

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

***POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAMME***

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

**2009 TRIMESTER 1**  
2 March to 5 June 2009

**Course Organiser:** Professor Elizabeth McLeay  
**Room:** MY 517  
**Phone:** 463 9450  
**Email:** Elizabeth.McLeay@vuw.ac.nz

**Lecture Times:** Monday 2-4  
**Venue:** KK 202

**Office Hours:** Monday 10-12

**Course Delivery** This course is taught through a combination of lectures and seminars.

**Communication of additional information**

Additional information about the course will be conveyed to students via Blackboard.

**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.

**Learning 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.

**Graduate attributes**

As with all POLS and INTP courses, learning objectives of this course contribute to the attainment of specific attributes in the areas of critical thinking, creative thinking, communication and leadership. Please consult the Programme Prospectus 2009, p. 10, for more details or on our website

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/pols/>

## Expected workload

In accordance with Faculty Guidelines, this course has been constructed on the assumption that students will devote 16 hours per week to INTP/POLS 383: Researching Politics. This includes two hours of lectures per week.

## Readings

The essential texts are:

*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](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto: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, Friday 27 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 2008 or 2009 Political Science or International Relations courses. You may not select a book that you have 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 27 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 Five; and Section C will include the material covered in Week Six.
- c) *Written assignment II.* This is worth 40% of the final grade and must be submitted on or before **5 pm, Friday 5 June**. It must be no more than 1500 words in length. This assignment consists of a research proposal (and I have made some suggestions below) for an MA thesis in Political Science or International Relations. VUW MA theses must be no more than 40,000 words in length, and should be completed in one calendar year. You will need to keep these constraints in mind when designing your proposal. Pretend that you are applying for a place in our postgraduate programme! (And remember that this is a plan, not a completed piece of research.) 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 (excluding the first, title slide).

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).

#### **Relationship between Assessment and Course Objectives:**

- Assignment 1 is designed to show that you have a critical understanding of research methodology and methods.
- 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.
- The test shows your overall grasp of the different research methods and sources employed in the study of politics, government and public policy.

#### **Return of assignments**

The first essay, and the in-class test, will be returned to students in class. Alternatively, essays may be collected from the Course Organiser during her office hours. The final essay (due at the end of the teaching trimester) may be collected from the Political Science and International Relations Office between the hours of 2pm and 3pm during weekdays.

#### **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.

#### **Mandatory Course Requirements**

To gain a pass in this course each student must:

- 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);
- Present one 5-10 minute talk during class on the topic of the second essay; and
- Attend no fewer than **eight** 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).

## Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

## 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 compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

## 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* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

## OUTLINE OF SEMINARS

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
<b>WEEK ONE</b> <i>2 March</i>	Course introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Asking research questions, considering our political assumptions, and defining and redefining our research topics;</li><li>• The research assignments; and</li><li>• Coming up with a research question</li></ul>	Harrison, pp. 1-10; 141-153; Coursebook, chaps. 2, 8 and 11.
<b>WEEK</b>	Approaches to political science and international	Harrison, pp. 13-37 and

<b>TWO</b> <i>9 March</i>	relations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative and qualitative research methods;</li> <li>• Variables and hypotheses; and</li> <li>• Comparative approaches.</li> </ul>	74-87; Coursebook, chaps. 1 and 10.
<b>WEEK THREE</b> <i>16 March</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case studies in political science and international relations;</li> <li>• Approaches to qualitative research(1); and</li> <li>• Materials and sources: the resources of the VUW Library United Nations and Official information collections.</li> </ul>	Harrison, pp. 106-121; Coursebook, chaps. 4 and 6
<b>WEEK FOUR</b> <i>23 March</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approaches to qualitative research (2); and</li> <li>• Materials and sources (cont.); especially the resources of he VUW Library: how it can help you research a project (Justin Cargill)</li> </ul> <p><i>Please note that your first assignment is due this week—on Friday 27 March.</i></p>	Harrison, pp. 124-38 Coursebook, chap. 7
<b>WEEK FIVE</b> <i>30 March</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using and researching the mass media; and</li> <li>• Qualitative methods: observation and participant observation; citizen and elite interviewing; and focus groups</li> </ul> <p><i>Today we will organize the workshop presentations.</i></p>	Harrison, pp. 74-104 Coursebook, chaps. 3, 5 and 12
<b>WEEK SIX</b> <i>6 April</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concepts and measurement; and using quantitative data and official statistics; and</li> <li>• Survey research design: uses and abuses; and understanding the results</li> </ul>	Harrison, pp. 39-70 Coursebook, chap. 13
<b><i>MID-TRIMESTER BREAK</i></b>		
<b>WEEK SEVEN</b> <i>27 April</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>In-class test</i></li> </ul>	
<b>WEEK EIGHT</b> <i>4 May</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researching politics: the ethical issues; and</li> <li>• Workshop: Assignment II research proposals.</li> </ul>	Coursebook, chap. 12
<b>WEEK NINE</b> <i>11 May</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop: Assignment II research proposals.</li> </ul>	
<b>WEEK TEN</b> <i>18 May</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop: Assignment II research proposals.</li> </ul>	
<b>WEEK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop: Assignment II research proposals</li> </ul>	

<b>ELEVEN</b> 25 May	Please note that Assignment II must be submitted by 5pm Friday 5 June.	
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## Written Assignment II: Research Design—some suggestions

It is your task, of course, to find and define an appropriate research question for undertaking a postgraduate thesis. Thus, 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 bibliographies.

### 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.