

INTL 6010: Research Methods in International Policy

Fall 2017

Dr. Shane P. Singh

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Course Webpage: <http://www.shanepsingh.com/teaching.html>

Class Meeting Time: Tuesdays, 11:00AM-1:45PM

Class Location: 117 Candler Hall

Goal of the Course: The goal of this course is to help you understand how we study politics and policy and to provide guidance in conducting original research. The course will provide you with a general understanding of what science is and a foundation in the logic and practice of systematic political inquiry. In addition to discussing general questions about the philosophy of science, we will cover fundamental issues such as arriving at a research question, theory building, hypothesis development, variable measurement, and identifying and dealing with confounding factors. We will then move to quantitative analysis; topics covered will include statistical inference, bivariate relationships, and multivariate relationships. The student should leave with an understanding of how to conduct his or her own research and a solid foundation for reading scholarly literature in political science and international policy.

Required Readings:

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (KW)

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (KKV)

Putnam, Robert D. 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (Putnam)

Several journal articles, all of which are available online for free

Student Responsibilities and Grade Breakdown:

Readings: Students are required to do the readings for each class period ahead of time. Each week, students should write a short memo summarizing the readings for each class ahead of time. He or she should then refer to the memo during discussion.

Participation: As this is a graduate seminar, your participation is crucial and will count for 10% of your grade. Your involvement toward the end of the semester,

when we will discuss the research designs of students in the class, is particularly important.

Research Design and Presentation: A critical assignment in the course is a research design, which includes a research question, theory and literature review, hypotheses, variable operationalization and measurement, dependent and independent variables, and what your expected findings would be if you were to actually conduct the research. (If you are able, you are encouraged to actually conduct analyses.) You will present your design toward the end of the semester. Each presenter will be assigned a discussant, who will be responsible for constructively critiquing the research design. Papers should be made available to the discussant ahead of time. Your role as a discussant will count towards your participation grade. Presenters may wish to incorporate the suggestions of the discussant and the rest of the audience into their final research design. The research design will count for 25% of your grade. Note that a one-page summary of your research design is due in class midway through the semester.

Exams: There will be two exams, each of which will count for 30% of your grade.

Homework Assignment: There will be one, rather long homework assignment handed out in the second half of the semester. This can be turned in any time on or before the day of the second exam. It will count for 5% of your grade. The purpose of the homework is to help you prepare for the second exam. You should approach me with any questions you have about the homework questions.

Grade Scale:

>=93%:	A
90-92.99%:	A-
87-89.99%:	B+
83-86.99%:	B
80-82.99%:	B-
77-79.99%:	C+
73-76.99%:	C
70-72.99%:	C-
60-69.99%:	D
<60%:	F

Late/Missed Assignments: Missed assignments will result in a zero without a university-approved medical excuse or family emergency. Students will be penalized for late assignments; 20% of the grade for each day late without a university-approved medical excuse or family emergency. Make-up exams can be arranged with the instructor with a university-approved medical excuse or family emergency.

As a University of Georgia student, you have agreed to abide by the University's academic honesty policy, "A Culture of Honesty," and the Student Honor Code. All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty" found at: www.uga.edu/honesty. Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic honesty policy should be directed to the instructor.

Readings and Course Schedule: *The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

Readings with a “*” in front are optional

WEEK 1

August 15: No Class (Out of Town)

WEEK 2

August 22: Welcome and Introduction

The Edicts of Candler Hall

*Keohane, Robert O. 2009. Political Science as a Vocation. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42 (2):359-363.

*<http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/science-isnt-broken/> (an article on the scientific process that illustrates the dangers of doing it wrong and the great value of doing it right)

WEEK 3

August 29: The Scientific Study of Politics and Policy

KW, Chapter 1

KKV, Chapter 1 (thinking like a social scientist)

Putnam, Chapter 1 (an example of selecting and formulating a research agenda)

WEEK 4

September 5: Theory, Hypotheses, Concepts, and Variables

KW, reread Sections 1.2 and 1.3 of Chapter 1 and read Chapter 2

Skim: Fridkin, Kim L., and Patrick J. Kenney. 2014. How the Gender of U.S. Senators Influences People’s Understanding and Engagement in Politics. *Journal of Politics* 76 (4): 1017-31. (a good American politics example with clear hypotheses and variables)

Skim: Fuhrmann, Matthew. 2009. Spreading Temptation: Proliferation and Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreements. *International Security* 34 (1):7-41. (a good international relations example with clear hypotheses and variables)

Skim: Reher, Stefanie. 2015. Explaining Cross-National Variation in the Relationship between Priority Congruence and Satisfaction with Democracy. *European Journal of Political Research* 54 (1): 160-81. (a good comparative politics example with clear hypotheses and variables)

WEEK 5

September 12: Operationalization and Measurement

KW, Chapter 5, pgs. 92-114

Putnam, Chapter 3 (an example of operationalization and measurement)

*KKV, Chapter 5, pgs. 150-168 (a good discussion of how *not* to measure)

*McDonald, Michael P., and Samuel L. Popkin. 2001. The Myth of the Vanishing Voter. *American Political Science Review* 95 (4):963-974. (an example of how measurement decisions can affect substantive conclusions)

WEEK 6

September 19: Causality and Relationships between Variables

KW, Chapter 3

KKV, Chapter 3 (important rules for constructing causal theories)

*Muller, Edward N., and Mitchell A. Seligson. 1994. Civic Culture and Democracy: The Question of Causal Relationships. *American Political Science Review* 88 (3):635-652. (the authors examine whether democracy causes attitudes, or vice versa)

WEEK 7

September 26: Experimental and Observational Designs

KW, Chapter 4

Putnam, Chapter 4 (Putnam's theory testing chapter)

WEEK 8

October 3: Exam 1

WEEK 9

October 10: Sampling and Surveys

Hand out homework assignment

KW, Chapter 6

Gerber, Alan S, and Donald P. Green. 2000. The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment. *American Political Science Review* 94 (3):653-663. (an example of how your sampling technique can affect the answers you get)

WEEK 10

October 17: Descriptive Statistics and Statistical Inference

Hand in one-page research design summaries

KW, pages 114-128 of Chapter 5, Chapter 6 again, and section 7.3 of Chapter 7

WEEK 11

October 24: Bivariate Relationships

Sign up for research design presentation days; assign discussants

KW, skim Chapter 7 and read Chapter 8 in depth

Putnam, Chapter 4 again, skim it (Putnam's theory testing chapter, which includes several bivariate examinations)

WEEK 12

October 31: Multivariate Relationships

KW, Chapter 9 and pages 220-232 of Chapter 10

*Brambor, Thomas, William Roberts Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analyses. *Political Analysis* 14 (1):63-82. (provides excellent guidance for testing conditional hypotheses with multiple regression)

WEEK 13

November 7: Presentation and Discussion of Research Designs

WEEK 14

November 14: Presentation and Discussion of Research Designs

WEEK 15

November 21: No Class (Thanksgiving)

WEEK 16

November 28: Exam 2 (Last Day of Class)

FINALS WEEK

December 12: Research design papers due in my mailbox, under my door, or directly to me before 5:00PM—not by email.