

17.801
Political Science Scope and Methods
Fall 2026

Lectures: Mondays, 3:00 PM–5:00 PM, [E51-390](#)

Recitation Sessions: Wednesdays, 3:00 PM–4:00 PM, [E51-390](#)

Units: 3-0-9 (12 units), HASS-S · CI-M

Prerequisites: None

	Professor	TA	WRAP Lecturer
	Fotini Christia	Benjamín Muñoz	Michael Maune
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Office Hours	By appointment	Tue, 2:00-3:00PM	By appointment
Office Location	E18-309C	E53-415	TBA

1. Course Description

Political scientists study some of the biggest questions we face – why democracies endure or collapse, why some political movements turn violent while others remain peaceful, how voters decide which candidates to support – but reaching a credible answer depends on the quality of the methodological choices behind it: the evidence chosen, the comparisons drawn, and the inferences made from them. I designed this course to introduce a variety of empirical research methods used by political scientists. The primary aims of the course are to make you a more sophisticated consumer of diverse empirical research and to allow you to conduct advanced independent work in your junior and senior years. This class is not a course in data analysis. Rather, it is a course on how to approach political science research and presumes that social science research can be evaluated according to common criteria that transcend methodological approaches. We will discuss how to generate research questions, how to think of measurement and causality in political science, the existing research designs in the discipline, whether and when to mix research methods, how new kinds of data and questions of transparency are reshaping the discipline, and how to think about the ethics of research in political science.

1.1 What to Expect in this Course

I have structured this course around three connected pieces that scaffold your training as a researcher: a foundation in the big ideas, a close look at how leading scholars put those ideas into practice, and your own opportunity to apply them. The first part of the course involves readings and homework exercises (due Oct 13 and Nov 2). These readings are roughly evenly divided between methodological works and notable applications of various research methods from different subfields of political science. The second part of the course involves visits from guest professors, where you will be responsible for preparing questions about their research design and approach. The third part of the course entails the presentation of the research projects you will be designing throughout the semester.

The research project is a critical element of the course and should be taken very seriously. It is your opportunity to apply the tools of this course to a question that genuinely interests you. First, students will submit one or two ideas for a research project (one or two paragraphs, due Sept 28). Next, students will submit a two-page statement describing their research question and explaining why it was selected (due Oct 19). Next, students will submit a list of at least 10 articles or three books on the topic and a brief abstract for each that presents the basic argument, findings, and relevance for the student's question (due Oct 26). One of these articles or books should include a literature review that the student would like to emulate. Next, students will submit a critical literature review (15 pages, due Nov 16). This will serve as the basis for a 10-minute in-class presentation (Nov 30 or Dec 7) on research proposals, which will be followed by a 10-minute group discussion of research strategies. Building on this discussion, students will submit a 15-page draft research proposal that includes a draft version of the literature review in Overleaf so that instructors can provide feedback (due Nov 30). Based on the feedback, students will submit a 20-25 page research proposal that includes a revised version of the literature review and a new section that proposes an original research design (due Dec 14). Students are required to meet with the TA by Oct 19 to discuss their projects, and are encouraged to do so multiple times during the semester. Assignments should use The Chicago Manual of Style author-date system for citations and references.

This course has been designated Communication Intensive (CI-M). A CI-M course is designed to help you develop your writing and speaking skills in the major. A lecturer from the Writing, Rhetoric, and Professional Communication (WRAP) program has been assigned to help with this course. Students are required to meet with the WRAP instructor twice during the semester: once to discuss either the Literature Review or Proposal, and once to rehearse the Presentation. Students are encouraged to meet with the WRAP instructor in advance of the Lit Review, the Proposal, and the Presentation to receive feedback and discuss revision. The WRAP instructor will also provide written feedback on all communication deliverables. In addition, you can set up an individual consultation with the communications experts at the Writing and Communication Center (WCC) via their online form. The WCC staff may be particularly helpful in revising your writing or practicing your oral presentation.

Please note that course participation is a critical part of your grade for this course. I expect that you will come to class prepared to discuss the week's readings. Discussion involves both asking and answering questions – from the teaching staff but also from other students. In addition, students are required to submit their communication goals for the semester to inform WRAP workshop material and individual feedback. I am looking forward to a semester of good questions, careful arguments, and productive disagreement.

2. Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to

- Distinguish the variety of ways to answer significant questions about political science.
- Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of various research methods.
- Critique research claims in popular media or academic settings.
- Communicate technical details clearly and concisely, both in written work and in oral presentation.
- Design an original research proposal addressing a significant question in political science.

3. Course Materials

There is no textbook to purchase for this course. All assigned readings are posted on the Canvas course website and should be completed before the class session for which they are listed (see the Course Outline).

Three textbooks included in this Syllabus are especially good introductory references for students who want a fuller treatment of research design:

- Shively, W. Phillips, and James W. Endersby. 2025. *The Craft of Political Research*. 11th edition. New York: Routledge.
- Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 3rd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. 2nd edition. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Physical copies are available in the MIT Libraries. The specific excerpts from all three that are assigned for the class are listed in the Course Outline below.

4. Required Work and Grading

Grades will be calculated based on performance on the following four components:

- **Homework Exercises:** 5%.
- **Communication Intensive Activities:** 10%.
- **Research Project:** 55%.
- **Participation:** 30%.

The table below decomposes each of these components into its specific deliverables and due dates.

Deliverable	Due Date	Weight
2 Exercises (2.5% each)	Oct 13, Nov 2	5%
3 CI pre-workshop exercises (2% each)	Oct 27, Nov 3, Nov 17	6%
1-on-1 meeting with the writing instructor	Oct 26-Nov 6	2%
Presentation rehearsal	Nov 10-23	2%
Preliminary research ideas (1-2 paragraphs) & Research question statement (2 pages)	Sep 28, Oct 19	5%
Annotated citations (at least 10 references) & Literature review (15 pages)	Oct 26, Nov 16	10%
In-class presentation	Nov 30 or Dec 7	10%
Draft research proposal (15 pages, <i>Overleaf</i>) & Final research proposal (20–25 pages)	Nov 30, Dec 14	30%

Attendance (13 lectures, 12 recitations)	–	15%
Class participation	–	15%
Total		100%

Grades for each individual assignment will be based on the demonstrated progress in accomplishing the course’s goals relative to the course schedule, on appropriate adherence to each assignment’s guidelines. Extra credit will be given to works that go above and beyond the assignment’s expectation. Attendance in class and active participation in class discussions are also required, as reflected above.

4.1 Academic Integrity Statement

In this course, I will hold you to the high standard of academic integrity expected of all students at the Institute. Doing your own work is essential both to your own learning and to maintaining a level playing field for everyone in the course. Violations – including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and cheating – will result in official Institute sanction, up to and including failure of the course. Please review [MIT’s Academic Integrity Policy](#) and contact me or the TA if you have questions about appropriate citation practices or anything else related to the Academic Integrity of this course.

4.2 AI Policy Statement

The main communication learning goal of this course is for you to learn to explain and justify your research design effectively to a political science audience.

Using Generative AI (Gen AI) in this class may support this goal in some cases but not in other cases. Below is a list of unacceptable and acceptable uses of Gen AI. These constitute the Gen AI policy for this course.

Unacceptable Use

- Generating text for your literature review
- Summarizing sources
- Generating text for your research design

Acceptable Use with Attribution

- Generate code
- Generate graphics and charts
- Generate slides
- Request for feedback on your writing

If you use Gen AI for these purposes, you must provide attribution by describing your usage in an Acknowledgements section and include links to your prompts and Gen AI outputs.

Acceptable Use Without Attribution

- Inquire about specific research and coding methods
- Search for sources for literature review
- Thesaurus word-level support
- Brainstorming ideas

If you want to use Gen AI for any other use case, you must first get permission from the instructor.

Responsibility of Gen AI Content

You are responsible for any Gen AI content you use in your communication deliverables. If you include any Gen AI content, you must fully understand and take responsibility for the output. If you use Gen AI for generating code, you must be able to completely explain how it works. If you use Gen AI for generating charts, you must be able to completely explain every element of the chart.

Any work submitted using AI tools beyond acceptable uses may be considered a violation of academic integrity, with the possibility of a referral to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (OSCCS).

4.3 Preparing Assignments

All required deliverables in this course must be completed individually. You are welcome to discuss ideas with classmates and to give each other feedback, but the work you submit must be your own. You are also encouraged to reach out to the TA to discuss your project or assignments at any point in the semester.

4.4 Submitting Assignments

All assignments must be submitted on Canvas prior to the beginning of class (03:00pm EST) on their due date. They will be considered late if the submission has a time stamp later than 03:00pm EST. WRAP workshop exercises need to be uploaded by 03:00pm EST the DAY BEFORE recitation. Assignments will be penalized 1/3 of a grade for every 24 hours that they are late. All assignments should be sent as Word or PDF documents with the student's last name as the first part of the file name (e.g., Smith_LiteratureReview.docx/Smith_LiteratureReview.pdf).

5. Course Policies

5.1 Use of Technology in Class

Laptops are welcome in lectures and recitations for note-taking and following along with readings. Audio or video recording of any class session is not permitted.

5.2 Office Hours

Professor Christia will hold office hours by appointment in her office (E18-309C). Benjamin will hold office hours weekly (Tuesdays, between 2:00pm and 3:00pm) in E53-415 or by appointment. Michael will hold office hours by appointment.

5.3 Recitations

Recitations will also be held weekly on Wednesdays at 3:00 PM–4:00 PM in E51-390 and are all mandatory attendance. Recitations begin on Wednesday, September 16. There is no recitation on Wednesday, November 11 (*Veterans Day*). Recitation slides, if presented, will be posted online. Four recitations spanning October, November and December (Wednesdays, Oct 28, Nov 4, 18, and Dec 9) will be led by our WRAP Lecturer, and will focus on writing the literature review, writing the research proposal, preparing the presentation, and doing peer reviews; the December 2 recitation will be devoted to peer review of draft research proposals. Students are expected to attend all of these sessions. Our WRAP Lecturer will also be holding individual meetings with students at any time before the literature review and research proposal due dates, and rehearsals before presentations. REMEMBER, EARLIER IS ALWAYS BETTER.

5.4 MIT Writing and Communication Center (WCC)

The Writing and Communication Center offers free one-on-one consultations and coaching with communication specialists with advanced degrees and publishing experience. The WCC can help you learn about different types of academic and professional writing and further develop your written and oral communication skills. You can learn more about WCC consultations at <http://cmsw.mit.edu/writingand-communication-center> and register with the online scheduler to make appointments through <https://mit.mywconline.com>. Please note that WCC hours are offered Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. during the semester, and fill up fast.

5.5 Special Accommodations and Disability Support Services

If you need disability-related accommodations, I encourage you to meet with me early in the semester. If you have not yet been approved for accommodations, please contact [Disability and Access Services \(DAS\)](#) at das-student@mit.edu.

I look forward to working with you to assist you with your approved accommodations.

5.6 Mental Health Statement

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may impact your ability to attend class, concentrate, complete work, take an exam, or participate in daily activities.

Support for undergraduate and graduate students is available through the [DoingWell](#) site. Visit the [Get Support](#) to access to different resources.

6. Course Outline

All the readings are available from the Canvas course website and should be completed prior to class on the day that they are listed. This section first presents a Course Calendar with the date and topic of each lecture, followed by the detailed week-by-week reading list.

In the detailed list below, a few symbols flag special items:

- § **Optional Readings** marks readings that are not required but are recommended for students whose projects touch on that week's topic.
- † **Note** marks the due date of a graded deliverable.
- * **Note** marks a scheduling or logistics note.

Course Calendar

Week	Lecture	Topic	Recitation
1	September 14	Introduction: Models and Theories in Political Science	September 16
2	September 21	Generating Research Questions and Hypotheses	September 23
3	September 28	Ethics and Political Research	September 30
4	October 5	Experiments, Statistical Analysis, and Case Studies	October 7
5	October 13 (Tuesday)	Selecting and Sampling Cases	October 14
6	October 19	Measurement	October 21
7	October 26	Causal Methods and Causal Analysis	October 28
8	November 2	Combining Methods	November 4
9	November 9	Transparency, Replication, and New Data: Text, Machine Learning, and Large Language Models	No recitation (Veterans Day)
10	November 16	Guest lecture: Naoki Egami	November 18
11	November 23	Guest lecture: TBA	November 25
12	November 30	Presentations – Group 1	December 2
13	December 7	Wrap-up & Presentations – Group 2	December 9

I: The Scientific Method

1. Introduction: Models and Theories in Political Science (September 14)

Shively, W. Phillips, and James W. Endersby. 2025. Chapters 1 “Doing Research” and 2 “Political Theories and Research Topics.” In *The Craft of Political Research*. 11th edition, 1–37. New York: Routledge.

Gerring, John. 2012. Preface and Chapter 1 “A Unified Framework.” In *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. 2nd edition, xix–xxiii and 1–23. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. Chapter 3 “Evaluating Causal Relationships.” In *The*

Fundamentals of Political Science Research. 3rd edition, 56–76. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ashworth, Scott, Christopher R. Berry, and Ethan Bueno de Mesquita. 2021. Chapter 1 “Introduction.” In *Theory and Credibility: Integrating Theoretical and Empirical Social Science*. 1–7. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

§ Optional Readings

Bueno de Mesquita, Ethan, and Scott A. Tyson. 2020. “The Commensurability Problem: Conceptual Difficulties in Estimating the Effect of Behavior on Behavior.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (2): 375–391.

2. Generating Research Questions and Hypotheses (September 21)

Gerring, John. 2012. Chapters 2 “Beginnings” and 3 “Arguments.” In *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. 2nd edition, 27–73. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Eidlin, Fred. 2011. “The Method of Problems versus the Method of Topics.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44 (4): 758–761.

Posner, Daniel N. 2004. “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi.” *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529–545.

Harding, Robin, and Arinze Nwokolo. 2024. “Terrorism, Trust, and Identity: Evidence from a Natural Experiment in Nigeria.” *American Journal of Political Science* 68 (3): 942–957. (Read alongside Posner and his argument on identity salience).

Paglayan, Agustina S. 2021. “The Non-Democratic Roots of Mass Education: Evidence from 200 Years.” *American Political Science Review* 115 (1): 179–198.

§ Optional Readings

Williams, Isabel, Timothy B. Gravelle, and Samara Klar. 2022. “The Competing Influence of Policy Content and Political Cues: Cross-Border Evidence from the United States and Canada.” *American Political Science Review* 116 (4): 1375–1388.

3. Ethics and Political Research (September 28)

American Political Science Association. 2020. *Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research*. Washington, DC: APSA. (Read the “Preamble” and the Principles on “Consent,” “Deception,” “Harm and Trauma,” and “Third Parties”).

Milgram, Stanley. 1965. “Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority.” *Human Relations* 18: 57–76.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2006. “The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones.” *Qualitative Sociology* 29 (3): 373–86.

Pearlman, Wendy. 2023. “Emotional Sensibility: Exploring the Methodological and Ethical Implications of Research Participants’ Emotions.” *American Political Science Review* 117 (4): 1241–1254. (Read alongside Wood).

Slough, Tara. 2023. “Phantom Counterfactuals.” *American Journal of Political Science* 67 (1): 137–153.

Darnton, Christopher. 2022. “The Provenance Problem: Research Methods and Ethics in the Age of WikiLeaks.” *American Political Science Review* 116 (3): 1110–1125.

Exchange: Stanford Prison Experiment

Zimbardo, Phillip G. “A Pirandellian Prison.” *New York Times Magazine*, April 8, 1973.

Blum, Ben. “The Lifespan of a Lie.” Medium, June 7, 2018.

§ Optional Readings

Zimmer, Michael. 2010. “‘But the Data Is Already Public’: On the Ethics of Research in Facebook.” *Ethics and Information Technology* 12 (4): 313–25. (Read alongside Darnton).

Phillips, Trisha. 2021. “Ethics of Field Experiments.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 24: 277–300.

Zimbardo, Phillip G. “Philip Zimbardo’s Response to Recent Criticisms of the Stanford Prison Experiment.” Accessed September 4, 2026. <https://www.prisonexp.org/response>.

† Note: Preliminary Research Ideas due, 1-2 paragraphs (September 28)

II: Methods of Political Science Research

4. Experiments, Statistical Analysis, and Case Studies (October 5)

Gerring, John. 2001. Chapter 9 “Methods.” In *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. 200– 230. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Habyarimana, James, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy Weinstein. 2007. “Why Does Ethnic Diversity Undermine Public Goods Provision?” *American Political Science Review* 101 (4): 709–725.

Kalla, Joshua L., and David E. Broockman. 2023. “Which Narrative Strategies Durably Reduce Prejudice? Evidence from Field and Survey Experiments Supporting the Efficacy of Perspective-Getting.” *American Journal of Political Science* 67 (1): 185–204.

Wasow, Omar. 2020. “Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion and Voting.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (3): 638–659.

Clarke, Killian. 2023. “Revolutionary Violence and Counterrevolution.” *American Political Science Review* 117 (4): 1344–1360.

§ Optional Readings

Enos, Ryan D. 2014. “Causal Effect of Intergroup Contact on Exclusionary Attitudes.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 111 (10): 3699–3704. (Read alongside Kalla and Broockman).

Alrababa’h, Ala’, William Marble, Salma Mousa, and Alexandra A. Siegel. 2021. “Can Exposure to Celebrities Reduce Prejudice? The Effect of Mohamed Salah on Islamophobic Behaviors and Attitudes.” *American Political Science Review* 115 (4): 1111–1128.

Blair, Graeme, C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro. 2013. “Poverty and Support for Militant Politics: Evidence from Pakistan.” *American Journal of Political Science* 57 (1): 30–48.

Holland, Alisha C. 2015. “The Distributive Politics of Enforcement.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (2): 357–371.

* **Note:** consider setting up your TA meeting soon — it’s due by October 19.

III: Gathering Data

5. Selecting and Sampling Cases (Tuesday, October 13 – Monday schedule of classes)

Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. 2008. “Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options.” *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (2): 294–308.

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. “How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics.” *Political Analysis* 2: 131–150.

Shively, W. Phillips, and James W. Endersby. 2025. Chapter 8 “Selection of Observations for Study.” In *The Craft of Political Research*. 11th edition, 128–145. New York: Routledge.

Pape, Robert A. 2003. “The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.” *American Political Science Review* 97 (3): 343–361.

Ashworth, Scott, Joshua D. Clinton, Adam Meirowitz, and Kristopher W. Ramsay. 2008. “Design, Inference, and the Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism.” *American Political Science Review* 102 (2): 269–273. (Read alongside Pape and compare the views).

Egami, Naoki, and Erin Hartman. 2023. “Elements of External Validity: Framework, Design, and Analysis.” *American Political Science Review* 117 (3): 1070–1088. (Read the “Introduction” and the “Formal Framework for External Validity” sections).

Kertzer, Joshua D. 2022. “Re-Assessing Elite-Public Gaps in Political Behavior.” *American Journal of Political Science* 66 (3): 539–553.

§ Optional Readings

Findley, Michael G., Kyosuke Kikuta, and Michael Denly. 2021. “External Validity.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 24: 365–393.

Slough, Tara, and Scott A. Tyson. 2023. “External Validity and Meta-Analysis.” *American Journal of Political Science* 67 (2): 440–455. (More demanding reading on external validity but very solid).

Exchange: Historical Persistence and Nazi Concentration Camps

Homola, Jonathan, Miguel M. Pereira, and Margit Tavits. 2020. “Legacies of the Third Reich: Concentration Camps and Out-group Intolerance.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (2): 573–590.

Pepinsky, Thomas B., Sara Wallace Goodman, and Conrad Ziller. 2024. “Modeling Spatial Heterogeneity and Historical Persistence: Nazi Concentration Camps and Contemporary Intolerance.” *American Political Science Review* 118 (1): 519–528.

† **Note: Exercise 1 due (October 13)**

* **Note:** Monday, October 12 is Indigenous Peoples’ Day. MIT holds a Monday schedule of classes on Tuesday, October 13, so we will meet at the usual time and place that Tuesday.

6. Measurement (October 19)

Gerring, John. 2012. Chapter 7 “Measurements.” In *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. 2nd edition, 155–194. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. 2001. “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research.” *American Political Science Review* 95 (3): 529–546.

Brady, Henry E., Michael C. Herron, Walter R. Mebane, Jasjeet Singh Sekhon, Kenneth W. Shotts, and Jonathan Wand. 2001. “Law and Data: The Butterfly Ballot Episode.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 34 (1): 59–69.

Knox, Dean, Will Lowe, and Jonathan Mummolo. 2020. “Administrative Records Mask Racially Biased Policing.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (3): 619–637.

Exchange: Objective vs. Expert-Coded Measures on Democratic Backsliding

Little, Andrew T., and Anne Meng. 2024. “Measuring Democratic Backsliding.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 57 (2): 149–161.

Knutsen, Carl Henrik, Kyle L. Marquardt, Brigitte Seim, Michael Coppedge, Amanda B. Edgell, Juraj Medzihorsky, Daniel Pemstein, Jan Teorell, John Gerring, and Staffan I. Lindberg. 2024. “Conceptual and Measurement Issues in Assessing Democratic Backsliding.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 57 (2): 162–177.

§ **Optional Readings**

Warwick, Paul, and Maria Zakharova. 2013. “Measuring the Median: The Risks of Inferring Beliefs from Votes.” *British Journal of Political Science* 43 (1): 157–175.

Blair, Graeme, Alexander Coppock, and Margaret Moor. 2020. “When to Worry about Sensitivity Bias: A Social Reference Theory and Evidence from 30 Years of List Experiments.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (4): 1297–1315.

Exchange: Measurement Uncertainty and the Theory of Democratic Support

Claassen, Christopher. 2020. “Does Public Support Help Democracy Survive?” *American Journal of Political Science* 64 (1): 118–134.

Tai, Yuehong ‘Cassandra’, Yue Hu, and Frederick Solt. 2024. “Democracy, Public Support, and Measurement Uncertainty.” *American Political Science Review* 118 (1): 512–518.

† **Note:** Research Question Statement due, 2 pages (October 19)

* **Note:** Deadline to meet with TA (by October 19)

IV: Research Designs

7. Causal Methods and Causal Analysis (October 26)

General Overview

Gerring, John. 2012. Chapters 8 “Causal Arguments” and 9 “Causal Analyses.” In *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. 2nd edition, 197–255. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Lundberg, Ian, Rebecca Johnson, and Brandon M. Stewart. 2021. “What Is Your Estimand? Defining the Target Quantity Connects Statistical Evidence to Theory.” *American Sociological Review* 86 (3): 532–565. (Read the “Introduction” and the “The Theoretical Estimand,” “Identification,” and “Estimation” sections).

Selection on Observables: Regression

Keele, Luke, Randolph T. Stevenson, and Felix Elwert. 2020. “The Causal Interpretation of Estimated Associations in Regression Models.” *Political Science Research and Methods* 8 (1): 1–13.

Natural Experiments and As-If Randomness

Bautista, María Angélica, Felipe González, Luis R. Martínez, Pablo Muñoz, and Mounu Prem. 2023. “The Geography of Repression and Opposition to Autocracy.” *American Journal of Political Science* 67 (1): 101–118.

Regression Discontinuity Design

Thompson, Daniel M. 2020. “How Partisan Is Local Law Enforcement? Evidence from Sheriff Cooperation with Immigration Authorities.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (1): 222–236.

Difference-in-Differences

Hazlett, Chad, and Matto Mildemberger. 2020. “Wildfire Exposure Increases Pro-Environment Voting within Democratic but Not Republican Areas.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (4): 1359–1365.

Instrumental Variables

Mellon, Jonathan. 2025. “Rain, Rain, Go Away: 194 Potential Exclusion-Restriction Violations for Studies Using Weather as an Instrumental Variable.” *American Journal of Political Science* 69 (3): 881–898. (Read alongside Wasow 2020 from Week 4).

§ Optional Readings

Dunning, Thad. 2010. “Design-Based Inference: Beyond the Pitfalls of Regression Analysis?” In *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, edited by Henry E. Brady and David Collier, 2nd edition, 273–311. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. (Compare with Keele, Stevenson, and Elwert).

- Kern, Holger Lutz, and Jens Hainmueller. 2009. “Opium for the Masses: How Foreign Free Media Can Stabilize Authoritarian Regimes.” *Political Analysis* 17: 377–399. (Another example of Natural Experiments using IV).
- Boas, Taylor C., F. Daniel Hidalgo, and Neal P. Richardson. 2014. “The Spoils of Victory: Campaign Donations and Government Contracts in Brazil.” *Journal of Politics* 76 (2): 415–429. (Another example of Regression Discontinuity Design).
- Marshall, John. 2024. “Can Close Election Regression Discontinuity Designs Identify Effects of Winning Politician Characteristics?” *American Journal of Political Science* 68 (2): 494–510. (Comment on Regression Discontinuity Design).
- Chiu, Albert, Xingchen Lan, Ziyi Liu, and Yiqing Xu. 2026. “Causal Panel Analysis under Parallel Trends: Lessons from a Large Reanalysis Study.” *American Political Science Review* 120 (1): 245–266. (Read the “Introduction” and “Recommendations” sections only. Accessible entry to Difference-in-Differences designs).

† **Note: Annotated citations due (October 26); identify a paper with a literature review that you want to emulate.**

† **Note: Pre-Workshop assignment due October 27, 3PM.**

* **Note:** WRAP session on writing the literature review will be held at recitation (October 28). Individual meetings on the Literature Review with the WRAP Lecturer are available until the Literature Review deadline (November 16), and we suggest scheduling yours between October 26 and November 6.

8. Combining Methods (November 2)

- Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research.” *Political Analysis* 14 (3): 227–249.
- Brady, Henry E. 2010. “Data-Set Observations versus Causal-Process Observations: The 2000 U.S. Presidential Election.” In *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, edited by Henry E. Brady and David Collier, 2nd edition, 237–242. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Humphreys, Macartan, and Alan M. Jacobs. 2023. Chapter 1 “Introduction.” In *Integrated Inferences: Causal Models for Qualitative and Mixed-Method Research*. 1–15. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kapiszewski, Diana, and Sebastian Karcher. 2021. “Transparency in Practice in Qualitative Research.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 54 (2): 285–291.
- Tsai, Lily L. 2007. Chapter 5 “Temples and Churches in Rural China.” In *Accountability Without Democracy: Solidary Groups and Public Goods Provision in Rural China*. 120–147. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Auerbach, Adam Michael, and Tariq Thachil. 2020. “Cultivating Clients: Reputation, Responsiveness, and Ethnic Indifference in India’s Slums.” *American Journal of Political Science* 64 (3): 471–487.

Cheema, Ali, Sarah Khan, Asad Liaqat, and Shandana Khan Mohmand. 2023. “Canvassing the Gatekeepers: A Field Experiment to Increase Women Voters’ Turnout in Pakistan.” *American Political Science Review* 117 (1): 1–21.

§ Optional Readings

Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. 2008. “Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, 756–776. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Compare with *Humphreys and Jacobs*).

Prillaman, Soledad Artiz. 2023. “Strength in Numbers: How Women’s Groups Close India’s Political Gender Gap.” *American Journal of Political Science* 67 (2): 390–410. (Connect with readings from Week 7).

Miller, Nicholas L. 2014. “The Secret Success of Nonproliferation Sanctions.” *International Organization* 68 (4): 913–944.

† Note: Exercise 2 due (November 2)

† Note: Pre-Workshop assignment due November 3, 3PM.

* Note: WRAP session on writing the research proposal will be held at recitation (November 4).

9. Transparency, Replication, and New Data: Text, Machine Learning, and Large Language Models (November 9)

Grimmer, Justin, Margaret E. Roberts, and Brandon M. Stewart. 2021. “Machine Learning for Social Science: An Agnostic Approach.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 24: 395–419.

Ofori, George K., and Daniel N. Posner. 2023. “Pre-Analysis Plans: An Early Stocktaking.” *Perspectives on Politics* 21 (1): 174–190.

Jacobs, Alan M., Tim Büthe, Ana Arjona, Leonardo R. Arriola, Eva Bellin, Andrew Bennett, and Lisa Björkman, et al. 2021. “The Qualitative Transparency Deliberations: Insights and Implications.” *Perspectives on Politics* 19 (1): 171–208. (Read the “Introduction” and the “Summaries of the Final Reports of the QTD Working Groups” sections).

Nielsen, Richard A. 2020. “Women’s Authority in Patriarchal Social Movements: The Case of Female Salafi Preachers.” *American Journal of Political Science* 64 (1): 52–66.

Esberg, Jane, and Alexandra A. Siegel. 2023. “How Exile Shapes Online Opposition: Evidence from Venezuela.” *American Political Science Review* 117 (4): 1361–1378.

Exchange: LLMs and Human Samples

Argyle, Lisa P., Ethan C. Busby, Nancy Fulda, Joshua R. Gubler, Christopher Rytting, and David Wingate. 2023. “Out of One, Many: Using Language Models to Simulate Human Samples.” *Political Analysis* 31 (3): 337–351.

Bisbee, James, Joshua D. Clinton, Cassy Dorff, Brenton Kenkel, and Jennifer M. Larson. 2024. “Synthetic Replacements for Human Survey Data? The Perils of Large Language Models.” *Political Analysis* 32 (4): 401–416.

§ Optional Readings

Rodriguez, Pedro L., Arthur Spirling, and Brandon M. Stewart. 2023. “Embedding Regression: Models for Context-Specific Description and Inference.” *American Political Science Review* 117 (4): 1255–1274.

Siegel, Alexandra A., and Vivienne Badaan. 2020. “#No2Sectarianism: Experimental Approaches to Reducing Sectarian Hate Speech Online.” *American Political Science Review* 114 (3): 837–855.

Velez, Yamil Ricardo, and Patrick Liu. 2025. “Confronting Core Issues: A Critical Assessment of Attitude Polarization Using Tailored Experiments.” *American Political Science Review* 119 (2): 1036–1053.

* **Note:** No recitation on Wednesday, November 11 (Veterans Day).

10. Guest lecture: Umutcan Ay, Shuning Ge, and Joohye Jeong (November 16)

Reading TBD

† **Note:** Literature Review due, 15 pages (November 16).

† **Note:** Pre-Workshop assignment due November 17, 3 PM.

* **Note:** Rehearsal appointments with the WRAP Lecturer are available from November 10 to November 23. WRAP session on preparing your presentations will be held at recitation (November 18).

11. Guest lecture: Naoki Egami (November 23)

Reading TBD

* **Note:** Thanksgiving vacation: November 26-27.

V: Student Presentations & Conclusion

12. Presentations – Group 1 (November 30)

† **Note:** Draft Research Proposal due, 15 pages (November 30).

* **Note:** Peer review of Draft Research Proposals at recitation (December 2).

13. Wrap-up & Presentations – Group 2 (December 7)

† Note: Final Paper due, 20-25 pages (Monday, December 14).

*** Note:** Bring peer reviews to the WRAP session during recitation (December 9). WRAP session on revising the research proposal will be held at recitation (December 9). Individual meetings on the Final Paper with the WRAP Lecturer are available any time before the assignment due date. Last day of classes: Thursday, December 10.