PSCI A201: INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH METHODS

Item	Value
Curriculum Committee Approval Date	12/09/2020
Top Code	220700 - Political Science
Units	3 Total Units
Hours	54 Total Hours (Lecture Hours 54)
Total Outside of Class Hours	0
Course Credit Status	Credit: Degree Applicable (D)
Material Fee	No
Basic Skills	Not Basic Skills (N)
Repeatable	No
Grading Policy	Standard Letter (S), • Pass/No Pass (B)

Course Description

Introduces basic steps in the research process and/or basic steps in critically evaluating discussions on social issues using a variety of research methodologies. Emphasizes the scientific investigation of social subject matter. PREREQUISITE: SOC A100 or SOC A100H. Transfer Credit: CSU. C-ID: POLS 160.**C-ID:** POLS 160.

Course Level Student Learning Outcome(s)

1. Compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of experiments, surveys, interviews, and field research.
2. Design, conduct, and analyze a survey, experiment, and/or research project.
3. Critically evaluate current research using knowledge about the elements of research design, measurement, and sampling.

Course Objectives

- 1. Differentiate between empirical vs. opinion-based information.
- 2. Describe and apply the scientific method.
- 3. Define and recognize examples of independent and dependent variables.
- 4. Compare and contrast different types of validity.
- 5. Apply knowledge about population vs. sample to address generalizability.
- 6. Explain and contrast the various sampling techniques used in research.
- 7. Evaluate issues of sample size.
- 8. Distinguish between cross-sectional, longitudinal, and sequential methods.
- 9. Explain operational definitions and develop such definitions.
- 10. Use the elements of research design, measurement, and sampling to analyze critically research.
- 11. Practice research design, data collection, and analysis.
- 12. Design well-controlled experiments, particularly avoiding biased variables.
- 13. Identify good sources for existing data.
- 14. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of experiments, surveys/ interviews, field research, and using existing data.
- 15. Define various data processing methods.
- 16. Explain the major issues, which affect generalization of results.
- 17. Explain the major ethical concerns that influence the conduct of human research.

Lecture Content

A. Scientific understanding of behavior:1. Use of research methods 2. Scientific method 3. Goals of science 4. Empirical vs. opinion 5. Basic vs. applied research 6. Sociology and research methods B. Elements of research design 1. Unit of analysis 2. Independent vs. dependent variables 3. Qualitative vs. quantitative 4. Causation 5. Hypothesis 6. Theory 7. Stages of social research C. Measurement 1. Measurement process 2. Reliability 3. Validity types 4. Measurement scales D. Sampling 1. Population vs. sample 2. Sampling designs 3. Factors affecting sampling design choice 4. Sample size 5. Sampling errors 6. Generalizability E. Experimental design 1. Strengths and weaknesses 2. Internal validity Assigning participants to conditions: Independent groups vs. repeated measures vs. matched pairs 3. 4. Developmental research designs: Longitudinal, cross-sectional, sequential 5. Challenges F. Conducting experiments 1. Selecting participants 2. Manipulating the independent variable 3. Measuring the dependent variable G. Surveys interviews 1. Strengths and weaknesses 2. Types 3. Designs 4. Constructing questions 5. Response types 6. Rating scales 7. Challenges H. Field research 1. Strengths and weaknesses 2. Types 3. Stages 4. Challenges I. Using existing data 1. Strengths and weaknesses 2. Sources 3. Types J. Data processing drawing conclusion 1. Data processing methods 2. Statistics and results 3. Presenting results strategies K. Generalizing results 1. Other populations 2. Other experimenters 3. Laboratory settings 4. Role of replications 5. Types of replications L. Research Ethics 1. Informed consent 2. Debriefing 3. Institutional review boards 4. Protection of human subjects

Method(s) of Instruction

- Lecture (02)
- DE Online Lecture (02X)

Instructional Techniques

1. Lecture: Explanation and application of topics, concepts, and terms, as well as providing relevant examples 2. Written feedback to all assignments 3. Verbal feedback on small discussion groups 4. Textbook and other instructor-provided handouts 5. Review sheets to support student preparation for tests 6. Overhead projector, board, or white board 7. DVDs, video tapes, or online media (i.e. Youtube.com, Hulu.com, etc) 8. Exams to assess student progress and mastery 9. Technology in the classroom: Power point presentations, Blackboard use, accessing internet websites, and on- line journal references

Reading Assignments

1. Students will use critical thinking skills to conduct and design research project. 2. Students will use critical thinking skills to answer essay questions. Student success will be viewed in terms of (a) practical applications described; (b) examples of content that are fully explained; and/or (c) reasons given to justify the students position. 3. Students will use critical thinking skills to explain, to compare and contrast, and to describe relevant content in order to answer teacher or textbook questions.

Writing Assignments

1. Students will use critical thinking skills to conduct and design research project. 2. Students will use critical thinking skills to answer essay questions. Student success will be viewed in terms of (a) practical applications described; (b) examples of content that are fully explained; and/or (c) reasons given to justify the students position. 3. Students will use critical thinking skills to explain, to compare and contrast, and to describe relevant content in order to answer teacher or textbook questions.

Out-of-class Assignments

1. Students will use critical thinking skills to conduct and design research project. 2. Students will use critical thinking skills to answer essay questions. Student success will be viewed in terms of (a) practical applications described; (b) examples of content that are fully explained; and/or (c) reasons given to justify the students position. 3. Students will use critical thinking skills to explain, to compare and contrast, and to describe relevant content in order to answer teacher or textbook questions.

Demonstration of Critical Thinking

1. Objective and critical thinking examination questions covering text and lecture material. 2. Prepare a critical analysis assignment on of a piece of current research by using principles of measurement, sampling, and research design. 3. Practice research design, data collection, and analysis. 4. Participate in in-class discussions. 5. Term projects (as described in “Writing Assignments”)

Required Writing, Problem Solving, Skills Demonstration

1. Students will use critical thinking skills to conduct and design research project. 2. Students will use critical thinking skills to answer essay questions. Student success will be viewed in terms of (a) practical applications described; (b) examples of content that are fully explained; and/or (c) reasons given to justify the students position. 3. Students will use critical thinking skills to explain, to compare and contrast, and to describe relevant content in order to answer teacher or textbook questions.

Eligible Disciplines

Political science: Masters degree in political science, government, or international relations OR bachelors degree in any of the above AND masters degree in economics, history, public administration, social science, sociology, any ethnic studies, J.D., or LL.B. OR the equivalent. Masters degree required. Sociology: Masters degree in sociology OR bachelors degree in sociology AND masters degree in anthropology, any ethnic studies, social work, or psychology OR the equivalent. Masters degree required.

Textbooks Resources

1. Required Johnson, J., Reynolds, H. T. Political Science Research Methods, ed. Washington: CQ Press, 2019 2. Required Salkind, N. Statistics for People Who Think They Hate Statistics, ed. New York: Sage, 2019 3. Required Babbie, Earl. The Basics of Social Research, 7th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2016

Other Resources

1. Discipline Related Web Sites Instructor provided handouts