

POL S 205
Michael Strausz

Political Science as a Social Science
Fall 2007

office hours: Tuesdays 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

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course webpage: <http://courses.washington.edu/polsc205>

Course Description and Objectives: Why do we call our discipline political *science*? Can the scientific method, which was developed to study natural phenomena, also teach us about how political systems function? This course aims to address these questions. It also aims to introduce students to the main tools that political scientists use to conduct research, including research design, qualitative research methods, and quantitative research methods. This class will give students a better idea of what it is political scientists actually *do*, and it will also give students analytic tools to evaluate the strength of social scientific research.

Expectations:

1. Prepare for each class by carefully reading the assigned materials. If it appears that substantial numbers of students are not doing the readings, I will give pop quizzes that will be considered as a part of the participation grade.
2. Come to class on time.
3. Participate actively in class, both by making verbal contributions to discussions and by listening to your classmates. If you do not attend class regularly, you will not be able to participate in discussions.
4. Be respectful of others. I expect each student to pay careful attention to the views of your classmates.
5. Homework assignments should be made up entirely of your original work. Copying or paraphrasing a source without acknowledging that source is plagiarism and will not be tolerated. Allowing another student to copy your work is also cheating and likewise will not be tolerated. Students determined to have committed plagiarism will be treated in accordance with the University of Washington's policy on academic honesty (<http://depts.washington.edu/grading/issue1/honesty.htm>).

Course Materials: I have put many of the readings for this class on reserve, and you can access them through the UW library website. That way, if you prefer to read them on your computer, you are free to do so, and if not, you can also print them out. In addition to these online materials, I have also assigned the following book (The book is available at the UW bookstore, but feel free to buy copies at other bookstores or online):

Salkind, Neil J. 2008. *Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.

Disabled Student Services: If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8924 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the professor so accommodations you might need for class can be discussed.

Grading: Grades in this course will be determined as follows:

- Classroom Participation: 25%
- Homework (4 assignments, 5% each): 20%
- Midterm Exam (**November 5**): 25%
- Final Exam (**Tuesday, December 11**): 30%

You are required to turn in hard copies of homework at the beginning of class.

Late assignments will be penalized .3 per date late (4→3.7→3.4, etc.). Once grades have been officially submitted for the course, late assignments will no longer be accepted.

Makeup exams and paper deadline extensions will not be allowed except in the cases of university-excused absences or illnesses, and proper documentation is required.

If you feel that you have been graded unfairly on any course assignment, please wait 24 hours after the assignment is returned and then contact the TA with a typed statement about why you believe you were graded unfairly. This typed statement must provide substantive reasons why you believe that you were graded unfairly. Appeals are due one week after the exam/homework was returned.

Office Hours: I encourage students to take advantage of my office hours in order to ask questions about course materials or to chat about issues related to the course or political science more generally. Also, if you have any comments about or problems with the course itself I encourage you to share them in my office hours.

If you would like to get in touch with me to ask a question or schedule an appointment, I encourage you to e-mail me.

Schedule:

9/26 *Introduction*

Unit 1: What's Social About Social Science?

10/1 *Social Science and Natural Science*
Weber, Max. 1918. *Science As a Vocation* (electronic reserve).

10/3 *History, Theory, and Political Science*
Jervis, Robert. 2001. *International History and International Politics: Why are they Studied Differently?* In *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*.

Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press (electronic reserve).

Unit 2: Research Design

- 10/8 *Questions and Concepts*
Owen, John M. 1994. How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace. *International Security* 19 (2):87-125 (electronic reserve).
- 10/10 *Measurement and Types of Data*
Beer, Caroline, and Neil J. Mitchell. 2006. Comparing Nations and States: Human Rights and Democracy in India. *Comparative Political Studies* 39 (8): 996-1018 (electronic reserve).
Homework #1 distributed in class
- 10/15 *Case Selection and Comparison*
Brooks, Stephen G., and William C. Wohlforth. 2000-2001. Power, Globalization, and the End of the Cold War: Reevaluating a Landmark Case for Ideas. *International Security* 25 (3):5-53 (electronic reserve).
Homework #1 due at the beginning of class

Unit 3: Qualitative Research

- 10/17 *Participant Observation*
Cohn, Carol. 1987. Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals. *Signs* 12 (4):687-718 (electronic reserve).
- 10/22 *Archival Sources and Secondary Data*
English, Robert D. 2002. Power, Ideas, and New Evidence on the Cold War's End: A Reply to Brooks and Wohlforth. *International Security* 26 (4):70-92 (electronic reserve).
- 10/24 *Interviews*
Guest Lecturer: Robert Pekkanen, Jackson School of International Studies
Pekkanen, Robert. 2000. Japan's New Politics: the Case of the NPO Law. *Journal of Japanese Studies* 26 (1):111-143.
Pekkanen, Robert, Benjamin Nyblade, and Ellis S. Krauss. 2006. Electoral Incentives in Mixed-Member Systems: Parties, Posts, and Zombie Politicians in Japan. *American Political Science Review* 100 (2):183-192 (electronic reserve).
Homework #2 distributed in class
- 10/29 *Process Tracing*
Lott, John R., Jr. 2000. "Gore Might Lose a Second Round: Media

Suppressed the Bush Vote.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Tuesday, 14 November 2000, p. 23A.

Brady, Henry E. 2004. Data-Set Observations versus Causal-Process Observations: The 2000 U.S. Presidential Election. In *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, edited by H. E. Brady and D. Collier. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield. (electronic reserve).

Homework #2 due at the beginning of class

- 10/31 *Ethical Issues in Data Collection*
Charlotte Allen. 1987. “Spies Like Us: When Sociologists Deceive Their Subjects” *Lingua Franca*, November 1997. (electronic reserve).

11/5 **MIDTERM**

Unit 4: Quantitative Research

- 11/7 *Sampling*
Salkind, pp. 1-15, 301-327.
- 11/12 **Class Cancelled for Veterans Day**
- 11/14 *More Sampling*
Homework #3 distributed in class
Ada Finifter and E. Mickiewicz. 1992. “Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass Support for Political Change.” *American Political Science Review* 86 (4): 857-74. (electronic reserve)
Salkind, pp. 17-73.
- 11/19 *Confidence*
Homework #3 due at the beginning of class
Salkind, pp. 134-152.
- 11/21 *Significance*
Salkind, pp. 153-232.
- 11/26 *Correlation*
Salkind, pp. 74-96, 233-244, 262-273.
- 11/28 *Regression*
Homework #4 distributed in class
Salkind, pp. 245-261.
- 12/3 *More Regression*
Homework #4 due at the beginning of class

12/5 *Review*

12/11 **FINAL EXAM, 8:30-10:20.**