



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

**POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS PROGRAMME  
INTP/POLS 383: RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

**TRIMESTER 1 2012  
5 March to 4 July 2012**

**Trimester dates**

Teaching dates: 5 March to 8 June 2012  
Mid-trimester break: 6–22 April 2012  
Assignment due: 6 June 2012  
In class test: 28 May 2012  
This course is 100% internal assessment

**Withdrawal dates**

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

**Name and contact details course coordinator**

Hilde Coffé  
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Phone: 463 6681  
Murphy Building, Level 5, Room 535  
Office Hours: Tuesday 12.30 pm – 1.30 pm

**Class times and locations**

Lectures: Monday 11.00 am – 12.50 pm  
Venue: Murphy LT220  
No tutorials

**Course delivery**

Students are expected to attend class regularly and to participate actively in any in-class discussions. Students are also responsible for reading the articles before the class for which it is assigned.

**Communication of additional information**

Additional information or information on changes will be posted on the INTP/POLS 383 Blackboard side.

**Course Prescription**

This course enables us to uncover and to better understand how the (political) world operates. This course introduces some of the basic research tools used in the study of

politics. Along the way, students will learn how to pose and answer empirical research questions using appropriated evidence and arguments.

### **Learning objectives**

Students passing the course should be able to:

- understand the research process.
- read, search through and summarize other research.
- judge the quality of research.
- see how theory and data fit together.
- be familiar with the different types of research methods.
- formulate appropriate research questions.
- design research studies that answer the question they want answered.

### **Expected workload**

Over the course of the trimester students are expected to spend 200 hours on this course, including: class contact hours, preparation for lectures, and the completion of an assignment and exam.

### **Readings**

#### **Essential texts:**

All required readings will be accessible online via VUW Library E-Reserves. All readings to be accessed electronically will be clearly marked in the detailed reading list to be provided at the start of the trimester.

Students must read all the literature to prepare for the lectures. Lectures will explain these readings, place them in context, and clarify questions students may have.

### **Assessment requirements**

The final grade will be based on a combination of:

- Formulation of research question (10%)
- Research proposal (45%)
- 2-hour in class test (45%)

Presentation research question:

Maximum 500 words – to be submitted no later than 16.00 pm 4 April 2012.

Students will have to think about the research topic they want to address in their research proposal and formulate clear research questions.

Research proposal:

Maximum 2,000 words - to be submitted no later than 16.00 pm **6 June 2012**.

Students will have to write a research proposal taking insights from the content of the lectures. The assignment will allow students to introduce a research topic of their own interest. Students will have to formulate appropriate research questions related to their topic, frame this topic within the current literature and theory, and suggest a method of analysis and research design.

Students are encouraged to submit a draft of their research proposal no later than 16.00 pm **17 May 2012**. Those who submit a draft will be receive individual feedback on 21 May and

on their final research proposal. This will allow them to improve their proposal before submitting the final version (due 6 June). Students who do not submit a draft will not get detailed feedback on their work in progress nor on their final research proposal, though of course, general questions related to the research proposal may be asked during the lectures.

**In-class test:**

The 2-hour in-class test will be held on **28 May 2012** and will test the knowledge of students about the topics discussed during the lecture programme.

Active participation during the lectures will allow students to think critically about articles (see reader) students should read and prepare for the lectures, and which will be discussed during the lectures.

### **Penalties**

Assignments that are not submitted on time will not be accepted for mandatory course requirements and not be marked.

### **Mandatory course requirements**

To pass this course each student must:

- Submit a research question
- Submit a Research proposal
- Sit a 2 hour in-class test

### **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, tutors 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>

#### WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study). Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress). Most statutes and policies are available at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy), except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx) (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at [www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic).

#### Course Outline

The outline below gives basic information about the topics (and related questions and issues) that will be covered in each week of the course and some suggested readings. A detailed outline with weekly topics and required readings will be provided in the first class.

Day	Topic
5 March	<p><b>General Introduction to Course</b>  <i>How research is defined and what some of its purposes are.</i>  <i>The different steps in the research process.</i>  <i>Start of the research process: how to select a research problem and how to translate a research problem into research questions.</i></p>
12 March	<p><b>Collecting Data</b>  <i>Overview of the different types of data collection methods (qualitative and quantitative).</i></p> <p>Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." <i>Political Analysis</i> 14: 227-249.</p>
19 March	<p><b>Texts, Discourses and Media</b>  <i>Discussion of characteristics of methods related to text, discourse and media analysis.</i>  <i>Discussion of studies using these different types of methods.</i>            E.g., McMillan, Kate. 2009. "Newsflash: 'Men and Women Still Unequal!' New Zealand and the Global Media Monitoring Project 2005." In McMillan, Kate, John Leslie and Elizabeth McLeay (Eds.) <i>Rethinking Women and Politics. New Zealand and Comparative Perspectives</i>. Wellington: Victoria University Press, Pp. 302-331.</p>

26 March	<p>In Depth Interviews Q Method <i>Discussion of characteristics of these different types of methods.</i> <i>Discussion of studies using these different types of methods.</i> E.g., Coffé, Hilde. 2011. <i>Conceptions of Female Political Representation. Perspectives of Rwandan Female Representatives.</i> Paper prepared for presentation at the APSA Annual Meeting, Seattle.</p>
2 April	<p>Focus Groups Field Research <i>Discussion of characteristics of these different types of methods.</i> <i>Discussion of studies using these different types of methods.</i> E.g., Conover, Pamela Johnston, Ivor M. Crewe and Donald D. Seating. 1991. "The Nature of Citizenship in the United States and Great Britain: Empirical Comments on Theoretical Themes." <i>Journal of Politics</i> 53(3): 800-832.</p>
BREAK (2 weeks)	
23 April	<p>Survey Research <i>Discussion of characteristics of survey research.</i> <i>The difference between a survey sample and a population.</i> <i>Is a survey sample representative for the population?</i> <i>Discussion of studies based on survey research.</i> E.g., Denmark, D. and Shaun Bowler. "Minor Parties and Protest Votes in Australia and New Zealand: Locating Populist Parties." <i>Electoral Studies</i> 21: 47-67.</p>
30 April	<p>Experimental Research <i>Discussion of characteristics of experimental research and different types of experiments (e.g., field experiments, survey experiments).</i> <i>When is an experimental research design most appropriate?</i> <i>Discussion of studies using these different types of methods.</i> E.g., Matland, Richard E. 1994. "Putting Scandinavian Equality to the Test: An Experimental Evaluation of Gender Stereotyping of Political Candidates in a Sample of Norwegian Voters." <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> 24: 273-292.</p>
7 May	<p><b>Data Management and Analysis</b> <i>How to manage and analyse data?</i> <i>Presentation of different statistical programmes and tools used to analyse collected data.</i></p>
14 May	<p><b>Presenting Findings</b> <i>Scientific Writing: How to write a research proposal and scientific article?</i> <i>Discussion of different parts of a proposal and manuscript and how they should be prepared.</i> Thunder, David. 2004. "Back to Basics: Twelve Rules for Writing a Publishable Article." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>, 37(3): 493-495. Krishner, Jonathan. 1996. "Alfred Hitchcock and the Art of Research." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>, 29(3): 511-513.</p>
21 May	<p><b>Feedback on Research Proposals</b></p>

	One-to-one consultations with the course coordinator to discuss drafts of the research proposals.
28 May	In class test