification Revolution?” *Good Authority*. [LINK](#).

5. Concepts and operationalization (Assignment 1 due)

25 Sep

Lecture:

- ① Gerring, John. 1999. “What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences.” *Polity* 31(3): 357-393.
- ② Goertz, Gary. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User’s Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Read pp. 27-67 in “Structuring and Theorizing Concepts” and pp. 69-94 in “Concept Intension and Extension.”

Discussion:

- ① Tilly, Charles. 2006. *Regimes and Repertoires*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Read pp. 1-17 in “What are Regimes?” and pp. 18-29 in “How Regimes Work.”
- ② Walsh, Catherine Kramer. 2012. “Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective.” *American Political Science Review* 106(3): 517-532.

6. Measurement and validity

2 Oct

Lecture:

- ① Adcock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research.” *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 529-546.
- ② Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Read pp. 155-193 in “Measurements.”

Discussion:

- ① Meng, Anne. 2020. *Constraining Dictatorship: From Personalized Rule to Institutionalized Regimes*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Read pp. 93-127 in “How Should Institutionalization Be Measured?”
- ② Bonica, Adam. 2013. “Mapping the Ideological Marketplace.” *American Journal of Political Science* 58(2): 367-386.

7. Writing a literature review (Assignment 2 due)

9 Oct

Lecture:

- ① Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 127-132.
- ② McMenamain, Iain. 2006. "Process and Text: Teaching Students to Review the Literature." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 133-135.
- ③ Baumeister, Roy F. and Mark R. Leary. 1997. "Writing Narrative Literature Reviews." *Review of General Psychology* 1(3): 311-320.

Discussion:

- ① Carnes, Nicholas and Noam Lupu. 2016. "Do Voters Dislike Working-Class Candidates? Voter Biases and the Descriptive Underrepresentation of the Working Class." *American Political Science Review* 110(4) 832:844.

8. Causality and causal inference

16 Oct

Lecture:

- ① Brady, Henry E. 2008. "Causation and Explanation in Social Science" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, eds. Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 217-270.
- ② Freese, Jeremy and J. Alex Kevern. 2013. "Types of Causes" in *Handbook of Causal Analysis for Social Research*, ed. Stephen L. Morgan. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 27-41.

Discussion:

- ① Levy, Jack S. 2015. "Counterfactuals, Causal Inference, and Historical Analysis." *Security Studies* 24(3): 378-402.
- ② Hernán, Miguel A. and James M. Robins. 2024. *Causal Inference: What If*. Boca Raton: CRC Press. Read pp. 3-12 in "A Definition of Causal Effect."

9. Causal mechanisms (RD/PAP: Literature review due)

23 Oct

Lecture:

- ① Hedström, Peter and Ylikoski, Petri. 2010. "Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36(1): 49-67.
- ② Steel, Daniel. 2004. "Social Mechanisms and Causal Inference." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 34(1): 55-78. Elster, Jon. 1998. "A Plea for Mechanisms" in *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*, eds. Peter Hedström and Richard Swedberg. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 45-73.

Discussion:

- ① Falleti, Tulia G. and Julia F. Lynch. 2009. "Context and Causal Mechanisms in Political Analysis." *Comparative Political Studies* 42(9): 1143-1166.
- ② Gerring, John. 2010. "Causal Mechanisms: Yes, But..." *Comparative Political Studies* 43(11): 1499-1526.
- ③ Tavana, Daniel L. 2025. "Endogenous Opposition: Identity and Ideology in Kuwaiti Electoral Politics." *American Journal of Political Science*.

10. Regression (Assignment 3 due)**30 Oct**

Lecture:

- ① Huntington-Klein, Nick. 2021. *The Effect: An Introduction to Research Design and Causality*. Boca Raton: CRC Press. Read pp. 179-266 in “Regression.”
- ② Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan and Anthony Fowler. 2021. *Thinking Clearly with Data: A Guide to Quantitative Reasoning and Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Read pp. 54-73 in “Correlation Requires Variation” and pp. 74-93 in “Regression for Describing and Forecasting.”

Discussion:

- ① Samii, Cyrus. 2016. “Causal Empiricism in Quantitative Research.” *Journal of Politics* 78(3): 941-955.
- ② Seawright, Jason. 2010. “Regression-Based Inference: A Case Study in Failed Causal Assessment” in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, eds. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 247-272.

11. No class**6 Nov****12. Experiments (RD/PAP: Theory and hypotheses due)****13 Nov**

Lecture:

- ① Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski and Arthur Lupia. 2011. “Experiments: An Introduction to Core Concepts.” In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*, eds. James N. Druckman, Donald P. Greene, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 15-26.
- ② Druckman, James N., Adam J. Howat, and Kevin J. Mullinix. 2018. “Graduate Advising in Experimental Research Groups.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(3): 620-624.
- ③ Evans, Annabel Ness and Bryan J. Rooney. 2008. *Methods in Psychological Research*. London: Sage Publications. Read pp. 76-96 in “Hypothesis Testing, Power, and Control: A Review of the Basics” and pp. 133-157 in “Experimental Design: Independent Groups Designs.”

Discussion:

- ① Truong, Mai. 2024. “The ‘Ironic Impact’ of Pro-Democracy Activists: How Pro-Democratic Frames Undermine Support for Local Policy-Based Protests in Authoritarian Regimes.” *Comparative Political Studies* 57(7): 1107-1138.
- ② Tavana, Daniel L., Kevan Harris, Gary Fong, and Amir Farmanesh. 2025. “Preference Falsification in Iran.” [LINK](#).

13. Observational data

20 Nov

Lecture:

- ① Dunning, Thad. 2010. “Design-Based Inference: Beyond the Pitfalls of Regression Analysis?” in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, eds. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, pp. 273-312.
- ② Cirone, Alexandra and Arthur Spirling. 2021. “Turning History into Data: Data Collection, Measurement, and Inference in HPE.” *Journal of Historical Political Economy* 1(1):127-154.

Discussion:

- ① Tavana, Daniel L., Christiana Parreira, and Lindsay Walsh. 2025. “From Protest to Parliament: Lebanon’s October Revolution and the Rise of Movement Parties.” [LINK](#).
- ② De Kadt, Daniel, Ada Johnson-Kanu, and Melissa L. Sands. 2024. “State Violence, Party Formation, and Electoral Accountability: The Political Legacy of the Marikana Massacre.” *American Political Science Review* 118(2): 563-583.

14. Qualitative and mixed methods (Assignment 4 due)

4 Dec

Lecture:

- ① Lareau, Annette. 2021. *Listening to People: A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing It All Up*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Read pp. 38-59 in “Preparing: The Early Steps in a Study,” pp. 60-90 in “Learning to Interview: What to Do before and after the Interview,” pp. 91-139 in “How to Conduct a Good Interview: Dig Deep,” and pp. 226-259 in “Writing: Becoming Clearer about Your Contribution.”
- ② Small, Mario L. and Jenna M. Cook. 2021. “Using Interviews to Understand Why: Challenges and Strategies in the Study of Motivated Action.” *Sociological Methods & Research* 52(4): 1591-1631.

Discussion:

- ① Shesterinina, Anastasia. 2016. “Collective Threat Framing and Mobilization in Civil War.” *American Political Science Review* 110(3): 411-427. (and read the qualitative methods appendix)
- ② Ahmed, Amel and Rudra Sil. 2012. “When Multi-Method Research Subverts Methodological Pluralism—Or, Why We Still Need Single-Method Research.” *Perspectives on Politics* 10(04): 935-953. (skim)

15. Final paper presentations

11 Dec
