

# **POLI-4110FA: Research Methodology**

## **Course Outline**

Fall 2016

Instructor: Dr. Zubairu Wai

Office: RB 2041

Hours: Wednesday 2:30-4:00pm (or by appointment)

Email: zubawai@lakeheadu.ca

**Meeting: Wednesday, 11:30am-02:30pm, RB-3026**

### **Course Descriptions**

What is research methodology? How are research methods related to the politics of knowledge production in the social sciences and humanities? What are some of the diverse ways that research can be approached? In this course, we will examine various methodological approaches to social science research and consider their implications for the politics of knowledge production. The course seeks to familiarise students with the necessary tools for crafting social science research. We will ask how different theories and politics of knowing shape the kind of research we engage in, and how different social scientists think about knowledge production and how that ultimately reflects the methods that they employ. We will explore the conditions of knowledge production, the methodological diverseness of social scientific practice, the assumptions underpinning the various epistemological positions and methodological approaches, and the implications of deploying specific research methods.

### **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the course, students should:

- Have a critical understanding of the practices, techniques, methodologies and ethics of doing research and producing knowledge in the social sciences;
- Be conversant with the different methodological approaches of social scientific practice;
- Be familiar with the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning these approaches, and their implications for social scientific research practice;
- Be acquainted with the necessary tools for crafting social science research and be able to design both quantitative and qualitative research proposals
- Have a critical understanding of the power-knowledge regimes that underpin social research

### **Course Structure, Requirements and Evaluation**

This course comprises 12 weekly seminars based on student-led presentations of the course materials. We will meet every Wednesdays between 11:30am and 2:30pm in RB-1021. The success of the course will depend on attendance, class participation and critical engagement with the literature. Students registered on the course are required to regularly attend classes, do the assigned readings before coming to class, do at least one class

presentation on the weekly assigned readings, and take part in class discussions. They are also required to complete a short critical review essay, and submit a final research paper.

### **Course Requirements and Evaluation**

As this is a seminar, the success of the course will largely depend on student participation and attendance. Students registered on the course are required to attend classes regularly, do the assigned readings before coming to class, do at least one class presentation as assigned per week and take part in class discussions. They are also required to complete a short annotative bibliography on a given topic, engage in a group work and submit a final research proposal. The final grade will be weighted in the following manner:

Presentation and participation:	25%
Annotated bibliography:	20%
Group Assignment (Quantitative Research Proposal):	25%
Individual Assignment (Qualitative Research proposal):	30%

#### **1. Presentation and participation: (worth 25% of final grade)**

Attendance and participation are crucial for the success of the course. Students registered on the course are required to attend classes regularly, do the assigned readings before coming to class and take part in class discussions. A register of attendance will be kept throughout the duration of the course and will account for 40% of the marks allocated for presentation and participation. The remaining 60 percent will go to presentation. Each class will be organised around student-led presentations. Every student must do at least one class presentation as assigned per week. The order of presentation will be decided on the first day of class. Typically, a class presentation should not be more than 20 minutes per presenter.

#### **2. Short annotated bibliography: (worth 20% of final grade):**

This assignment involves compiling a bibliography on a specific topic and brief annotative comments about the sources cited. It should contain three part: (a) the title of a given topic, (b) the proper citation of the source (formatted in either Harvard or Chicago referencing styles) and (c) annotation of about 100 words. The list should contain ten academic sources (specifically books and journal articles). Please use this opportunity to start thinking about your final research proposal.

#### **3. Group Assignment: Quantitative Research Proposal (worth 25% of final grade):**

The group assignment is intended to test knowledge of quantitative research methods as well as the ability to work together as a team in developing a research proposal. Students bear the responsibility for forming their respective groups, each of which should comprise 3-5 members. Each group will be graded uniformly as an entity, which means that every member bears responsibility for the success of the group. The group proposal should be between 10 and 15 (double-spaced) pages long.

#### **4. Individual Assignment: Qualitative Research Proposal (30% of final grade):**

The final assignment is an individual research proposal. It is intended to test your knowledge of qualitative research methods. It is an opportunity to demonstrate your

ability to work independently on a research problem. The proposal should be between 10 and 15 (double-spaced) page long.

**Note: Please Note:**

- While it is the responsibility of all students to choose their own topics based on their individual interests, such topics should be cleared with the course director.
- All written work should have a title page indicating the title of the project, the name of student and their student number, as well as the name of the instructor, the department and course.
- In terms of formatting, all written work should be doubled-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point fonts, 1-inch margin and should be handed in on the due date in class. (Manipulating the margins or font size will be penalised).
- Barring any extenuating circumstance, all written assignments **must** be submitted on or before the due date, otherwise a 2 per cent per day penalty will apply each day the assignment is late in fairness to those who submit their assignments on time.
- **For citation and referencing, please refer to either the Harvard or the Chicago referencing style for all written work.** Failure to follow these instructions will be penalised.

**Required texts:**

1. W. Lawrence Neuman & Karen Robson, *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* [3rd Canadian edition] (Toronto: Pearson, 2012)
2. Linda T. Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* 2e (London: Zed Books, 1999)
3. Course CD

**Students with Special Needs**

Students with special needs can request accommodations in accordance with the Senate Policy on Students with Disabilities. Please endeavour, at the earliest opportunity, to advise the Student Accessibility Services (formerly the Learning Assistance Centre) and the instructor of your special needs so that appropriate arrangements can be made to accommodate such needs. Those who encounter extenuating circumstances which may interfere with the successful completion of the course should, as soon as possible, discuss these circumstances with the instructor and the Student Accessibility Services.

**Lakehead Policy on Academic Dishonesty**

As academic integrity is crucial to the pursuit of university education, students are expected to uphold the academic honour code at all times and are advised to familiarise themselves with the university's policy on academic dishonesty, especially in relation, but not limited, to plagiarism, cheating, impersonation etc. In order to make sure that a degree awarded by Lakehead University is a reflection of the honest efforts and individual academic achievement of each student, Lakehead University treats cases of

academic dishonesty very seriously and severely penalises those caught in violation of the university's policy on academic honesty.

### **Policy on Electronic Devices**

Cell phones are distracting and therefore should be turned off and kept out of sight during lectures. A visible phone will be assumed to be used. In such a scenario, the instructor may ask the offending student to leave the class. Except where prior permission is sought from the instructor, no audio or video recording of lectures is allowed. Where permission is sought and granted, such recordings should be solely for private use.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 (September 7): Introduction to the Course**

#### **Readings**

Neuman & Robson, *Basics of Social Research*, Chapter 1

### **Week 2 (September 14): Foundational Issues: Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology and methods**

#### **Readings**

Paul Furlong & David Marsh, 'A Skin Not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science' in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 3e (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 184-211

Stephen R. Bates and Laura Jenkins, 'Teaching and Learning Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science', *Politics* 27, no.1 (2007), pp. 55-63

Robert W. Cox, 'Social Forces, States, and World Order: Beyond International Relations Theory,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10, no. 2, (1981), read only pp. 128-130

Abraham Kaplan, 'Methodology' in his *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioural Science* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002), pp. 3-32

**[Note: Remember September 19 is the final date for registration]**

### **Week 3 (September 21): Power/Knowledge and Social Inquiry**

#### **Readings**

Linda T. Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*; Introduction & Chapters 1-3

Michel Foucault, 'Two Lectures' and 'Truth and Power' in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*; [Edited by Colin Gordon] (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 78-133

Edward W. Said, 'Introduction', in *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1978), pp. 1-28

#### **Week 4 (September 28): Designing Social Research**

##### Readings

Neuman & Robson, *Basics of Social Research*, Chapters 4 & 5

Norman Blaikie, 'Preparing Research Designs' in *Designing Social Research 2e* (London: Polity, 2010), pp. 13-34

Bob Hancké, 'The Challenge of Research Design' in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 3e (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 233-248

#### **Week 5 (October 5): Measurement and Sampling**

##### Reading

Neuman & Robson, *Basics of Social Research*, Chapters 6 & 7

#### **Week 6 (October 12): Fall Reading Week (No Class)**

#### **Week 7 (October 19): Interviewing and Ethics**

##### Reading

Neuman & Robson, *Basics of Social Research*, Chapters 3 & 12

**[Note: Annotated bibliography is due in class on October 19]**

#### **Week 8 (October 26): Designing Quantitative Research: Surveys and Experiments**

##### Readings

Neuman & Robson, *Basics of Social Research*, Chapters 8 & 9

Peter John, 'Quantitative Methods' in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); pp. 267 – 284

#### **Week 9 (November 2): Non-Reactive Quantitative Research and Data Analysis**

##### Readings

Neuman & Robson, *Basics of Social Research*, Chapters 10, 11 & 15

**[Note: November 7 is the final date for withdrawal without academic penalty]**

#### **Week 10 (November 9): Ethnography and Field Research**

##### Reading

Neuman & Robson, *Basics of Social Research*, Chapter 13

Johannes Fabian, 'Time and the Emerging Other', in his *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983 [2002], pp. 1-35

Mary Louise Pratt, 'Fieldwork in Common Places' in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, edited by James Clifford and George E. Marcus, (Berkeley, CA: University of California press, 1986)

Lorraine Bayard de Volo and Edward Schatz, 'From the Inside Out: Ethnographic Methods in Political Research' *PS: Political Science and Politics* 37, no. 2, (2004), pp. 267-271

**[Note: Group assignment due in class on November 9]**

**Week 11 (November 16): Historical Research and Comparative Methods**

Reading

Neuman & Robson, *Basics of Social Research*, Chapter 13

Jonathan Hopkin, 'The Comparative Methods' in in David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); pp. 285 – 307

F. Douglas Dion, 'Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study,' *Comparative Politics* 30, no. 2, (1998), pp. 127-146

Barbara Geddes, 'How the Cases you Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics,' *Political Analysis* 2, (1990), pp. 131-150

Ian Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 90, 1996, pp. 605-618

**Week 12 (November 23): Discourse Analysis**

Reading

Jennifer Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods' *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no.2, (1999), pp. 225-54

Aubrey Neal, 'Promise and Practice of Deconstruction' *Canadian Journal of History* 30, (1995), pp. 49 – 76,

Jonathan Crush, 'Introduction: Imagining Development' in Jonathan Crush (ed.) *Power of Development* (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 1-26

Shaul R. Shenhav, 'Thin and Thick Narrative Analysis: On the Question of Defining and Analyzing Political Narratives,' *Narrative Inquiry* 15, no. 1 (2005), pp. 75-99

**Week 13 (November 30): Aboriginal Research Agendas as Alternative  
Reading**

Linda T. Smith, *Decolonising Methodologies*; chapters 6-10

**[Note: There will be no exam for this course, however, the final paper, Qualitative Research Proposal, is due at the end of class on November 30.]**