

Political Science 7961: Seminar on Scope and Methods

Fall 2020

Class Meeting: Tuesday 9:00-11:50

Class Location: 210 Stubbs

Instructor: David Sobek

Office Hours: Thursday 9:00-10:00

Wednesday 9:00-10:00

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Office Location: 207 Stubbs

Office Number: 578-2134

This class is the introduction to the study of research methods of political science. The course has two main goals. First, it is a broader introduction to the key debates within the philosophy of science literature. In other words, how do we learn about a subject and how do we know that we learned something. These are questions that are not specific to any sub-field in political science nor even to political science but are vital to any endeavor that claims to be scientific.

The second goal of the course is more practical and that is to introduce the basic methods used in political science. There are numerous methods used and as such this course only provides a broad overview of the various approaches and discusses the benefits and costs of each approach. In addition, the course will provide an overview of how one designs and implements a research project starting from the research question to the completed manuscript.

Attendance and Participation: 20% of final grade.

Research questions: 5% of final grade

Research pages: 10% of final grade

Literature reviews: 15%

Final Paper Assignment: 25% of final grade.

Final Exam: 25% of final grade.

Grading System:

: Attendance and participation account for 20% of your final grade. It is vitally important for you to come to class prepared, i.e. having carefully read the assignments. Simply showing up for class is not sufficient. You will need to consistently contribute to class discussion in order to satisfy the participation aspect of this part of your grade.

: During the semester you will be required to write 10-15 literature reviews. This is the equivalent of a research article but without the actual data analysis. As a way to prepare for the final paper, there are a series of additional graded assignments that lead up to the final paper.

This is a set of 20 research questions (if-then statements about a particular topic). Your final paper topic will come from one of these questions, so be sure to

Chalmers, Chapters 1-7

Chalmers, Chapters 8-11

Kuhn, Thomas. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Chalmers, chapters 12-17

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Ia dYX]a Ybr]hc UbXYf]hX]b[Pfc[fYggŪ *International Studies Quarterly*. 55(2): 465-481.

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