



**SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY,
POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**POLITICAL SCIENCE and INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
PROGRAMME**

2008 TRIMESTER 1

**INTP/POLS 383: RESEARCHING POLITICS
(CRN 9910/13560)**

Course Organiser:	Professor Elizabeth McLeay
Room:	MY 517
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Lecture Times:	Monday 10-12
Venue:	HM LT 001
Office Hours:	Monday 2-4

Course Aims

We aim to explore the tools and design of research in politics and government. These include: understanding the broad approaches to studying political science; defining research questions, building a bibliography, learning how to use different sorts of sources, understanding the uses of quantitative and qualitative methods, and developing research proposals.

Course Content

The classes comprise lectures given by the Course Organiser and guest speakers in various subject areas. Our guests provide insights into how they conduct their own research, as well as discussing various research methods. There will also be class discussion and workshops where students discuss their research proposals. Outlines of the lectures will be placed on Blackboard. Please note that you also need to make notes during class because the information provided there will be more extensive than that included in the lecture outlines. You are also advised to check regularly for announcements on Blackboard. For a more detailed description of the course content see the Seminar Outline below.

Course Objectives

Students passing the course should be able to demonstrate:

- knowledge of the basic research methods in political science;
- critical understanding of the uses and purposes of a range of research methods;
- knowledge of the sources available to students of government and politics, including the resources available in Wellington, and an understanding of how they can be used;
- confidence in the use of relevant materials and techniques; and
- the skills needed to design a research project.

Relationship between assessment and course objectives:

- a) Assignment 1 is designed to show that you have a critical understanding of research methodology and methods.
- b) Assignment 2, the research proposal, demonstrates that you have the capacity to develop a viable research question, develop hypotheses, and choose research methods and sources that are appropriate to your question.
- c) The test shows your overall grasp of the different research methods and sources employed in the study of politics, government and public policy.

Additional Information

Additional information about the course, and information on changes, will be conveyed to students via Blackboard.

Expected workload

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 18 hours per week to *Researching Politics*. This includes two hours of lectures per week.

Essential texts:

POLS 383 Researching Politics (available from Student Notes)

Lisa Harrison, *Political Research: An Introduction* (London, Routledge, 2001)

Textbooks can be purchased from Vicbooks located on the top floor of the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. Books of Reading are distributed from the Student Notes Shop on the ground floor of the Student Union Building. Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop the day after placing an order online. Opening hours are: 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays); 10.00 am – 1.00 pm Saturdays. Phone: 463 5515

Assessment requirements

- a) *Written assignment I*. This is worth 30% of the final grade and must be submitted on or before **5 pm, Wednesday 19 March**. It must be no more than 1000 words in length. For this assignment you are required to write a critical analysis of a book of your choice—*not* a textbook—selected from any of your 2007 or 2008 Political Science or International Relations courses. You may not select a book that you are already reviewed, or are at present reviewing, for any other VUW course. Please consult the Course Organiser if you are unsure of the suitability of your choice. The requirements are as follows:
 - provide the title, author/s, place of publication, publisher, date of publication, and number of pages;
 - identify the main question or questions being asked;

- identify and discuss the main methodological approach or approaches adopted by the author—the underlying assumptions and the theories (and we'll be discussing this aspect in class more fully);
 - outline briefly and critically discuss the research methods used; and
 - discuss the extent to which the overall approach and methods satisfactorily answer the research questions.
- b) *Open-book test.* This is worth 30% of the final grade. This test (duration 90 minutes) will be held during class on **Monday 28 April**. It will test your knowledge of methodology, sources, and methods. You will be required to answer *four* questions. There will be three sections, and you will be required to answer at least one question from each section. Section A will include the material covered in Weeks One and Two; Section B will include the material covered in Weeks Three, Four, and Six; and Section C will include the material covered in Week Seven.
- c) *Written assignment II.* This is worth 40% of the final grade and must be submitted on or before **5 pm, Friday 30 May**. It must be no more than 1500 words in length. This assignment consists of a research proposal (and I have made some suggestions below). The essay must include:
- the title of the research project;
 - a statement of the main research question and hypothesis/hypotheses;
 - discussion of the research methods you would use, and why you think they are appropriate;
 - an outline of the primary source material and data;
 - discussion of any ethical issues raised by the research, and how you would deal with these;
 - an outline of the structure of the finished research report (the headings you would use);
 - a bibliography, correctly set out and divided into primary and secondary sources, containing at least 20 references relevant to the topic you are studying, including a range of sources (e.g. books, journal articles and internet sites). *Please note that you are expected to show that you have read more widely on methods than merely the coursebook and textbook.*

Workshops will be held during the last weeks of the course where all students will present summaries of their research proposals to the rest of the class. This will provide students with the opportunity to gain feedback on their research questions and methods before submitting Assignment II for formal assessment. Students should speak for between five and ten minutes. You are encouraged to use Powerpoint, but please restrict yourselves to a maximum of five slides (including pictures etc.)

Please submit your essays on paper **and** in electronic form. The latter must be submitted via <http://turnitin.com/>. (Further information will be provided during the course.) Paper copies of assignments may either be handed to me personally or deposited in my pigeonhole outside the School Office on the fifth floor of the Murphy Building. Your essays must include the Political Science and International Relations coversheet (available on Blackboard). Please refer to the Political Science and International Relations *Essay Writing Guide* for help with acknowledging sources. Marks will be deducted for any bibliographical inaccuracies and sloppiness of presentation (e.g. erratic punctuation and layout).

Mandatory Course Requirements

To gain a pass in this course each student must:

- a) Submit the written work specified for this course, on or by the specified dates (subject to such provisions as are stated for late submission of work);
- b) Present one 5-10 minute talk during class on the topic of the second essay; and
- c) Attend no fewer than nine of the Monday seminars.

NB: A student who has obtained an overall mark of 50% or more, but failed to satisfy a mandatory requirement for a course, will receive a K grade for that course, while a course mark less than 50% will result in the appropriate fail grade (D, E or F).

Statement on penalties

Students will be penalised for late submission of essays—a deduction of 5% for the first day late, and 2% per day thereafter, up to a maximum of eight days. Work that is more than eight days late can be accepted for mandatory course requirements but will not be marked. However, penalties may be waived if there are valid grounds, e.g., illness (presentation of a medical certificate will be necessary) or similar other contingencies. In such cases prior information will be necessary.

Statement on the use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <<http://www.turnitin.com>>. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. At the discretion of the head of School, handwritten work may be copy typed by the School and subject to checking by turnitin. You are strongly advised to check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

Aegrotats

Please note that under the Assessment Statute (Sections 4.5) students may now apply for an aegrotat pass in respect of any item of assessment falling within the last three weeks before the day on which lectures cease. In the case of **first trimester** courses in 2008 the starting point for this period is **Monday 14 May 2008**.

The following rules apply:

- where a student is not able to sit a test falling within these last three weeks because of illness or injury etc., an alternative test will be arranged where possible. If the student has completed in the view of the course supervisor, sufficient marked assessment relevant to the objectives of the course, an average mark may be offered. Where a student has an essay or other piece of assessment due in the last three weeks, and has a medical certificate or other appropriate documentation, the student will be given an extension.
- if none of the above is available to the student, e.g., if she/he has an ongoing illness, than an aegrotat will be considered. See Assessment Statute (Sections 4.5) for a full explanation of the rules governing the provision of aegrotats in these circumstances.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means *no cheating*. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as follows:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were ones own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct. All cases will be recorded on a central database and severe penalties may be imposed. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* available in hardcopy or under "about Victoria" on the Victoria homepage at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/calendar_intro.html

Information on the following topics is available electronically under "Course Outline General Information" at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/newspubs/universitypubs.aspx#general>

- Academic Grievances
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

COURSE OUTLINE

Speaker availability might mean that there are a few amendments to this schedule. (The date of the test will not be changed.)

Date	Topic	Readings
WEEK ONE 25 February	Course introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking research questions, considering our political assumptions, and defining and redefining our research topics • The research assignments • Coming up with a research question 	Harrison, pp. 1-10 Coursebook, chaps. 1 and 3

WEEK TWO <i>3 March</i>	Approaches to political science and international relations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative and qualitative research methods • Variables and hypotheses • Comparative approaches 	Harrison, pp. 13-37 and 74-87 Coursebook, chap. 2
WEEK THREE <i>10 March</i>	Sources and data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VUW Library: how it can help you research a project (Justin Cargill) • The resources of the VUW United Nations and Official information collections (Corinna deWolff) • Case studies in political science and international relations 	Harrison, pp. 106-121 Coursebook, chap. 8
WEEK FOUR <i>17 March</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discourse analysis (Dr Sandra Grey) • Biographical and autobiographical material • Archival, government, parliamentary and party resources <p><i>Please note that your first assignment is due this week—on Wednesday 19 March.</i></p>	Harrison, pp. 124-38 Coursebook, chap. 4
E A S T E R B R E A K (Week Five)		
WEEK SIX <i>31 March</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using and researching the mass media, including the internet (speaker TBA) • Observation and participant observation • Citizen and elite interviewing • Focus groups <p><i>Today we will organize the workshop presentations.</i></p>	Harrison, pp. 74-104 Coursebook, chaps. 9 and 12
WEEK SEVEN <i>7 April</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concepts and measurement; and using quantitative data and official statistics (Dr Robert Deuchars) • Survey research design: uses and abuses; and understanding the results (speaker TBA) 	Harrison, pp. 39-70 Coursebook, chaps. 10 and 11
M I D - T R I M E S T E R B R E A K		
WEEK EIGHT <i>28 April</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In-class test</i> 	

WEEK NINE <i>5 May</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Assignment II research proposals 	Coursebook, chap. 7
WEEK TEN <i>12 May</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researching politics: the ethical issues (Dr Allison Kirkman) • Workshop: Assignment II research proposals 	Coursebook, chaps. 5, 6
WEEK ELEVEN <i>19 May</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Assignment II research proposals 	
WEEK TWELVE <i>26 May</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop: Assignment II research proposals <p><i>Please note that Assignment II must be submitted by 5pm Friday 30 May.</i></p>	

Written Assignment II: Research Design—some suggestions

It is your task, of course, to find and define an appropriate research question. Each of the following suggestions must be narrowed down and refined.

- The relationship between age and political participation, or between gender and political participation
- Indigenous legislative representation
- Public participation in the legislative process
- The causes of political corruption
- Public attitudes towards, for example, other countries, republicanism, or immigration, and so forth.
- The media coverage of a particular event or issue; and/or the use of the internet in an election campaign
- New Zealand's defence relationship with a particular country, or its overseas aid policy
- Pressure groups and the policy process (choosing one particular issue)
- Policy development on a particular issue within any one international organisation such as the United Nations or the World Bank

Bibliography

Please note that many of these books are on Three-Day Loan or Closed Reserve. Remember that there are also many useful sources in your textbook and coursebook.

Selected Books and Articles about Research Methods

Social Science Research in General

- Creswell, John W. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approaches*. Second edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications, 1994.
- Czaja, Ronald and Johnny Blair. *Surveys: a guide to decisions and procedures*. Thousand Oaks, California: Pine Forge Press, 2005.
- Davies, Maire Messenger and Nick Mosdell. *Practical research methods for media and cultural studies: making people count*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006.
- Druckman, Daniel. *Doing research: methods of inquiry for conflict analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2005.
- Gash, Sarah. *Effective literature searching for research*. Second edition. Aldershot, Hamps. & Brookfield, Vt.: Gower, 1999.
- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2004.
- Grbich, Carol. *Qualitative data analysis: an introduction*. London; Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2007.
- Heewson, Claire, Peter Yule, Dianna Laurent and Cart Vogel. *Internet research methods: a practical guide for the social and behavioural sciences*. London: Sage, 2003.
- Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nag and Patricia Leavy, eds. *Approaches to qualitative research: a reader on theory and practice*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Katzer, Jeffrey, Kenneth H. Cook, and Wayne W. Crouch. *Evaluating information: a guide for users of social science research*. Fourth edition. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998.
- Leedy, Paul D., and Jeane Ellis Ormrod. *Practical research: planning and design*. Sixth edition. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill Prentice Hall, 2001. (filed as a Big book)
- McPherson, Glen. *Applying and interpreting statistics: a comprehensive guide*. Second edition. New York: Springer, 2001.
- Moses, Jonathan. *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research* Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Silverman, David. *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. London & Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2000.
- Sproull, Natalie L. *Handbook of research methods: a guide for practitioners and students in the social sciences*. Metuchen, N.J. Scarecrow Press, 1995.
- Stern, Paul C., and Linda Kalof. *Evaluating social science research*. Second edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Tolich, Martin, and Carl Davidson. *Starting fieldwork: an introduction to qualitative research in New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds. *Interpretation and method: empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*. Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2006.
- Yin, Robert K. *Applications of case study research*. Second edition. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2003.
- Researching Politics and International Relations*
- Ackerly, Brooke A., Maria Stern and Jacqui True, eds. *Feminist methodologies for international relations*. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006
- Bernstein, Robert and James Dyer. *An introduction to political science methods*. Second edition. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1984.
- Burnham, Peter. *Research methods in politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.
- Burnham, Peter, Karin Gilland, Wyn Grant and Zig Layton-Henry. *Research methods in politics*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Glaser, James M. 'The challenge of campaign-watching: seven lessons of participant-observation research.' In *PS*, v. 29, no. 3 (September 1996), pp. 533-7.
- Johnson, Janet and Richard Joslin. *Political science research methods*. Third edition. Washington DC: CQ, 1994.
- Johnson, Paul E. 'Simulation modeling in political science.' In *The American Behavioral Scientist*, v. 42, no. 10 (August 1999), pp. 1509-30.
- Manheim Jarol and Richard Rich' *Empirical political analysis: research methods in political science*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1981.
- McCarty, Nolan M. and Adam Meirowitz. *Political game theory: an introduction*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

- Marsh, David and Gerry Stoker. *Theory and methods in political science*. Second edition. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.
- Pennings, Paul, Hans Keman, and J. Kleinnijenhuis. *Doing research in political science: an introduction to comparative methods and statistics*. London & Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 1999.
- Peters, B. Guy. *Comparative politics: theory and methods*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998.
- Roberts, Geoffrey and Alistair Edwards. *A new dictionary of political analysis*. London and New York: E. Arnold, 1991.
- Silburgh, David M. *Doing dissertations in politics: a student guide*. London and New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Simon, Adam F., and Shanto Iyengar. 'Toward theory-based research in political communication.' In *PS*, v. 29, no. 1 (March 1996), pp. 29-33.

Sources and Guides to Sources

- Boston, Jonathan, Nigel S. Roberts, E. M. McLeay, and Stephen I. Levine, eds. *Electoral and constitutional change in New Zealand: an MMP source book*. Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1999.
- Craig, John. *Australian politics: a source book*. Second edition. Sydney: Harcourt Brace, 1993.JQ4011 C866 A 2ED
- Kurian, George, L. Longley and T. Melia. *World encyclopaedia of parliaments and legislatures*. Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1998.
- Ringer, J. B. *An introduction to New Zealand government: a guide to finding out about government in New Zealand, its institutions, structures, and activities*. Christchurch: Hazard Press, 1991.
- Wood, G. A. *Studying New Zealand: a guide to sources*. Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999.

MLIS Annotated Bibliographies

Please note that these can be very useful. They have been assembled by Librarianship students at VUW as part of their Master's degree. They are all held at the Closed Reserve desk.