

New York University
Spring 2022
Comparative Field Seminar: Diversity and Society
POL-UA 595 - 001 (4 points)
Professor Cyrus Samii
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Basic Information

Course meeting time and location: Fri 11:00AM-1:30PM 25 W4 Room C-12 Website: https://cyrussamii.com/?page_id=3395	Office hours time and location: Wed & Thu 3-4pm (be sure to sign up: https://cyrussamii.com/?page_id=1779) 19 W4 Room 424
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Prerequisites

This is a course for upper level students in Politics interested to develop skills for political science research. The prerequisites are as follows:

- POL-UA 500 *Comparative Politics Core*,
- POL-UA 850 *Intro to Research Methods for Politics* or similar quantitative methods and data analysis course,
- Two more politics courses,
- Junior or Senior standing, and
- Minimum 3.0 GPA.

If you do not meet these prerequisites then you must have the permission of the instructor to enroll in the course.

Course Description

Immigration, demographic change, accumulation of inequalities, democratization—these are transformative processes that force societies to confront issues of cohesion amidst ethnic, religious, and gender diversity. This course will prepare students to apply a social scientific mindset in thinking through these issues. Students will work in small groups to engage with social science data and theories to characterize the nature of such problems and evaluate strategies to address them.

The class will focus on two problems for diverse democratic societies in particular:

1. Group underrepresentation in positions of power
2. Intergroup prejudice and mistrust

Our class will apply social scientific methods to addressing these problems. Here is an outline of the methods:

1. *Observe*: Define the problem concretely and document the extent of the problem and how it is evolving
2. *Interpret*: Explain why it is a problem, applying normative arguments
3. *Analyze*: Present theoretical propositions for the beliefs, behaviors, and other mechanisms that generate or sustain the problem
4. *Scrutinize*: Examine empirical analyses of data to assess the relevance of theoretical mechanisms
5. *Derive*: Derive implications for potential interventions that could be used to change or halt mechanisms that generate or sustain the problem
6. *Test*: Propose how to put the intervention(s) to the test through the design of an impact study

Course Structure

Given the prerequisites, you should already have read and processed a good amount of political science and have some background in quantitative analysis. This course is not about reading and commenting on social science content that the instructor provides. Rather, the course will help you move from being a passive consumer of such content to someone trying to use social science actively for real-world problem-solving.

Students will work in small groups (around 4 students per group) to proceed through these steps for the two problems described above. Students should expect to put in 4-6 hours per week outside of class time on group assignments. Students will share their work through in-class oral presentations with slides.

Based on the above, you should have a schedule that allows for meeting with your small group during the week outside of class, be comfortable working in a small group, and be comfortable giving oral presentations to your peers.

Course Learning Objectives

The main learning objective is for students to learn how to use social science methodology to address societal problems — that is, to observe, interpret, analyze, scrutinize, derive, and test in the manner described above. A secondary objective is for students to learn how to formulate and present social science arguments to an audience through presentations and writing.

Materials

The instructor will provide some background readings in electronic format. Much of the content, though, will be defined and assembled by you, working as part of a small group. The instructor will provide guidance on relevant materials for your small group work.

Requirements and Schedule

Class attendance and active participation in group work are required throughout. The table below outlines activities for the semester. During “small group meetings” sessions, you will join your small group to meet with the instructor for about 30 minutes to discuss your group assignment. During “presentations” sessions your small group will be delivering an approximately 10-15 minute presentation (about 6-8 slides), followed by about 10 minutes of Q&A (each group in the audience will be required to ask at least one question, based on guidance provided by the instructor).

Session	Date	Activities		
1	1/28/22	Syllabus review and introductory examples		
2	2/4/22	Underrepresentation:	Observe & Interpret	Small group meetings
3	2/11/22			Presentations
4	2/18/22		Analyze & Scrutinize	Small group meetings
5	2/25/22			Presentations
6	3/4/22		Derive & Test	Small group meetings
7	3/11/22			Presentations
8	3/25/22	External speaker and discussion (TBA)		
9	4/1/22	Prejudice & mistrust:	Observe & Interpret	Small group meetings
10	4/8/22			Presentations
11	4/15/22		Analyze & Scrutinize	Small group meetings
12	4/22/22			Presentations
13	4/29/22		Derive & Test	Small group meetings
14	5/6/22			Presentations

Policies

Grading will be based on a percent-based rubric:

A=93-100
A-=90-92
B+=87-89
B=84-86
B-=80-83
C+=77-79
C=74-76
C-=70-73
D+=67-69
D=65-66
F=below 65

Grades are determined on the basis of the following:

- Preparation and participation in small group meetings (35%)
- Preparation and participation in presentations (35%)
- Group participation in Q&As (20%)
- Class attendance and participation in non-group-work sessions (10%)

Attendance is required. If you cannot make a session, please notify the instructor as soon as possible and indicate how you will make up your contributions to your group's work.

Because all coursework will take place in the form of group activities during class sessions, there are no make-up assignments or extensions.

This course will abide by the academic integrity principles defined here:

<https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-integrity.html>

Assessment

Students will work in groups of three or four. Each group will complete the following:

- For Unit 1, "underrepresentation"
 - "Observe & Interpret"
 - Brainstorm bullet points to discuss for small group meetings session
 - Oral presentations with slides (6-8 slides)
 - A Q&A question for each of the other groups' presentations
 - "Analyze & Scrutinize"
 - Brainstorm bullet points to discuss for small group meetings session
 - Oral presentations with slides (6-8 slides)
 - A Q&A question for each of the other groups' presentations
 - "Derive & Test"
 - Brainstorm bullet points to discuss for small group meetings session
 - Oral presentations with slides (6-8 slides)

- A Q&A question for each of the other groups' presentations
- For Unit 2, "prejudice & mistrust"
 - "Observe & Interpret"
 - Brainstorm bullet points to discuss for small group meetings session
 - Oral presentations with slides (6-8 slides)
 - A Q&A question for each of the other groups' presentations
 - "Analyze & Scrutinize"
 - Brainstorm bullet points to discuss for small group meetings session
 - Oral presentations with slides (6-8 slides)
 - A Q&A question for each of the other groups' presentations
 - "Derive & Test"
 - Brainstorm bullet points to discuss for small group meetings session
 - Oral presentations with slides (6-8 slides)
 - A Q&A question for each of the other groups' presentations

This implies a total of 6 small group meetings assignments, 6 presentation assignments, and 6 Q&A assignments. Each assignment will receive a grade of up to 10 points depending on the quality of the work and whether you clearly contributed to it, and a 0 if not completed.

To ensure that your contribution to group work is noticed, members of each group should divide the presentation duties equally (e.g., one person should not do all the talking at small group meetings or do all the talking in a presentation).

High grades require that one shows an engagement with relevant social literature and data, demonstrates an ability to synthesize and innovate, demonstrates an understanding of the task at hand, and presents their ideas clearly to the rest of the class.

Accommodation

Disability Disclosure Statement: Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. The Moses Center website is www.nyu.edu/csd. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

Student Wellness

From the Wellness Office: In a large, complex community like NYU, it's vital to reach out to others, particularly those who are isolated or engaged in self-destructive activities. Student wellness (<https://cas.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/cas/academic-programs/student-wellness.html>) is the responsibility of all of us. The NYU [Wellness Exchange](#) is the constellation of NYU's programs and services designed to address the overall health and mental health needs of its students. Students can access this service 24 hours a day, seven days a week -

wellness.exchange@nyu.edu; (212) 443-9999. Students can call the Wellness Exchange hotline (212-443-9999) or the NYU Counseling Service (212-998-4780) to make an appointment for Single Session, Short-term, or Group counseling sessions.