Political Science 280  
Methods of Research  
University of Hawai‘i at Hilo  

Fall, 2007  
CRN# 11645  
MW 4:30-5:45 pm  
UCB 104

Instructor: Dr. Todd Belt  
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Office: UCB 355  
Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday  
2:00pm – 4:30 pm,  
and by appointment.

Course Description and Prerequisite
This course is designed to introduce you to research methods in Political Science. This is a required course for the  
B.A. degree in Political Science. It is specifically designed for Political Science majors, and Political Science 101 is  
a prerequisite for this course. Non-Political Science majors are encouraged to take research methodology courses in  
their own major field of study.

Course Overview
What do we mean when we say “Political Science”? Is it an oxymoron? How is politics studied “scientifically?”  
When your professors “profess” to know things, how do they really know them? Upon completion of this class you  
will be well equipped to undertake your own research and better able to understand and evaluate the research of  
others in your classes as well as in the media. You will understand the logic and approaches used by political  
scientists in order to create knowledge. You will understand how to do scientific political analysis. You will also be  
able to pinpoint errors in others’ analyses. Perhaps most importantly, you will attain the skills needed to demonstrate  
why you are right and everyone else is wrong during conversations and writings with your friends, family, and  
instructors.

Goals of the Course
Upon completion of this course, you should be able to understand many things about research methods in the  
discipline of Political Science:

- You will be able to explain and employ the Social Scientific Method, including the connections among theory,  
  research design, data collection, measurement and hypothesis testing.
- You will understand the evolution of Political Science over time, and when, how, and why it has changed.
- You will be able to describe and employ specific research methods such as experiments, surveys, focus groups,  
  content analysis, depth and elite interviews, direct and participant observation, and case study analysis.
- You will understand the various strengths and weaknesses of the above listed methods of research and the  
  conditions which make selection among them appropriate for different research questions.
- You will be able to interpret and perform data analysis.
- You will be able to employ different statistical tests for the purposes of testing hypotheses.
- You will understand how to select the right statistical test for the data you have.
- You will become familiar with the style and content of scholarly research in books and journals.
- You will be able to understand and critique research articles in Political Science journals.
- You will prepare a research manuscript of quality suitable for submission to a Political Science journal.
- You will know how to do Political Science.
Required Texts
You are required to read from the above texts as part of your coursework. I have placed these books on reserve in the library, so you need not purchase these books if you do not wish to do so. The Babbie book comes bundled with the SPSS for Windows Student Version, which we will use in the lab and you may use on your own Windows-compatible computer. The 3rd Edition of the Babbie book is OK to use, except for Chapter 10, which you should read from the 4th edition. Similarly, earlier versions of the Simple Guide to SPSS are also OK to use. Handouts distributed in class will be required reading as well.

Student Responsibilities
Beyond learning the course material, there are only three responsibilities that I place on all students in this course:

1. **Turn assignments in on time.** This class has deadlines that need to be met and exams that must be taken. Turn the assignments in on time. You must take the exams when they are scheduled unless you have a valid excuse (see below for the late assignment and exam scheduling policies). **Do not email assignments.**

   - “I lost my pen drive.”
   - “This isn’t the only class I have, you know.”
   - “My computer crashed.”
   - “I can’t find someone to watch my kids.”
   - “My nose job got infected.”
   - “I’m taking my kids snowboarding on Mauna Kea.”
   - “I can’t get motivated to do it.”
   - “I have to work.”
   - “My child is sick.”
   - “I have a doctor’s appointment.”
   - “I had printer problems.”
   - “I’m having personal problems.”
   - “But, my parents were in town.”
   - “I would have had to come back early from my trip to Kona.”

2. **Be courteous.** I hope and expect that we will have lively political discussions in this class. You are encouraged to disagree with other students and even the professor as long as it is done in a courteous manner. Turn off all electronic devices before class. Do not bring children or other animals to class. Do not pack up your belongings while class is still in session (see below for student conduct policy).

3. **Do not cheat.** Cheating will result in an “F” for the course, not just the assignment or exam upon which the student cheated (see below for academic integrity policy).

Evaluation Method and Grading Policy
Students will be evaluated by the instructor and will receive a letter grade for each of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercises and Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exams</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **Participation.** You are not **required** to show up for class, but your contributions to class discussion will form part of your final grade. Participation includes the quality and frequency of individual students’ contributions to classroom discussion. I follow an “active learning” approach in my classes—simply reading the texts is not a substitute for classroom discussion and learning. Additionally, there will be a copious amount of on-computer lab work during the last third of the semester. This in-class work will be difficult to replicate on your own. In order to participate well in this class, you must pay close attention to assignments and deadlines (all of which are listed in this syllabus). You must complete all assigned readings for the week prior to coming to class on the first meeting of the week. If you are a shy person, now is your chance to work on your shyness and learn how to speak in front of others. Attendance will be taken for administrative purposes only and is not factored into your grade except that your ability to participate will be disadvantaged by too many missed classes. Missing classes can be very detrimental to your ability to learn the course material, especially due to the fact that this class meets only once per week. If you miss a class, it is your own responsibility to learn the material and catch up by the
next class meeting. This will be especially important in the last third of the semester, as the statistics lessons build on the material covered in the prior class meeting.

2. Exercises and Assignments.

**Exercises** are in-class work that must be turned in by the end of a specified class period and receives a credit/no-credit grade. Late exercises will receive credit if the work is completed and turned in by the next class meeting and accompanied by a valid excuse. Exercises will receive only partial credit if they are turned in by the next class meeting and no valid excuse is given. Each partial credit will cause the student’s **Exercises and Assignments** grade component to be reduced by one-third of a letter grade. Each missed exercise will cause the student’s **Exercises and Assignments** grade component to be reduced by two-thirds of a letter grade.

**Assignments** are take-home work which will receive a letter grade (with the exception of the data collection assignment, which is credit/no-credit). Any assignments turned in after the first 10 minutes of class will be treated as late by one day. Late assignments not accompanied by a valid excuse will be deducted one full letter grade for every class meeting they are late. Assignment sheets specifying requirements will be distributed in class and will be posted on the class website. They will not be emailed. See me during class or during my office hours if you missed any of them. Assignments must be typed, double-spaced and turned in as a hard copy, they may not be emailed. Do not show up to class with a diskette and attempt to explain why you have not yet printed your assignment. Always back-up your computer files in at least two places. As a student, it is your responsibility to keep track of due dates and to follow up on missed exercises and assignments. Telling the instructor that you “did not know” about a course requirement is not an acceptable excuse. It is your responsibility to keep yourself informed. Refer to this syllabus frequently. Please do not hesitate to email or call me if you have any questions or need any assistance. Your “Concepts and Hypotheses” and “Literature Review” assignments are part of your **Exercises and Assignments** grade, which is calculated the following way:

- 50% Literature Review (10% of Final Grade). Failure to turn in a Literature Review will result in an F for the Exercises/Assignments component of your grade.
- 20% Participant Observation / Ethnomethodology Experiment (4% of Final Grade).
- 10% Annotated Bibliography (2% of Final Grade).
- 5% Research Question, Concepts and Hypotheses (1% of Final Grade).
- 15% Exercises and other Assignments, credit/no-credit, -1 full letter grade on this component of the Exercises and Assignments grade for each missed Exercise or other Assignment, (3% of Final Grade).

3. Examinations. There will be two midterm examinations. The exams will include multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. The midterm exams are not cumulative. Exams will include material drawn from the readings as well as class lectures. If you wear a hat with a brim on the day of an examination, you will be asked to remove it. If you have a disability that warrants additional consideration for examinations, please inform me so that I can accommodate you (also, see the “Note on Disability Services” below).

4. Final Research Paper. The final research paper will comprise a write-up of an individual research project that you will undertake for this course. Your research project will be based upon a survey that you design and implement with a group of students, but each student is required to write their own research paper on their own topic. More details regarding the final paper will be discussed in class and in several assignment handouts. Late research papers must be turned in to the Social Sciences Division Office (UCB 308) and date stamped. See Academic Integrity Policy and Late Assignment Policy below for additional details. If you cite Wikipedia as a source you will receive an automatic “F” on your paper. You will be required to submit your paper electronically to Turnitin.com, and you are required to submit a hard (paper) copy to me.

- In order to earn an Excellent (A) grade, a student must demonstrate mastery of all of the factual material, be able to apply and in fully integrate theories and concepts, and demonstrate clear organization of ideas and arguments.
- In order to earn a Good (B) grade, a student must demonstrate mastery of nearly all of the factual material, demonstrate some application and integration of theories and concepts, and demonstrate clear organization of ideas and arguments.
In order to earn a Satisfactory (C) grade, a student must demonstrate mastery of most of the factual material and demonstrate clear organization of ideas and arguments.

In order to earn a Poor (D) grade, a student must demonstrate mastery of most of the factual material.

In order to earn a Failing (F) grade, a student must not demonstrate adequate knowledge of the factual material.

The instructor’s evaluation of student performance will be guided by the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation</th>
<th>Exam Points</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failure</td>
<td>59 and below</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grade weighting method: The grade a student receives for each requirement will be converted to grade points and weighted by the corresponding percentage (see above). The final value will be rounded to the closest Grade Point assignment and the corresponding grade will be recorded as the student’s final grade in the course. Here is an example: Suppose Ann received a B+ for Participation, an A- for Exercises and assignments, a C+ on both Midterm Exams and an A- for her Final Research Paper. Ann’s final grade would be calculated as follows:

Final Grade = (3.3 * .10) + (3.7 * .20) + (2.3 * .15) + *(2.3 * .15) + (3.7 * .40)
Finally Grade = .330 + .740 + .345 + .345 + 1.480
Final Grade = 3.240, which is closest to 3.3 grade points, which is equivalent to a B+.

Your final grade will be available on the “My UH” web portal after the semester. I do not email grades.

Other Course Policies and Notes

Add / Drop Policy
This class is full. If you do not wish to take this class, please drop it immediately in order to make room for another student. You may add the class prior to Friday, 8/24 at 12:00 midnight if you are lucky enough to register after someone has dropped and there is an opening on the computer system. If there are openings available, I will add students at the beginning of the second week (Monday, 8/27). You must be present to add. Political Science Majors will be given priority if there are not enough spaces in the class.

Grade Options Policy
Students may take this course for Credit / No Credit, but they must exercise this option on or before Friday, 9/7. The last day to withdraw without a “W” is 9/9. Incompletes are rarely given and only in cases of an emergency and provided that the student has completed at least half of the course requirements and is earning a C- or better.

Student Consultation Policy (Office Hours)
Students are my highest priority. I want every student to do well. I am always happy to meet with students who need help. My office hours are listed at the top of the syllabus, and I am available for drop-in consultation at that time. If you need to see me but cannot make it during my normal office hours, please schedule an appointment with me. Sometimes my office door is left open at other times during the week, and you can drop-in to talk if it is. If my door is closed, I may or may not be available to speak with you (please knock to find out). When I am not working on course material or grading, I am often busy in my office doing research or helping to improve the university.
through such things as committee work. For these reasons it is best to meet with me during regular office hours or
during a scheduled appointment so that we are not disturbed and I can give you my undivided attention. If you want
to schedule an appointment with me, you may see me before or after class, call me or email me. When you email
me, please be sure to say who you are and the class in which you are enrolled.

**Student Conduct Policy**
Students who engage in disruptive behavior will be asked to leave class immediately. Disruptive behavior consists
of, among other things, frequent talking with other students during lectures and presentations, eating, and electronic
noises. Turn off all pagers, phones and other electronic devices prior to entering the classroom. If you have an
electronic device that emits noise during class you will be asked to leave—no excuses and no exceptions. Do not
pack up your belongings before class is dismissed, this is extremely disrespectful. Do not bring children or other
animals to class.

**Academic Integrity Policy**
Academic honesty is required of all students. Each student is responsible for understanding and following campus
policies on academic honesty. Academic dishonesty defrauds all those who depend on the integrity of University
courses and is a serious offense. The UHH Catalog defines academic dishonesty as:

- “Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: submitting, to satisfy an academic requirement, any document
  that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual’s work without identifying that individual;
  neglecting to identify as a quotation a documented idea that has not been assimilated into the student’s
  language and style, or paraphrasing a passage so closely that the reader is misled as to the source;
  submitting the same written or oral material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from
  the instructors involved; or drylabbing, which includes (a) obtaining and using experimental data from other
  students without the express consent of the instructor, (b) utilizing experimental data and laboratory write-
  ups from other sections of the course or from pervious terms during which the course was conducted, and
  (c) fabricating data to fit the expected results” (p. 66).

Cheating and plagiarising will not be tolerated. Note that submitting the same paper for more than one course *without
the prior approval of both instructors* is considered to be a case of academic dishonesty. You must use quotation
marks (“these things”) if you are directly copying another author’s words. Simply citing the author is not enough
unless you are paraphrasing (rewriting the idea in your own words). Copying material off of websites and pasting it
in your paper is plagiarism. You are encouraged to paraphrase wherever possible, as it is preferable to using too
many quotes. If plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty (including cheating on examinations) is
suspected, the incident will be thoroughly investigated. If you are caught cheating in any form or plagiarising any
part of a test, paper, or other assignment, you will receive an “F” for the course (not just the assignment) and may be
reported to the University administration for further possible action, including expulsion from the university.

**Late Assignment Policy**
Writing assignments are due at the beginning of class of the day assigned, and they must be turned in as a hard
(paper) copy. *Do not* merely show up with a pen drive with your file or attempt to email your exam to me and expect
this to be OK. It is not. I *do not* accept emailed assignments. Assignments that are turned in during or at the end of
class will be treated as late. A late assignment is to be turned in to me at the next class meeting and the assignment
will be deducted one full letter grade for every class period it is late. Late papers completed after the last day of
class but before the final exam must be turned in to the Social Sciences Division Office and date stamped (UCB
308). No assignments will be accepted after the final paper is due. Missing assignments will result in an “F” for the
assignment plus a full letter grade deduction in the student’s final grade. Thus, it is far better to turn an assignment
in late than not to turn it in at all. If you have missed a class or showed up late, make sure to visit the course website
for any missed handouts or assignments.

**Exam Scheduling Policy**
Make-up exams are rarely given and only when a university-authorized excuse is provided. These excuses include
illness, religious holiday or a death in the family only. Make-up exams will not include multiple choice questions.
You will not be excused from an exam simply because you missed the prior class or because the exam interferes with
your work schedule. Do not make plans to leave town before the final exam. Any requests for a makeup exam must
be made *before* the exam is given (call me). You will not be permitted to take a make-up exam if you do not request
one before the exam is given.
Note on Disability Services
I will do everything possible to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability who would like to request accommodations should contact the University Disability Services Office—Hale Kauanoe A Wing Lounge, 933-0816 (V), 933-3334 (TTY), shirachi@hawaii.edu. Please do so as early in the semester as possible.

Note on Academic Advising
Advising is a very important resource designed to help students complete the requirements of the University and their individual majors. Students should consult with their advisor at least once per semester in order to decide upon courses, check progress towards graduation, and discuss their career options and other educational opportunities provided by UH Hilo. Advising is a shared responsibility, but students have the final responsibility for meeting degree requirements. You can find out who your advisor is on the UHH website. This is the URL: http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/studentaffairs/advising/advisors

Course Schedule:

Week 1 (8/20-22). The Nature and Goals of Political Inquiry
Reading: Babbie, ch. 1.
Exercise: Detecting Assumptions and Biases.
  ♦ Syllabus Distributed
  ♦ Assumptions
  ♦ Biases
  ♦ Errors of Inquiry
  ♦ Methodological Rigor
  ♦ Ideographic and Nomothetic Explanation
  ♦ Qualitative and Quantitative Observations

Week 2 (8/27). Epistemology, Theories and Paradigms
No Class Wednesday
“There are two ways to slide easily through life: to believe everything or to doubt everything; both ways save us from thinking.” -Theodore Rubin
Reading: Babbie, ch. 2.
Assignment: In lieu of Wednesday class, answer Review Question #2 in Babbie Ch. 2 (p. 62). One page limit, due Wednesday of Week 3.
  ♦ Epistemology
  ♦ Positivism and Causality
  ♦ Kuhn and Scientific Revolutions
  ♦ The Evolution of Political Science as a Discipline
  ♦ Normative and Non-normative Research
  ♦ Characteristics of the Scientific Method
  ♦ Inductive Theory Building
  ♦ Deductive Theory Building
  ♦ Feminist, Postmodernist, Marxist, and Neo-Eclectic challenges

Week 3 (9/5). Concepts, Operationalization, and Measurement
No Class Monday (Labor Day)
Reading: Babbie, ch. 5.
Exercise: Deductive and Inductive Logic.
Assignment: Review Question #2 in Babbie Ch. 2 (p. 57), due Wednesday.
  ♦ The Logic of Scientific Inquiry
  ♦ The Research Question
  ♦ Hypotheses
• Variables
• Levels of measurement
• Validity
• Reliability
• Taxonomies

Week 4 (9/10-12). The Literature Review and Research Design
“If we encounter a man of rare intellect, we should ask him what books he reads.” -Ralph Waldo Emerson
Reading: Babbie, ch. 4; Fussell, chs. 1-5 and pp. 191-202 (you do not need to complete the exercises).
Assignment: Research Question, Operationalization and Hypotheses due Wednesday.
• Reasons for a Literature Review
• An Introduction to Scholarly Literature, especially Political Science Journals
• Tips on Conducting a Literature Review
• Research Design
• Purposes of Research
• Units of Analysis
• The Ecological Fallacy
• Foci of Study
• Time Dimensions of Study

Week 5 (9/17-19). Indexes, Scales and Sampling
Reading: Babbie, chs. 6-7; Dowd, “The Manolo Moochers” (Handout).
• Scales and Indexes
• History of Sampling
• Populations vs. Samples
• Representativeness
• The Logic of Probability Sampling
• Characteristics of an “Ideal” Random Sampling Technique
• Non-random Sampling
• Confidence Intervals and Sampling Error

Week 6 (9/24-26). Monday: Exam #1
Wednesday: Introduction to Experimental Design
Reading: None
In-Class Film: Obedience.
• Ethics and Validity of Experimentation
• The Milgram Experiment and the Stanford Prison Experiment
• Characteristics of an “Ideal” Experiment
• Independent and Dependent Variables
• Establishing Causality

Week 7 (10/1-3). Experimental Design (cont’d) and Survey Design
Reading: Babbie, ch. 8.
Assignment: Annotated Bibliography Assignment due Wednesday.
• Threats to Internal and External Validity of Experiments
• Experimental Randomization
• Varieties of Experimental Design
• Quasi-Experiments (Natural Experiments)
• Field Experiments
• Strengths and Weaknesses of Experimental Design
• Topics Appropriate for Surveys
• Types of Surveys
• Methods of Administration
Week 8 (10/8-10). Survey Research (cont’d)
Reading: Babbie, ch. 9.
Assignment: Literature Review Assignment due Wednesday.
Exercise: Questionnaire Design.
  ◆ Selection Bias
  ◆ Social Acceptability Bias
  ◆ Order, Wording, and Interviewer Effects
  ◆ Closed and Open-ended Questions
  ◆ Main Factors Affecting the Quality of a Survey
  ◆ Step-by-step Instructions for Conducting a Poll
  ◆ Strengths and Weaknesses of Survey Research
  ◆ Secondary analysis (introduction to the American National Election Studies)

Week 9 (10/15-17). Qualitative Methods and Content Analysis
Reading: Babbie, ch. 10.
Assignment: Survey Questionnaire due Wednesday.
  ◆ Case Studies
  ◆ Direct and Participant Observation
  ◆ Depth and Elite Interviewing
  ◆ Focus Groups
  ◆ Ethnomethodology

Week 10 (10/22-24). Monday: Content Analysis (cont’d)
Wednesday: Exam #2
Reading: Babbie, ch. 11.
  ◆ Topics Appropriate for Content Analysis
  ◆ Coding and Intercoder Reliability
  ◆ Running Records vs. Episodic Records
  ◆ Strengths and Weaknesses of Content Analysis
  ◆ The third way: Triangulation

Week 11 (10/29-31). Computers for Data Analysis
Assignment: Data Collection for your project to be completed by beginning of class Monday.
Reading: Babbie, ch. 14; Kirkpatrick and Feeney chs. 1-2.
  ◆ Coding Data
  ◆ Entering Data
  ◆ Managing and Cleaning Data

Week 12 (11/5-11/7). Descriptive Statistics
“There are three kinds of lies: Lies, damned lies, and statistics.” - Mark Twain
Assignment: Participant Observation Report Due Monday, Data for your project to be entered by Wednesday.
Reading: Babbie, ch. 14; Kirkpatrick and Feeney chs. 3-6.
  ◆ Frequency Distribution
  ◆ Measures of Central Tendency
  ◆ Standard Deviation

Week 13 (11/14). Crosstabulation
No Class Monday: Veterans’ Day
Reading: Kirkpatrick and Feeney chs. 7-8.
Exercises: Frequencies for your own project due by the end of class Wednesday.
  ◆ Crosstabs
  ◆ Presenting Tables and Finding Patterns in Tables
  ◆ Collapsing/Recoding Variables
Week 14 (11/19-21). Bivariate Statistics
Reading: Kirkpatrick and Feeney ch. 17.
Exercises: Data Analysis I due by the end of class Wednesday.
   ✦ The Logic of Statistical Testing
   ✦ Significance Levels
   ✦ Measures of Association and the Chi-Square statistic
   ✦ Difference of Means tests (ANOVA)

Week 15 (11/26-28). Multivariate Data Analysis
Reading: Kirkpatrick and Feeney, chs. 14-16.
Exercises: Chi-Square calculation due by the end of class Wednesday.
   ✦ Antecedent and Intervening Variables
   ✦ Control Variables
   ✦ Correlation (r)
   ✦ Multiple Regression—when and how to use it
   ✦ Interpreting regression coefficients and significance levels

Week 16 (12/3-5). Open Lab and Research Paper Assistance
Reading: None.
Exercise: Data Analysis II (Bivariate) due by the end of class Wednesday.

Final papers due Monday, December 10th, 4:00 pm – 5:00 pm in my office (UCB 355)