



University
of Victoria

POLI 321 Introduction to Research Methods in Politics

Instructor Spring 2023: Dr. Feng Xu

Course delivery: POLI 321 will be delivered face-to-face and on campus.

Course description:

This course introduces students of political science how to conduct research and critically assess research results and design. The course will teach students how political scientists ask answerable questions; how we define key political concepts; how we formulate hypotheses and theories about political dynamics; how we measure the phenomena we want to study; how we think about and assess relationships of cause-and-effect; and how we report our findings to the world. This course also develops skills that will help students know how to write up, present and discuss empirical research findings. Students will learn by using employing the concepts, ideas, and methods on a topic of their choosing.

Prerequisite: None

Course outcomes/objectives:

- Understand the scientific method and basics of philosophy of science
- Distinguish between qualitative and quantitative research methods
- Understand the basic principles of various research methods
- Understand how variability influences data and outcomes
- Become familiar with very basic statistics
- Develop written and verbal communication skills through group projects and individual assignments

Topics may include:

Political behaviour
Voting
Public opinion
Social movements
Public policy coordination

This summary provides an overall sense of the course and is not an official course outline. Detailed course outlines will be available for all registered students on the first day of class.