

# PO102-30 Political Research in the 21st Century

**20/21**

**Department**

Politics & International Studies

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 1

**Module leader**

Justin Greaves

**Credit value**

30

**Module duration**

22 weeks

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

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## Description

### Introductory description

N/A

### Module aims

This is a module in research and study skills. It will provide students with a thorough grounding in study skills, so as to promote independent learning and provide a solid foundation for students in the first year of their undergraduate degree. It will provide an introductory overview of research methods, approaches and methodology, therefore allowing students to critically interrogate the political science literature. It will engage the student as an 'active researcher' equipped with effective study and research skills and, thereby, promote employability and personal development. The module will also emphasise the distinctiveness or otherwise of politics as a discipline and its position as a junction subject and the implications this has for research methods and techniques.

## Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Lecture/seminar topics will include:

Being a political researcher: Student as Producer

Essay writing and referencing

The internet as a research tool

Researching general elections: voting behaviour

Social surveys & opinion polls

Ethical issues and plagiarism

Conspiracy theories and counterfactuals

Using statistics in political science

Researching pressure groups

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of the principal research methods, approaches and techniques, qualitative and quantitative, used in the study of Politics and International Relations.
- Be familiar with the process of research design and the major stages that are involved in designing a research proposal.
- understand the ethical dilemmas that arise in the research and study process, including issues of plagiarism, and strategies available for resolving them.
- To develop skills as an 'independent learner' and 'researcher'. To be confident and equipped in foundation level university study skills, including the critical analysis of a wide range of sources for research and study purposes.
- develop transferable skills To appreciate how academic skills translate into the 'transferable' and 'soft' skills required in employment and life beyond university.

## Indicative reading list

Halperin, S and Heath, O. (2016) Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press).

Burnham, P et al (2008) Research Methods in Politics, 2nd Edition (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke)

Bryman, A. (2016) Social Research Methods, 5th Edition (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke)

Moses, J and Knutsen, T. (2019) Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research. 3rd Edition (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke)

Cottrell, S. (2019) The Study Skills Handbook. 5th Edition (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke)

Grix, J. (2010) The Foundations of Research. Second Edition (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke)

Marsh, D and Stoker G (eds) (2017) Theory and Methods in Political Science., 4th Edition. (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke).

Wisker, G. (2009) *The Undergraduate Research Handbook*. Palgrave Macmillan.  
Matthews, B and Ross, L. (2010) *Research Methods: A Practical Guide for the Social Sciences* (Pearson)  
Pierce, R. (2008), *Research Methods in Politics: a Practical Guide* (Sage).  
Moore et al (2010) *The Ultimate Study Skills handbook* (Open University Press)

## **Research element**

Central to the module are the themes of 'student as producer' and 'student as researcher'.

This provides a strong basis should students wish to take advantage of research opportunities at the University and beyond, such as the Undergraduate Student Research Scheme (URSS), the International Conference of Undergraduate Research (ICUR), or the Reinvention Journal.

## **Interdisciplinary**

A running theme of the module is the nature of politics and international studies as an interdisciplinary discipline and a junction subject. One of the topics focuses specifically on Crossing the Interdisciplinary Divide.

## **International**

The module focuses on methods and techniques in international studies and international relations, as well as political science. Students are encouraged to bring out global examples to illustrate their points.

## **Subject specific skills**

tbc

## **Transferable skills**

The module provides students with opportunities to acquire or develop the following key skills:

Written communication skills

Oral communication skills

Problem-solving skills

Skills in the use of the internet and information technology

Skills of interpretation and the critical analysis of primary and secondary sources

Awareness and sensitivity to diversity (in terms of people, cultures) and the ability to understand unfamiliar ideas and ways of thinking

the ability to digest, retain and apply complex information and ideas

Ability to conduct research and reference their work appropriately

Time management skills and the ability to meet deadlines.

The ability to reflect critically on the extent and limitations of how and what they have learned, discovered and understood

Quantitative and qualitative techniques

Teamwork and working with other students

Employers of all kinds tell us these are the skills they need and which you can transfer into the workplace. Employers are seeking confident, self assured graduates and PR21, along with other modules in PAIS, will help provide you with the evidence and skills to demonstrate you possess such qualities.

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## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	20 sessions of 1 hour (7%)
Seminars	20 sessions of 1 hour (7%)
Other activity	1 hour (0%)
Private study	259 hours (86%)
Total	300 hours

### Private study description

tbc

### Other activity description

Library workshop.

## Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

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## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Students can register for this module without taking any assessment.

### Assessment group A2

	Weighting	Study time
Assessed Presentation	10%	
Assessed Essay/Project	90%	

Students submit 3 assignments. The first two are 2,500 words. The final assignment is a 3000 word project. The two highest marks count equally weighted (45% each), determining 90% of the

## Weighting

## Study time

module mark. In other words, the weakest assignment mark is discarded.

## Feedback on assessment

Essay feedback will be returned within 20 working days of essay submission

Formative and summative feedback will be provided in accordance with standard PAIS practice.

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## Availability

## Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of UPOA-M100 Undergraduate Politics
- UPOA-M16A Undergraduate Politics and International Studies
  - Year 1 of M16A Politics and International Studies
  - Year 1 of M16A Politics and International Studies
  - Year 1 of M16A Politics and International Studies
- Year 1 of UPOA-M168 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese
- Year 1 of UPOA-M169 Undergraduate Politics and International Studies with Chinese (3 year)

This module is Optional for:

- UECA-3 Undergraduate Economics 3 Year Variants
  - Year 1 of L100 Economics
  - Year 1 of L100 Economics
  - Year 1 of L100 Economics
  - Year 1 of L116 Economics and Industrial Organization
  - Year 1 of L116 Economics and Industrial Organization
- UECA-LM1D Undergraduate Economics, Politics and International Studies
  - Year 1 of LM1D Economics, Politics and International Studies
  - Year 1 of LM1D Economics, Politics and International Studies

This module is Option list B for:

- USOA-L301 BA in Sociology
  - Year 1 of L305 Sociology with Specialism in Cultural Studies
  - Year 1 of L303 Sociology with Specialism in Gender Studies
  - Year 1 of L304 Sociology with Specialism in Research Methods
  - Year 1 of L302 Sociology with Specialism in Social Policy