



# POIR901

## Research Methods in Politics and International Relations

S1 External 2018

*Dept of Modern History, Politics & International Relations*

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#### Disclaimer

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Convener/Lecturer

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Lecturer

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Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MPPP or MIntRel or MPICTMIntSecSt or MCPICTMIntSecSt or MPICT or MCPICT or MIntSecStud or GradDipIntSecStud or MIntPubDip or MIntCommMIntRel or MIntBusMIntRel or MTransInterMIntRel or MPPPMIntRel

Corequisites

Co-badged status

POIR705

Unit description

This unit examines general aspects of academic research including purpose/aims, questions and 'problems', organisation and design, the philosophy of science and associated debates, as well as specific methods and materials applied to pursue a research project including archives, interviews, surveys, quantitative, and discourse analysis.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Understand debates around the question of the possibility of political "science"

Understand debates on the question of human agency

Understand basic issues relating to various research methods

Understand similarities and differences between the various theoretical approaches to studying politics

## General Assessment Information

- Please feel free to stay in touch with your lecturer regarding your progress.
- Start thinking about your assessments early; do not let them creep up on you.
- Tutorial attendance is compulsory for internal students. Failure to attend three or more tutorials without documentation is potential grounds for a Fail grade
- Plagiarism will attract severe penalties, including marks of zero for essays/assignments with plagiarism.
- **Late Submission Penalty**

*“Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline.*

*No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.”*

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<u>Internals: Class presentation</u>	15%	No	Ongoing from Week 2
<u>Externals' Short Essay 15%</u>	0%	No	Friday 11 May (week 9)
<u>Quantitative methods</u>	20%	No	Friday 6 April (week 6)
<u>Research project proposal.</u>	40%	Yes	25 May (Week 11)
<u>Test</u>	25%	No	Week 13

### Internals: Class presentation

Due: **Ongoing from Week 2**

Weighting: **15%**

#### Internal students only

Each student will be placed into a group of two or three on Week 1. Each group will be assigned a week in which it will lead a class discussion based on that week's topic. The group is expected to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the week's readings
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the issues relating to the week's topic
3. Be able to generate sustained class discussion/participation through creative means such as:
  1. Formulating questions for discussion
  2. Prompting discussion of questions with follow-up questions
  3. Activities that generate discussion around the key questions of the week's topic: debates, for example
4. Being able to relate the week's topic to current events and questions

The group's presentation can extend throughout most of the duration of the 2 hour seminar (good presentations often will). The Lecturer will also facilitate by interjecting with questions, comments, and thoroughly unhelpful asides.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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## Externals' Short Essay 15%

Due: **Friday 11 May (week 9)**

Weighting: **0%**

**External students only**

**Length: 1000 words**

Summarise and evaluate the argument in the following online article: **'Is a Science of Politics Possible?' - James Skillen**

Your evaluation should draw on at least four sources used in class (the textbook counts as a source).

Article available at: <http://www.metanexus.net/essay/science-politics-possible>

On successful completion you will be able to:

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## Quantitative methods

Due: **Friday 6 April (week 6)**

Weighting: **20%**

Translate numerical data into words. Length 1200 words. Further instructions to follow.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Understand basic issues relating to various research methods

## Research project proposal.

Due: **25 May (Week 11)**

Weighting: **40%**

**This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)**

The task entails writing up a detailed, professional research proposal of **8 pages (no less, no more, including references)** (12 point font, 1 ½ spacing). Write concisely and with clarity. The individual items include:

- The identification of a problem and/or a central research question that the project will pursue
- Review of relevant literature and identification of a lacuna that your project will fill – how does your project make an original contribution to the scholarship
- Aims (what the project strives to discover/establish/refute) contextualized against a background
- The method/s to be used and justification why it/they are appropriate
- Organization of the project (e.g. what will be done where, chapter outline, etc)
- Logistical and/or budgetary issues (e.g. travel requirements, special equipment, translation costs)
- A schedule/plan
- A bibliography of works cited. Use the Harvard method. If you are unsure how to use this consult the following website (from MQ library): <http://libguides.mq.edu.au/content.php?pid=459099&sid=3759396>

Think of this proposal as a plan for a long master's thesis (40 000 to 50 000 words). You have one year to complete the project. This would mean that any field work you do (should your project require it) would have to be undertaken in the first few months.

In choosing a topic you are able to build on work you have done in previous units, **but you must not substantially replicate this work**. All essays are now processed through turnitin. Proposals that substantially borrow from other essays will be penalised. Depending on the seriousness of the plagiarism, this can involve anything from the loss of a few marks to failure in the unit.

Guidelines for writing research proposals can be found on the ilearn site (under the assessment tab).

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand basic issues relating to various research methods
- Understand similarities and differences between the various theoretical approaches to studying politics

## Test

Due: **Week 13**

Weighting: **25%**

**Internal students** will sit a 2 hour (closed book) test **during class in week 13 (7 June)**. Test will include short answer and essay components.

**External students** will receive test questions at **4pm Tuesday (5 June)** and will submit their answers via turnitin **by 11:59pm Thursday 7 June**. External students are expected to use essay-style referencing as it is a non-invigilated examination.

Both Internal and External students will be marked fairly with none being advantaged or disadvantaged owing to their mode of examination.

**More details to come.**

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Understand basic issues relating to various research methods
- Understand similarities and differences between the various theoretical approaches to studying politics

## Delivery and Resources

Compulsory textbook: Vivian Lowndes, David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (eds.), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, (Palgrave, 2017). Fourth Edition.

Other weekly reading available online.

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from **Policy Central** (<https://staff.mq.edu.au/policy-central/>)

[mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central](http://mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central)). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

## Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au).

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

#### Learning outcome

- Understand similarities and differences between the various theoretical approaches to studying politics

#### Assessment task

- Internals: Class presentation

### PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

#### Learning outcomes

- Understand debates around the question of the possibility of political "science"
- Understand debates on the question of human agency
- Understand basic issues relating to various research methods
- Understand similarities and differences between the various theoretical approaches to

studying politics

## **Assessment tasks**

- Internals: Class presentation
- Externals' Short Essay 15%
- Quantitative methods
- Research project proposal.
- Test

## **PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking**

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Understand debates around the question of the possibility of political "science"
- Understand debates on the question of human agency
- Understand basic issues relating to various research methods
- Understand similarities and differences between the various theoretical approaches to studying politics

## **Assessment tasks**

- Internals: Class presentation
- Externals' Short Essay 15%
- Quantitative methods
- Research project proposal.
- Test

## **PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability**

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Understand debates around the question of the possibility of political "science"
- Understand basic issues relating to various research methods
- Understand similarities and differences between the various theoretical approaches to studying politics

## **Assessment tasks**

- Internals: Class presentation
- Externals' Short Essay 15%
- Quantitative methods
- Research project proposal.
- Test

## **PG - Effective Communication**

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcome**

- Understand similarities and differences between the various theoretical approaches to studying politics

## **Assessment tasks**

- Internals: Class presentation
- Test

## **PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens**

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

## **Learning outcomes**

- Understand debates on the question of human agency
- Understand similarities and differences between the various theoretical approaches to

studying politics

## **Assessment tasks**

- Internals: Class presentation
- Test