

PSC 3150 - Methodologies and Approaches to Political Science Research

Introduction

This course is specifically designed to enable students who are following a Political Science Special degree programme to prepare for their final year research programme. The course has three components: (a) basic approaches to political science research, (b) formulating a research proposal and doing research, and (c) techniques in social science writing. Since this course has a practical orientation, student evaluation has an emphasis on practical work.

Objectives

The objectives of this course are:

- i. To introduce students to the main approaches of Political Science research,
- ii. To build capacity of students in selecting research topics, identifying research problems and formulating research proposals and research programmes, and
- iii. To develop students' skills in social science research and social science writing.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, the students will

- i. know the main approaches to political science research,
- ii. be able to prepare a research proposal, including formulating research problems, hypotheses etc, and
- iii. have learned about principles and techniques in social science academic writing.

Course Outline

Part I

- I. **Approaches to Political Science Research:** Changing scope and approaches in the political science inquiry; the philosophical and historical traditions; the empiricist and positivist political 'science', behavioural and post-behavioural approaches, post-positivist political science inquiry (radical, post-structuralist and feminist political science).

Part 2

II. **Conducting Political Science Research:** Nature of ‘data’ in social research; Qualitative and quantitative methods in research; the survey method; qualitative field research. Data analysis.

Part 3

III. **Preparing for Research?** What is a ‘Research Proposal’? Essential components of a research proposal. Formulating research problems and hypotheses. Working towards a research programme and its implementation.

Evaluation

End of the Semester Test	60%
Assignments	15%
Mid-term test	15%
Class Attendance and Participation	10%

Recommended Reading

Burnham, Peer et al., 2004, *Research Methods in Politics*, London: Palgrave.

Kuhn, Thomas, 1962, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago University Press.

Lewin, C and Somekh, B, (Eds.), 2005, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*, New Delhi: Vistaar.

Marsh, David and Gerry Stoker, 2002, *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, London: Palgrave.

Silverman, David, 2000. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*, London: SAGE.

Thakur, Devan, 1993, *Research Methodology in the Social Sciences*, New Delhi: Deep & Deep.