

**MCGILL UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
POLITICAL SCIENCE POLI-311**

TECHNIQUES OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Instructor Jessica Fortin
e-mail: jessica.fortin1@mail.mcgill.ca

Office Hours: TBA

=====
The purpose of this course is to train students in how to analyze social phenomena in a rigorous manner. This knowledge requires an understanding of two different components: research design and statistics, both skills that are essential within the discipline of political science, but also in many other fields.

This course is designed to be an introduction course to empirical research methods. In the first component, students will learn how to discriminate between theories, pose proper research questions, construct a relevant hypothesis, make valid causal inferences, operationalise concepts, and test their hypotheses. The latter component offers the student a “statistical toolbox” to use as he or she pursues the study of all things political. This component covers quantitative topics such as central tendency and dispersion as well as measures of association.

EVALUATION:

3 assignments + 1 exam

Project 1: Analyze a piece of literature and identify its main components. 10%

Project 2: Create your own survey design 20%

Project 3: Create your own empirical analysis using the ANES survey. 30%

1 Final exam: 40%

TEXT: Required (available at the bookstore):

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians, Empirical Political Analysis 6th edition

And a course pack is also available at the bookstore.

I do not expect anyone to complete and understand all of the readings listed below (they often overlap considerably, so compare the readings and pick the ones that you find most helpful), but it is not possible to do the assignments without attending the lectures. The lectures will frequently cover matters related directly to the assignments which are not covered fully in the readings. Your grades will be determined by how well you have learned the methods of the course; consequently, the later assignments will be weighted more heavily than the earlier ones.

WEBSITE: You can access the course website by going to the McGill home page and following the links for WebCT. Instructions are provided on the WebCT home page. Any student who is

registered for the course can log on to the website. All PowerPoint slides presented in class will be available on the website. The communication tools can be used for contacting other students in the course, and for participating in discussion groups.

TOPIC 1 The production of knowledge in social science and the Scientific Method

Janet Buttolph Johnson, Richard A. Joslyn, and H. T. Reynolds. *Political Science Research Methods*. 5th edition, chapter 2.

Gary King, Robert Keohane, Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Introduction, pp. 3-12.

Recommended (not included in course pack):

Gabriel Almond and Stephen Genco. 1990. "Clouds, Clocks and the Study of Politics." in Gabriel A. Almond (Ed). *A Discipline Divided*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, pp.32-65.

TOPIC 2 Theories

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapter 2.

Stephen Van Evera. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, Chapter 1, pp.7-21.

Kenneth N. Waltz. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill, 1-17.

TOPIC 3 Concepts, Variables and Hypotheses

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapter 2.

Recommended :

John Gerring. 2001. *Social Science Methodology: a Critical Framework*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp.35-61.

Janet Buttolph Johnson, Richard A. Joslyn, and H. T. Reynolds. *Political Science Research Methods*. 5th edition, chapter 4.

TOPIC 4: From Concepts to Indicators

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, pp. 60-65, 71-72.

Earl Babbie, *The Practice of Social Research*. Wadsworth, Thomson Learning Inc, 9th edition, chapter 5.

Recommended:

John Gerring. 2001. *Social Science Methodology: a Critical Framework*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, chapter 4.

TOPIC 5 Research Problems and the Research Process

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapter 1.

David E. McNabb. 2004. *Research Methods for Political Science: Quantitative and Qualitative methods*. M.E. Sharpe. Pp.67-78.

TOPIC 6 Control Variables

Winston Jackson. 1999. *Methods: Doing Social Research*. Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada Inc., Scarborough, Ontario, pp. 10-13.

Review: Van Evera, pp. 7-21.

TOPIC 7: Content Analysis

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapter 10

Robert Edward Mitchell. 1967. "The Use of Content Analysis for Explanatory Studies." *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 230-241.

Recommended:

Timothy Shortell. 2004. "The Rhetoric of Black Abolitionism: An Exploratory Analysis of Antislavery Newspapers in New York State." *Social Science History*, Vol. 28, No. 1, pp. 75-109.

TOPIC 8a Survey Research II: Designing a Questionnaire

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapter 8.

Winston Jackson. 1999. *Methods: Doing Social Research*. Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada Inc., Scarborough, Ontario, pp. 81-103.

Recommended:

Earl Earl Babbie and Lucia Benaquisto. 2002. *Fundamentals of Social Research*. Scarborough, Ontario: Thompson/Nelson, 1st Canadian edition, pp. 241-267.

James M. Carlson and Mark S. Hyde. 2003. *Doing Empirical Political Research*. Houghton Mifflin Company. Chapter 10: Collecting Data using surveys. pp: 222-246.

Maria Elena Sanchez. 1992. "Effects of Questionnaire Design on the Quality of Survey Data". *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 56, No. 2, pp. 206-217.

James H. Frey and Sabine Mertens Oishi, How to Conduct Interviews by Telephone and in Person, pp. 65-108 [HN29 S724 1995 v. 4]

Linda B. Bourque and Eve P. Fielder, How to Conduct Self-Administered and Mail Surveys, pp. 23-79 [HN29 S724 1995 v.3]

Arlene Fink, How to Ask Survey Questions [HN29 S724 1995 v.2]

TOPIC 8b Survey Research

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapter 8

Asher, Herbert. *Polling and the Public: What Every Citizen Should Know*, 5th edition, chapter 9 (Polling and Democracy)

TOPIC 9 Observational Research

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapter 19

TOPIC 10: Case Studies

Christopher C. Achen, and Duncan Snidal. 1989. "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies." *World Politics* 41, pp.143-69.

Gerring, J. 2004. What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? *American Political Science Review*. 98(2), pp.341-354.

Recommended:

Stephen Van Evera ch.2

TOPIC 11: The Comparative Method

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapter 11 on the practice of comparative research.

Arend Lijphart. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65, No. 3, pp. 682-693.

TOPIC 12 Measurement

* Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, pp. 66-71.

Janet Buttolph Johnson, Richard A. Joslyn, and H. T. Reynolds. *Political Science Research Methods*. 5th edition, chapter 6.

TOPIC 13 Statistics: Describing Variables

* Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapters 15 and 16.

Jeremy Wilson, *Analyzing Politics: An Introduction to Empirical Methods*, pp. 123-135

Winston Jackson. 1999. *Methods: Doing Social Research*. Prentice Hall Allyn and Bacon Canada Inc., Scarborough, Ontario, Rules for Survey Design and Analysis, pp.106-116.

TOPIC 14 Statistics: Estimating Sampling Error and Sample Size

James M. Carlson and Mark S. Hyde. 2003. *Doing Empirical Political Research*. Houghton Mifflin Company. Chapter 9: How to achieve maximum representativeness: sampling, pp.192-217.

Jeremy Wilson, *Analyzing Politics: An Introduction to Empirical Methods*, pp. 70-83

Peeverill Squire. Why the 1936 Literary Digest Poll Failed. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 1. (Spring, 1988), pp. 125-133.

TOPIC 15 Causal Thinking and Research Design

* Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, chapters 6 and 23.

Darrell Huff. 1993. *How to Lie with Statistics*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. Chapter 8: post hoc rides again, pp. 87-99.

TOPIC 16 Statistics: Cross-Tabulations and Statistical Significance

* Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians. 2006. *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*. Pearson Education, 6th edition, pp. 268-81.

Michael Corbett and Michael K. Le Roy. *Research Methods in Political Science*. 5th Ed., pp. 157-164 and 178-189.

TOPIC 17 Statistics: Nominal and Ordinal-Level Measures of Association

TOPIC 18 Statistics: Examining the Effects of Control Variables

Chava Frankfort-Nachmias and David Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. 5th Ed., pp. 426-40 (Control, Elaboration and Multivariate Analysis)

Earl Babbie and Lucia Benaquisto, *Fundamentals of Social Research*, 1st Canadian Ed., pp. 428-439.

Michael Corbett and Michael K. Le Roy, *Research Methods in Political Science*, 5th Ed., pp. 219-228.

TOPIC 19 Validity and Reliability

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians, *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*, 6th edition, chapter 5.

Robert Adock and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *The American Political Science Review* Vol. 95(3), pp.529-546.

TOPIC 20 Scaling

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians, *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*, 6th edition, pp. 156-163

TOPIC 21 Designing A Sample

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians, *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*, 6th edition, chapter 7

Arlene Fink. 2002. How to Sample in Surveys. The *Survey Kit*, 2nd edition, Sage Publications chapter 1

TOPIC 22 Conducting Research Ethically

*Jarol B. Manheim, Richard C. Rich, Lars Willnat, and Craig Leonard Brians, *Empirical Political Analysis: Research Methods in Political Science*, 6th edition, Appendix B

Earl Babbie and Lucia Benaquisto, *Fundamentals of Social Research*, 1st Canadian Ed, pp. 201-212

TOPIC 23 The "Traditional Critique"

Lawrence Mayer, *Comparative Political Inquiry*, chapter 5

TOPIC 24 The Feminist Critique

Sandra Harding. 1987. "Introduction: Is There a Feminist Method?" In *Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues*, ed. Sandra Harding. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, pp.1-14 and 181-190.

Margrit Eichler. 1988. *Nonsexist Research Methods: a Practical Guide*. Boston, Allen & Unwin, pp.1-18.