This course is designed to provide an introduction to a variety of empirical research methods used by political scientists. The primary aims of the course are to make you a more sophisticated consumer of diverse empirical research and to allow you to conduct sophisticated independent work in your junior and senior years. This is not a course in data analysis. Rather, it is a course on how to approach political science research.

The course will consist of three parts. The first part of the course will involve readings, research assignments, and in-class exercises. Our readings will be roughly evenly divided between methodological works and notable applications of various research methods. Because, I study American politics, many of the examples I will use will be drawn from that field. But this is not a course in American politics. I hope that you will emerge from this course better equipped to undertake research of your own and better able to evaluate the work of others. The second section of the course involves visits from guest professors. Students will be responsible for preparing questions about the professor’s research design and approach. The third part of the course will be taken up with presentations of work that students will be preparing throughout the semester.

This research project is a critical element of the course and should be taken very seriously. First, students will submit a two-page statement describing their research question and explaining why it was selected. Next, students will submit a list of at least 10 articles or three books on the topic and a brief abstract for each that presents the basic argument, findings, and relevance for the student’s question. Next, students will submit a critical literature review (15 pages). This will serve as the basis for a 15-minute in-class presentation, which will be followed by a 15-minute group discussion of research strategies. Finally, building on this discussion, students will submit a 20-page research proposal that includes a revised version of the literature review and a new five-page section that proposes an original research.

This course has been designated Communication Intensive (CIM). A CIM course is designed to help you develop your writing and speaking skills in the major. As a result, Writing Program faculty have been assigned to help with this course. The Writing Program faculty will provide you written comments on your Literature Review. In addition to the written comments that you will receive on the Literature Review, the Writing Program staff will be available to assist you with your two-page statement and your final proposal.
Grading

Grades will be calculated as follows:
- Class participation: 30%
- Class assignments project: 10%
- Explanation/defense of research topic: 5%
- Literature review: 15%
- Presentation: 10%
- Final research proposal: 30%

Please note that course participation is a critical part of your grade for this course. I expect that you will come to class prepared to discuss the week’s readings.

Required Reading

A coursepack is available at Copytech. I will also be making great use of the following books and I suggest you purchase them:


Course Outline

I: The Scientific Method

1. Introduction and Course Overview (September 5)

2. Models and Theories in Political Science (September 12)
   - Gabriel Almond, “Political Science: The History of the Discipline,” in *A New Handbook of Political Science*.

II: Methods of Research

3. Introduction to Research Design and The Experimental Method (September 19)
   - Donald Campbell and Julian Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research* (read pages 1-64; play close attention to pages 6-34).
4. **Case Studies, Comparing Cases, and Statistical Analysis  (September 26)**
   
   *Note: Exercise 1 due (Questions of Validity)*
   
   
   David Collier, “The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change” in Rustow and Erickson, eds., *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives*.
   
   

   **III: Gathering Data**

5. **Selecting and Sampling Cases (October 3)**
   
   *Note: Statement of Research Due*
   
   
   
   

6. **Observation, Measurement, and Political Implications I (October 10)**
   
   

7. **Observation, Measurement, and Political Implications II (October 17)**
   
   
   
   

   → Fenno’s interview notes are available on line. Visit, explore, and read interview notes at [http://nara.gov/nara/legislative/fenno1.html](http://nara.gov/nara/legislative/fenno1.html)

   **IV: Guest Lectures**

8. **Stephen Ansolabehere, (October 24)**
   
   *Note: Exercise 2 Due (Measurement)*
   
   Readings TBA.
9. TBA (October 31)  
   *Note: Literature Review Due*

IV: Student Presentations

10. Group 1 (November 7)

11. Group 2 (November 14)

12. Group 3 (November 21)

V: Conclusions

13. Final Thoughts: Ethics and Political Research (December 5)  
   *Note: Final Paper Due*
   
   
   (See also Zimbardo’s description of this Prison experiment at [http://www.prisonexp.org](http://www.prisonexp.org))