

Political Inquiry:
How to Conduct Research in Political Science and International Relations
AS 190.255

Professor R. Marlin-Bennett
Nathan Gies, TA

Marlin-Bennett

Office: Mergenthaler 326
Office hours: Tuesdays, 2 to 3 and
Wednesdays, 2 to 3 and by
appointment
Email: marlin@jhu.edu
Phone: 410-516-5478

Gies

(To be announced)
Office hours: Monday, 12 to 1 and
Tuesday, 12 to 1, and by
appointment
Email: gies@jhu.edu

190.255 (1) M and W, 11 to 11:50, Krieger 300; F, 11-11:50, Remsen 101
190.255 (2) M and W, 11 to 11:50, Krieger 300; F, 12-12:50, Bloomberg 178

Course Goals

In the scholarship of political science and international studies, evidence is key. We use evidence to envision the world, and we draw on scholarly writing to develop policies that change the world. How do we gather and make sense of evidence and how can we evaluate how strong the evidence is? In this course, students will learn skills of political science and international studies research and the philosophy of science that underlies the various methods and methodologies that we use. The goal of the course is to develop practical knowledge for conducting sound research and critical judgment to evaluate others' research.

Specifically, this course is designed with the following goals in mind:

- ❖ To introduce you to the practice of scholarly writing in political science and international relations and to make you a more critical reader of the scholarly literature;
- ❖ To help you write well-researched and analyzed term papers in political science and international relations courses as you complete your undergraduate studies and, for those intending to pursue graduate degrees in these fields, to give a hint of what is to come as you continue your education;
- ❖ To prepare you to write a thesis in political science or international relations (if you so choose); and
- ❖ To develop some skills (e.g., collection and analysis of primary sources of evidence, literature searching, clarification of concepts, knowledge of specialized vocabulary) that have been useful (former students tell me) in their professional lives after graduation.

Text:

Gary Goertz, *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006). ISBN 0691124116 (pbk. : alk. paper) 9780691124117 (pbk. : alk. paper).

W. Lawrence Neuman, *Basics Of Social Research: Qualitative And Quantitative Approaches, 2nd Edition*. (Allyn & Bacon, 2007). ISBN: 0205484379 9780205484379.

Course Requirements

This course is writing intensive, and there will be both brief writing assignments each week, and a longer project that will be due at the end of the semester. There are no exams, but you will be expected to have completed the assigned reading prior to class and to participate in class discussion, particularly in section meetings on Fridays.

You will be able to redo assignments that are completed by the due date. You will have one week to complete a revision. (Example: You turn in Wednesday, September 23 assignment on time, prior to class. Nate grades the assignment and returns it to you on September 30. You wish to learn the material better (and you want a better grade), so you revise and turn in your revision prior to class on October 7. You must also turn in the assignment due on October 7 prior to class.)

Weekly Writing Assignments: The 12 assignments together count for 60% of your grade (5% of your grade each). Weekly writing assignments are due on Wednesdays, prior to class. That means they must be submitted to the WebCT site prior to the start of class. If you have any problems with the submission, bring a printed version of your assignment to class and hand it in to me at the beginning. Assignments turned in during class or after the class period in which they were assigned will be considered late.

You'll note that the assignments refer backwards to topics that were discussed in the week before.

Class participation: 15% of your grade. Complete the reading prior to class and be prepared to participate in each class session.

Research Proposal: The research proposal requirement includes a 5 minute oral presentation of your proposal (5% of your course grade) and a 10-12 page research proposal (20% of your course grade).

Oral presentations will begin December 2. You must be prepared on that day. Being absent (without a medical excuse) or being unprepared when you are called upon will result in a zero for that 5% of the grade. Practice your presentation because it is difficult to pare down what you need to say and present it fluently in just 5 minutes. Prepare 1 or 2 Powerpoint slides. (See the information on WebCT for how to create effective Powerpoint presentations.) Your presentation should include your research question and a brief statement of why it is important; a short summary of one or two of the most

relevant scholarly literature on the topic; your hypothesis or research plan; the evidence you would gather; and what you expect to find.

Although the written proposal is not due until noon on December 16, you should begin writing your proposal early. We will discuss the research proposal format on October 12. *Note that beginning on Monday, October 26, you are required to turn in evidence of progress on your research proposal every two weeks.* The following due dates are recommended. Your evidence should be in the form of a memorandum with supporting documents, as necessary.

October 26	Research question
November 9	Literature review and concept definitions
November 23	Discussion of methods and source of evidence
November 30	Optional: Turn in rough draft for comments
<i>Research Proposal Due:</i>	<i>By noon on Wednesday, December 16</i>

It is very important that you retain your research notes, drafts, and outline that you use to write your research proposal. I may require that you turn in these materials.

If you are writing a thesis, or intend to write a thesis in the future, you must pay close attention to a potential academic integrity pitfall. It is a violation of academic integrity to turn in material that you have received credit for in one course for another course, unless both professors agree to allow the material to count for both courses. Please make special note of the following:

- ❖ If your thesis advisor requires you to submit a research proposal, I am happy to allow you to use the research proposal you turn in for this course as the thesis proposal as well, contingent on approval from your thesis advisor.
- ❖ I will not give my permission for you to use the research proposal for any assignment other than your thesis.
- ❖ If you are writing a thesis and if you plan to use the research proposal assignment from this course as preliminary work on your thesis, I urge you to seek approval from your thesis advisor in advance. This is particularly important if your thesis advisor requires that you submit a research proposal and is grading you, in part, on that proposal. In that case, **failure to get approval before using the same research proposal assignment for this class and for your thesis is a violation of academic integrity. Get this approval in writing.**

I hope your thesis advisor will allow you to use the research proposal from this course as the proposal for your thesis, but if he or she does not, you must write separate proposals.

Academic Integrity

Your college degree is only worth something if you and your classmates uphold academic integrity. Obviously people who violate academic integrity can and do get caught, and the consequences are severe. On a more fundamental level, ethical violations, including cheating on assignments, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, purchasing papers, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying,

facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition hurt every student at Hopkins, the innocent and the guilty, because these violations dilute the value of every student's diploma.

You are responsible for knowing what is or is not an academic integrity violation, and you have many resources at this university that will give you additional guidance. (See the guide on "Academic Ethics for Undergraduates" and the Ethics Board Web site (<http://ethics.jhu.edu>) for more information.) If you have any uncertainty about whether a practice is appropriate or not ("Am I citing this properly?" "Is this common knowledge, or do I need to put in a footnote?" "Can my friend and I work together on this assignment?") ask your professor.

Report any violations you witness to the instructor. You may consult the associate dean of student affairs and/or the chairman of the Ethics Board beforehand.

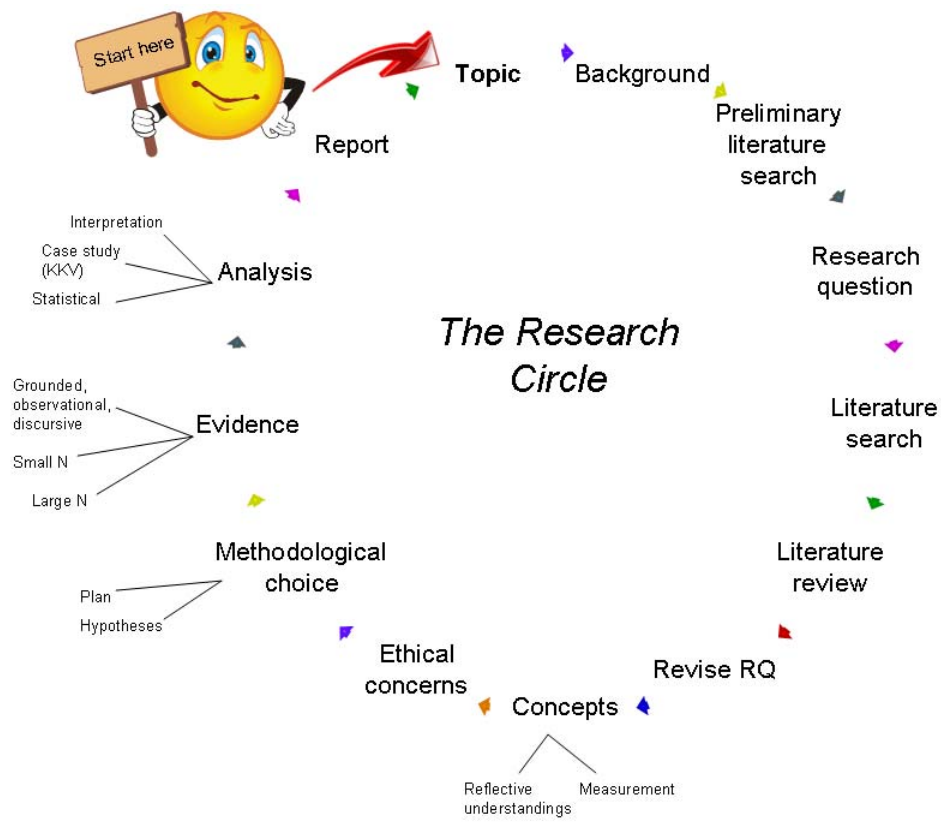
I expect that every student will uphold the principles of academic integrity as set forth in the Student Handbook and other university guidelines.

Disability Accommodations

Any student with a disability who may need accommodations in this class must obtain an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

The Big Picture

Through the semester, we will be studying the various stages of the research circle, depicted below. I will refer to this diagram throughout the semester.



R. Marlin-Bennett 8/25/2009

Course Calendar

- Wed Sep 2 **Lecture Topic: Introduction, the research circle, and types of writing**
No assigned reading
- Fri Sep 4 **Section: Types of writing**
Read: (1) O. Lowenheim, "Do ourselves credit and render a lasting service to mankind': British moral prestige, humanitarian intervention, and the Barbary pirates," *International Studies Quarterly* 47.1 (Mar 2003), pp. 23-48; and (3) M. Boot, "Pirates, Then and Now," *Foreign Affairs*, 88.4 (Jul/Aug 2009), pp. 94-108." (These articles are also available on WebCT > Course Content > Types of Writing.)
- Mon Sep 7 Labor Day; No class
- Wed Sep 9 **Lecture Topic: The research enterprise**
Read: Neuman, chapters 1 and 2
Assignment:* Types of writing. Write a 1 to 2 page essay (single spaced) on the similarities and differences between the two articles assigned for today. What kinds of writing do they represent? How do you know?
- Fri Sep 11 **Section: The research enterprise**
Read: (1) Joseph F. Healy, *Statistics: A Tool for Social Research*, 3rd Edition (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1993), pp. 1-6; (2) Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 3-33; and (3) Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), pp. xi-xxvii.
- Mon Sep 14 **Lecture Topic: Choosing a topic and preliminary steps**
Read: (1) Piracy, *Wikipedia*, online at <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy>>; (2) "Piracy and private enterprise: Splashing, and clashing, in murky waters," *The Economist*, August 20, 2009 (See WebCT); (3) Chris Hart, *Doing a Literature Search: A Comprehensive Guide for the Social Sciences* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), pp. 2-21.
- Wed Sep 16 **Lecture Topic: Research questions**
Read: Neuman, ch. 4 (We will come back to ch. 3)

Assignment: Looking for background and literature. Choose a topic. (This may, but will not necessarily, become the topic of your research proposal.) Do some background reading and look for some scholarly literature on the subject. Write a 1 to 2 pp. essay that describes the topic and the kinds of questions that people have examined concerning it.

Fri Sep 18

Section: Topics, preliminary steps and research questions

Read: Jim Glassman and Abdi Ismail Samatar, "Development geography and the third-world state," *Progress in Human Geography*, 21.2 (1997), pp. 164-198.

Mon Sep 21

Lecture: literature search and review

Read: Alan Gerber, Jonathan Gruber, and Daniel M. Hungerman, "Does Church Attendance Cause People to Vote? Using Blue Laws' Repeal to Estimate the Effect of Religiosity on Voter Turnout, National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series, no. 14303, September 2008, online at <<http://www.nber.org/papers/w14303>> (available on WebCT).

Wed Sep 23

Lecture: literature search and review

Read: Aldrich, J.H., Gelpi, C., Feaver, P., Reifler, J. & Sharp, K.T. "Foreign policy and the electoral connection," *Annual Reviews of Political Science* 9 (2006), pp. 477-502.
Assignment: Research Question and Literature Review. Write a 1 to 2 pp. essay discussing the use of the scholarly literature in one or more of the articles that have been assigned.

Fri Sep 25

Section: Literature Search and Review

Read: Lester Spence, Harwood K. McClerking, and Robert Brown, "Revisiting Black Incorporation and Local Political Participation," *Urban Affairs Review* (forthcoming).

Mon Sep 28

Yom Kippur – A pre-recorded class will be available by podcast.

Lecture: Revising and refining the research question and tweaking the literature search and review

Reading: Goertz, pp. 1-24

Wed Sep 30

Lecture: Concepts

Reading: Goertz, pp. 25-68

Assignment: Concepts. Write a 1 to 2 pp. essay discussing how concepts are defined in one or more of the articles that have been assigned.

- Fri Oct 2 **Section: Concepts**
Reading: Goertz, pp. 69-94
- Mon Oct 5 **Lecture: Concepts (with a little discussion of measurement)**
Reading: Goertz, pp. 95-128 (I note that some of this material assumes a working knowledge of statistics. If you have not had any statistics, just try to get the main points being explained.)
- Wed Oct 7 **Lecture: Other ways of conceptualizing (with a little discussion of reflective understanding)**
Reading: Robert Adcock, "Generalization in Comparative and Historical Social Science," in *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, edited by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), pp. 50-66.
Assignment: Concepts. Write a 1 to 2 pp. essay on Goertz's implicit approach to science and the creation of knowledge. How do you think Goertz conceptualizes science, theory, and causation?
- Fri Oct 9 **Section: Concepts**
Reading: Parsons, Talcott, "On the Concept of Political Power", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 107.3 (1963) , pp. 232-262.
- Mon Oct 12 **Lecture: What a research proposal looks like**
Reading: Sample research proposals to be posted on WebCT.
- Wed Oct 14 **Lecture: Ethical concerns**
Reading: Neuman, ch. 3.
Assignment: Conceptualization and research design. Carefully examine the conceptualization of an important concept in two scholarly journal articles. (These may be articles that you will use in your research proposal.) Write a 1 to 2 page essay comparing and contrasting the conceptualization in the two articles. Do the differences matter? How or why?
- Fri Oct 16 **Ethical concerns**
Reading: These short articles are from *PS: Political Science & Politics*, vol. 41.3 (July 2008): (1) R. J. Hauck, "Protecting Human Research Participants, IRBs, and Political Science Redux: Editor's Introduction," pp. 475-476; (2) F. J. Levine and P.R. Skedsvold, "Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Aligning IRBs and Research Practice," pp. 501-505; (3) T.

Porter, "Research Ethics Governance and Political Science in Canada," pp. 495-499; (4) M.A. Seligson, "Human Subjects Protection and Large-N Research: When Exempt is Non-Exempt and Research is Non-Research," pp. 477-482; (5) S. Tolleson-Rinehart, "A Collision of Noble Goals: Protecting Human Subjects, Improving Health Care, and a Research Agenda for Political Science", pp. 507-511; (6) D. Yanow, and P. Schwartz-Shea, "Reforming Institutional Review Board Policy: Issues in Implementation and Field Research," pp. 483-494.

Mon Oct 19

Lecture: Methodological choice: positivist approaches

Reading: Neuman, ch. 5

Wed Oct 21

Lecture: Methodological choice: interpretivist research design

Reading: D. Yanow, "Neither Rigorous Nor Objective? Interrogating Criteria for Knowledge Claims in Interpretive Science," in *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, ed. by D. Yanow and P. Schwartz-Shea, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), pp. 67-88. and D. W. Miller, "Storming the Palace in Political Science: Scholars join revolt against the domination of mathematical approaches to the discipline," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 21, 2001, available at <<http://chronicle.com/free/v48/i04/04a01601.htm>> (and on WebCT).

Assignment: Ethical concerns and methodological choice. What are the pros and cons of positivist methodologies? Of interpretivist methodologies? Are the ethical concerns that arise from the methodologies similar or different? Why? Write a 1 to 2 page essay discussing your answer to these questions.

Fri Oct 23

Section: Methodologies

Reading: Neuman, ch. 6

Mon Oct 26

Lecture: Evidence: Quantitative (Large N)

Reading: Neuman, ch. 7

Due: Evidence of progress on your research proposal

Wed Oct 28

Finding evidence: Quantitative (Large N)

Reading: Neuman, ch. 9

Assignment: Quantitative data. Find some quantitative data (e.g., from UN, US Census, or other sources) and critically analyze how it was collected, how the terms were defined, etc. Present your analysis in a 1 to 2 pp. paper.

- Fri Oct 30 **Section: Finding evidence**
Reading: Neuman, ch. 11
- Mon Nov 2 **Lecture: Finding evidence: Qualitative (small N)**
Reading: (1) Neuman, ch. 12; (2) Klaus Dingwerth, "Private Transnational Governance and the Developing World: A Comparative Perspective," *International Studies Quarterly* 52 (2008), pp. 607-634.
- Wed Nov 4 **Lecture: Finding evidence: Interpretive**
Reading: Susan Shepler, "The Rites of the Child: Global Discourses of Youth and Reintegrating Child Soldiers in Sierra Leone," *Journal of Human Rights*, Vol. 4 Issue 2 (Apr-Jun2005), p197-211.
Assignment: Finding evidence small N studies. Outline Dingwerth's article (assigned for Nov. 2). In addition, discuss the conceptual definitions he uses and his sources of evidence.
- Fri Nov 6 **Section: Finding evidence**
Reading: Neuman, ch. 10.
- Mon Nov 9 **Lecture: Analysis of quantitative data in large N studies**
Reading: Errol A. Henderson, "Culture or Contiguity: Ethnic Conflict, the Similarity of States, and the Onset of War, 1820-1989," *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 41, No. 5. (Oct., 1997), pp. 649-668.
Due: Evidence of work completed on your research proposal
- Wed Nov 11 **Lecture: Analysis of qualitative data in small N studies**
Reading: Neuman, ch. 13
Assignment: Analysis of quantitative data in Large N studies. Outline Henderson's article (assigned on for Monday, Nov.9). In addition answer the following questions: How does Henderson conceptually and operationally define his variables? What is his unit of analysis? Which hypotheses does he support, and which he does he refute?
- Fri Nov 13 **Section: Analyzing evidence**
Reading: Sangbun Shin, "Economic Globalization and the Environment in China: A Comparative Case Study of Shenyang and Dalian," *The Journal of Environment & Development*, Vol. 13, Issue 3, pp. 263-
- Mon Nov 16 **Lecture: Analysis of Small N studies with qualitative data**

Reading: Jack S. Levy, "Preventative War and Democratic Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 52 (2008), pp. 1-24.

- Wed Nov 18 **Lecture: Analyzing political speech. Guest speaker: Mark Clark, SAIC**
Reading: Klebanov, B.B., Diermeier, D. & Beigman, E. 2008, "Lexical Cohesion Analysis of Political Speech", *Political Analysis*, vol. 16, pp. 447-463.
Assignment: Analysis of qualitative data in small N studies. Choose either the article by Shin (assigned for Nov. 13) or the one by Levy (assigned for Nov. 16). Outline the article and discuss the way in which the author used the evidence in his analysis.
- Fri Nov 20 **Section: Analyzing evidence**
Reading: R. Jackson, "Constructing Enemies: 'Islamic Terrorism' in Political and Academic Discourse", *Government and Opposition*, 42.3 (2007), pp. 394-426.
- Mon Nov 23 **Lecture: Interpretation**
Reading: Roxanne Doty, "States of Exception on the Mexico-U.S. Border: Security, 'Decisions,' and Civilian Border Patrols," *International Political Sociology* 1 (2007), 113-137.
- Wed Nov 25 Thanksgiving vacation
- Fri Nov 27 Thanksgiving vacation
- Mon Nov 30 **Lecture: Emancipatory empiricism**
Reading: (1) Patomaki, H. 2001, "The Challenge of Critical Theories: Peace Research at the Start of the New Century", *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 38, no. 6, pp. 723-737; and
Optional: Turn in rough draft of your research proposal for comments
- Wed Dec 2 Lecture: Network analysis
Reading: These are all short articles; they come from two issues of *Science*. The first article comes from Volume 323, Number 5916(13 February 2009) :
(1) S.P. Borgatti, et. al, "Network analysis in the social sciences", *Science*, 323.5916 (13 February 2009), pp. 892-895.
The rest of the articles come from Volume 325, Number 5939 (24 July 2009)
(2) A. Barabasi, "Scale-Free Networks: A Decade and

Beyond," pp. 412-413; (3) J. Bascombe, "Disentangling the Web of Life," pp. 416-419; (4) J. Bohannon, "Counterterrorism's New Tool: 'Metanetwork' Analysis," pp. 409-411" (5) J. Bohannon, "Investigating Networks: The Dark Side." pp. 410-411, (6) C. T. Butts, "Revisiting the Foundations of Network Analysis," pp. 414-416; (7) A. Cho "Econophysics: Still Controversial After All These Years," pp. 408; (8) A. Cho, "Ourselves and Our Interactions: The Ultimate Physics Problem?" pp. 406-408; (9) E Ostrom, "A General Framework for Analyzing Sustainability of Social-Ecological Systems," pp. 419-422; (10) F. Schweitzer, et. al, "Economic Networks: The New Challenges", pp. 422-425; (11) A. Vespignani, "Predicting the Behavior of Techno-Social Systems," Science, pp. 425-428.

Assignment: Assignment: Analyzing speech. Work in pairs or trios. Decide on a short primary text to interpret. This could be a politician's speech, words of a popular song, even a passage from the Bible. Each of you should interpret the text separately. Then share your interpretations. (Doing this over coffee is optional.) Write a 1 to 2 pp. essay that discusses your interpretation and that of the other(s) you worked with. (Each person should write his or her essay separately.)

Fri Dec 4 **Section:** Writing a research report
 Reading: Neuman, ch. 14

Mon Dec 7 **Lecture: Summing up**

Wed Dec 16 Research Proposal due at noon!

*Note that assignments are due BEFORE the class period begins.