PSC 691: Logic of Political Inquiry
Fall 2024
Th 9:30-12:15, Eggers 100A

Professor Lamis Abdelaaty
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Virtual Office Hours: Tu 9:30-11:30

Course Description   The goal of this course is to introduce you to how empirical political scientists think and research. We will discuss how political scientists across subfields ask and answer substantive questions. We will survey a range of formal, experimental, quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The course will also focus on professionalization topics (i.e., how to become a political scientist, not just study political science). An important secondary goal is to uncover as much as possible of the "hidden curriculum" on how to navigate graduate school, the profession, and academia in general.

Course Requirements
Participation in Class (25%) Students should arrive at every class having carefully read the assigned texts and ready to discuss them. To prepare for this discussion, students should familiarize themselves with the concepts, argument, methodology, and findings of each reading. At a minimum, every student should be able to offer an assessment and/or pose questions of each reading.

Participation in Intellectual Life of the Department (10%) Students are required to attend at least two-thirds of the meetings of the department research seminar (Political Science Research Workshop, PSRW) over the course of the semester and at least two-thirds of any job talks that take place this semester.

Professionalization Exercises (15%) Each student will complete three assignments that deal with different aspects of professional practice. First, each student will develop a curriculum vitae (CV), due in class on Oct 17. Second, each student will complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) online training for Human Research, with the completion certificate due by email to me on Oct 24. Finally, each student will complete a journal-style peer review of another student's draft proposal (making specific recommendations for improvement), due in class on Dec 5.

Research Proposal (50%) Students must make regular progress on an original research proposal over the course of the semester and submit a research questions memo on Sept 19, a three-article "literature review" on Sept 26, a theory memo on Oct 3, a research design on Oct 10, and a draft research proposal on Nov 14. Each student will also present their research proposal in class on Nov 21. The final research proposal along with a reviewer response memo will be due on Dec 17.

Research questions Prepare a 3 page memo that describes three possible questions you might address in your research proposal. Allocate one page for each and explain: (i) why it is important and interesting; and (ii) why our understanding of it is inadequate. Is there puzzling variation in an outcome across time or space, a pattern that seems suboptimal or inefficient, or a phenomenon that is puzzling? Are there disagreements among scholars, gaps in knowledge, or complexities/inconsistencies that characterize the question? Ensure that your questions are empirical, rather than prescriptive or normative.

Literature review Select one peer-reviewed journal article that is directly relevant to the research question you have chosen. Identify one relevant journal article that is cited by your selected article, and one (relatively recent) relevant journal article that cites your selected article. Prepare a 2-3 page review that briefly compares the arguments, methods, and findings of the three articles, exploring whether they represent a progression/cumulation of knowledge, fragmentation/disagreement, or some other trend. Conclude with your thoughts on how future research on the topic should proceed.

Theory In 2-3 pages, begin by identifying and briefly summarizing one theoretical answer to your research question and state it as a clear, testable, and falsifiable proposition. Then, clarify the mechanism(s) that link cause with effect. Next, construct at least one hypothesis about the observable implications of your possible explanation. Finally, explicitly state your independent and dependent variables and explain how they vary. You may include diagrams and/or equations as needed.

Research design In 2-3 pages, discuss the nature of the evidence that you will evaluate and the form of analysis that you will employ to assess your theory. Be clear about your unit of analysis and the relevant universe of cases. Describe how you will operationalize your variables and collect the data needed. Justify why you selected these particular techniques, cases, and/or data sources, and consider the strengths and weaknesses of your approach.

Presentation Deliver a 10 minute presentation of your research proposal. While you may provide some background, your focus should be on clearly conveying your research question, theoretical argument, and proposed research design. Prepare a slide deck to accompany your oral presentation.

Research proposal The final 12-15 page research proposal should include an introduction that describes and justifies your research question and previews your theoretical argument, a literature review that explains how your research builds on or departs from previous studies, a theory section that details at least one potential answer to your research question, a research design that describes the approach and methods you will use, and references. Submit a 2-3 page cover letter with your final proposal that responds to the comments on your draft and describes the revisions you made.

Policies

- *Faith Tradition Observances*: Syracuse University's Religious Observances Policy recognizes the diversity of faiths represented in the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their traditions. Under the policy, students are given an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance, provided they notify their instructors no later than the academic drop deadline. For observances occurring before the drop deadline, notification is required at least two academic days in advance. Students may enter their observances in MySlice under Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances/Add a Notification.

- *Disability Statement*: Syracuse University values diversity and inclusion; we are committed to a climate of mutual respect and full participation. There may be aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion and full participation in this course. I invite any student to contact me to discuss strategies and/or accommodations (academic adjustments) that may be essential to your success and to collaborate with the Center for Disability Resources (CDR) in this process. If you would like to discuss disability-accommodations or register with CDR, please visit Center for Disability Resources. Please call (315) 443-4498 or email disabilityresources@syr.edu for more detailed information. The CDR is responsible for coordinating disability-related academic accommodations and will work with the student to develop an access plan. Since academic accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact CDR as soon as possible to begin this process.

- *Discrimination or Harassment*: Federal and state law, and University policy prohibit discrimination and harassment based on sex or gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation). If a student has been harassed or assaulted, they can obtain confidential counseling support, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, from the Sexual and Relationship Violence Response Team at the Counseling Center (315-443-8000, Barnes Center at The Arch, 150 Sims Drive, Syracuse, New York 13244). Incidents of sexual violence or harassment can be reported non-confidentially to the University's Title IX Officer (Sheila Johnson Willis, 315-443-0211, titleix@syr.edu, 005 Steele Hall). Reports to law enforcement can be made to the University's Department of Public Safety (315-443-2224, 005 Sims Hall), the Syracuse Police Department (511 South State Street, Syracuse, New York, 911 in case of emergency or 315-435-3016 to speak with the Abused Persons Unit), or the State Police (844-845-7269). I will seek to keep information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible, but as a professor I have mandatory reporting responsibilities to share information regarding sexual misconduct, harassment, and crimes I learn about with the University's Title IX Officer to help make our campus a safer place for all.

- *Academic Integrity*: As a pre-eminent and inclusive student-focused research institution, Syracuse University considers academic integrity at the forefront of learning, serving as a core value and guiding pillar of education. Syracuse University's Academic

Integrity Policy provides students with the necessary guidelines to complete academic work with integrity throughout their studies. Students are required to uphold both course-specific and university-wide academic integrity expectations such as crediting your sources, doing your own work, communicating honestly, and supporting academic integrity. The full Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy can be found by visiting class.syr/edu, selecting, "Academic Integrity," and "Expectations and Policy." Upholding Academic Integrity includes the protection of faculty's intellectual property. Students should not upload, distribute, or share instructors' course materials, including presentations, assignments, exams, or other evaluative materials without permission. Using websites that charge fees or require uploading of course material (e.g., Chegg, Course Hero) to obtain exam solutions or assignments completed by others, which are then presented as your own violates academic integrity expectations in this course and may be classified as a Level 3 violation. All academic integrity expectations that apply to in-person assignments, quizzes, and exams also apply online. Students found in violation of the policy are subject to grade sanctions determined by the course instructor and non-grade sanctions determined by the School or College where the course is offered. Students may not drop or withdraw from courses in which they face a suspected violation. Any established violation in this course may result in course failure regardless of violation level.

- *Artificial Intelligence*: All generative-AI tools are prohibited in this course because their use inhibits achievement of the course learning objectives. This policy applies to all stages of project and writing processes including researching, brainstorming, outlining, organizing, and polishing. Do not use Generative-AI tools to create any content (i.e., images and video, audio, text, code, etc.). If you have any questions about a feature and whether it is considered Generative-AI, ask your instructor.

Required Texts   None. All readings are available electronically via Blackboard.

Course Outline

Aug 29 – Introduction to the Course

- David B. Cohen, "Surviving the Ph.D.: Hints for navigating the sometimes stormy seas of graduate education in political science," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35, no. 3 (2002): 585–588.

- Deepa Aravind, "Mastering your mind-set," in *Inside Higher Ed*, www.insidehighered.com/opinion/career-advice/2023/08/18/how-phd-students-can-combat-imposter-syndrome-opinion (2023).

- Amelia Hoover Green, "How to read political science: A guide in four steps," calgara.github.io/ Pol157_Spring2019/howtoread.pdf (2013).

Sep 5 – Political Science in the US

- Ira Katznelson and Helen V Milner, "American political science: The discipline's state and the state of the discipline," in *Political science: The state of the discipline* (WW Norton & Company, 2002), 1–26.

- Gabriel A. Almond, "Political science: The history of the discipline," in *A new handbook of political science*, ed. Robert E Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann (Oxford University Press, 1998), 50–96.

- Mary Hawkesworth, "Contending conceptions of science and politics: Methodology and the constitution of the political," in *Interpretation and method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*, ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (Routledge, 2015), 27–49.

- Paula D. McClain, "Crises, race, acknowledgement: The centrality of race, ethnicity, and politics to the future of political science," *Perspectives on Politics* 19, no. 1 (2021): 7–18.

- Timothy V. Kaufman-Osborn, "Dividing the domain of political science: On the fetishism of subfields," *Polity* 38, no. 1 (2006): 41–71.

Sep 12 – Research Questions & Literature Reviews

- Adam McCauley and Andrea Ruggeri, "From questions and puzzles to research project," in *The SAGE handbook of research methods in political science and international relations*, ed. Robert Franzese and Luigi Curini (SAGE, 2020), 26–43.

- Jillian Schwedler, "Puzzle," *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 11, no. 2 (2013): 27–30.

- Jeffrey W. Knopf, "Doing a literature review," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39, no. 1 (2006): 127–132.

- Peter K. Hatemi and Rose McDermott, "Strategies for picking the right adviser," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 55, no. 4 (2022): 793–798.

- Katie Shives, "Managing your advisor," in *Inside Higher Ed*, www.insidehighered.com/blogs/gradhacker/managing-your-advisor (2014).

Sep 19 – Theories & Hypotheses
(Research questions memo due in class)

- Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses, laws, and theories: A user's guide," in *Guide to methods for students of political science* (Cornell University Press, 1997), 7–48.

- John Gerring, "Causation: A unified framework for the social sciences," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 17, no. 2 (2005): 163–198.

- Jon Elster, "Mechanisms," in *Explaining social behavior: More nuts and bolts for the social sciences* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 32–51.

- Alexander Wendt, "On constitution and causation in international relations," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 5 (1998): 101–118.

- Carolyn E. Holmes et al., "A case for description," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 57, no. 1 (2024): 51–56.

- Adam Meirowitz and Kristopher W. Ramsay, "Applied game theory: An overview and first thoughts on the use of game theoretic tools," in *The SAGE handbook of research methods in political science and international relations*, ed. Robert Franzese and Luigi Curini (SAGE, 2020), 192–204.

Sep 26 – Concepts & Measurement
(Three-article "lit review" due in class)

- Gerardo L. Munck, Jørgen Møller, and Svend-Erik Skaaning, "Conceptualization and measurement: basic distinctions and guidelines," in *The SAGE handbook of research methods in political science and international relations*, ed. Robert Franzese and Luigi Curini (SAGE, 2020), 331–352.

- Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow, "Starting from meaning: Contextuality and its implications," in *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes* (Routledge, 2011), 45–53.

- "Comment and controversy: Special issue on democratic backsliding," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 57, no. 1 (2024): 149–229.

Oct 3 – Research Designs
(Theory memo due in class)

- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, "Determining what to observe," in *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research* (Princeton University Press, 1994), 115–149.

- David Collier, James Mahoney, and Jason Seawright, "Claiming too much: Warnings about selection bias," in *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*, ed. Henry E. Brady and David Collier (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 85–102.

- "Symposium on Perestroika in political science: Past, present, and future," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 43, no. 4 (2010): 729–731 & 741–745.

- Kristen Renwick Monroe, "What did Perestroika accomplish?," *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 2 (2015): 423–424.

- Tanya B. Schwarz and Carrie Reiling, "Preparing an interpretive research design," in *Doing good qualitative research*, ed. Jennifer Cyr and Sara Wallace Goodman (Oxford University Press, 2024), 96–108.

- Jody LaPorte, "Confronting a crisis of research design," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47, no. 2 (2014): 414–417.

Oct 10 – Funding
(Research design due in class)

- Micah Altman, "Funding, funding," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42, no. 3 (2009): 521–526.

- Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon, "On the art of writing proposals," in *Social Science Research Council*, www.ssrc.org/publications/the-art-of-writing-proposals/ (1995).

- Karen Kelsky, "Dr. Karen's rules of the academic CV," in *The Professor Is In*, theprofessorisin.com/ 2016/08/19/dr-karens-rules-of-the-academic-cv/ (2016).

- Tamir Moustafa, "Political science as a dependent variable: The National Science Foundation and the shaping of a discipline," *Perspectives on Politics*, 2024, 1–21.

Oct 17 – Ethics
(CV due in class)

- Sarah M. Brooks, "The ethical treatment of human subjects and the Institutional Review Board process," in *Interview research in political science*, ed. Layna Mosley (Cornell University Press, 2013), 45–66.

- Lee Ann Fujii, "Research ethics 101: Dilemmas and responsibilities," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 45, no. 4 (2012): 717–723.

- Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True, "Reflexivity in practice: Power and ethics in feminist research on international relations," *International Studies Review* 10, no. 4 (2008): 693–707.

- "Data access and research transparency (DA-RT): A joint statement by political science journal editors," *Political Science Research and Methods* 3, no. 3 (2015): 421.

- Samantha Majic, "Ethics of transparency and data sharing," in *Doing good qualitative research*, ed. Jennifer Cyr and Sara Wallace Goodman (Oxford University Press, 2024), 446–455.

- Alan M. Jacobs et al., "The qualitative transparency deliberations: Insights and implications," *Perspectives on Politics* 19, no. 1 (2021): 171–208.

No Class – Oct 24
(CITI completion certificate due by email)

Oct 31 – Experiments & Quantitative Methods

- Rose McDermott, "Experimental methods in political science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5, no. 1 (2002): 31–61.

- Thad Dunning, "Design-based inference: Beyond the pitfalls of regression analysis?," in *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*, ed. Henry E. Brady and David Collier (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 273–311.

- Susan C. Stokes, "A defense of observational research," in *Field experiments and their critics: Essays on the uses and abuses of experimentation in the social sciences*, ed. Dawn Langan Teele (Yale University Press, 2014), 33–57.

- Philip A. Schrodt, "Seven deadly sins of contemporary quantitative political analysis," *Journal of Peace Research* 51, no. 2 (2014): 287–300.

- John Wilkerson and Andreu Casas, "Large-scale computerized text analysis in political science: Opportunities and challenges," *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, no. 1 (2017): 529–544.

- Maya Sen and Omar Wasow, "Race as a bundle of sticks: Designs that estimate effects of seemingly immutable characteristics," *Annual Review of Political Science* 19, no. 1 (2016): 499–522.

Nov 7 – Qualitative Methods

- John Gerring, "Qualitative methods," *Annual Review of Political Science* 20, no. 1 (2017): 15–36.

- Dan Slater and Daniel Ziblatt, "The enduring indispensability of the controlled comparison," *Comparative Political Studies* 46, no. 10 (2013): 1301–1327.

- Christine Trampusch and Bruno Palier, "Between X and Y: How process tracing contributes to opening the black box of causality," *New Political Economy* 21, no. 5 (2016): 437–454.

- Cameron G. Thies, "A pragmatic guide to qualitative historical analysis in the study of international relations," *International Studies Perspectives* 3, no. 4 (2002): 351–372.

- Lisa Wedeen, "Reflections on ethnographic work in political science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, no. 1 (2010): 255–272.

- Ezgi Irgil et al., "Field research: A graduate student's guide," *International Studies Review* 23, no. 4 (2021): 1495–1517.

Nov 14 – Mixing Methods
(Draft research proposal due in class)

- Imke Harbers and Matthew C. Ingram, "Mixed-Methods Designs," in *The SAGE handbook of research methods in political science and international relations*, ed. Robert Franzese and Luigi Curini (SAGE, 2020), 1117–1132.

- Jason Seawright, "Better multimethod design: the promise of integrative multimethod research," *Security Studies* 25, no. 1 (2016): 42–49.

- Evan S. Lieberman, "Nested analysis as a mixed-method strategy for comparative research," *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (2005): 435–452.

- Ingo Rohlfing, "What you see and what you get: Pitfalls and principles of nested analysis in comparative research," *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 11 (2008): 1492–1514.

- Jack S. Levy, "Qualitative methods and cross-method dialogue in political science," *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 2 (2007): 196–214.

Nov 21– Conferences & Presenting
(Presentations in class)

- Jessica McCrory Calarco, "Writing about your research," in *A field guide to grad school: Uncovering the hidden curriculum* (Princeton University Press, 2020), 177–211.

- Devashree Gupta and Israel Waismel-Manor, "Network in progress: A conference primer for graduate students," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39, no. 3 (2006): 485–490.

- David T. Smith and Rob Salmond, "Verbal sticks and rhetorical stones: Improving conference presentations in political science," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44, no. 3 (2011): 583–588.

- Antoinette Pole and Sangeeta Parashar, "Am I pretty? 10 tips to designing visually appealing slideware presentations," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 53, no. 4 (2020): 757–762.

- Adeline Lo and Jonathan Renshon, "How to be a good discussant," pdf (2022).

- Seo-Young Silvia Kim, Hannah Lebovits, and Sarah Shugars, "Networking 101 for graduate students: Building a bigger table," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 55, no. 2 (2022): 307–312.

Dec 5 – Publishing & Public Engagement
(Peer review due in class)

- Timothy S. Rich, "Publishing as a graduate student: A quick and (hopefully) painless guide to establishing yourself as a scholar," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46, no. 2 (2013): 376–379.

- "Critical perspectives on demystifying publishing: A short guide for early career researchers," *Politics & Gender* 19, no. 2 (2023): 616–619, 625–629, 630–635, & 636–641.

- Matthew J. Lebo, "Managing your research pipeline," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49, no. 2 (2016): 259–264.

- Lee Demetrius Walker, "Rejection of a manuscript and career resilience," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 52, no. 1 (2019): 44–47.

- Mariano E. Bertucci, "Why, and how, to bridge the "Gap" before tenure: Peer-reviewed research may not be the only strategic move as a graduate student or young scholar," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48, no. 4 (2015): 591–594.

- Patricia Siplon, "Scholar, witness, or activist? The lessons and dilemmas of an AIDS research agenda," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 32, no. 3 (1999): 577–581.

Dec 17 – *Final research proposal with response memo due*