

Scope and Method of Political Science
GVPT 700
Fall 2009

Contact Information

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Thursday: 3:30-6:15

1108 Tydings Hall

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Office hours: 1:00-3:00 Wed.

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Professor D. Corstange (dcorstange@gvpt.umd.edu)

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Professor S. Croco (scroco@gvpt.umd.edu)

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Course Description:

This course is intended to introduce you to research methods in the social sciences. It is not a course in data analysis; it is rather a course on what sorts of data are worth gathering and analyzing. Like courses everywhere, this one reflects, for good and ill, the perspectives and experiences of the instructors. We presume that no single method is best, that all methods have strengths and weaknesses. We will consider both general recommendations and many examples. We hope you will emerge better equipped to undertake research of your own and better able to evaluate the work of others. Read the assigned material, think about it, and come to class each week ready to discuss it.

Part of the purpose of this class is to introduce you to the norms and expectations of your chosen profession. This means we have several requirements for class. First, everyone must do all of the reading every week, and come prepared to discuss it and ask questions. Second, we expect you to debate the readings constructively, meaning you must learn to critique and disagree with others' commentary politely, and must also come to accept others' criticism of your ideas as natural and part of the process.

Graded Components:

In-class Participation: 25%

Presentation: 15%

Research Design (8-10 pages): 30%

Short Assignments (6 total; 2 pages each): 30%

Class Readings

Week 1: Thursday, Sept. 3 Introduction

- Manheim et al. 1
- King et al. 1
- Adler and van Doren 2, 5, 9, and 19
- Lave and March 1

Week 2: Thursday, Sept. 10 Nuts and Bolts

- Manheim et al. 2
- King et al. 2 and 3
- Valentino, Huth and Balch-Lindsay “Draining the Sea”
- Levitt and Dubner “Where Have All the Criminals Gone?”
- Levitt and Donohue “Further Evidence that Legalized Abortion Lowered Crime”

Week 3: Thursday, Sept. 17 Pure Experiments

- Kinder and Palfrey “On Behalf of an Experimental Political Science”
- Shadish, Cook and Campbell 1-63.
- Croco “The Flip-side of Flip-Flopping”
- Banks “Is it Fear?”

Week 4: Thursday, Sept. 24 Q/N/F Experiments

- Campbell and Stanley (34-64)
- Achen 1 and 2
- Gerber and Green “Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout?”
- Gosnell 1927 (pgs 1-80)
- Miguel “Tribe or Nation?”

Week 5: Thursday, Oct. 1 Experiment Presentations

- Posner “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference”
- Hyde “The Observer Effect in International Politics”
- Kuklinski and Hurley "On Hearing and Interpreting Political Messages: A Cautionary Tale of Citizen Cue-Taking"
- Valentino et al. “Cues that Matter”

Week 6: Thursday, Oct. 8 Large-N Observational

- Manheim et al. 11 (14, 15, and 18 recommended)
- Acemoglu et al. “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development”
- Huth, Croco, and Appel “Bringing Law to the Table”
- Ross "Does Oil Hinder Democracy?"
- Kaufmann 2004 5 and 6

Week 7: Thursday, Oct. 15 Large-N Observational Presentations

- Weeks “Autocratic Audience Costs: Regime Type and Signaling Resolve”
- Sauvan and Phillips “Democracy, Foreign Policy, and Terrorism”
- Brader Campaigning for Hearts and Minds 6
- Nooruddin and Simmons "The Politics of Hard Choices"

Week 8: Thursday, Oct. 22 Surveys

- Manheim et al. 8
- Kish “Some Statistical Problems in Research Design”
- Bartels “Partisanship and Voting Behavior”
- Hatchett and Schuman “White Respondents and Race-of-Interviewer Effects”
- Inglehart et al. “Xenophobia and In-Group Solidarity in Iraq: A Natural Experiment on the Impact of Insecurity”

Week 9: Thursday, Oct. 29 Survey Presentations

- Tessler and Robbins “What Leads Some Ordinary Arab Men and Women...”
- Tomz “Domestic Audience Costs in International Relations”
- Kam and Kinder “Terror and Ethnocentrism”
- Berinsky and Kinder “Making Sense of Issues Through Media Frames”

Week 10: Thursday, Nov. 5 Measurement

- Manheim et al. 5
- King et al. 5
- King et al. (2003) “Enhancing the Validity and Cross-Cultural Comparability of Measurement in Survey Research.”
- Mondak “Developing Valid Knowledge Scales”
- Corstange “Religion, Pluralism, and Iconography in the Public Sphere”
- Marcus et al. “The Measure and Mismeasure of Emotion.”

Week 11: Thursday, Nov. 12 Case Selection/Comparative Method/Case Studies

- Manheim et al. 12
- King et al. 6
- Lijphart “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method”
- Geddes “How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get”
- Achen and Snidal “Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies”
- Jamal 4, 5

Week 12: Thursday, Nov. 19 Small-N to Large-N Presentations

- Karol and Miguel “The Electoral Costs of War”
- Singh and Way “The Correlates of Nuclear Proliferation”
- Collier and Garg “On Kin Groups and Wages in the Ghanaian Labour Market”
- Chhibber and Nooruddin “Do Party Systems Count? The Number of Parties and Government Performance in the Indian States”

Week 13: Thursday, Nov. 26 NO CLASS. THANKSGIVING BREAK.

Week 14: Thursday, Dec. 3 Selection Bias/Ethics

- King et al. 4
- Nooruddin “Modeling Selection Bias in Studies of Sanctions Efficacy”
- Valentino “Final Solutions”
- Guidelines on ethics
 - Nuremberg code
 - Belmont report(continued on next page)

- Ethics case studies
 - Tuskegee
 - Milgram
 - Haney et al. "Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison"

Week 15: Thursday, Dec. 10 Reflections

- Silvia "How to Write a Lot"
- Medawar "Advice to a Young Scientist"
- Polsby "Social Science and Scientific Change"
- *TBA*