

**POLITICS 769  
ADVANCED RESEARCH SKILLS  
Semester 1, 2016**

**Instalment One – Quantitative Module**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

<b>LECTURER:</b>	Professor Peter Davis (convenor, quantitative methods) Pacific Studies, 273.201L ext. 85109 <a href="mailto:pb.davis@auckland.ac.nz">pb.davis@auckland.ac.nz</a>  Dr Stephen McTaggart (qualitative module) <a href="mailto:sm.mctaggart@auckland.ac.nz">sm.mctaggart@auckland.ac.nz</a>
<b>Tutor:</b>	Martin von Randow (quantitative and qualitative) Pacific Studies, 273.201F <a href="mailto:m.vonrandow@auckland.ac.nz">m.vonrandow@auckland.ac.nz</a> ext. 84499
<b>LECTURE:</b>	Monday, 1–2pm
<b>LABORATORY:</b>	Monday, 2–3pm
<b>LABORATORY (optional):</b>	Monday, 3–4pm
<b>ROOM:</b>	Human Sciences Building, 201E-259
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	By appointment (email preferred)

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

**POLITICS 769 [Advanced Research Skills]** is a course designed to provide grounding in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, with particular emphasis on computer-assisted skills in data management, analysis and interpretation.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

- To develop an understanding of the major steps and components of a range of quantitative and qualitative research processes, albeit largely within a computer-mediated environment using existing data sets and standard software.
- To develop an understanding of the principal steps in quantitative and qualitative data management and analysis, and to practice the application of those skills.
- To gain skill and experience in using a standard data analysis software package in each “paradigm” (SPSS for quantitative, NVivo for qualitative).
- To develop a practical appreciation of the relationship in both quantitative and qualitative research between theory, research design, analysis, and reporting.

## **CLASSES**

Classes run for two hours, 1 pm-3 pm on Mondays – one hour lecture, one laboratory (with an extra hour to 4 pm as an option for those who want to spend more time on their lab exercise). The course follows the logic of the research process, but with a particular applied focus on the management and analysis of data. This involves working with secondary data within either an SPSS or NVivo framework, managing and presenting the data, and conducting your own original analysis. The quantitative module will be delivered over five six weeks up to the mid-semester break, followed by a five-week qualitative module after the break.

We will be using a lecture/laboratory-tutorial approach: the first hour of each session will be a methodology lecture/seminar, exploring aspects of either the quantitative or qualitative research process. Students are expected to direct their own learning by contributing to discussions, asking questions, extending and applying the points raised, etc. It is important you are familiar with the required readings for each class *before* the class. The second hour will be spent working with either SPSS (before mid-semester break) or NVivo (after the break) to manage, present and analyse real data, and to complete the tutorial assessments.

The lab is fully provided with SPSS and NVivo and versions of these are available for use “off-campus”. Students can also stay for an extra hour up to 1 pm for further work on their own or with a tutor. The lab is open for free use at any time, at times when it is not booked for some other purpose (e.g. for another course).

## OFFICE HOURS AND COMMUNICATION

Lecturers will be available by appointment, but would prefer to deal with enquiries by e-mail as this is the most reliable means of contacting us and it allows us to manage our time and other commitments better.

Should you have any course-related problems, particularly anything that might affect your ability to meet assignment deadlines, it is imperative that you contact us as soon as possible.

We frequently use Canvas as a means of communicating with students, and all important announcements will be placed on Canvas. We also place a significant number of resources on Canvas. If you have issues accessing either Canvas and/or your University email, please advise us as soon as possible. Unless you advise otherwise, it will be assumed that you have Canvas access, and are keeping up to date with announcements, communication, and course resources.

## OTHER ASSISTANCE

### **Student Learning Services**

Student Learning Services provides workshops, online resources and advice for students to develop academic and research skills. For more information, please see <http://www.library.auckland.ac.nz/services/student-learning>.

### **Administrative assistance**

This course is administered through the COMPASS Research Centre office, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Fale Pasifika office complex. However, all departmental enquiries should go to the Political Studies offices.

### **Class representatives**

Class representatives will be elected in the first week of the course, and will bring any concerns students may have regarding the course, or the department, to regular meetings. You will be advised of the class representative contact details as soon as possible.

## READINGS

The main text for this course, which will be on reserve, is:

Bryman, A. 2012. *Social research methods*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[Note: Bryman & Bell's *Business Research Methods* is also on Short Loan]

Other texts for this course, which will also be on reserve, are:

Acton, C. and Miller, R. 2009. *SPSS for social scientists*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bazeley, P. 2013. *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. London: Sage.

Berg, B. and Lune, H. 2012. *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

De Vaus, D. 2014. *Surveys in social research*. 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Also highly recommended are:

*e-Source: Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Interactive Textbook*

<http://www.esourceresearch.org/tabid/226/Default.aspx>

Burnham, P., Gilland, K., Grant, W, and Layton-Henry, Z. 2008. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. *Research Methods in Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

Creswell, J. W. 2009. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Los Angeles: Sage.

Davidson, C. & Tolich, M. (eds). 2003. *Social science research in New Zealand: Many paths to understanding*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Auckland: Pearson Education.

Esterberg, K. G. 2002. *Qualitative methods in social research*. Boston: McGraw Hill.

Pole, C. & Lampard, R. 2002. *Practical social investigation: Qualitative and quantitative methods in social research*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education.

All are in the Short Loan Collection for this course.

For each class, there will be a list of required and suggested readings. The required readings will either be from the course text, or will be available electronically on Canvas before the relevant class. It is expected that students will have read the required readings *prior* to class. Suggested readings will either be in the texts that are in the Short Loan Collection (see below for list), or PDFs that can be downloaded from Canvas.

## **COURSE ASSESSMENTS**

Assessment for this course is based 100% on coursework. There are 4 sets of assessments for this course, three being essays/reports:

- Ten tutorial assessments (hand in each lab): worth 10%
- Assignment 1 – quantitative report: worth 30%
- Assignment 2 – essay (contrast and compare): worth 30%
- Assignment 3 – qualitative report: worth 30%

No extensions for assignments will be permitted. Initial drafts and progress reports will be expected. Assignments 1 to 3 will be submitted to Turnitin via Canvas. In part this is to enable a standard plagiarism check, but it is mainly to ensure that assignments can be submitted, marked, and returned online.

A description of the assignments follows. Further information and instruction will be provided. Students are encouraged to discuss progress with assignments in class.

### **Lab Assessments – 10 Tutorial assessments (worth 10% in total) Due at the end of each tutorial**

Tutorials/labs are designed around specific tasks and exercises intended to help you become confident SPSS and NVivo users. Tutorials/labs in the first half of the course will follow the quantitative module outline and concentrate on SPSS skills while those in the second half will focus on NVivo. To reinforce the importance to your learning of these activities, each tutorial/lab will require you to produce output to be handed in and assessed.

### **Assignment 1 - Quantitative Report (worth 30%) Due 1pm Monday 18 April Word limit: 2,000**

Using a survey from one of the quantitative datasets made available to you, write a report that presents original data analysis (including a justification for the choices you made in selecting data, themes, etc.) and some conclusions that can be drawn from your analysis. You may choose to focus on specific sub-sets in the data, or you may decide to address the whole data set. However, if you do choose a subset, you need to justify your choice.

**Further details will be provided on this assignment in the first session.**

### **Assignment 2 – Essay (worth 30%)**

**Due 1pm Sunday 8 May**

**Word limit: 2,000**

In their introduction to their Handbook of Data Analysis, Hardy and Bryman suggest "(I)t is worth reflecting ... on the ways in which quantitative and qualitative data analysis may be said to have common characteristics" (p. 41). Identify two high-quality studies and/or papers, one broadly representative of the quantitative paradigm (e.g. a survey), and the other qualitative in nature, and discuss the extent to which they are required to meet similar criteria of research plausibility and authority, and where they may reasonably differ. Do not feel you should restrict your comments to data analysis; consider the entire research cycle.

**Assignment 3 – Qualitative Report (worth 30%)**

**Due 1pm Monday 6 June**

**Word limit: 2,000**

(Details to be announced)

## LECTURE OUTLINE

POLITICS 769 consists of two methodological components, one with the emphasis on quantitative techniques, the other qualitative. However, they both follow a similar five-lecture/laboratory routine around the following themes:

1. Orient and design;
2. Select and collect;
3. Process and prepare;
4. Assess and analyse I;
5. Assess and analyse II;
6. Interpret and infer.

The quantitative component of the course will be delivered in the first six weeks of the semester, the qualitative one over the remainder, as described below:

<b>Semester 1, 2016 – Lecture and Laboratory Schedule</b>			
	Theme	Lecture	Tutorial
29 February	<b>1. Orient &amp; Design</b>	Introduction to quantitative research and research design	Introduction to the Computing Environment
7 March	<b>2. Select &amp; Collect</b>	Sampling and data collection	Introduction to SPSS
14 March	<b>3. Process &amp; Prepare</b>	Issues of data quality	Data coding and checking in SPSS
21 March	<b>4. Assess &amp; Analyse I</b>	Exploring, describing and presenting data	Data exploration using SPSS
<b><i>Easter break (25–29 March)</i></b>			
4 April	<b>5. Assess &amp; Analyse II</b>	The “logic of inference” – drawing conclusions from tabulations	Cross-tabulations with SPSS
11 April	<b>6. Interpret &amp; Infer</b>	Using techniques beyond cross-tabulation for continuous data	More advanced techniques with continuous data
<b><i>Mid-semester break + ANZAC Day (18–25 April)</i></b>			
2 May	<b>7. Orient &amp; Design</b>	Introduction to Qualitative Research – principles and research design	Introduction to NVivo
9 May	<b>8. Select &amp; Collect</b>	Coding and developing analytical themes	Coding data
16 May	<b>9. Process &amp; Prepare</b>	Drawing conclusions / rigour and reliability / ethics	Coding and nodes
23 May	<b>10. Assess &amp; Analyse</b>	Qualitative research methods – sampling and collecting data	Framework matrices and querying your data
30 May	<b>11. Interpret &amp; Infer</b>	Mixed methods / Writing a qualitative report	From analysing cases to analysing themes

## **Quantitative Methods Module – Weeks 1–6**

### **1. Orient & Design, 29 February: Introduction**

#### Readings

Acton and Miller – Introduction

Bryman – Chapters 1, 2, 6

De Vaus – Chapters 1–3

#### Suggested reading

Esterberg – Chapter 1 (What is social research?)

### **2. Select & Collect, 7 March: Sampling and data collection**

#### Readings

Acton and Miller – Orientation, Chapter 1

Bryman – Chapters 7–12

De Vaus – Chapters 4–8

### **3. Process & Prepare, 14 March: Issues of data quality and measurement**

#### Readings

Acton and Miller – Chapters 1–3

Bryman – Chapters 6, 10

De Vaus – Chapters 4, 7, 9–11

### **4. Assess & Analyse I, 21 March: Exploring, describing and presenting data**

#### Readings

Acton and Miller – Chapters 2, 3

Bryman – Chapters 14, 15

De Vaus – Chapters 12, 13

### **5. Assess & Analyse II, 4 April: Drawing conclusions from cross-tabulations**

#### Readings

Acton and Miller – Chapter 5

Bryman – Chapters 14, 15

De Vaus – Chapters 14–16

### **6. Interpret & Infer, 11 April: Using techniques beyond cross-tabulations**

#### Readings

Acton and Miller – Chapters 4, 8

Bryman – Chapters 14, 15

De Vaus – Chapters 15–17