

**LINGNAN UNIVERSITY**

**EMPIRICAL POLITICAL ANALYSIS: APPROACHES AND**

**METHODS**

**POL3101**

1st Term 2017-2018

Instructor: Dr. Tam Wai-keung; Department of Political Science

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Office hours: Wednesday 1:30-3:30pm; Friday 1:30-2:30pm, 3:30-4:30pm; or by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course focuses on the nature of scientific analysis and the major forms of qualitative, quantitative, and textual research utilized by political scientists. It also provides students with the basic tools to enable them to identify research questions, construct literature review and write a research paper.

**AIMS**

This course aims:

1. To instill in students the ability to understand, analyze, and conduct political science research through various methodologies.
2. To equip students with the fundamental background of political science research by focusing on the assumptions of the scientific method, the requirements of good argumentation, and the forms of qualitative, quantitative, and textual research.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES (LOs)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and assess the principles of a range of basic research methods and their use in various political science studies; and evaluate the evidence presented in these studies.

2. Articulate the terminology, procedures, requirements, and structure of political science research methodologies.
3. Construct their own research designs and research papers using various methods in a political science research format; develop a good research question and test their research hypothesis using the appropriate empirical methods.

### **TEACHING METHOD**

Lectures are combined with tutorials involving written assignments and presentations. Real applications and research examples will be used to illustrate the concepts and the techniques of various research methods. Students are required to design their own research proposal to apply what they have learnt in this course.

### **MEASUREMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Assessment of students' performance will be based on the following four criteria:

1. Class participation (25%) (measures LOs 1-3)

Students will be graded according to their degree of class participation and other relevant contributions to the class discussion.

2. A Proposal of Survey Research (35%) (measures LOs 1-3)

5 students will work together in a small group and write a proposal of a survey research. Students must consult the instructor concerning the topic of their survey research. The proposal should include your research questions, the questions that will be asked (the questionnaire), and sampling procedures. Due date of the proposal is 1 December 2017.

3. Final Examination (40%) (measures LOs 1-2)

This will assess students' understanding of the basic concepts, case studies, and debates encountered in this course.

## **IMPORTANT NOTES**

1. Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
2. Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
3. Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
4. To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

Week 1 (September 8, 2017)

### **Introduction and Housekeeping**

Week 2 (September 15, 2017)

### **Concepts: Conceptualization and Measurement**

Required readings:

Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011) (Fifth Edition), pp. 131-136, 148-155.

Gerardo Munck and Jay Verkuilen, "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.35, No.1 (2002), pp. 5-34 (read pp. 5-17 only).

Week 3 (September 22, 2017)

### **From Topics to Questions**

Required reading:

Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) (Third edition), pp. 35-50.

Week 4 (September 29, 2017)

### **Causation and Causal Logic in Research Design**

Required reading:

Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011) (Fifth Edition), pp. 97-101.

Optional reading:

W. Phillips Shively, *The Craft of Political Research* (Boston: Pearson, 2013) (9<sup>th</sup> edition), pp. 73-95.

Week 5 (October 6, 2017)

### **Survey Research I**

Required readings:

Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011) (Fifth Edition), pp. 269-305.

Browse the website of *World Values Survey Wave 6 (2010-2014)*  
<http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV6.jsp>

Week 6 (October 13, 2017)

### **Survey Research II**

Required reading:

Henry Brady, "Contributions of Survey Research to Political Science," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, Vol.33 (March 2000), pp. 47-57.

Week 7 (October 20, 2017)

### **The Logic of Sampling**

Required reading:

Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011) (Fifth Edition), pp. 201-244.

Week 8 (October 27, 2017)

### **In-Person Interviews**

Required reading:

Layna Mosley (ed.), *Interview Research in Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), pp. 1-28.

Week 9 (November 3, 2017)

### **Participant Observation**

Required reading:

Richard Fenno, "Notes on Method: Participant Observation," in Richard Fenno, *Home Style: House Members in their Districts* (New York: Longman, 2003), pp. 249-295.

Week 10 (November 10, 2017)

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

Required reading:

Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011) (5<sup>th</sup>

Edition), pp. 453-469.

Week 11 (November 17, 2017)

**How to Professionally and Effectively Present Your Work**

Required readings:

Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams, *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008) (Third edition), pp. 187-210.

Earl Babbie, *The Basics of Social Research* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 2011) (5<sup>th</sup> Edition), p. 496.

Week 12 (November 24, 2017)

**No Class, University Special Arrangement**

Week 13 (December 1, 2017)

**Conclusion**