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**PSC 204**  
**Research Design in Political Science**

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Spring 2012  
2:00-4:40 Wed.  
Morey 524

Professor: Kevin A. Clarke  
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Office: Harkness 317  
Office Hours: Fri., 12:00-2:00

### **PURPOSE**

Is the mass media really biased? Does abortion lower the crime rate? Does the "No Child Left Behind" act encourage cheating? Providing convincing answers to these hot-button political issues requires good research design. Our goal is to learn the techniques behind designing research studies that allow political scientists and economists to answer exactly these kinds of questions. Our focus is on setting up the problem so that data analytic techniques, when applied, provide the right answers.

### **PREREQUISITES**

The only prerequisite is an undergraduate course in data analysis. PSC 200 or 201 suffices for political science.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Evaluation is based on class participation (30% of your grade), two essay exams (20% each), and a 15-page research design project (30% of your grade). The exams are given as scheduled and are not given early—please make any travel plans accordingly. The research design is due during the course's university-scheduled final period.

A web page for this course is to be found here:

<http://www.rochester.edu/College/PSC/clarke/204/204.html>

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Be familiar with the University's policies on academic integrity and disciplinary action (<http://www.rochester.edu/College/CCAS/AdviserHandbook/AcadHonesty.html>). Violators of University regulations on academic integrity will be dealt with severely, which means that your grade will suffer, and I will forward your case to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty.

Remember that the same technology that has made plagiarism easier to accomplish has also made it easier to detect. If you do not cite a source, it is plagiarism. If you do cite it, it is scholarship.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

All readings are online at the course web page unless followed by a URL.

### January 18: No class

- None.

### January 25: Introduction

- None (first day of class).

### February 1: Causation in Social Sciences

- Little (1991), “Causal Analysis.”
- Brady (2002), “Causation and Explanation in Social Science.”
- Goldthorpe (2001), “Causation, Statistics and Sociology.”

### February 8: Explanation in the Social Sciences

- Lave & March (1975), “An Introduction to Speculation.”
- Little (1991), “Rational Choice Theory.”
- Little (1991), “Interpretation Theory.”
- Schelling (1978), “Micromotives and Macrobehavior.”

### February 15: Experiments and Quasi-Experiments

- Campbell and Stanley (1963), 1-24.
- Rosenbaum (1999), “Choice as an Alternative to Control in Observational Studies.
- Green & Gerber (2003), “The Underprovision of Experiments in Political Science.”

### February 22: Methods

- Little (1991), “Statistical Analysis.”
- Brady, Smith, Granato and Scioli (2004), “Symposium.”
- Achen and Snidal (1989). “Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies.”
- Geertz (1972), “Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight.”
- Freedman (1991), “Statistical models and shoe leather.”

### February 29: Does Money Determine Elections?

- Levitt (1994), “Using Repeat Challengers to Estimate the Effect of Campaign Spending on Election Outcomes in the U.S. House.”
- Jacobsen (2004), “Money in Congressional Elections.”
- Stratmann (2005), “Some talk: Money in politics.”

⇒ Essay Exam 1

### March 7: Does Capital Punishment “Work”?

- Cloninger & Marchesini (2001), “Executions and Deterrence: A Quasi-Controlled Group Experiment.”
- Mocan & Gittings (2003), “Getting Off Death Row: Commuted Sentences and the Deterrent Effect of Capital Punishment.”
- Goertzel (2004), “Capital Punishment and Homicide.”  
[http://www.csicop.org/si/show/capital\\_punishment\\_and\\_homicide\\_sociological\\_realities\\_and\\_econometric\\_illu](http://www.csicop.org/si/show/capital_punishment_and_homicide_sociological_realities_and_econometric_illu)
- Berk (2005), “New Claims about Executions and General Deterrence: Deja Vu All Over Again?”
- Fagan (2005), “Deterrence and the Death Penalty: A Critical Review of New Evidence.”

#### March 14: Spring Break

- None.

#### March 21: Did Legalizing Abortion Affect the Crime Rate?

- Donohue & Levitt (2001), “The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime.”
- Joyce (2004), “Did Legalized Abortion Lower Crime?”
- Donohue & Levitt (2004), “Further Evidence that Legalized Abortion Lowered Crime.”
- Sailer, “Did Legalizing Abortion Cut Crime?”  
<http://www.isteve.com/abortion.htm>
- Levitt & Sailer (1999), “Debate.”

#### March 28: Does Democracy Lead to Peace?

- Russett (1993), “Grasping the Democratic Peace.”
- Layne (1994), “Kant or Cant? The Myth of the Democratic Peace.”
- Ray (1998), “Does Democracy Cause Peace?”

#### April 4: Is There a Liberal Bias in the Media?

- Groseclose & Milyo (2005), “A Measure of Media Bias.”
- Niven (2003), “Objective Evidence on Media Bias: Newspaper Coverage of Congressional Party Switchers.”
- Patterson (1996), “Bad News, Period.”
- Watts *et al.* (1999), “Elite Cues and Media Bias in Presidential Campaigns: Explaining Public Perceptions of a Liberal Press.”

April 11: Does No Child Left Behind Encourage Cheating?

- Amrein & Berliner (2002), “High-Stakes Testing, Uncertainty, and Student Learning.”  
<http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n18/>
- Raymond & Hanushek (2003), “High-Stakes Research.”  
<http://edpro.stanford.edu/hanushek/admin/pages/files/uploads/ednext.accountability.final.pdf>
- TBA.

⇒ Essay Exam 2

April 18: Student Presentations

- TBA.

April 25: Student Presentations

- TBA.

May 2: Student Presentations

- TBA.

**Your 15-page research design is due the last day of classes.**