

SCHOOL OF HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INTP 453 Research Methods in International Relations
POLS 453 Research Methods in Political Science
TRIMESTER 1 and TRIMESTER 2 2010
1 March to 14 November 2010

Trimester dates

Trimester One

Trimester teaching dates: 1 March 2010 to 4 June 2010

Mid-trimester break: 5 April to 18 April 2010

Teaching ends 4 June 2010

Trimester Two

Trimester teaching dates: 12 July to 17 October 2010

Mid-trimester break: 23 August to 5 September 2010

Study/examination period: 18 October to 14 November 2010

Note: This course is partly assessed by an examination which will take place in the examination period in Trimester Two. Attendance at the examination is compulsory and students who are not available for the whole of the examination period (18th October – 14th November) should not enrol for this course.

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Names and contact details

Course coordinator:

Hilary Pearse

Email:

Hilary.Pearse@vuw.ac.nz

Room no.:

Murphy (MY) 506

Phone no.:

463 9495

Office hours:

Tuesday and Wednesday 3-4, or by appointment

Class times and locations

Seminar time:

Tuesday 11-12:50

Seminar venue:

Murphy (MY) 404

Course delivery

The course has one two hour seminar per week. Central to this course is a combination of theoretical and practical content. In many of the seminars we will be practising the research methods covered in the course. For example, we will practise interview techniques in class, conduct our own content analysis of a text, design a survey schedule, and head to the

computer lab to learn some introductory statistical analysis techniques. In other seminars, we will be discussing more theoretical readings on methodology and analysing examples of other scholars' research that employ the research methods we cover in the class. You will see from the seminar schedule below that fewer seminars are held in the second trimester in order to provide more time for the preparation of the final research design that is a large component of the assessment of this course. During this time, students will meet individually with the instructor as they develop and refine the research design.

Communication of additional information

Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed to students via class Blackboard.

Course content

This course advances students' understanding of positivist and post-positivist approaches to the study of Political Science and International Relations, as well as providing practical experience in a range of research methods. Students will analyse the strengths and limitations of qualitative methods, quantitative methods and research methods for critical theoretical inquiry. The course will also consider larger ethical questions raised by research design. Students will be exposed to examples of research in Political Science and International Relations that employ a range of research methods. This course also provides the opportunity to learn new research skills, ranging from a basic introduction to SPSS to the practise of interview techniques. The course's focus on research design will be particularly relevant to students considering postgraduate study.

Learning objectives

Upon successful completion of the course students should be able to:

- understand key methodological debates relevant to Political Science and IR
- identify the strengths and limitations of a range of research methods
- use a variety of methods in their own research
- identify ethical questions involved in research design
- design a research project appropriate for further postgraduate study

Graduate attributes

As with all Political Science and International Relations courses, learning objectives of this course contribute to the attainment of specific attributes in the areas of logical and critical thinking, conceptual analysis and rational and ethical decision-making.

Expected workload

In accordance with Faculty of Humanities and Social Science guidelines, the overall workload for this course is 400 hours in total.

Readings

Essential texts:

There is one essential text for this course:

Maggie Walters (ed). 2010. *Social Research Methods*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

This is available on the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building for \$95.

Alternatively, you may prefer to use the library copy. This is the central text that we will use

for practising different research methods – it's a 'how to' guide for qualitative and quantitative methods. I'll also supplement the text with more theoretical chapters and articles, all of which will be available on Blackboard.

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. Customers will be contacted when they are available. Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

You will see that the central reading requirement (a phrase I use to refer to the reading that we will all have read in preparation for each seminar) is significantly lighter than for other Honours courses. In addition to this reading, each student and the instructor will bring one academic reading of their own selection to each seminar – a journal article, chapter from an edited volume, or a scholarly monograph. The only requirement for the selection of the reading is that it employs the relevant research method or relates to the methodological debate for the seminar in some way. Ideally, students will be able to select readings relevant to their own research interests.

In each class, we will all briefly discuss our selected reading, focusing on the appropriateness of the chosen method for the research question addressed in the reading and evaluating how effectively the method has been used. It is fine for you to bring readings from your other courses as long as they are relevant. This is also an opportunity for you to build up a bibliography of reading that will be useful for your research proposal and final research design. I will talk more about this in our first class.

Assessment requirements

The assessment for this course comprises one research proposal (10%), one full research design (50%), and a final exam (40%).

Key assessment dates:

Friday 4 June	Research Proposal due (1500-2000 words)
Friday 15 October	Full Research Design due (6,000-8,000 words)
22 October – 14 November	Final examination (three hours)

Guidelines for the research proposal and the full research design will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard.

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 8 days. Work that is more than 8 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.

There is a uniform deadline for the final submission of all written in-term work (including research papers) for honours courses. Students are advised that this deadline will be firmly adhered to; extensions will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, under the conditions stipulated in Victoria University's aegrotat regulations. Extensions must be approved by the Honours Coordinator (Jon Johansson) in advance of the deadline. In 2010 the deadline will be 4.30 p.m. on **Friday 15th October**. Work not submitted by this deadline will not be taken into consideration when determining final results.

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), and sit the final exam.

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

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 POLICIES AND STATUTES

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>

The AVC(Academic) 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. This website can be accessed at:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcademic/Publications.aspx

Seminar schedule

Date	Topic	Central reading*
9 March	Overview of the course Methodology vs. method	SSR chapter 1
16 March	Positivism and interpretivism	Moses and Knutsen 2007, Bevir 2008
<i>Methodology to method</i>		
23 March	Research design and the research process	SSR chapters 2 and 3
30 March	Case studies and process tracing	George and Bennett 2005, chapters 3 & 4
20 April	Interviews and focus groups	SSR chapter 10
27 April	Content analysis	SSR chapter 11
4 May	Discourse analysis	SSR chapter 12
11 May	Foucauldian analysis	Foucault 1982, Donnelly 1986
18 May	Indigenous research	Smith 1999, chapters 3 & 8

25 May	Survey design	SSR chapter 6
11 May	Introduction to quantitative analysis	SSR chapter 8
18 May	Using SPSS**	SSR chapter 9
25 May	Field Experiments and Natural Experiments	Morton and Williams 2008, Gerber and Green 2008
1 June	Research ethics	SSR chapter 4, Smith 1999 chapter 6
4 June: Research Proposal due		
<i>Method to methodology</i>		
13 July	Behaviouralism	Easton 1953, Sanders 2002
20 July	Behaviouralism's impact on small- <i>n</i> research	King, Keohane and Verba 1994, Brady and Collier 2004
27 July	Rational choice theory	Green and Shapiro 1994, Cox 2004
3 August	Critical theory	Guess 1981, Baert 2005
10 August	Ontology, epistemology and methodology	Hall 2003, Marsh and Furlong 2002
17 August	Research design in progress presentations	
15 October: Full Research Design due		

*SSR refers to Maggie Walter (ed). 2010. *Social Research Methods*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2nd edition.

All other central readings are available on Blackboard.

In addition to this reading, each student and the instructor will bring one academic reading of their own selection to each seminar – a journal article, chapter from an edited volume, or a scholarly monograph. The only requirement for the selection of the reading is that employs the relevant research method or relates to the methodological debate for the seminar in some way. More information is on p. 3 of this course outline.

**This seminar will be held in a computer lab (location TBA). Students do not need to bring a reading of their own selection to this seminar.