COURSE OUTLINE

Class schedule:  
Mon 10-11:30, Sports Complex (SCS) E218  
Wed 8:30-10:00, Sports Complex (SCS) E218  
Professor's office hours:  
Wed 10:00-11:30, FSS6020 (and by appointment)

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

Application of methodologies for research in the fields of conflict studies and human rights. Study of qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as case study research. Study of ethical questions surrounding the conduct of research on human rights and conflicts (ECH, 2010).

GENERAL COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course begins with an overview of the philosophy of social science, including the nature of reality, theory, and causation. Next, it reviews the construction and use of social science concepts, measurements, data, and considers assorted distinctions and debates between and among “quals”, “quants” and “interps.” Then the course turns to case studies and the comparative method, followed by an overview of methodologies for analyzing text. The course ends with a consideration of basic quantitative methods used to analyze large-N data. Discussion of “research design” will be managed throughout the course, with ample attention paid to recent scholarly work on conflict and human rights.

SPECIFIC COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objective of the course is to give students the tools to conceptualize social science knowledge in terms of research questions and design, methodology, data collection, as well as quantitative and qualitative analysis. At the end of this course, students will be able to: 1) Recognize the need for, and limits of, designing and doing social science research; 2) Think critically about social scientific work of different
methodological hues; 3) Appreciate the differences between descriptive and causal claims; 4) Understand the purpose and challenges of comparison, conceptualization, operationalization, measurement, case selection, and other research design tasks; 5) Interpret basic statistical inferences.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT METHODS**

This is an interactive course combining lectures, discussions, exams, and presentations. The course textbook and readings favour the discipline of political science and the semi-autonomous field of International Relations, but the course is not be limited to them. The main textbook:


The rest of the readings are accessible through Virtual Campus/Blackboard (uOttawa’s online course management system, also referred to Bb, Bb Vista) and/or through uOttawa’s research databases (for off-campus online access to these, see [www.biblio.uottawa.ca](http://www.biblio.uottawa.ca))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENT</th>
<th>RAW SCORE &amp; WEIGHT</th>
<th>DUE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Every week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-term exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group presentation</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Week 12-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINAL MARKS:** 90-100 (A+), 85-89 (A), 80-84 (A-), 75-79 (B+), 70-74 (B), 66-69 (C+), 60-65 (C), 55-59 (D+), 50-54(D), 40-49 (E), 0-39 (F). For substantive meanings behind these symbols: [http://www.etudesup.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1807&monControl=Examens](http://www.etudesup.uottawa.ca/Default.aspx?tabid=1807&monControl=Examens)

**Participation.** You are expected to participate in all discussions, implying that attendance & attention are necessary to successfully complete this course (multiple non-medical absences will significantly hurt your mark). It helps to bring readings and/or your notes to class. For more, see David Romer, “Do Students Go to Class? Should They?” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7:3 (1993), 167-174.

**Exams.** There are two in-class exams (details TBA), and their purpose is to give you an opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge of the research process.

**Group presentation.** Students will work in groups to develop a written research proposal and present it in class. The purpose of this assignment is to familiarize you with the process of designing research in social-scientific fashion, and presenting it in a short period of time allotted. Each team will pick a research problem (or question, puzzle, objective, etc.) broadly related to conflict and human rights and then explain how it would approach if given resources (i.e., time and money). No actual research is thus necessary, but each group will be expected to show a basic command of the literature or literatures of relevant to their research problem.
Students are welcome to consult additional textbooks and how-to guides, especially if their research problem appears to significantly differ from those discussed in class. Do keep in mind that ideas about what constitutes good social science research vary. Unlike the objects of natural science, the objects of social science are also subjects, in the sense that they are conscious and engage in meaningful behaviour (a.k.a., action), and methodologists have debated what to do with this fact of life for over a century. If and when confused, bring it up in class.

Groups are supposed to self-select. Students who are unable to locate themselves within a group should send me a tweet-like email indicating their substantive and methodological interests by Week 7. The written research proposal should be a hard copy, submitted at the beginning of the class, max. 3,500 words, double-spaced, 12-pt font, 1-inch margins, including bibliography, notes, appendices etc. For your presentation, do not read what you wrote; rather, try to put together a XX minute talk (exact time to be discussed) that is conceived and organized as a briefing or, better yet, a scholarly presentation. Effective visuals are encouraged.

**Fine Print**

1. Late submissions of assignments are not tolerated. University regulations require all absences from exams and all late submissions due to illness to be supported by a medical certificate (In the event of an illness or related complications, only the counseling service and the campus clinic [located at 100 Marie-Curie] may issue valid certificates to justify a delay or absence). Exceptions for other “serious situations” are not guaranteed – notify the professor as soon as possible and in writing if a religious holiday etc. forces your absence during an evaluation. Reasons such as travel, work and errors made while reading the exam schedule are not accepted; indeed, if it is not medical, the professor reserves the right to reject the reason put forth.

2. There will be a penalty for tardiness: 5% for the first day, thereafter 1% for each day overdue.

3. You will also be judged on your writing and presentation abilities. It is recommended to take the appropriate measures to avoid mistakes.

4. Re-marking requests will be considered for one week after the assignment is returned if and only if an explanation of why the original mark is not justified is made in writing.

5. New and additional readings might be announced at the end of class and/or through Bb, which are to be read before the subsequent class meeting(s). Changes to the syllabus necessitated by the circumstances of the class may be made at my discretion. If/when there are any changes, the professor will make an appropriate announcement in class, on Bb and/or in an email sent to all students’ uOttawa e-mail accounts (as maintained by the registrar’s list) prior to class time.

6. Any questions by email should receive a response within two business days or during the following class if taken place within the 48 hours following receipt of the email. Further, any questions by email must use uOttawa email address, as per the official policy (effective July 2012). And last, the professor reserves the right not to answer an email if the level of language used is inadequate.
ECH3350A (Vucetic) 2012 Course Schedule, W Sept 5 – W Dec 5

Week 1

(W Sept 5) Introduction

No readings for today

Week 2

(M Sept 10) Philosophy


(W Sept 12) Theory


Recommended:


Week 3

(M Sept 17) Description, Correlation, Causation


Recommended:


(W Sept 19) **Conceptualization & Measurement I**


Recommended:

Alan Monroe, *Essentials of Political Research* (Westview, 2000), Ch. 6, pp. 82-93.


---

**Week 4**

(M Sept 24) **Conceptualization & Measurement II**


Intro to SPSS, point-and-click computer package for statistical analysis. Students will familiarize themselves with user interface (settings, menus, toolbars) and data sets. Online tutorials (Carl Lee et al at SPSSTools.net [General Tutorials], StatProf, Bart Poulson and SPSS Lecture Series on YouTube, etc) are strongly recommended.

(W Sept 26) **Case Studies I**


Recommended:


**Week 5**

(M Oct 1) **Case Studies II**


Recommended:


(W Oct 3) **Process-tracing & Historical Analysis**


Recommended:


**Week 6**

(M Oct 8) **Thanksgiving Day (no class)**

(W Oct 10) **Discourse & Content Analysis**

In-class: Steven Pinker's 2007 TED talk on language and thought, 17 minutes.
Symposium: Discourse Analysis and Content Analysis, *Qualitative Methods Newsletter* 2: 1 (Spring 2004). Contributions by Yoshiko M. Herrera and Bear F. Braumoeller (pp. 15-9) Cynthia Hardy, Bill Harley, and Nelson Phillips (pp. 19-22), Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes (pp. 28-31), and Ted Hopf (pp. 31-33). Available at: [http://www1.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/moynihan/cqrm/Newsletter2.1.pdf](http://www1.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/moynihan/cqrm/Newsletter2.1.pdf)

Recommended:


**Week 7**

(M Oct 15) **Mid-term Exam!**

(W Oct 17) **Research Design & Research Proposal**


**Week 8**

(M Oct 22, W Oct 24) **Study Week (no classes)**

**Week 9**

(M Oct 29) **The Basics of Statistical Numeracy**

In-class: Hans Rosling’s “The Joy of Stats”, first 40 minutes.


*Highly Recommended:*

(W Oct 31) “Lies, Damned lies, and Statistics”
Kellstedt and Whitten, The Fundamentals, Ch. 8, pp. 134-158.

Alex Hutchinson, “Does prolonged exercise damage the heart?” The Globe and Mail, 8 July 2012.


Recommended:
Alan Monroe, Essentials of Political Research (Westview, 2000), Ch. 6, pp. 92-117.

Week 10
(M Nov 5) Working with Datasets I
Lab practice; review Week 9 readings

(W Nov 7) Working with Datasets II
Lab practice; review Week 9 readings

Week 11
(M Nov 12) Understanding Quantitative Analysis I

(W Nov 14) Understanding Quantitative Analysis II

Weeks 12-14
(M Nov 19, W Nov 21) Group Presentations
(M Nov 26, W Nov 28) Group Presentations
(M Dec 3) Group Presentations
(W Dec 6) Review for the Final Exam (TBD)
Resources for you

Mentoring Centre - http://www.sciencessociales.uottawa.ca/mentor/fra/
The goal of the Mentoring Centre is to help students with their academic and social well being during their time at the University of Ottawa. Regardless of where a student stands academically, or how far along they are in completing their degree, the mentoring centre is there to help students continue on their path to success.

Academic Writing Help Centre - http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/writing/
At the AWHC you will learn how to identify, correct and ultimately avoid errors in your writing and become an autonomous writer. In working with our Writing Advisors, you will be able to acquire the abilities, strategies and writing tools that will enable you to:

Career Services - http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/careers/
Career Services offers various services and a career development program to enable you to recognize and enhance the employability skills you need in today's world of work.

Counselling Service- http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/personal/
There are many reasons to take advantage of the Counselling Service. We offer:

Access Service - http://www.sass.uottawa.ca/acces/
The Access Service contributes to the creation of an inclusive environment by developing strategies and implementing measures that aim to reduce the barriers to learning for students who have learning disabilities, health, psychiatric or physical conditions.

The Student Resources Centres aim to fulfill all sorts of students needs.
Beware of Academic Fraud

Academic fraud is an act committed by a student to distort the marking of assignments, tests, examinations, and other forms of academic evaluation. Academic fraud is neither accepted nor tolerated by the University. Anyone found guilty of academic fraud is liable to severe academic sanctions. Here are a few examples of academic fraud:

• engaging in any form of plagiarism or cheating;
• presenting falsified research data;
• handing in an assignment that was not authored, in whole or in part, by the student;
• submitting the same assignment in more than one course, without the written consent of the professors concerned.

In recent years, the development of the Internet has made it much easier to identify academic plagiarism. The tools available to your professors allow them to trace the exact origin of a text on the Web, using just a few words. In cases where students are unsure whether they are at fault, it is their responsibility to consult the University’s Web site at the following address:

http://www.socialsciences.uottawa.ca/eng/writing_tools.asp

Persons who have committed or attempted to commit (or have been accomplices to) academic fraud will be penalized. Here are some examples of the academic sanctions, which can be imposed:

• a grade of « F » for the assignment or course in question;
• an additional program requirement of between 3 and 30 credits;
• suspension or expulsion from the Faculty.

In earlier years, most of the students found guilty of fraud were given an « F » for the course and had between three and twelve credits added to their program requirement. For more information, refer to:

http://www.uottawa.ca/academic/info/newsletter/fraud_e.html

The End