

POS 4734 Section 05G9 - Spring 2015  
 Tuesday 5-6 (11:45 - 1:40 pm), Mat 016  
 Thursday 6 (12:50 - 1:40 pm), Mat 016

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Office Hours: 208 Anderson Hall  
 Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2:00 - 3:30 pm

## Research Methods in Political Science

### Goal of the course

Why do we call our discipline "political *science*"? What kinds of research do political scientists do, and how do they communicate that knowledge to one another? How do we know what we think we know? How do we measure political phenomena? How would we know if a new public policy "worked"? How do we analyze data, and what are good data to analyze? Are ethics as hard to define in "political science" as they are in "politics"?

During the course of the semester, we will discuss these issues and others. Our discussions, the readings, various assignments, the midterm and final exams, and the research paper will facilitate your becoming intelligent consumers of political science research, as well as help you become producers of your own research. The skills that you develop in the course will help you understand the literature that you read in substantive courses, help you distinguish between real research and meaningless rubbish, enable you to better understand the assumptions behind each research design, introduce you to data management using a popular statistical package, help you find published research and data archives on topics that interest you, and familiarize you with some of the techniques used in individual and aggregate level analysis.

For many students, this will be an entirely different kind of course. Many good undergraduate courses require you to become knowledgeable about a field, such as Comparative Politics, Political Behavior, Public Policy, American Politics, or International Relations. In this course, we are not focused on a particular field, but are more interested in understanding the methods that political scientists in all fields use to understand and build knowledge. Of course, new things can be both exciting and frightening. Any trepidation that you may have is best overcome by "feeling the fear, and doing it anyway." The excitement will come with the realization that this knowledge is empowering, in that it will enable you to find, read, and understand research on your own. You will also begin to produce this kind of research, which will give you a product of your own labors.

### Requirements

In order to meet these goals, participants in the seminar will be required to

- **Attend and participate (5%).** Every person should come to class prepared to comment on the assigned readings, and help others to understand the concepts presented in the readings and assignments. Research is not a spectator sport, so you should expect me to ask for your contributions on a regular basis. Some time in class will be devoted to lecture, but your participation in this course is expected to be that of an "active learner". Multiple absences seriously jeopardize the prospect for successful completion of the course. If it appears that the class is continually unprepared to discuss the assigned readings, I may use quizzes to assess (and encourage) preparedness. These quizzes will be incorporated into this portion of the grade.
- **Write occasional assignments (30% cumulative).** Some assignments are short essays, and others are exercises using data. All completed assignments must represent each participant's own and sole work, unless otherwise directed. Some assignments will be submitted hardcopy in class, but most will be submitted online via Canvas.
- **Complete a Midterm Examination (20%).** tentatively, February 24
- **Complete a Final Examination (20%).** Wednesday, April 29, 10:00 am to 12 noon. The date and time for the final exam were assigned to this class by the UF Registrar in order to assure that all students have time to prepare for all of their exams and avoid (most) exam conflicts. Plan to be on campus at this time, and do not ask to take the exam early or late, unless you have an exam conflict that is recognized by the UF Registrar. Please advise parents, spouses, and others who may be making travel plans for you of your final exam schedule. If you have unavoidable plans to be out of Gainesville on April 29, you should consider dropping the course.
- **Write a Research Paper (25%).** Each participant will be required to submit a research paper. Papers will be judged on readability, the appropriateness of the research question, the suitability of the design for that question, the interpretation of the analysis, and (if appropriate) the feasibility of extending the analysis in an Honors Thesis. Guidelines for the paper are

posted [here](#). Due April 23.

## Grading Scale:

Lower boundaries for grades are:

		B+	85.0%	C+	75.0%	D+	65.0%
A	91.0%	B	81.0%	C	71.0%	D	61.0%
A-	88.0%	B-	78.0%	C-	68.0%	D-	58.0%

Note that 84.97% is less than 85.0%, and is therefore a "B".

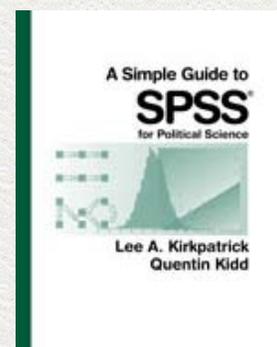
## Rhythm

Our normal rhythm will be to begin discussion of the weekly reading assignments on Tuesday, and wrap up that discussion (if necessary) on Thursday. On Thursday, we will usually have some time to explore applications in SPSS, the data analysis system that we will be using during the course of the semester. Any written assignments following up on those discussions will be due on the following Tuesday. Our normal rhythm will be disrupted by the Southern Political Science Association meetings (January 15).

## Readings and Resources



- Johnson, Janet Buttolph and H. T. Reynolds. 2012. *Political Science Research Methods*. Seventh Edition. CQ Press. [ISBN 978-1-60871-689-0](#)
- Kirkpatrick, Lee A. and Quentin Kidd. 2013. *A Simple Guide to SPSS® for Political Science*. Wadsworth Cengage. [ISBN 978-1-11135-379-7](#)
- You will also be required to access numerous journal articles, which are generally available electronically through access to Canvas. There will also be a coursepack available with the same readings available at Target Copy.
- You will also learn some basic data analysis using SPSS. Students should load this program onto a laptop or tablet (with wireless capability) that they can bring to class when announced. SPSS is available
  - in the [UF Apps](#) package (free, and can be used on a Windows, Mac, or tablet, but can be slow)
  - for lease (to November 30 plus 60 day grace period) from [UF Software Services](#) for use on your laptop or home computer (\$35 plus tax)
  - for six-month lease from [Onthehub](#) for use on your laptop or home computer (\$38 + \$4.99 download fee)
  - in the [Academic Technology labs](#) around campus (free, but you will also need a version on your laptop or tablet that you can bring to class).
- Canvas - I will also post some materials, assignments, assignment inboxes, and grades on the class E-Learning - Canvas site. Log in at <http://lss.at.ufl.edu>
- listserv - Registered students in the class are enrolled on the class listserv. Messages from the listserv are sent to students' Gatorlink email addresses (eg., youhoo@ufl.edu), and students should check that email regularly.



## Miscellaneous stuff

Students requesting classroom accommodation for testing or completing assignments must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation. Please do so by January 15.

Please do not phone me to discuss a grade over the phone. You are welcome to call to schedule an appointment, but please refrain from asking about your grade directly over the phone. This helps me protect your statutory rights to privacy, as we are generally unable to verify your identity over the phone.

The following is a tentative calendar, and dates on assignments are especially subject to revision. Readings marked with an asterisk (\*) are included in the Target Copy coursepack and on Canvas (under Files).

**Calendar - Updates or revisions to the calendar will be announced in class and on Canvas.**

January 6	<p align="center"><b>Introduction to the course: What kinds of research do political scientists do? How do they present their work?</b></p>
	<p align="center"><b>Anatomy of a Research Article</b></p>
January 8 - 13	<p>Read: Johnson and Reynolds, Chapters 1 and 2</p> <p>* Hall, Melinda Gann. 1992. "Electoral-Politics and Strategic Voting in State Supreme Courts." <i>Journal of Politics</i> 54 (2, May): 427-446.</p> <p>* Most, Benjamin A. 1990. "Getting started on political research." <i>PS: Political Science &amp; Politics</i> 23 (4, December), 592-596.</p> <p>Kirkpatrick, Lee A. and Quentin Kidd. Chapter 1.</p> <p>Bound copies of most journals should be available in <a href="#">Library West</a>.</p> <p><b>On Thursday, Jan 8, be prepared to discuss:</b></p> <p>(1) Describe Hall's article, outlining its component parts. What is Hall's main "theory"? Does she have a "theory", in the sense that term is used by Johnson and Reynolds (Chapter 2) ?</p> <p>(2) What are Hall's hypotheses? How does she test them?</p> <p><b>On Tuesday, Jan 13, be prepared to discuss:</b></p> <p>(3) If Most were advising Hall on where to go next in her research on electoral motivations for judicial behavior, what directions would be scientifically fruitful?</p> <p><b>On Tuesday, Jan 13, have SPSS loaded onto your laptop or tablet ready to use, and bring it to class.</b></p>
January 15	<p align="center"><i>No class; <a href="#">Southern Political Science Association meetings</a></i></p>
January 20 - 22	<p align="center"><b>Researchers as Readers: Literature Review</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b> Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 3</p> <p>Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." <i>PS-Political Science &amp; Politics</i> 39 (1, January): 127-132.</p> <p>Kirkpatrick, Lee A. and Quentin Kidd. Chapter 2.</p> <p><b>Followup Assignment Due (Jan 27; 5%)</b> - Write a short literature review that reviews one of the following optional journal articles, at least one journal article which was cited by the selected article, and at least one journal article that cited the selected article. Your review should explain whether the ideas and methods represented in the three (or more) articles are cumulative, and if so, how the ideas (or methods) from later articles were developed from ideas in earlier articles. Your review should close with your thoughts on avenues for future research in the subfield. I expect good papers will be four to five pages.</p> <p>Optional journal articles:</p> <p>Boettcher, William A., III, and Michael D. Cobb. 2009. "'Don't Let Them Die in Vain' Casualty Frames and Public Tolerance for Escalating Commitment in Iraq." <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> 53 (5, October): 677-697.</p>

Koch, Jeffrey W. 2000. "Do Citizens Apply Gender Stereotypes to Infer Candidates' Ideological Orientations?" *Journal of Politics* 62 (2, 2000): 414-429.

Mitchell, Sara McLaughlin. 2002. "A Kantian System? Democracy and Third-Party Conflict Resolution." *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (4, October): 749-759.

Alternative assignment:

If you are writing a thesis and none of the optional articles are related to your thesis, another option is available to you. You can tell me your thesis topic, and I will add one article to the optional list that is related to your thesis topic (my choice), and you may use that article as the "selected article" your literature review.

If you elect this option, email me your thesis topic no later than 10:40 am, January 23.

**Researchers as Theorists: Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables**

**Read:** Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 4

Kirkpatrick and Kidd, Chapter 3.

**Be prepared to discuss:** What are the characteristics of good hypotheses? What is Hall's (1993) unit of analysis?

**Followup Assignment Due (Feb 3; 3%):** Find an existing dataset somewhere

- in the ICPSR archive ([www.icpsr.umich.edu](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu))
- American National Election Study ([www.electionstudies.org](http://www.electionstudies.org))
- Quality of Government Institute data (<http://www.qog.pol.gu.se/>)
- or a publicly available dataset you have found in the readings

Propose two hypotheses that you could test with that dataset. For each hypothesis, tell me

1. The dataset that you are proposing to use
2. The unit of analysis
3. The independent variable(s)
4. The dependent variable(s)

**Researchers as Counters: Measurement**

**Read:** Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 5

Kirkpatrick and Kidd, Chapter 4.

\* Delli Carpini, Michael X. and Scott Keeter. 1993. "Measuring Political Knowledge: Putting First Things First." *American Journal of Political Science* 37 (4, November): 1179-1206.

\* Epstein, Lee, and Jeffrey A. Segal. 2000. "Measuring Issue Salience." *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (1, January): 66-83.

**Be prepared to discuss:** What are the principal desirable characteristics of social science measures? What is the differences between those characteristics? What measurement issues are important in developing good measures of political knowledge and liberal democracy? Do Hall's measures have desirable characteristics? How do you know, or how could you know?

**Followup Assignment Due (Feb 10; 3%):** For each of the following variables in the designated datasets, (1) identify the unit of analysis and (2) present appropriate univariate statistics (either frequencies or descriptives) to describe the univariate distribution.

- The feeling thermometer for Sarah Palin in the 2008 American National Election Study.
- The Freedom House Political Rights measure (fh\_pr) in the Quality of Government basic dataset (<http://www.qog.pol.gu.se/data/datadownloads/qogbasicdata/>)
- The percent of state legislatures that are women (WOMENLEG) in the State Politics and Policy Quarterly dataset ([http://academic.udayton.edu/sppq-TPR/tpr\\_data\\_sets.html](http://academic.udayton.edu/sppq-TPR/tpr_data_sets.html))

January 27  
- 29

February 3  
- 5

	<b>Researchers as manipulators: Experiments</b>
February 10 - 12	<p><b>Read:</b> Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 6 (pp. 165 - 193)</p> <p>* Kinder, Donald R., and Thomas R. Palfrey. 1993. "On Behalf of an Experimental Political Science." In <i>Experimental Foundations of Political Science</i>. Eds. Donald R. Kinder, and Thomas R. Palfrey. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press. pp. 1-39.</p> <p>* Majeski, Stephen J. and Shane Fricks. 1995. "Conflict and Cooperation in International Relations." <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> 39 (4, December): 622-645.</p> <p>* King, David C. and Richard E. Matland. 2003. "Sex and the Grand Old Party - an Experimental Investigation of the Effect of Candidate Sex on Support for a Republican Candidate." <i>American Politics Research</i> 31 (6, November): 595-612.</p> <p>Kirkpatrick and Kidd, Chapter 5.</p> <p><b>Be prepared to discuss:</b> What are the essential characteristics of an experiment, and what are the basic strengths and weaknesses of an experimental research design as compared to non-experimental designs? Evaluate those strengths and weaknesses with respect to the assigned articles. How is the independent variable manipulated, and how is the dependent variable measured? Is Hall (1992) an experiment? Why or why not?</p> <p><b>Followup Assignment Due (Feb 17; 3%)</b> - Replicate the King and Matland findings using crosstabulations and controlled comparisons in their dataset.</p>
	<b>Researchers drawing inferences: Observational Designs</b>
February 17 - 19	<p><b>Read:</b> Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 6 (pp. 194 - 221)</p> <p>* Drury, A. Cooper, Richard Stuart Olson, and Douglas A. Van Belle. 2005. "The Politics of Humanitarian Aid: US Foreign Disaster Assistance, 1964-1995." <i>Journal of Politics</i> 67 (2, May): 454-473.</p> <p>* Stratmann, Thomas and Martin Baur. 2002. "Plurality Rule, Proportional Representation, and the German Bundestag: How Incentives to Pork-Barrel Differ across Electoral Systems." <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 46 (3, July): 506-514.</p> <p>Kirkpatrick and Kidd, Chapter 6.</p> <p><b>Be prepared to discuss:</b> What are the basic strengths and weaknesses of a quasi-experimental research design and a case-study design as compared to an experimental design? Are Stratmann and Baur (2002) and Drury <i>et al</i> (2005) high in internal validity, external validity, neither, or both?</p>
February 24	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
February 26	<b>Go over Midterm Exam; Discuss Research Paper requirements</b>
	<p><b>Followup Assignment Due (March 10; 4%)</b> - Submit a research proposal for your final paper. Your proposal should have an introductory paragraph (or two) stating the research problem that your paper will address, propose at least two hypotheses that will be empirically tested in the paper, identify a dataset that will be used, and identify measures for the independent, dependent, and control variables to be used in the test.</p>
March 3 - 5	<i>Give me a (spring) break!</i>
	<b>Researchers as lurkers and intruders: Observation</b>
	<p><b>Read:</b> Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 8</p> <p>* Mazie, Steven V. and Patricia J. Woods. 2003. "Prayer, Contentious Politics, and the Women of the Wall: The Benefits of Collaboration in Participant Observation at Intense, Multifocal Events." <i>Field Methods</i> 15 (1, February): 25 - 50.</p> <p>* Fenno, Richard F., Jr. 1977. "U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 71 (3, September): 883-917.</p> <p>Kirkpatrick and Kidd, Chapter 7.</p>

March 10 - 12	<p><b>Be prepared to discuss:</b> Are there any advantages or disadvantages to participant observation techniques to gather data? Do these strategies pose any threats to the internal validity of the research design?</p> <p><b>Followup Assignment Due (March 17; 5%)-</b> Observe a public meeting. This can be any meeting of a legislature, legislative committee, commission, local board, or any other public agency that you have the right to attend by virtue of your citizenship. Examples of acceptable meetings are the Florida House of Representatives, the U.S. House Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Boynton Beach City Commission, or the Alachua County Recreation and Open Space Advisory Committee. You may, but are not required to, observe a public meeting in your hometown. The Sunday <i>Gainesville Sun</i> usually lists upcoming public meetings in the City of Gainesville and Alachua County. Examples of unacceptable meetings are Student Government, its committees, other student or UF groups, or neighborhood property owners association meetings.</p> <p>This website lists public meetings in the City of Gainesville:  <a href="http://www.cityofgainesville.org/GOVERNMENT/ClerkOfTheCommission/NoticeofMeetings/tabid/372/Default.aspx">http://www.cityofgainesville.org/GOVERNMENT/ClerkOfTheCommission/NoticeofMeetings/tabid/372/Default.aspx</a></p> <p>This website lists public meetings in Alachua County: <a href="http://meetingdocs.alachuacounty.us/meetings/">http://meetingdocs.alachuacounty.us/meetings/</a></p> <p>Write a short essay which (a) describes the setting of the meeting, (b) describes your observation role (using a role as defined by one of the readings), and (c) discusses whether the behavior of the meeting's participants varies by some independent variable or variables (eg.: gender, issue type, time). Does your observation of this case tend to confirm a pre-existing theoretical expectation, infirm a pre-existing theoretical expectation, and/or help build theory by induction?</p>
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<b>Researchers as Misers: Sampling</b>	
March 17 - 19	<p><b>Read:</b> Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 7</p> <p>Kirkpatrick and Kidd, Chapter 8.</p> <p>* Reiter, Dan and Curtis Meek. 1999. "Determinants of Military Strategy, 1903-1994: A Quantitative Empirical Test." <i>International Studies Quarterly</i> 43 (2, June): 363-387.</p> <p>* Cohen, Nissim, and Tamar Arieli. 2011. "Field research in conflict environments: Methodological challenges and snowball sampling." <i>Journal of Peace Research</i> 48 (4):423-435.</p> <p><b>Be prepared to discuss:</b> When should researchers <i>avoid</i> sampling? Why do researchers have to sample? What kinds of samples are used in the assigned articles for this week? Why were these samples chosen? Were these samples appropriate? For each sample, what is the theoretical population?</p> <p><b>Assignment (Due March 24; 2%) -</b> SPSS Sampling exercise</p>

<b>Researchers as diggers: Content Analysis and Aggregate Data</b>	
March 24 - 26	<p><b>Read:</b> Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 9</p> <p>Kirkpatrick and Kidd, Chapter 9.</p> <p>* Crichlow, Scott. 2002. "Legislators' Personality Traits and Congressional Support for Free Trade." <i>Journal of Conflict Resolution</i> 46 (5, October): 693-711.</p> <p>* Damore, David F. 2002. "Candidate Strategy and the Decision to Go Negative." <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 55 (3, September): 669-685.</p> <p><b>Be prepared to discuss:</b> What kinds of research designs are employed in this week's readings? Where did the researchers dig up their data, and are the data and measures appropriate for the questions posed in the articles? Are these research stronger in internal validity or external validity, and why?</p>

<b>Researchers as interrogators: Survey Analysis</b>	
	<p><b>Read:</b> Johnson and Reynolds, Chapter 10</p> <p>* Javeline, Debra. 1999. "Response Effects in Polite Cultures: A Test of Acquiescence in Kazakhstan." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 63: 1-28.</p>

<p>March 31 - April 2</p>	<p>* Duff, Brain, Michael J. Hanmer, Won-ho Park, and Ismael K. White. 2007. "Good Excuses: Understanding Who Votes with an Improved Turnout Question." <i>Public Opinion Quarterly</i> 71 (1, Spring): 67-90.</p> <p>* Berry, Jeffrey M. 2002. "Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing." <i>PS: Political Science &amp; Politics</i> 35 (4, December): 679-682.</p> <p><b>Be prepared to discuss:</b> What are the challenges in constructing survey instruments posed by the readings? What strategies do the authors propose to address those challenges? Do these strategies aim to improve validity, reliability, sampling, or what?</p> <p><b>Assignment Due (April 7; paper submission; 1%)</b>- Print the survey. (You'll need the <a href="#">Acrobat Reader</a>, if you don't already have it.)</p> <p>Pick a person to interview by phone (this can be a sample of convenience), and interview the person using this questionnaire. Record the forced choice responses by circling the number of the response. Record the open-ended responses by filling in the blank, or by verbatim transcript of the respondent's answers. Be sure to record the start time, the end time, and the respondent's first name in the appropriate places on the questionnaire.</p>
<p>April 7 - 9</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Researchers as Number Crunchers: First steps in presenting your data!</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b> Johnson and Reynolds, Chapters 11 and 12</p> <p><b>Assignment Due (April 14; 2%)</b> Do the appropriate bivariate analysis for your research project.</p>
<p>April 14 - 16</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Researchers as Number Crunchers: Multivariate Analysis and Presenting results</b></p> <p>Read: Johnson and Reynolds, Chapters 13 and 14 Kirkpatrick and Kidd, Chapters 10-11</p> <p><b>Assignment Due (April 21; 2%)</b> Do the appropriate multivariate analysis for your research project.</p>
<p>April 21</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Researchers as Demons?: Ethics in Social Scientific Research</b></p> <p><b>Read:</b></p> <p>Goel, Vindu. 2014. <a href="#">As Data Overflows Online, Researchers Grapple with Ethics</a>. <i>New York Times</i> (12 August 2014)</p> <p>Scott, Dylan. 2014. <a href="#">Profs Bumble Into Big Legal Trouble After Election Experiment Goes Way Wrong</a>. TPM Online. (27 October 2014)</p> <p>Humphreys, Macartan. 2014. <a href="#">How to make field experiments more ethical</a>. The Washington Post Monkey Cage (2 November 2014)</p> <p>Leeper, Thomas. 2014. <a href="#">In Defense of the Montana Experiment</a>. (25 October 2014)</p> <p>American Political Science Association. 2014. <a href="#">Statement on Field Experiments and Research Integrity in Political Science</a>.</p> <p>Optional:</p> <p>Belmont Report ( <a href="http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html">http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html</a> ) .</p> <p>Milgram, Stanley. 1965. "Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority." <i>Human Relations</i> 18 (1, February): 57-76.</p> <p>Greenberg, David and Mark Shroder. 2004. <i>The Digest of Social Experiments</i>. Washington: The Urban Institute Press. "Introduction - Are Experiments Ethical?" (p. 8)</p>

Hatemi, Peter K., and Rose McDermott. 2011. "The Normative Implications of Biological Research." *PS-Political Science & Politics* 44 (2, April):325-329.

**Be prepared to discuss:** What standards of ethics should apply to political scientists who study the political behavior of individuals, organizations, or states? Are field experiments inherently unethical? If so, why? If not, are there boundaries?

April 23,  
11:59 pm

Research Papers Due

Wednesday,  
April 29,  
10:00 am to  
12 noon

Final Exam