



**Political Science 3324G (570)**  
**INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**  
**Fall/ Winter 2025-2026**

**Instructor:** Dr. Laszlo Sarkany

**Email:** lsarkan@uwo.ca

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### **Course Information**

#### **Calendar Description:**

This course introduces students to a range of methodological approaches to questions in political science. Students will become familiar with qualitative and quantitative data sources and ways of using each to address political issues.

**Antirequisite(s) at Main campus:** Political Science 2535F/G or Political Science 3325F/G, Health Sciences 2801A/B, Psychology 2800E, Psychology 2820E, and Sociology 2206A/B.

**Antirequisite(s) at Huron campus:** Health Sciences 2801A/B, the former Psychology 2800E, the former Psychology 2820E, Psychology 2830A/B, and Sociology 2206A/B. **Antirequisite(s) at King's campus:** Health Sciences 2801A/B, the former Psychology 2800E, the former Psychology 2820E, Psychology 2830A/B, and Sociology 2206A/B, Political Science 2325F/G.

**Prerequisite(s):** Enrolment in Political Science; or Politics and International Relations modules.

**Extra Information:** 2 lecture hours.

**Course Weight:** 0.50

**Breadth:** Category A

**Subject Code:** POLISCI

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.



**PS 3324G**

**(570)**

**Winter 2026**

## **Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science**

### **Instructor Information:**

<b>Professor:</b>	Dr. Laszlo Sarkany	<b>Office #:</b>	N/A
<b>Email:</b>	lsarkan@uwo.ca	<b>Ext:</b>	4513

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Mode of delivery:** In-person

**Class Times and Location(s):** Wednesdays, 2:30pm – 4:30pm

### **1. Course Description**

The aim of this course is to familiarize the students with both, quantitative and qualitative methodologies used for scholarly inquiry relevant for political science. The course will begin with an overview of theories of knowledge, or how do we know what we know. Next, emphasis will be placed on how we are able to acquire such knowledge, as well as how best to communicate this knowledge. In practical terms, students will be asked to uncover their topic(s) of research interests relevant for political science, conduct a literature review, choose appropriate methodologies to conduct this research, and finally communicate their research agendas in the form of a research proposal, or, alternately, a grant proposal.

### **2. Textbooks and Course Materials**

#### **Required:**

Loleen Berdahl and Jason Roy, *“Conducting Empirical Research in Canadian Political Science,”* 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Oxford University Press Canada, 2021. [Price: \$ 72.99, on VitalSource]

### **Recommended:**

Cresswell, John W. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA: 2013. [Available to download as a PDF.]

Margot Northey, Lorne Tepperman and Patrizia Albanese. *Making Sense in the Social Sciences: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*, Fifth Edition. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Wheelan, Charles. *Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data*. W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York: 2014.

I strongly encourage you to purchase the books and keep them for future reference, **in addition to reading them for the lectures**. I will also assign additional readings which will be marked with an asterisk (\*). These readings will be available in the library under course reserves.

**\*\*\*The rest of the readings assigned are accessible on-line in the appropriate journals, which are available electronically through UWO library web page.**

### ***Recommended:***

Margot Northey, Lorne Tepperman and Patrizia Albanese. *Making Sense in the Social Sciences: A Student's Guide to Research and Writing*, Fifth Edition. Oxford University Press, 2012.

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

After the completing the course, students should be able to:

- ❖ Understand the centrality of the notion of research design in the process of setting and answering research questions.
- ❖ Differentiate between quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, and in what circumstances are these methodologies most useful to answer research questions.
- ❖ Distinguish between ‘methodology’ and ‘methods’ during the research design process.
- ❖ Identify and state the proper use of key qualitative and quantitative research methods such as document and textual analysis, as well as methods associated with descriptive and inferential statistics for the social sciences.
- ❖ Understand the importance of research ethics during the research process.

### **3. Methods of Evaluation**

<b>GRADING</b>	<b>VALUE</b>	<b>Due Date:</b>	<b>Type of assignment</b>
Midterm exam	25 %	February 11 <sup>th</sup>	Individual
Literature review	15 %	March 4 <sup>th</sup>	Group
Research proposal	25 %	March 18 <sup>th</sup>	Group
Final exam	35%	April, 2026	Individual

## **ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **I) MIDTERM EXAM (In-class)**

### **II) LITERATURE REVIEW: ‘What others are arguing, and how do we fit in the debate.’**

- i. For this assignment your task is to narrow down your research questions to one specific question, and then provide a summary of the 10 most pertinent scholarly sources on the research question of your choice. In this assignment your task will be, first, to clearly and succinctly identify the exact research question you would like to answer. Second, you will then need to explain what others have stated, argued, or wrote in general about that question. Your review needs to be 1000-words, maximum (4 double-spaced pages).

## **IV) RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

The aim of this project is to essentially compose either a research proposal, or a grant proposal, based on the work you have done thus far in the course. The format and content of the assignment will be as follows: (please note that you must use these subheadings):

- a. **‘INTRODUCTION’** – In this section you will outline the study – or proposal – in broad and general terms.
  - i. Maximum space allotted: 1 double-spaced page or 250 words.
- b. **‘PURPOSE STATEMENT’** – In this section your task is to explain why this question is important to study, or why this project is important to fund.
  - i. Maximum space allotted: 1 double-spaced page, or 250 words
- c. **‘LITERATURE REVIEW’** – In this section, your aim is to use at most 15 scholarly sources to highlight what others have argued or stated about your research question. If you are writing a grant proposal, your task then is to show how your ‘cause’ is unique, compared to other similar ‘causes’. This section of the proposal will differ from the previous one in that in this section you are not only providing the reasons why your question or cause is important in general, but here you are also explaining how your question or cause compares to how others have approached the question, or approached the social justice and peace issue. In essence, you are here conducting a ‘market research’, if you will.
  - i. Maximum space allotted: 2 double-spaced page, or 500 words

- d. **‘METHODOLOGY’** – Your task in this section is to clearly outline what methods you have chosen for your study, and why. These methods can be quantitative, qualitative, or both. If you are writing a grant proposal, your task here is to provide a detailed explanation as to what you would like to spend the funds on.
  - i. Maximum space allotted: 2 double-spaced page, or 500 words
- e. **‘CONCLUSION’** – Your task here is to provide a few brief concluding remarks.
  - i. Maximum space allotted: 1/2 double-spaced page, or about 150 words

**\*\*\*\*PLEASE NOTE: In order to complete the final project, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO REUSE any of the assignments you completed up to this point in the course. The caveat here is that you MUST show that you have taken into consideration the edits and comments of the instructor. Any attempt to hand back in any one of the 5 assignments without making the necessary changes will be considered plagiarism!**

## **V) FINAL EXAM:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>

## **\*\*\* POLICY WITH REGARDS TO THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:**

*Please note that you are explicitly asked not to use any type of software during the writing process which uses artificial intelligence. The use of such software – such as ChatGPT – will result in you receiving ‘0’ on the assignment.*

## **WEEKLY READING ASSIGNMENTS:**

### **WEEK 1: JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup>: INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

- Introductions
- Organizational overview of the course
- Explanation of grading
- Overview of research methods

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 1

### **WEEK 2: JANUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> – Theories, Measures, Designs, and Concepts**

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 4

Please explore the following website: [Sage Research Methods - Home \(sagepub.com\)](https://www.sagepub.com)

**WEEK 3: JANUARY 21<sup>ND</sup> – Documents, Text and Interviews**

Berdahl and Roy, chapters 6 and 7

Mahoney, James. The Logic of Process Tracing Tests in the Social Sciences. *Sociological Methods & Research*. Vol. 41, No. 4. November 2012: 570 – 597.

Van Dijk, Teun A. Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis. *Discourse and Society*. Vol. 4, No. 2, April 1993: 249 – 283.

**WEEK 4: JANUARY 28<sup>TH</sup> – Documents, Texts and Interviews, cont’.**

**WEEK 5: FEBRUARY 4<sup>TH</sup> – Case Studies and Comparative Research**

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 10

**WEEK 6: FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup> – MIDTERM EXAM – IN CLASS**

**\*\*\* FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> – FEBRUARY 22<sup>ND</sup> - WINTER STUDY BREAK \*\*\***

**WEEK 7: FEBRUARY 25<sup>TH</sup> – Qualitative Data**

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 11

**WEEK 8: MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup> – Surveys**

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 10

**WEEK 9: MARCH 11<sup>TH</sup> - Quantitative Analysis**

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 12

**WEEK 10: MARCH 18<sup>TH</sup> – Research Ethics**

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 3

**WEEK 11: MARCH 25<sup>th</sup> – Political Science as Craft**

Berdahl and Roy, chapter 14

**WEEK 12: APRIL 1<sup>st</sup> – EXAM REVIEW**

# KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

## GENERAL COURSE POLICIES

### 2025-2026

#### **1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences**

##### **Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)**

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

##### **Academic Consideration for Student Absence**

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses\\_enrollment/exams\\_and\\_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf](https://www.kings.uwo.ca/kings/assets/File/currentStudents/courses_enrollment/exams_and_tests/SMC-Feb-2025.pdf).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course.

Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course.

For further information, please see:

[https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

##### **Absences from Final Examinations**

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

## **Religious Accommodation**

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

## **2. Support Services**

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King’s University College: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

[https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/)

Academic Support Services at King’s University College:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/academic-resources/>

### **GBSV Support:**

King’s is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing [Care@kings.uwo.ca](mailto:Care@kings.uwo.ca) or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western’s Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.

Further supports can be found on this website: <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/about-kings/safe-campus/gender-and-sexual-violence/>

See also [https://www.uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html)

University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

### 3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

**Use of Electronic Devices:** Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

**Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom:** King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-affairs/code-of-student-conduct1/>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

### 4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

### **5. Copyright of Course Material**

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

### **6. Use of Recordings**

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

### **7. Policy on Attendance**

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.