Course description
This course will help you understand how we study politics and provide guidance on conducting original political science research. We will discuss the challenges that all political science researchers face with the core issues of research design. A research design is a plan that specifies how you plan to carry out a research project and how you expect to use your evidence to answer your research question. This course aims to provide an overview of potential research designs for establishing causal inference and their advantages and disadvantages. Students should understand the trade-offs involved in choosing a particular research design. Students are expected to develop their own ideas about potential research questions to be able to actively participate in seminars within this course. The language of this course is English, including all instruction, readings and assignments.

Course requirements
I expect you to prepare the readings in advance so that you can come to class with particular questions in mind. You will learn primarily by reading and then discussing that material with your instructor and classmates. The more actively you participate in the discussions the easier it will be to comprehend the material. All readings are provided in advance. In addition to regular attendance and active class participation, you are also required to write a research design suitable for a realisable research project, present this research design to your peers as well as read and provide feedback on the proposed research of others on the course. You must pass every assignment in order to pass the course.

1. Research Proposal
I expect you to devise a research question and write a short draft research proposal. This proposal should demonstrate your competence in applying some of the issues covered in this course to the design of a potential research project (one suitable for a Master’s thesis) that will address your research question. This exercise should be of help for a future Master’s thesis and I suggest emphasizing design, methods and potential analysis more than demonstrating an in-depth knowledge of the research area (i.e. try to avoid an overly long literature review). Note that this should be an original paper for this course and cannot overlap in any substantial way with a paper written for another course. For this class I will be looking for a project that is well defined and feasible as well as methodologically sound.

2. Research Design and feedback (Pass/Fail)
Besides reading and discussing the material, an effective way to gain a better understanding for issues relating to research design is to provide and receive constructive criticism. To this end you will write a summary of a research design, which will form the larger research proposal due later in the semester. This summary will be no more than three pages in length. These short research designs will then be circulated to the rest of the class and you will provide constructive criticism for a selection of your colleagues.
3. **Presentation and feedback (Pass/Fail)**
Presenting one’s work is an essential part of not only academic life, but many other careers. Presenting ongoing research is one of the principal methods that academics use to communicate and improve their work. For the final few weeks of the semester, you will be presenting the work you are doing for the final paper for this course and receiving feedback from your peers on how you might improve your project. The short presentation will outline your research question, research design and strategy for realising the project. More details and a schedule will be given in class during the semester.

4. **Collaborative reading assignments (ungraded)**
While reading is probably the most valuable and frequent method by which we engage with new material, it can feel like rather a solitary way to learn. To try and counter this, we will attempt to make the usually solitary activity of reading for class more interactive by using Perusall. This allows class participants to annotate the class reading with questions, observations, criticism, etc. that can be read by all other members of the class. While you are reading you can ask and answer questions with your classmates preparing for the same class. While there will be no set assignments on Perusall, I will monitor its use regularly and we will discuss issues that emerge from the site each week. Students who engaged most extensively with Perusall over the past two years also tended to get better grades on the course than students who engaged less and far better than those who did not engage at all.

**Reading**

**Week 1: Introduction**


**Week 2: Developing Research Questions**


**Week 3: Conceptualization and Measurement**


**Week 4: Case Selection**


**Week 5: Causal Inference**


**Week 6: Experimental Design**


**Week 7: Quasi-experimental Design**


Week 8: Statistical Control

Week 9: Case Studies

Week 10: Mixed Methods

Week 11: Replication & Publication

Week 12-14: Research Design Presentations