

COURSE SYLLABUS

Political Science 347: Intro to Research Methods

Meets 8/27/2018-12/14/2018, MWF 1:00p-1:50p, Location: SS143

Casper Kamau, PhD

Course Information

The general objective of this course is to present students with a rigorous approach to the guidelines, design, conduct, evaluation, and communication of state-of-the-science research in Political Science and related areas of academic inquiry. The specific objectives of the course are to help students learn to:

- describe and assess the logic of Political Science research in particular and of scientific research in general - that is, the state of an area of inquiry in terms of current contributions and future directions;
- describe and assess the scope of Political Science research - that is, the failures or successes of Political Science research programs in terms of making knowledge gains;
- describe, assess, and apply the methodologies of Political Science research - that is, the design, conduct, evaluation, and communication of research, in terms of the identification of interesting and important (and researchable) questions, the development of credible answers in terms of appropriate methodologies and strategies, and the communication and evaluation of research results.

No Required Reading

We will use the Annual Review of Political Science found online or at the library

Calendar

An Introduction to The Course

August 27 - 31

Writing a research paper

Steps in the Research Process

The Logic, Scope and Value of Political Science Research

September 3 -7

Choose a topic and Terms

Dealing with information and knowledge

Munger, Michael C., "Political Science and Fundamental Research,"

September 10 – 14

Logic X=Y

Ostrom, Elinor, "The Danger of Self-Evident Truths."

September 17-21

Concepts

Huth, Paul K., "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Implications."

Sept 24-28

Theories

The Methodology of Political Science Research**October 1 – 5**

Literature review, Theory, and Hypothesis

Walt, Stephen M., "The Relationship Between Theory and Policy in International Relations."

October 8 – 12

Quantitative and Qualitative

Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics."

October 15 – 19

How do you ask good questions?

October 22 -26

International Relations vs. Comparative Politics

Engerman, Stanley L. and Kenneth L.Sokoloff, "Debating the Role of Institutions in Political and Economic Development: Theory, History, and Findings."

October 29 – November 2

How do you build a good model?

How do political scientists investigate questions/implement models?

Research Design Papers Due**November 5-9**

Turn in Paper

How do you develop a good research design?

Helmke, Gretchen and Frances Rosenbluth, "Regimes and the Rule of Law: Judicial Independence in Comparative Perspective."

November 12-16

Operationalization

Hart, John, "Neglected Aspects of The Study of the Presidency."

November 19-23

How to use qualitative and quantitative in tandem?

Polsby, Nelson W. and Eric Schickler, "Landmarks in The Study of Congress since 1945."

November 26-30

The Comparative Methods

Necessary and Sufficient Conditions

December 3-7

Presentations

Group A

December 10-14

Group B

Grading Criteria and Assignments

Class Participation 20%; Paper Logic Essay 20%; In Class Assignments and Article Summaries 20%, Research Paper 20%, Presentation 20%

A+: 95-100%; A-: 90-94; B+: 83-89; B: 77-82; B-: 70-76; C+: 65-69; C: 60-64; F: Below 60%.

Class Participation: Regular attendance; Assigned reading prior to the class meeting when it will be discussed; Class presentations based on assigned readings; Constructive and frequent contributions to seminar discussions.

Design Essay: A double-spaced, typed, 3-page essay that: (1) describes the research paper and topic you have selected X=Y Due Date October 5

Research Design Paper: A double-spaced, typed, 10-page paper - one-page Title page and one-page Reference page Due Date November 9

- states and interesting and important research question, and justifies why it is so (1 page);
- reviews a selection of relevant research literature (see Johnson and Reynolds, ch. 6) that includes scholarly chapters in edited volumes (such as *Annual Review of Political Science*) and/or in scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals in either a chronological (date-of-publication) order or a knowledge-production (set-of-ideas) form (3 pages);
- articulates an empirically testable hypothesis, identifies its independent and dependent variables, precisely defines the core concepts associated with these variables, and discusses what several indicators or measures of these variables would be (2 pages);
- discusses appropriate sampling considerations as well as appropriate research design (methodologies of data collection) needed to test the hypothesis and to try to provide an answer to the research question (2 pages).
- lists endnotes and references in appropriate form.

Readings

Annual Review of Political Science

- Finnemore, Martha and Kathryn Sikkink, "Taking Stock: The Constructivist Research Program in International Relations and Comparative Politics."
- Huth, Paul K., "Deterrence and International Conflict: Empirical Findings and Theoretical Implications." Walt, Stephen M., "The Relationship Between Theory and Policy in International Relations."
- Engerman, Stanley L. and Kenneth L. Sokoloff, "Debating the Role of Institutions in Political and Economic Development: Theory, History, and Findings."
- Geddes, Barbara, "What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?"
- Treisman, Daniel, "What Have We Learned About the Causes of Corruption from Ten Years of Cross-National Empirical Research?"
- Munger, Michael C., "Political Science and Fundamental Research."
- Ostrom, Elinor, "The Danger of Self-Evident Truths."
- Baum, Lawrence, "The Supreme Court in American Politics."
- Graber, Mark A., "Constructing Judicial Review."
- Helmke, Gretchen and Frances Rosenbluth, "Regimes and the Rule of Law: Judicial Independence in Comparative Perspective."
- Bowles, Nigel, "Studying The Presidency."
- Hart, John, "Neglected Aspects of The Study of the Presidency."
- Polsby, Nelson W. and Eric Schickler, "Landmarks in The Study of Congress since 1945."

Note

In addition to the above, students are expected to:

- know that this syllabus, including calendar/timelines, is subject to change at the discretion of the Professor;
- access and read related policy material at the Universities Website

Campus carry: Texas Senate Bill- 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who otherwise authorized to carry a handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations. For a list of locations, please refer to <http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatments/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>) and/ or consult your event organizer). Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

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StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu

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