

Political Science Research

Modernization Theory

Independent variable

Dependent variable

**Economic
development**

→

**Regime
type**

Rich

→

Democratic

Poor

→

Authoritarian

This course provides an introduction to the methods political scientists use to conduct research and prepares you for upper-division coursework in political science. It will help you develop tools to understand, critically evaluate, and perform empirical political science research. By the end of the course, you should:

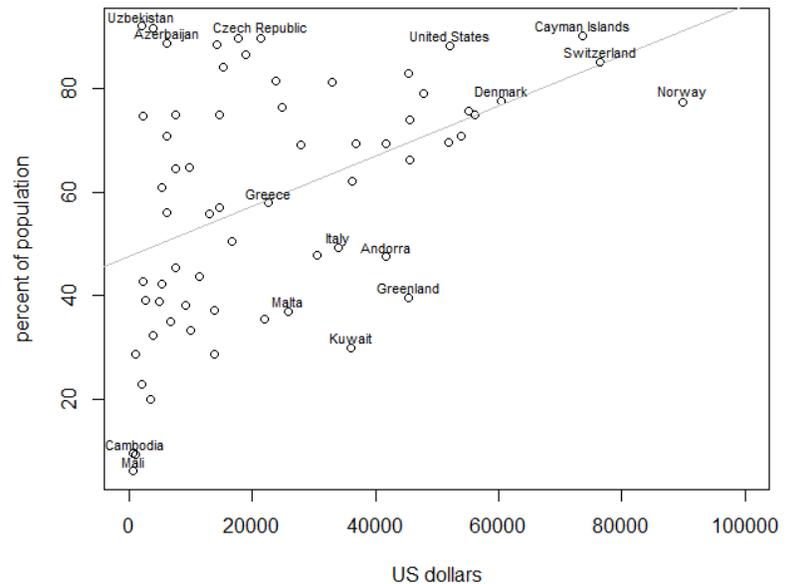
- Be familiar with both qualitative and quantitative methods commonly used in political science, including the subdisciplines of American politics, comparative politics, international relations, political theory, and public policy.
- Know how to be a critical consumer of political science research from the scholarly literature, including: identifying research question, hypotheses, and variables; describing and critiquing the methods and data; assessing the extent to which the findings support the hypotheses; and noting shortcomings and proposing improvements for future research.
- Gain experience developing your own research interests into a research question; conducting a literature review; formulating a testable hypothesis; and proposing thoughtful operationalization of variables.

Required text:

Howard, Christopher. 2017. *Thinking Like a Political Scientist*. University of Chicago Press.
ISBN: 9780226327549.

All other reading assignments are available via Camino.

High school graduates and wealth across countries, 2015



Source: World Development Indicators (World Bank)

Course

POLI 99

Quarter

Fall 2020

Time

MWF 2:15 – 3:20pm

Zoom Classroom

scu.zoom.us/j/98965142158

Instructor

Ryan Tans

Email

rtans@scu.edu

Zoom Office Hours

Thurs. 10am – 12pm

scu.zoom.us/j/94014872427

Fri. 2:15 – 3:20pm

scu.zoom.us/j/98845678612

and by appointment

This course fulfills the Social Science Requirement in the Core Curriculum

Goals: Scientific Inquiry, Complexity, Critical Thinking, Mathematical & Quantitative Reasoning

Students who have completed Social Science will achieve the following objectives:

- Apply deductive and inductive reasoning to analyze social science topics. (Scientific Inquiry, Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning) *Addressed by exams, workshops and written assignments.*
- Evaluate evidence used to validate theories, hypotheses, or predictions. (Scientific Inquiry, Critical Thinking, Complexity) *Addressed by exams and review article.*
- Appreciate that theories and data analysis often admit multiple interpretations and will be able to evaluate the relative merits of alternative perspectives. (Critical Thinking, Complexity) *Addressed by exams, review article, and workshops and discussions.*

Course requirements:

1. Attendance

For each class session, I will hold video conferences via Zoom. I invite you to join those meetings with or without video as you feel comfortable. However, attendance is not required, and I will record and post all meetings for everyone unable to join in real-time.

2. Participation (5%)

I will award participation credit to students who engage with the course by completing participation assignments, participating in Zoom meetings, by speaking to me during office hours and by email, and so on. The participation grade of all students begins at a common baseline (between 50% and 85%, depending on opportunities to participate). To calculate the participation grade, I add or subtract a student's participation credit to the baseline.

3. Workshops (12%)

The course is designed to be hands-on. For every topic in this course, there is a workshop that will provide an opportunity to apply the methodological concepts we discuss in class. Workshops include directed writing, diagramming arguments, analyzing texts and visualizing data. We will discuss these workshops via Zoom every Wednesday, and I request that you complete each one before we meet to discuss it. I will award a score of 1 for each workshop that you complete on time, $\frac{1}{2}$ for each workshop that you complete late, and zero otherwise.

Thank you for reading this syllabus! I now invite you to submit the name of a song, or a band, whose music you have found comforting during the pandemic. You can type your submission directly to Camino via the "syllabus" assignment. I will award participation credit to everyone who does so.

4. Research question (11%)

This short writing assignment should state a research question that interests you, explain why you care about it, and describe how the outcome of interest varies across cases. It is an opportunity for me to learn about your interests and for you to learn about my grading style early in the course. It will build on the first workshop.

5. List of sources (11%)

The second writing assignment compiles a list of twenty scholarly articles that address your research question and organizes them into meaningful “schools of thought” that support competing answers. The assignment builds on the research question and compiles the raw material for the review article to follow.

6. Theory and hypothesis (6%)

In this assignment, you will create an arrow diagram that depicts a causal relationship between two variables. Guided by this diagram, you will formulate a hypothesis that describes the relationship between the variables that you expect to see in the real world if your theory is true. This assignment builds on your list of sources and generates a figure that visualizes the answer to your research question, which should be included in your review article.

7. Review article (25%)

The final writing assignment provides a broad overview of the scholarly literature with respect to your research question. This assignment culminates a series of in-class activities and written assignments, so by the time you submit it you will have had multiple opportunities for revision. It is due on November 20, but you should complete a first draft by November 13 for the peer review workshop.

8. Exams (30%)

Two exams will ask questions focused on application of the concepts covered in the course. The question format will include matching and short answer, among other types of questions. Some questions will ask you to read and analyze a short excerpt from a scholarly or popular article and analyze it from a methodological point of view.

Each exam will have an individual and a group section. Please make every effort to be available for a synchronous Zoom session on exam days. I will administer exams as Camino quizzes with a combined (individual + group) time of 75 minutes.

Course technology:

This class will hold meetings via Zoom. The easiest way to access Zoom is via the Zoom Pro tab in Camino. In addition, the table below provides Zoom access information. To avoid “Zoombombing”, please do not post this information publicly or share it outside of our class.

	<i>Class meetings</i>	<i>Thursday office hours</i>	<i>Friday office hours</i>
Zoom link	scu.zoom.us/j/98965142158	scu.zoom.us/j/94014872427	scu.zoom.us/j/98845678612
Password	poli99	poli99	poli99
Meeting ID	989 6514 2158	940 1487 2427	988 4567 8612
Join by phone	+1 (669) 900-6833	+1 (669) 900-6833	+1 (669) 900-6833
One tap mobile	+16699006833,,98965142158#	+16699006833,,94014872427#	+16699006833,,98845678612#

Technology support:

SCU can provide technology assistance, and you can also reach out to our providers directly.

- For **Camino support**, contact caminosupport@scu.edu or call 408-551-3572. You can also use the help button within the Camino platform (on the left hand navigation) for 24/7 support via chat or phone.
- For **Zoom assistance**, contact Media Services at mediaservices@scu.edu or 408-554-4520. You can also get 24/7 support from Zoom by calling 1-888-799-8854.
- For **SCU network and computing support**, contact the SCU Technology Help Desk at techdesk@scu.edu or 408-554-5700. They can provide support for MySCU Portal, Duo, ecampus, hardware and software issues, and more.

Course policies:

Late assignments

Students, like faculty, juggle many responsibilities, which is why it's so important to meet your deadlines! Nevertheless, I am willing to negotiate extensions, but you must approach me before the assignment is due, not after. Otherwise, late work will incur penalties worth one-sixth of a letter grade per day (e.g. the grade is reduced from a B+ to a B after two days).

Academic integrity

The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University's commitment to fostering an understanding of – and commitment to – a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states:

I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.

Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. For more information about Santa Clara University's academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see www.scu.edu/academic-integrity/.

Office of Accessible Education (formerly Disabilities Resources)

If you have a documented disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact the Office of Accessible Education, Benson 1, as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours within the first two weeks of class. The full university policy is available at www.scu.edu/oea.

Accommodations for pregnant and parenting students

Santa Clara University does not discriminate against any student on the basis of pregnancy or related medical conditions. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments, or by requesting accommodations through OAE. The following link provides information for students and faculty regarding pregnancy rights: <https://www.scu.edu/title-ix/resources/pregnancy/pregnancy>.

Discrimination and sexual misconduct (Title IX)

SCU faculty are committed to helping create a safe and open learning environment for all students. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, I encourage you to seek support and report incidents to [Belinda Guthrie](#). For more information, please visit the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX](#). [Confidential resources](#) are also available.

Copyright Statement

Materials in this course are protected by United States copyright laws. You may make copies of course materials for your own use and you may share the materials with other students enrolled in this course. However, please do not publicly distribute the course materials or record video or audio of class meetings without my written permission.

Course schedule
(Subject to change)

PART 1: Questions

Week 1: Introduction

- Monday, September 21 **Course introduction**
- Lave, Charles and James March. 1993. *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*, Ch. 1 (pp. 2-7).
- Wednesday, September 23 **Workshop: Research topics**
- Lave, Charles and James March. 1993. *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*, Ch. 2 (pp. 10-20).
- Friday, September 25 *Please read this syllabus (no Zoom meeting)*

Week 2: Research questions

- Monday, September 28 **Lecture: Research questions**
- Howard, Chapter 1, pp. 25-29.
- Wednesday, September 30 **Workshop: Analyzing a review article**
- Ross, Michael. 1999. "The Political Economy of the Resource Curse," *World Politics*, pp. 297-300.
- Friday, October 2 *Research question due (no Zoom meeting)*

Week 3: Scholarly literature

- Monday, October 5 **Virtual library visit (no Zoom meeting)**
- Howard, Chapter 1, pp. 29-34.
- Wednesday, October 7 **Workshop: Reading scholarly literature**
- Laubepin, Frederique. 2013. "How to Read (and Understand) a Social Science Journal Article," Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research.
- Friday, October 9 **Distinguishing schools of thought**
- Howard, Chapter 1, pp. 13-25.

PART 2: Theories

Week 4: Explanation

Monday, October 12

Lecture: Explanatory models

- Howard, Chapter 3, pp. 64-71.
- Pepinsky, Thomas. 2009. *Economic Crises and the Breakdown of Authoritarian Regimes*, p. 14-15.

Wednesday, October 14

Workshop: Visualizing cause and effect

- Sorkin, Andrew Ross. 2018. "From Trump to Trade, the Financial Crisis Still Resonates 10 Years Later," *New York Times*, September 10.

Friday, October 16

List of sources due (no Zoom meeting)

Week 5: Concepts and measures

Monday, October 19

Lecture: Conceptualization and measurement

- Howard, Chapter 2, pp. 36-45, 49-52.

Wednesday, October 21

Workshop: Defining slippery concepts

- Gladwell, Malcolm. 2011. "The Order of Things," *The New Yorker*, February 14.

Friday, October 23

Exam #1

PART 3: Comparisons

Week 6: Logic of comparison

Monday, October 26

Lecture: Cause and effect

- Howard, Chapter 2, pp. 52-58; Chapter 3, pp. 71-81.

Wednesday, October 28

Workshop: Comparing cases

- Posner, Daniel. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review*, pp. 529-539.

Friday, October 30

Arrow diagram due (no Zoom meeting)

Week 7: Research design, part 1

Monday, November 2

Lecture: Sampling

- Howard, Chapter 5, pp. 117-126.

Tuesday, November 3

Election Day, please vote!

Wednesday, November 4

Workshop: Sampling voters

- Reading TBA

Friday, November 6

No Zoom meeting

Week 8: Research design, part 2

Monday, November 9

Lecture: Case studies

- Howard, Chapter 4, pp. 93-96, 109-113; Chapter 5, pp. 127-131, 133-138.

Wednesday, November 11

Workshop: Selecting cases

- Reading TBA

Friday, November 13

Review article peer review (no Zoom meeting)

PART 4: Data

Week 9: Data

Monday, November 16

Lecture: Data sources

- Howard, Chapter 7, pp. 169-174, 193-195.
- Earl Babbie. 1975. *The Practice of Social Research*, pp. 344-350.

Wednesday, November 18

Workshop: Visualizing data

- “Democracy,” Our World in Data, accessible at ourworldindata.org/democracy.

Friday, November 20

Review article due (no Zoom meeting)

Thanksgiving week: No class

Week 10: Research opportunities

Monday, November 30

Workshop: Review article celebration

Wednesday, December 2

Lecture: Research opportunities

- “Fellowships,” Office of Student Fellowships, accessible at www.scu.edu/fellowships/
- “Student Funding Opportunities,” Santa Clara University Office of the Provost, accessible at www.scu.edu/provost/research/student-funding-opportunities/

Friday, December 4

Exam #2