

PUBADM 633

## **Research Methods & Analysis in International Relations**

Course Syllabus  
Spring 2016

Class Time: M 6:00-8:15 PM  
Location: McCormack Hall M03-0415

Instructor: Prof. Joseph Brown  
Office: Wheatley Hall 05-0102  
Office Hours: M,W 1:00-2:30 PM

### **Course Description**

This course introduces students to basic concepts and skills for research, both academic and practice-based, in international relations areas. It discusses the stages of research, from identifying appropriate questions and assessing existing literature, through framing questions in researchable fashion, identifying the best research approaches for those questions, identifying existing data resources, creating research agendas for gathering new quantitative and qualitative data, analyzing and weighing different forms of data, and drawing defensible conclusions while identifying further areas for research. Specific international relations concepts and major geographic regions are used as foci for readings and major international data sets.

### **Course Requirements**

**Class Participation:** Regular class attendance is essential to success in this course. The assignments will cover material presented in the lectures but *not* in the assigned readings. You will be learning to conduct basic operations in statistical software — essential material which is not covered in the readings. You will also be expected to discuss the assigned readings for each week during that class meeting.

In the event that a class must be cancelled, you are still responsible for the assigned readings. Do not assume that a class is cancelled unless informed by your professor or by another university representative in person or through UMass Boston's automated emergency alert system. Be aware that the reading load may be higher for certain class meetings, and plan accordingly. You will also be given assignments that take some time to complete. Start these early so that you can ask clarifying questions or request assistance with any software problems.

**Assignments:** You are required to complete three major assignments during this course. (These are appended to the syllabus below, for your reference.) You will need to complete each assignment on time, submitting it in hard copy and by email by the time of the corresponding class. Late assignments will be graded down a third of a grade each day until they are handed in.

Be prepared to discuss your completed work in class with fellow students. You will be asked to share your work on Assignment #3 in class on May 5, in a 5-10 minute presentation. You must circulate Assignment #3 to the class before the May 5 meeting.

### **Grading**

Your grade will be determined as follows:

Assignment #1: 20% of final grade

Assignment #2: 20% of final grade

Assignment #3: 30% of final grade

Class attendance and participation: 30% of final grade

Letter grades correspond to numeric grades as follows:

A: 93-100     A-: 90-92

B+: 87-89     B: 83-86     B-: 80-82

C+: 77-79     C: 73-76     C-: 70-72

D+: 67-69     D: 63-66     D-: 60-62     F: 0-59

### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring assistive technology or other accommodations should contact the Ross Center (Campus Center, UL 211; 617-287-7430), and consult the Center's website: <http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability>. Students requiring accommodations in training sessions, class meetings, or course assignments should also contact the instructor well in advance of the relevant meeting or due date.

### **Academic Integrity**

Be certain that you are familiar with the University's rules concerning academic misconduct as described in the UMass Boston Code of Conduct. Plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of misconduct will result in severe penalties (which may include a

failing grade and/or expulsion from the University). Violating these policies also harms your fellow students. For more information on academic conduct and misconduct, see the UMass Boston Student Handbook, the Undergraduate Catalog, or the following website: [http://www.umb.edu/life\\_on\\_campus/policies/academics](http://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/academics). *Ignorance of these regulations is not an excuse for violating them.*

You are expected to cite authors whose ideas you use. Use quotations to cite any direct use of authors' language. Your citations may be in footnote or parenthetical format, and should include the author's name, the date of the work, and the page numbers of any passages used or quoted. Please include a "Works Cited" page at the end of your paper.

### **Readings**

All course readings will be available online via Blackboard or the UMass Boston Healey Library. If you wish to purchase some of the books for ease of use, the following are recommended, based on the number of pages assigned:

Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research*. 11th edition. (Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education, 2007).

Fortna, Virginia Page. *Does Peacekeeping Work?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

Class handouts will also be available through Blackboard.

### **Online Resources**

The course website is located in the Blackboard Learn environment on the UMass Boston computer system: <https://umb.umassonline.net/>. Here, you will find the syllabus, reading assignments, and copies of the handouts.

### **Audio/Video Recording:**

The audio or video recording of class lectures and discussions is strictly prohibited. The instructor's lectures are proprietary, and students are entitled to an expectation that the opinions they proffer in the classroom are confined to the educational experience of the

classroom. Students requiring special accommodation may request permission to record class material, but formal documentation must also be provided by the Ross Center.

### **Social Media**

You may follow the Political Science Department on Twitter ([@polisci\\_umb](#)) and Facebook ([https://www.facebook.com/polisciUMB/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/polisciUMB/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)). These are updated regularly to announce events, lectures, internships, faculty achievements, and other newsworthy items. You may follow me on Twitter as well ([@Joseph\\_M\\_Brown](#)).

### **Jalal Alamgir Lecture**

The Political Science Department is pleased to announce the first annual Jalal Alamgir Lecture, to be held on April 12, 2016 at 4:00pm in Campus Center room 3545. The featured speaker will be Vijay Prashad (<http://internet2.trincoll.edu/facProfiles/Default.aspx?fid=1000767>).

### **Questions? Problems?**

You are welcome to discuss this course with me during my office hours (Mondays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:30pm). To make an appointment (not necessary during office hours), please contact me by email ([Joseph.Brown@umb.edu](mailto:Joseph.Brown@umb.edu)).

### **Schedule of Course Meetings and Readings**

#### **Week I (January 28): Scientific Theory**

Waltz, Kenneth N. *Theory of International Politics*. (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), pp. 1-17.

Babbie, Earl. *The Practice of Social Research*. 11th edition. (Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education, 2007), pp. 22-23, 44-57 (“Deductive and Inductive Theory” and “Two Logical Systems Revisited”).

**Week II (February 1): Structures of Inquiry**

Babbie, *Practice of Social Research*, pp. 120-151 (“Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement”).

Boal, Frederick W. “Territoriality on the Shankill-Falls Divide, Belfast,” *Irish Geography* 6 (1969), pp. 30-50.

**\*\*\*February 8: Snow Day — NO CLASS\*\*\***

**\*\*\*February 15: Presidents’ Day — NO CLASS\*\*\***

**Week III (February 22): Basic Research Design (and Qualitative Methods)**

Babbie, *Practice of Social Research*, pp. 19-26; 87-101; 107-113.

Jha, Saumitra. “Trade, Institutions and Ethnic Tolerance: Evidence from South Asia,” *American Political Science Review* 107:4 (November 2013), pp. 806-832.

Added due to snow day:

Babbie, “Qualitative Interviewing”, 305-308.

Trachtenberg, Marc. *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), pp. 140-168 (Chapter 5).

**Week V (Feb 29): Introduction to Quantitative Research (meet at White Lab)**

**\*\*\*Assignment # 1 Distributed (due March 7)\*\*\***

Handouts: how to input datasets, recode variables, and generate descriptive statistics.

Williams, Frederick. *Reasoning with Statistics: How to Read Quantitative Research* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 2007), pp. 3-9.

Babbie, *Practice of Social Research*, pp. 405-425 (“Quantitative Data Analysis”).

Also: Here are some of the major data sets in IR. Look through **two or three** that are of particular relevance to your research.

- Correlates of War: <http://www.correlatesofwar.org/>
- INSCR & Polity IV Project: <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>
- PRIO-Uppsala Armed Conflict: <http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/>
- Global Terrorism Database (GTD): <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/downloads/Codebook.pdf>

### **Week VI (March 7): Practice of Quantitative Research (meet at White Lab)**

**\*\*\*Assignment #1 Due\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Assignment #2 Distributed (due March 28)\*\*\***

Handouts: Examples of bivariate and multivariate linear regression.

Babbie, *Practice of Social Research*, pp. 450-470 ("Statistical Analyses").

Sandholtz, Wayne and William Koetzle. "Accounting for Corruption: Economic Structure, Democracy, and Trade," *International Studies Quarterly*, 44:1 (March 2000), pp. 31-50.

**\*\*\*March 13-20: SPRING BREAK, NO CLASS\*\*\***

### **Week VII (March 21): Interpreting Regression Results**

Handout: Interpreting regression results, creating path diagrams.

Boix, Carles and Frances Rosenbluth. "Bones of Contention: The Political Economy of Height Inequality." *American Political Science Review* 108 (February 2014), pp. 1-21

Rodrik, Dani. "Democracies Pay Higher Wages," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 114:3 (August 1999), pp. 707-738.

### **Week VIII (March 28): Special Models**

#### **\*\*\*Assignment # 2 Due\*\*\***

Handouts: Examples of probit, time series, and 2SLS regression.

Babbie, *Practice of Social Research*, pp. 101-107.

Shively, W. Phillips. *The Craft of Political Research*. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2009), pp. 136-141.

Acemoglu, Daron, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review* 91(5), pp. 1369-1401.

Maoz, Zeev and Bruce Russett. "Normative and Structural Causes of Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review* 87:3 (September 1993), pp. 624-638.

### **Week IX (April 4): Common Research Pathologies**

Handout: Errors of inference.

King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, pp. 150-207 (Chapter 5).

Pape, Robert A. "The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism," *American Political Science Review* 97:3 (August 2003), pp. 343-361.

Also recommended, a response to Pape:

Collard-Wexler, Simon, Costantino Pischedda and Michael G. Smith. "Do Foreign Occupations Cause Suicide Attacks?" *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 58:4 (June 2014), pp.625-657.

### **Week X (April 11): Experimental Research and Ethics**

#### **\*\*\*Assignment # 3 Distributed\*\*\***

Handouts: Sample informed consent form.

Babbie, *Practice of Social Research*, pp. 61-81, 221-241.

McMurtrie, Beth. "Secrets from Belfast: How Boston College's Oral History of the Troubles Fell Victim to an International Murder Investigation." *Chronicle Review – Chronicle of Higher Education*. January 27, 2014.

**\*\*\* April 18: PATRIOTS' DAY — NO CLASS\*\*\***

### **Week XII (April 25): Mixed Methods Research**

Fortna, Virginia Page. *Does Peacekeeping Work?* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.

### **Week XI (May 2): Research Design Revisited**

Handouts: Sample PhD dissertation proposal & conference paper.

Shively, *Craft of Political Research*, pp. 1-31, 74-96.

### **Week XIII (May 9): Student Presentations**

**\*\*\* Assignment # 3 Due\*\*\***

**Assignment # 1 (due in class March 10):**

Come up with three causal theories that could be tested with quantitative analysis and the data sets listed above. In a page or two, please explain each theory, the dependent and independent variables, and which specific variables from the above codebooks could be used to operationalize and measure your independent and dependent variables. Please use different variables in each case (you should have a total of six, an independent and dependent for each theory).

Briefly summarize the codebook information on each of the six variables, including the number of categories, the specific numeric value attached to each category, and any numeric value assigned to missing data. Your explanation does not have to be very long, but please give enough information to show that you understand the fundamentals of theory, hypothesis derivation, operationalization/measurement, and how each of your variables is coded.

Then generate descriptive statistics for the six variables. You will need to show the initial variable coding (using the “tab” command in Stata). You will also need to recode each variable by dropping any missing data, and use the “tab” command to show the Stata output for the recoded variable.

Then generate descriptive statistics for each recoded variable using the “sum” command. Finally, recode any variable with more than two categories into a 0/1 dummy variable. The exact categories corresponding to 0 and 1 do not matter, but you will need to explain (in a sentence) what a “1” response indicates and what a “0” response indicates. Show the “tab” results for your recoded variables, and use the “sum” command to show the descriptive statistics for each.

**Assignment #2 (due in class April 14, so you have some time to ask questions):**

Following the model from the handouts, use linear regression to test two of the causal theories you generated in Assignment #1. For each theory, use the “reg” command to regress your dependent variable on your independent variable. Show the Stata output. Also show the structural equation, with the regression constant, regression coefficient, standard errors and t-values. Interpret this equation substantively. What does your model predict, going from one category of your independent variable to another?

Next, introduce at least one control variable. Show the original variable with the “tab” command, and recode it to remove missing data. Show the recoded variable and its descriptive statistics using the “tab” and “sum” commands.

Now show the Pearson correlation matrix for your independent variables and dependent variable. Make sure that there is no multicollinearity between your independent variables. Then use the “reg” command to regress your dependent variable on your independent variables. Write the structural equation for this new regression. What does your new model predict? (Give some predicted values to make this concrete.) Are the predictions substantively different from those of the bivariate model? Are the results statistically significant?

Please fill out a path diagram for each of your multivariate theories.

Be sure to include all Stata outputs, and also attach a copy of your Assignment #1 so that I can see the original descriptive statistics for each variable.

**Assignment #3 (due in class May 5):**

Write your own research proposal for an academic thesis or major policy paper. The proposal should be no more than 15 pages long, including an abstract of no more than 200 words. (Your “Works Cited” section does not count toward the page total.)

This proposal should be based on what you have learned about research design in the class. It should include an introduction in which you introduce the research or policy question and outline your approach for answering it. It should include a “motivation” section in which you describe your contribution to the academic literature on your subject — or for a policy paper, the expected contribution of your paper to solving a particular policy problem. Your paper should include a description of any scope conditions — what your paper is *not* intended to address, for practical reasons or reasons of brevity, since this is not a book proposal. You should then discuss the puzzle or policy issue your paper is expected to address. What is it? Why is it puzzling (or for policy papers, what are the concrete impacts of the policy problem, if unresolved?)

Next, explain your research design. How will you solve the puzzle/problem? Explain your theory (allowing that it may change as you proceed with the research and more evidence comes in). What are the independent and dependent variables of your theory? Which hypotheses can you deduce from the theory? These hypotheses should be testable, using data and scientific methods. Identify the specific data you will use. For qualitative research designs, which case studies will you conduct, and why have you chosen them? Which archives will you visit, or which research subjects will you interview? For quantitative research, which data sources will you consult? These may be existing databases, databases you will construct (from surveys, news reportage, etc.) or any experiments you plan to conduct. You should also discuss the specific information you will use to operationalize and measure your independent and dependent variables — as well as any statistical models (OLS, etc.) you will use. You should conclude with a bullet point outline of the chapters or sections of your final research product.

You have several weeks to complete this assignment. Please start your work early and ask clarifying questions in class, office hours, or emails. I am happy to look at an early draft or outline and offer feedback to help you.

Come to class on May 5th prepared to discuss your research design with your fellow students. Circulate your research proposal by email before class on the 5th, and feel free to use slides or other visual aids. Your presentation should last 5-10 minutes.