

**PLS 511, Advanced Research I**  
**Fall 2019**  
**Thursday 13:30-16:20, Room 8.322B**  
**Prof. Alexei Trochev**  
**Office: 8.418, Email: atrochev@nu.edu.kz**  
**Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00-12:30 and by appointment**

<p>I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus as needed, including adding and subtracting assignments and changing due dates. I will notify you in class or via email about changes (this means you are responsible for checking your email and for being in class to hear about changes).</p>
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### **Course Objectives**

1. You will be able to read, understand, and evaluate the research designs and methods used in political science research.
2. You will be able to generate hypotheses and design research to test them.
3. You will be able to assess quantitative and qualitative measurement in terms of reliability and validity.
4. You will demonstrate their synthesis of a body of literature by producing a coherent literature review.
5. You will learn ethics of conducting social science research.

### **Course Description**

This course provides the opportunity for you to learn the fundamentals of political science research, and as such, is a vital component of the MAPSIR program's goal of your training to conduct significant original research in political science. This course will require a lot of reading, thinking, writing, and re-writing of your own ideas about how and why social scientists make choices while doing research: how and why they design their research projects the way they do, how they choose to conduct research, what kind of techniques they choose to use, what kind of evidence they accept and reject, and how they choose to present results of their research. It focuses on the elements of the choices made in the social science research process: research ideas, concepts, issues, and methods. It addresses philosophical questions concerning research design and methods, discusses political and ethical issues, applies practical matters of method and technique to a variety of topics. Thus, it aims to help you build the foundation in research skills that can be applied in an academic setting or a work environment. The outcome of this course is that you should understand the logic of inquiry, the scientific method as it relates to social science research, and should understand the process of research. At the end of the course you should be able to

produce a literature review and basic research design to answer an original political science question.

To achieve the five course objectives, as outlined above, **you will need to read the assigned readings early and closely to have time to write the assigned papers.** You will need to do a lot of additional reading as you continue researching to complete your research design. You will also be writing and re-writing frequent short papers to hone your writing, analytical, and rhetorical skills in addition to a long writing assignment that is divided into sections. This is a research design for a research question that you are interested in. This is an exercise that will be critical to you as you prepare to write your thesis in your second year of MAPSIR program.

### **Required Readings**

Readings for the course will be found on the [Moodle](#) page, or will be available through journal articles that can be found on the web using Nazarbayev University's electronic resources. An important part of this course helping you as students to develop the ability to find and utilize printed resources. The course readings will help with that goal. You will also be asked to find and utilize your own sources for the research design (and its attendant parts) that you will do.

### **Grading**

Individual assignments and exams will be graded according to the general rubric for all assignments in conjunction with specific instructions for major assignments. Your overall grade for the course will be determined by the cumulative points that you earn on those assignments divided by the total number of points possible in the course. Grades are assigned using the following scale:

#### **Letter Grade Distribution:**

<b>A 95.00 +</b>	65.00 - 69.99	C
<b>A- 90.00 - 94.99</b>	60.00 - 64.99	C-
<b>B+ 85.00 - 89.99</b>	55.00 - 59.99	D+
<b>B 80.00 - 84.99</b>	50.00 - 54.99	D
<b>B- 75.00 - 79.99</b>	50	F
<b>C+ 70.00 - 74.99</b>		

As an MA student, you are expected to do strong work independently and on time. You are no longer a student being told what to do with your hand being held. You are an adult MA student and you will be treated as such. **Any grade below a B+ is an indicator that you are not doing your work to the expected standard.** Please refer to the MA handbook for information on academic eligibility and good standing.

All graded assignments are counted towards your final grade in this course:

Class participation	10%
Weekly seminar papers	15%
Annotated bibliography	10%
Research project outline	5%
Literature review	20%
Draft research design	15%
<u>Final research design</u>	<u>25%</u>
COURSE GRADE	100%

## What Are You Expected to Do?

### Class participation 10%

In this course we will be learning by doing. At least one section of class each week will be dedicated to discussion and practice of research. Usually one class will be a seminar in which we discuss the readings that are the basis for the exercises. You are expected to be in class (you can't participate if you are not present), engaged with the material, and exchanging ideas about research with your peers. Your participation comes in two forms - positive contributions to discussion and activities and avoiding negative contributions. You will not behave in ways that distract other students or the professor. This means no side conversations, no smartphone (Instagram, VK, WhatsApp, etc.) or sleeping.

**Attendance** will be taken at each class meeting and unexcused absences will not be tolerated. **You will not succeed in this course if you are absent.** Furthermore, your first absence will result in a reduction of your final grade by a full letter (i.e. you will not be able to earn more than a B in the course). After the second absence, you will receive an F for the entire course. If you are more than 15 minutes late, or miss any 15 minute period during a class period, you will be counted absent for the day.

Learning through **participation** is a key goal for this course. This course will be discussion-driven, so you need to come to class prepared to interact and reflect on the things you have read. **You must prepare to discuss each reading. In class, you will be expected to have a copy of the reading with you that you can refer to. You need to refer to specific page numbers. You need to know the name of each author so you can refer to them as you go.**

The participation grade includes attendance, being involved in class discussions based on the readings and lectures, and being an active participant in all class activities. An A for participation requires: regular attendance and contribution to the learning environment of the course by asking thoughtful questions (in response to readings, lectures and class discussions), offering comments on course material that show insightful reflection, analysis of material and synthesis of concepts, demonstrating an ability to link theory to cases and current events, etc. To receive a B for participation, students must: attend regularly and show a mastery of assigned readings. A participation grade of C will be assigned for regular attendance without the above-stated contributions to class discussions. Students will receive a D for participation for excessive absences regardless of the quality of contributions to class discussions.

### **Weekly seminar papers: analysis + 2 questions 15%**

By 10:00 every Thursday, you will write a 1-page single-spaced commentary on the assigned reading, in which you **critically** evaluate the research question, theories, hypotheses, assumptions, design, methodology and evidence. **THIS IS NOT A SUMMARY!** Instead, you should **critically** engage the ideas presented in the readings. **IT IS NOT YOUR OPINION!** Instead, you should offer theoretically informed, well-reasoned and evidence-based analysis. At the end of every weekly paper you should write 2 questions to the author of the reading which can be discussed and debated by the class. It should not be a factually oriented question, but rather should offer a challenge or critique of the author's approach. Each seminar paper should be submitted via Turnitin, and emailed to other students by 10:00 on Thursday. You should come to class having read the other students' papers. You will earn credit for having these 4 components in your paper:

1. Substantive answer. Does your paper engage the with the argument, evidence, and research design of the readings?
2. Clarity of writing. Is your paper organized? Is it written coherently? Have you used proper grammar?
3. Formatting. Have you followed the formatting guides above?
4. Insight. Does your paper show original thinking or insight into the question posed?

### **Annotated Bibliography 10%**

You will write an annotated bibliography of at least 15 sources on an interesting and important political science research question (question must be approved by Prof. Trochev before August 29, and will be the focus of all further work in the course, culminating in the research design). Annotated Bibliographies are due via Turnitin and will be shared with other students. **ALL OF YOUR RESOURCES SHOULD BE FROM SCHOLARLY** (peer reviewed) **BOOKS/JOURNALS**. An annotated bibliography includes the source and a short (300-500 word) synopsis of each of the articles. For your synopsis, please include. 1. Theory - main research questions or hypotheses of the research. 2. Evidence - The method used (surveys, interviews, observations). 3. Value of research - The findings and/or conclusions.

### **2-page Research Project Outline 5%**

You will submit an outline of the final research design, addressing an original political science question, and make an in-class presentation of their outline. The 2nd page of the Outline must contain the Concept Map of the research project.

### **5-page Literature Review 20%**

Based on the Annotated Bibliography, by the end of the 9th week of classes you will submit a Literature Review that will be incorporated into the final Research Design. Literature Reviews are submitted via Turnitin, and shared with other students.

### **5-page Draft Research Design 15%**

Drawing on the revised Research Project Outline and combining the revised Concept Map and Literature Review, you write the working Draft Research Design, containing empirical and theoretical research questions, rival hypotheses, conceptual and operational definitions of variables, summary of the research design, proposed research methodology, and discussion of

evidence supporting and falsifying the argument. You will submit this Draft via Turnitin on Moodle, share with other students, and present in class.

### **12-page Final Research Design 25%**

Drawing on the revised Draft Research Design and expanded Literature Review, you will submit the Final Research Design, which develops a coherent plan of work answering an interesting and important political science research question. Each Final Research Design is submitted via Turnitin, is shared with other students, and is presented at the last class. You must follow these Guidelines and complete a Checklist, as posted on Moodle, for completing the Final Research Design:

- What exactly is the topic, question or problem with which you are concerned?
- What are the key concepts or ideas that either define or are closely associated with it?
- What are the key debates or controversies in this area? Which theoretical approach (if any) is dominant?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of current work on this topic, or in this area?
- What are the key questions that still need to be answered or investigated? How will your work contribute to what we know already?
- What range of sources are available (academic literature, official documents, data sets, Internet material) on which you might draw? Are they adequate in terms of their nature, quality, and coverage?
- Do you need to gather new data? What methods might you adopt to do so, and why?
- How would the project be organized and carried out?
- What ethical and political considerations would be raised by the research you propose?
- What are the strengths and limitations of your research design?

### **Class Policies**

- You should follow all instructions specified in the syllabus.
- If you bring a laptop, mobile phone or other mobile device to class it must be used strictly for class purposes (taking notes and accessing readings). I reserve the right to garnish your final course grade 5% for violations.
- All assignments should be submitted in class or on Moodle unless otherwise specified. Assignments submitted via email will not be accepted. Keep in mind that when you submit assignments to Moodle, you should not wait until the last minute because the system sometimes gets overloaded.
- **All written assignments must use Times New Roman font, size 12, single-spaced. Margins must be 1 inch.** All citations must adhere to the American Political Science Association Style Manual (<http://www.apsanet.org/files/APSASStyleManual2006.pdf>).
- While you are welcome to email anytime about any issue you may be having in the class, please use proper email etiquette. Do not start your email “Hey Dr. Trochev,” or “Hey” or “Professor” or without a salutation. Instead, “Dear Dr. Trochev,” or “Dear Professor Trochev,” should be used for initial contact. I will not answer emails that use an improper salutation.
- I will also not answer emails that can be answered by looking at the syllabus.

- Office hours are listed at the beginning of the syllabus. **I cannot guarantee that I will be in my office outside posted office hours.** If you need to meet with me at a different time, send me an email and I will be glad to make arrangements with you. (What this really means: **DO NOT** complain to me that you were looking for me but I wasn't in my office if you are looking for me at a time outside my office hours!)
- Late assignments turned in more than 5 minutes late on the due date will receive half credit. Assignments turned in past the due date will receive no credit.
- There will be no extra credit offered for this class.

### **Zero Tolerance of Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated under any circumstances. All of you have been notified of Nazarbayev University's Student Code of Conduct and you have agreed to follow the university's standards. Plagiarism is defined as "intentionally or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own." In short, all the work you turn in for this class is expected to be yours and yours alone. This includes self-plagiarism (submitting the same assignment to multiple courses/professors). Any plagiarism will result in an automatic zero for the assignment and will be reported to the dean to be placed on your permanent record. Violations could result in an F for the course. Lying about absences, illnesses, or other circumstances will also be considered as academic dishonesty. Cheating will not be tolerated. Any behavior that even hints of cheating will be reported to the school disciplinary committee and will result in an automatic F for the assignment and/or course. Asking for extra points, extra credit, or a higher grade is also a form of academic dishonesty. *This is also something that will ruin your reputation with faculty members.* **Please do not do this.** The time to worry about grades is on each assignment and exam - not at the end of the term when the final tally is made. You *earn* grades based on your effort and results, grades are not *given* by me. You have the right to question the grading of a particular item, and to make an appeal if you feel a grade for a given assignment was not fair. This should be done within a week of receiving feedback on an assignment. Any appeal to an assignment that occurred earlier in the semester at the end of the term will not be considered.

**Course Schedule** – may be changed depending on the learning progress

Readings are on Moodle course page

Week One  
August 15

#### **Course Introduction: Research and Academic Writing**

READ: Barakso et al., Introduction; LaPorte,

[http://www.jodylaporte.com/wp-](http://www.jodylaporte.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Fieldwork-and-Research-Design.pdf)

[content/uploads/2014/08/Fieldwork-and-Research-Design.pdf](http://www.jodylaporte.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Fieldwork-and-Research-Design.pdf);

[https://umdwritingfellows.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/](https://umdwritingfellows.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/politicalscience_writingguide.pdf)

[politicalscience\\_writingguide.pdf](https://umdwritingfellows.files.wordpress.com/2014/02/politicalscience_writingguide.pdf)

Week Two  
August 22

### **Research Questions in Political Science**

READ: Baglione, Chapter 2; Goertz & Mahoney, Chapter 3; Barakso et al., Chapter 2.

Week Three:  
August 29

### **Studying Politics Scientifically**

READ: Johnson et al. Chapter 2; Marsh and Furlong; KKV, Chapter 1; Baglione, Chapter 3. You should bring one of the articles from their annotated bibliography as an example of one of the principles in the readings.

**Submit research question for approval before August 29**

Week Four:  
September 5

### **Foundations of Research Design**

READ: Johnson et al. Chapters 3-4. You will share a concept map of one of the articles from their annotated bibliographies, pointing out the research question/hypothesis, variables, and research design.

**Annotated bibliography due, Saturday 7 September, 23:59**

Week Five:  
September 12

### **Operationalization of Variables: Data and Measurements**

READ: KKV Chapter 4; Baglione, Chapter 7; Brady & Kaplan; Lancaster and Montinola, "Comparative Political Corruption: Issues of Operationalization and Measurement"

Week Six:  
September 19

### **Typologies and Theory-Building**

READ: Collier et al., Typologies; Goertz & Mahoney, Chapter 13; Vinokurov and Libman, "Typology of Regional Organizations."

**Research Project Outline due, Saturday 21 September, 23:59**

Week Seven:  
September 26

### **Evaluating Empirical Evidence**

READ: Kopstein and Reilly "Geographic Diffusion and the Transformation of the Postcommunist World"; Hunt "Why are some public officials more corrupt than others?" Binder and Heupel, "Legitimacy of the UN Security Council."

### **Fall Break: October**

Week Eight:  
October 10

### **Evaluating Scholarly Arguments**

READ: Haas, Paradigms; Baglione, Chapter 4; Knopf, Doing a Literature Review.

**Literature Review due, Sunday 13 October, 23:59**

Week Nine:  
October 17

**Quantitative v. Qualitative Methodologies: Trade-Offs and False Dichotomies**

READ: Goertz & Mahoney, Chapter 7; Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing"; Beach, "It's All about Mechanisms."

Week Ten:  
October 24

**Counterfactuals and Historical Approaches**

READ: Lebow, "Counterfactual Thought Experiments: A Necessary Teaching Tool"; Breslauer and Lebow, "Leadership and the End of the Cold War: A Counterfactual Thought Experiment"; McCullagh, "Bias in Historical Description, Interpretation, and Explanation"; Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias."

**Research Design DRAFT due, Sunday 3 November, 23:59**

Week Eleven:  
October 31

**Field Research: Case Studies and Generalization**

READ: Kapiszewski et al., Chapters 1-3; Markowitz, "Scientific Closure and Research Strategies in Uzbekistan," Goertz & Mahoney, Chapters 14-15; Junisbai, "A Tale of Two Kazakhstans."

Week Twelve:  
November 7

**Research Ethics**

READ: Kapiszewski et al., Chapter 4; "The Ethics of Research in the Middle East." You will complete CITI human social and behavioral training. You must complete the training and the test and provide a certificate. [www.citiprogram.org](http://www.citiprogram.org)

Week Thirteen:  
November 14

**Completing Research Design**

READ: Baglione, Chapters 5-6, 8-9.

**Final Research Design due, Sunday 17 November, 23:59**

Week Fourteen:  
November 21

**Spiraling Research Design**

Final Research Design: Student Presentations