

# Analysing Politics

Jos Elkink

School of Politics and International Relations  
University College Dublin

jos.elkink@ucd.ie  
Library Building, Rm 512  
<http://jaeweb.cantr.net/teaching>

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## Introduction

The course materials are partly taken from the textbooks Shively (2004) and King, Keohane and Verba (1994) and partly from articles. Many sessions, especially in the second half of the course, also have assigned “applied examples”. The latter are required reading and you should make sure you read them before the lecture.

## Grading

The relative weight of each task is as follows:

| Task                   | Weight | Deadline   |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| Tutorial participation | 10%    |            |
| Argumentative essay    | 10%    | Tutorial 2 |
| Article review         | 10%    | Tutorial 4 |
| Final exam             | 70%    |            |

### Argumentative essay

An essay will be due at the start of the second tutorial, in hardcopy, with a signed Declaration of Authorship form, given to the tutor, as well as by email to *jos.elkink@ucd.ie*. The essay should be between 1000 and 1500 words, not counting the references, and you should take a stance on either one of the two statements below and argue your case, making use of the literature of the course.

- “The first requirement of good political science research is its relevance for society in general.”
- “Abstract models do not help to understand politics.”

## Article review

The article review will be due at the start of the fourth tutorial, in hardcopy, with a signed Declaration of Authorship form, given to the tutor, as well as by email to *jos.elkink@ucd.ie*. You can choose any of the “applied examples” to write a critical review of the article, focusing primarily on the research strategy, the conceptualisation and operationalisation of key terms in the article, the methods used, etc. Make sure you briefly summarise the article, but that your essay is critical and focuses on research design. Just a summary is not sufficient. The article review, excluding references, should be between 1500 and 1750 words long.

## Tutorials

The tutorials will be taught by:

| Name             | Email                     |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| Wendy Ross       | wendy.ross@ucd.ie         |
| Louise Caffrey   | louisecaffrey21@gmail.com |
| Michael Anderson | michael.anderson@ucd.ie   |

There will be five tutorials and participation counts towards your grade. Further details will follow during the first week. *Always keep an eye on Blackboard!*

## Plagiarism

Although this should be obvious, plagiarism - copying someone else’s text without acknowledgement or beyond “fair use” quantities - is not allowed. UCD policies concerning plagiarism can be found at [http://www.ucd.ie/regist/documents/plagiarism\\_policy\\_and\\_procedures.pdf](http://www.ucd.ie/regist/documents/plagiarism_policy_and_procedures.pdf). A more extensive description of what is plagiarism and what is not can be found at [http://www.ucd.ie/library/students/information\\_skills/plagiari.html](http://www.ucd.ie/library/students/information_skills/plagiari.html). Arguing that you “didn’t know” will not be a valid excuse when we find evidence of plagiarism - if it not really clear what is expected of you in this regard, ask.

## Contact

If you need to contact me outside class hours, you can find me in room 512 in the Library Building. I do not have fixed office hours, so if you want to make sure I am present, you

can make an appointment by email. If a personal visit is not necessary, the easiest way to reach me is by email (jos.elkink@ucd.ie).

## **Theory and philosophy of political science research**

### **21 January: Introduction: politics and political science**

Required reading: Shapiro (2002); Pye (1990).

### **23 January: Types of research and research ethics**

Required reading: Shively (2004: ch 1); King, Keohane and Verba (1994: ch 1).

### **28 January: Conceptualisation**

Required reading: Shively (2004: ch 3); Collier and Levitsky (1997).

Optional reading: Sartori (1970).

### **30 January: Measurement**

Required reading: Shively (2004: ch 4-5); Collier and Adcock (2001); King, Keohane and Verba (1994: §5.1).

### **4 February: Theories and models**

Required reading: Shively (2004: ch 2).

Optional reading: Bueno de Mesquita (1985).

### **6 February: Causality and research design**

Required reading: Shively (2004: ch 6).

Strongly suggested reading: King, Keohane and Verba (1994: ch 3).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Of King, Keohane and Verba (1994) you can skip §3.1, as well as the “formal examples”.

## **11 February: Formal modeling and rational choice**

Required reading: Laver (1997: ch 1,2).

Applied example: Fearon (1997).

Further reading: Green and Shapiro (1994); Riker (1977); Fiorina (1975).

## **13 February: Computational models**

Required reading: Axelrod (1997*a*).

Applied examples: Axelrod (1997*b*).

Optional example: Schelling (1971).

## **Qualitative research methods**

### **18 February: Case study method**

Required reading: Gerring (2004).

Applied example: Allison and Zelikow (1999: ch 6).

Optional reading: King, Keohane and Verba (1994: ch 2); McKeown (1999).

### **20 February: Case selection**

Required reading: King, Keohane and Verba (1994: ch 4).

Applied example: Lijphart (1968: ch 1,10).

Optional reading: Geddes (1990); Fearon (1991).

### **25 February: Comparative method**

Required reading: Landman (2003: pp 3-10, ch 2).

Applied example: Skocpol (1979).

Optional reading: Lijphart (1975).

## **27 February: Content analysis**

Required reading: Woolley (2000).

Applied example: Laver, Benoit and Garry (2003).

Optional reading: Althaus, Edy and Phalen (2001).

## **3 March: Discourse analysis**

Required reading: Fairclough (2000).

Applied example: Straehle et al. (1999).

Optional example: Larsen (1999).

## **5 March: Elite interviewing**

Required reading: Richards (1996); Berry (2002); Aberbach and Rockman (2002); Davies (2001).

Applied example: Thomassen and Andeweg (2004).

## **24 March: Grounded theory and ethnography**

Required reading: Aunger (1995) *or* Geertz (1994).

Applied example: Geertz (2005).

## **Quantitative research methods**

### **26 March: Sampling**

Required reading: Sudman and Blair (1999).

Optional reading: Malhotra and Krosnick (2007).

### **31 March: Survey and questionnaire design**

Required reading: Dillman (1991).

Applied example: Lupia and Philpot (2005).

Optional reading: Zaller and Feldman (1992).

## **2 April: Relationships with continuous data**

Required reading: Shively (2004: ch 7).

Applied example: Cutright (1963).

## **7 April: Relationships with discrete data**

Required reading: Shively (2004: ch 8).

Applied example: Slantchev (2004).

## **9 April: Statistical inference**

Required reading: Shively (2004: ch 9).

Applied example: Gelman and King (1993).

Optional reading: King, Keohane and Verba (1994: ch 5).

## **14 April: Recap / wrap-up / questions**

No readings.

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