

POLS 6940: Research Design and Methods

Credit Weighting: 0.75**Pre-/Co-Requisites:****Restrictions:** -**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION****Name:** Edward Koning**Email:** ekoning@uoguelph.ca**Office Location:** MCKN 509**GENERAL DETAILS**

This course offers a graduate-level introduction to research methods in political science, with the exception of methods of data analysis (which will be covered in POLS*6500 - Quantitative and Qualitative Methods of Data Analysis). Primary attention will be paid to ontology and epistemology, question formulation, theorization, research design and case selection, and methods of data collection. The course will help students develop a research proposal that will assist in their work for their Major Research Paper, MA Thesis, or dissertation research.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Develop a research proposal that thoughtfully considers crucial methodological decisions, especially regarding research design and methods of data collection
- Understand the philosophical underpinnings of the scientific method to the study of politics as well as objections to those principles
- Identify and evaluate methodological decisions in political science scholarship
- Consider trade-offs between different methodological decisions in concrete research projects, including those between qualitative and quantitative approaches to studying politics
- Participate in informed discussions about research methods

METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

The course is a seminar, and will therefore crucially depend on student participation. Every week students are expected to come to class well-prepared. 35 Percent of the final grade will be determined by students' participation in class discussion and activities. Another 40 percent will be determined by a research proposal, towards students will work throughout the semester. The remaining 25 percent will be determined by short written assignments.

REQUIRED READING

The course material will consist exclusively of academic material. All readings will be accessible online through your University of Guelph account.