

## INTL 201: Research Methods in Social Sciences

College of Administrative Sciences and Economics  
Department of International Relations  
**Spring 2014**

**Instructor:** Assist. Prof. Belgin Şan Akca  
**Office:** CAS - 152  
**E-mail:** [bakca@ku.edu.tr](mailto:bakca@ku.edu.tr)  
**Phone:** 338-1377

**Lectures:** M&W 11-12.15  
Location: CAS-Z48  
**Office Hours:** Tu&Th 3:30-4:30, by  
appointment

**Online Access:** F:\COURSES\UGRADS\INTL\INTL201  
**Teaching Assistant:** M. Yasin Budak ([mbudak@ku.edu.tr](mailto:mbudak@ku.edu.tr))

### Course Description & Objectives

This course focuses on scientific methods used in the study and research of political phenomena and international relations. It has two major goals: (1) provide students with analytical skills and resources to evaluate empirical findings in political research, (2) provide students with the practical skills they need to carry out their own independent research. As students of politics, you are not only acquiring knowledge about the world of politics, you also are joined to a research community. Thus, this course offers practical advice on how you evaluate the research of others as well as how you do your own research. By the end of the course, you will acquire the skills and tools to ask and answer systematic questions about the political world in a rigorous manner and learn the methods that help political scientists to connect abstract ideas and concepts about the way the political world works to evidence of what actually happens. The beginning of the course introduces general issues in research design, such as developing scientific questions and theoretical arguments, sampling, and measurement. The majority of the course is dedicated to specific methods, their application and use in real world politics. The majority of the research in Social Sciences including Political Science, Sociology, and Economics use either qualitative or quantitative methods. My goal in this course is not to highlight or give specific importance to either of these methods, Rather I intend to introduce you with advantages and disadvantages of both and provide you with the skills to choose and use the one that best suits answering the research question at hand. Specifically, we will learn about case study analyses, experimental design, focus group interviews, surveys, field research and statistical analysis. In studying these methods, we also will discuss the main principles guiding political research and how individuals at the decision-making level use research to reach certain conclusions about the political world.

### Requirements

Midterm.....	30%
Final Exam .....	35%
Research Proposal Paper .....	20%
Attendance.....	5%
Participation and In-class presentation.....	10%

## Required Readings

(NL) Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2009. *Understanding Research*. First Edition. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.

**Coursepack** will be available soon at the photocopy center of Koc library.

Note that the assignment of additional readings is under the instructor's discretion.

## Course Policies

- (1) Make-up examination for the exams is given only with prior instructor approval obtained with a timely notice and appropriate documentation indicating why a student cannot be in the classroom during the time of test. You should notify me or the TA within 24 hours after you miss an exam for your request about the make-up exam.
- (2) Late submission of the research proposal paper will lead to half a letter deduction of the total paper grade for each day of late submission. The penalty will start accruing as soon as the class begins on January 5th, Wednesday, the last day of lectures.
- (3) Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Those who engage in negative behaviors that may influence their and other students' learning will be asked to leave the classroom. Talking to others, interrupting the professor without raising hands, reading newspapers, using cell phones and other electronic devices, and arriving late and leaving early without prior approval will all be recorded by the teaching assistant and treated in accordance with the Koç University's 'classroom code of conduct.'
- (4) Academic dishonesty is one of the least appreciated parts of this course. Make sure that whenever you are using outside sources, give credit to them whether you are making a direct or indirect reference. Plagiarism and cheating will be found out and treated in accordance with the university regulations.
- (5) The teaching assistant will take **attendance** in the beginning of each class. You can keep track of your attendance through KUAIS. Per university policy, students who miss more than 1/3 of the total number of classes can be failed. It is your responsibility to inform me about any issue that may interfere with your attendance. Keep in mind that students who attend regularly to classes tend to do better overall in the class. The attendance will be added to your total grade as a percentage of classes attended to total number of classes held during the semester,
- (6) Exams may include multiple choice questions, short identification questions, problem sets and/or any combination. The final exam will be cumulative.
- (7) You are required to write a research proposal on a specific question of your own choosing. You are expected to clearly state your theory, specify hypotheses, variables and the measurement of those variables, and explicitly state the methods you will use to answer the research question. A separate guideline explaining the components of the research proposal will be given out later. The **paper should be around 5-7 double-spaced pages. It is due in the beginning of the final lecture.**

## Course Schedule:

Note that the readings from the textbook are indicated by 'NL'. The course pack will soon be available in the photocopy center of Koç library. Additional articles may be put in online (see the course address above) or in the reserve section of the library.

### Week 1.

**February 3-5:** Introduction – What is “Science” in Social Science?

*NL, Chapter 1*

*Lupia, Arthur. 2000. “Evaluating Political Science Research: Information For Buyers and Sellers.” PS: Political Science and Politics. 33(1): 7-13.*

### Week 2.

**February 10-12:** Informing Research Designs – how to formulate research questions and conduct literature review

*NL, Chapter 2*

Charles Ragin. 2000. “Diversity-Oriented Research: Between Complexity & Generality”, in *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*, pp.21-42.

### Week 3.

**February 17-19:** Ethics in Social Research

*NL, Chapter 3*

### Week 4.

**February 24-26:** Constituting Populations and Sampling

*NL, Chapter 6*

Gary King, R. Keohane, S. Verba. 1994. “Determining What to Observe”. In *Designing Social Inquiry*, pp. 113-150.

### Week 5.

**March 3-5:** Causality & Theory-building - What is theory? What does good theory look like? How is theory related to causality? Where do theories come from?

*Philips Shiveley. 2001. “Political Theories & Research Topics” in the Craft of Political Research, pp. 13-38.*

Nicholson, Stephen P. 2003. "The Political Environment and Ballot Proposition Awareness." 47(3): 403-10.

## **Week 6.**

**March 10-12:** Measurement

NL, Chapter 5

*Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How The Cases You Chose Affect The Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." Political Analysis. 2(1): 131-50.*

## **Week 7.**

**March 17-19:** Case Study

NL, Chapter 12

*Collier, David. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing. PS: Political Science & Politics 44: 823-830.*

*Bennett, Andrew and Colin Elman. 2006. "Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods." Annual Review of Political Science. 9: 455-76.*

*Solingen, Etel. 2007. "Pax Asiatica versus Bella Levantina: The Foundations of War and Peace in East Asia and the Middle East." American Political Science Review. 101 (4): 757-80.*

## **Week 8.**

**March 24: Midterm Exam – TBA**

**March 26:** Experiment

NL, Chapter 8

McDermott, Rose. 2002. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science. 5: 31-61.*

Stouffer, Samuel A. 1950. "Some Observations on Study Design." *The American Journal of Sociology. 55(4): 355-61.*

## **Week 9.**

**March 31-April 2:** Experiment and Field Research

Susan D. Hyde. 2010. "The Future of Field Experiments in International Relations". Annals, AAPSS. [http://hyde.research.yale.edu/Hyde\\_FutureIR.pdf](http://hyde.research.yale.edu/Hyde_FutureIR.pdf)

Susan D. Hyde. 2007. "The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment." *World Politics* 60(1): 37-63.

Elizabeth J. Wood. 2008. *The Social Processes of Civil War: The Wartime Transformation of Social Networks. Annual Review of Political Science, 11: 539-561.*

Neuman, chapter 11

**Week 10.**

**April 7-9. Spring Break**

**Week 11.**

**April 14-16: Survey**

Goldstein, Kenneth. 2002. "Getting in the Door: Sampling and Completing Elite Interviews." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 35(4): 669-72.

Tansey, Oisín. 2002. "Process-Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-probability Sampling." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 35(4):765-72.

Brady, Henry E. 2000. "Contributions of Survey Research to Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 33(1): 47-57.

NL, Chapter 7

**Week 12.**

**April 21:** Collecting Observational Data and Content Analysis

*NL, Chapter 9*

William Thompson. 2001. "Identifying Rivals and Rivalries in World Politics". 45(4): 557-586.

**Check out the following sites:**

<http://www.paulhensel.org/data.html>; <http://www.paulhensel.org/data.html>

**Week 13.**

**April 28-30:** Quantitative Analysis

William Berry & Mitchell Sanders, *Understanding Multivariate Research* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2000), 1-50.

Camobreco, John F., and Michelle A. Barnello. 2003. "Postmaterialism and Post-Industrialism: Cultural Influences on Female Representation in State Legislatures." *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 3.2: 117-138.

**Week 14.****May 5-7: Issues with Quantitative Methods**

*NL, Chapter 10*

Kish, Leslie. 1959. "Some Statistical Problems in Research Design." *American Sociological Review*. 24(3): 328-38.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on A Small Number of Cases." *Social Forces*. 70(2): 307-20.

**Week 15.****May 12-14: Conclusion, Catch-Up and Review**

Clarke, Kevin & David Primo. 2007. "Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Base Approach." *Perspective on Politics* 5.4: 741-753.

*Neuman, chapter 14 (look over it again before turning Proposal)*

*Final research proposal due by 5:00pm on May 14 (paper copy as well as submitted to Turnitin)*