

Methods of Inquiry and Research Design

Political Science 6802
Columbia University
Spring 2007
Mondays, 2:10-4:00

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Course Description

This course will cover research methods and research design in political science. We will focus on concrete issues of conducting research: picking a topic, generating hypotheses, case selection, measurement issues, combining quantitative and qualitative methods, designing and conducting experiments, working with data sets, and archival research, etc.

The course is designed primarily for students in their third or fourth years working on dissertation proposals or early stages of dissertation research, but may be helpful for students at other stages as well.

Requirements and Grading

50% Five short papers (posted to Courseworks and hard copies delivered to Fazal and Fortna the Friday before class)

- 600 word (or fewer) research design 'book review' Sept 28
- Replicate statistical results from a published work (3-5pp) Oct 12
- Interview (3-5pp) Oct 26
- Archival Research (3-5 pp) Nov 9
- The Ideal Experiment (3-5pp) Nov 16

(Note: some of these assignments require legwork in advance; plan accordingly)

25% Final Paper. Due December 17

The final paper for the class should take the form of an actual or practice dissertation prospectus that meets departmental guidelines for content, length, and form. Students who have already successfully defended their prospectus should submit the research design chapter of their dissertation as their final paper.

10% Presentation of final paper

15% Class Participation

- Come to class prepared to discuss the week's reading, and each others' short papers, where applicable
- Discussion of concept measurement assignment (Oct 8)

Policy on Late Assignments

- One-third of a grade will be deducted for every day an assignment is late.
- Assignments will not be accepted more than one week late.
- No incompletes except in cases of documented family or medical emergency.

Course Materials

The following books are available for purchase at Labyrinth Bookstore:

- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).
- Van Evera, Stephen. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997).
- George, Alexander L. and Bennett, Andrew. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005).
- Davis, James. *Terms of Inquiry: On the Theory and Practice of Political Science*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).
- Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).
- Trachtenberg, Marc *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).

Recommended:

- Ragin, Charles. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. (Los Angeles, University of California Press: 1987).

CLASS SCHEDULE

Readings are available at the following locations:

R = Lehman Reserves

EJ = Electronic Journal

(through Courseworks or at www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/ejournals/)

L = Labyrinth Books

CW = file posted on Courseworks

Week 1. September 10

Finding a Research Topic

What to read if you haven't already:

1. Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. [R]
2. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. [R]
3. Lakatos, Imre. "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs" in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, Lakatos and Musgrave, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970. [R]
4. Gabriel Almond and Stephen Genco. "Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of World Politics." *World Politics* July 1977 (29:4) [EJ]

Week 2. September 17

General Research Design

1. King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995). [L]
2. Van Evera, Stephen. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997). [L]
3. McKeown, Timothy. "Case Studies and the Statistical Worldview: Review of King, Keohane, and Verba's *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*." *International Organization* 53:1 (Winter 1999): 161-90. [EJ]
4. Sample dissertation proposals [CW]

Recommended:

Collier, David and Brady, Henry E. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004) [R]

Political Analysis March 2006 Symposium on *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, especially articles by Schrodtt, Shively, and Beck

Robson, Colin. *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*. (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1993). [R]

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Week 3. September 24

Case Studies: What are the options?

1. George, Alexander L. and Bennett, Andrew. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005), Chs. 3-6, 8-10. [L]
2. Gerring, John. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?" *American Political Science Review*. 98:2 (May 2004): 341-54. [EJ]
3. Mahoney, James and Goertz, Gary. "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 98:4 (November 2004), 653-69. [EJ]

Recommended:

Eckstein, Harry. "Case Study and Theory in Political Science." in Greenstein, Fred I. and Polsby, Nelson W., eds. *Handbook of Political Science: Strategies of Inquiry*. Vol. 7 (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975?). [R]

Ragin, Charles. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. (Los Angeles, University of California Press: 1987). [L]

Levy, Jack S. "Qualitative Methods in International Relations." in Brecher, Michael and Harvey, Frank P., eds. *Millennial Reflections on International Studies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). [R]

Week 4. October 1

Case Studies: What are the pitfalls?

Assignment: Pick a book or article on a topic of interest to you and write a 600 word (or fewer) book review that reviews the research design

1. Collier, David and Mahoney, James. "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." *World Politics* 49:1 (1996): 56-81. [EJ]
2. Fearon, James "Selection Effects and Deterrence." *International Interactions* 28, 1 (January - March 2000), 5-29. [R]
3. Reiter, Dan. "Fighting to an End: Information, Commitment, and War Termination." Book Manuscript, Emory University. Ch. 4. [CW]
4. Fearon, James. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43:2 (January 1991), 169-95. [EJ]
5. King, Gary and Zeng, Langche. "When Can History Be Our Guide? The Pitfalls of Counterfactual Inference" *International Studies Quarterly* 51:1 (March 2007), 183-210. [EJ]
6. Schrodtt, Philip A. "Of Dinosaurs and Barbecue Sauce: A Comment on King and Zeng." *International Studies Quarterly* 51:1 (March 2007), 211-215. [EJ]

Recommended:

Geddes, Barbara. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2 (1990), 131-150. [R]

Week 5. October 8

Measurement Issues and Quantitative Analysis: Options and Innovations

Assignment: Choose a concept of interest to you (e.g., democracy, interdependence, civil wars, war outcomes, statehood, etc.) that is measured in at least two existing data sets. Examine, and come to class prepared to discuss, differences (and potential problems) in the ways each data set codes this concept. May be done collaboratively with classmates. If you choose to collaborate on this assignment, each collaborator must recode the same case from one of the data sets you examine.

1. Sartori, Giovanni. "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review*. 64:4 (December 1970), 1033-53. [EJ]
2. Adcock, Robert and Collier, David. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95:3 (September 2001), 529-46. [EJ]

3. Survey of major data sets in IR and comparative – look at codebooks from:
 Correlates of War: <http://cow2.la.psu.edu/>
 Militarized Interstate Disputes: <http://cow2.la.psu.edu/>
 Polity IV Project: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity/>
 A useful source that links to these and other data sets is:
<http://garnet.acns.fsu.edu/~phensel/data.html>

4. Bennett, D. Scott, and Allan Stam. 2000. “EUGene: A Conceptual Manual.” *International Interactions* 26:179-204. [R]
 Also browse EUGene at <http://www.eugenesoftware.org>

Week 6. October 15 Quantitative Analysis: Pitfalls and Sandtraps

Guest Professor: Robert Shapiro

Assignment: Replicate someone else’s (published) quantitative results (3-5pp).

1. Clarify: Gary King, Michael Tomz, and Jason Wittenberg. “Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation,” *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (April, 2000): 341-355 [EJ]
2. ReLogit: King, Gary and Zeng Langche “Explaining Rare Events in International Relations” *International Organization* 55:3 (Summer 2001), 693-715. [EJ]
3. Amelia: Gary King, James Honaker, Anne Joseph and Kenneth Scheve. “Analyzing Incomplete Political Science Data.” *American Political Science Review* 95:1 (March 2001), 49-69. [EJ]
4. Replication Symposium: King, Gary “Replication, Replication” and ensuing debate in *PS: Political Science and Politics* [Vol:No (date)], 444-499. [EJ]
5. Achen, Christopher H. “Let’s Put Garbage-Can Regressions and Garbage-Can Probits Where They Belong.” *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22:4 (Winter 2005), 327-340. [R]
6. Braumoeller, Bear F. “Hypothesis Testing and Multiplicative Interaction Terms.” *International Organization* 58:4 (Fall 2004), 807-820. [EJ]

See Gary King’s website, particularly the section on software, for additional information:
<http://gking.harvard.edu/stats.shtml>

Week 7. October 22

Constructivism and Research Design

1. Davis, James. *Terms of Inquiry: On the Theory and Practice of Political Science*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), chapters 1, 4, & 5. [L]
2. Dessler, David and Owen, John. "Constructivism and the Problem of Explanation." *Perspectives on Politics* 3:3 (September 2005), 597-610. [EJ]
3. Fearon, James and Alexander Wendt, "Rationalism v. Constructivism: a Skeptical View." in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse, and Beth Simons, eds., *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage Publications, 2002). [R]

Recommended:

Kratochwil, Friedrich and Ruggie, John Gerard. "International Organization: A State of the Art on an Art of the State." *International Organization*, 40:4 (Autumn 1986), 753-75. [EJ]

Lin, Ann Chih. "Bridging Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches to Qualitative Methods." *Policy Studies Journal* 26:1 (Spring 1998), 162-80. [EJ]

Practical Issues

Week 8. October 29

Ethical and Practical Issues in Field Research

Guest Appearances: Gretchen Borges, IRB representative
Mona El-Ghobashy, Barnard College

Assignment: Conduct an interview with a political actor and write up results of the interview (3-5 pp.)

1. Saiyigh, Rosemary. "Resources, Researchers and Power: Recording 'Real Life' in Wadi Zeineh." *Middle East Report* 173 (November-December 1991), 23-25. [EJ]
2. Goduka, Ivy. "Ethics and Politics of Field Research in South Africa." *Social Problems* 37:3 (August 1990), 329-40. [EJ]
3. Pearce, Lisa D. "Integrating Survey and Ethnographic Methods for Systematic Anomalous Case Analysis." *Sociological Methodology* 32 (2002), 103-32. [EJ]

4. Helper, Susan. "Economists and Field Research: 'You Can Observe A Lot Just By Watching.'" *Industrial Technology and Productivity* 90:2 (May 2000), 228-32. [R]
5. Glaser, James M. "The Challenge of Campaign-Watching: Seven Lessons of Participant-Observation Research." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29:3 (September 1996), 533-37. [EJ]
6. Peabody, Robert. et. al. "Interviewing Political Elites." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 23:3 (September 1990), 451-55. [EJ]
7. Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. [L] (This is an easy read, just skim it, but remember to read it again before you do any actual fieldwork)
8. Leech, Beth L. ed. Symposium on "Interview Methods in Political Science" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 23:3 (December 2002), 663-688. [EJ]
9. Keeter, Scott. "Survey Research." in Daniel Druckman, *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005). [R] (skim only)
10. Belmont Report, available at: <http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/belmont.html>
11. APSA Collaboration Report, available at: http://www.apsanet.org/content_43659.cfm
12. Carapico, Sheila. "No Easy Answers: The Ethics of Field Research in the Arab World." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39:3 (July 2006), 429-432. [EJ]
13. Romano, David. "Conducting Research in the Middle East's Conflict Zones." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39:3 (July 2006), 439-442. [EJ]

Recommended:

Vidich, Arthur J. "Participant Observation and the Collection and Interpretation of Data." *American Journal of Sociology* 60:4 (January 1955), 354-60. [EJ]

Bratton, Michael and Liatto-Katundu, Beatrice. "A Focus Group Assessment of Political Attitudes in Zambia." *African Affairs* 93: 373 (October 1994), 535-63. [EJ]

Williams, Christine L. and Heikes, E. Joel. "The Importance of Researcher's Gender in the In-Depth Interview: Evidence from Two Case Studies of Male Nurses." *Gender & Society* 7:2 (June 1993), 280-91. [EJ]

Devereux, Stephen and John Hoddinott, eds. *Fieldwork in Developing Countries* Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992. [R]

Burgess, Robert G. *In the Field: An Introduction to Field Research* London: George Allen & Unwin, 1984. [R]

Week 9. November 5 No Class – Election Day Holiday

Week 10. November 12 Archival Research

Guest Professor: Adam McKeown

Assignment: Visit an archive to research a specific question and write up results. (3-5pp)

1. Lustick, Ian S. “History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias.” *American Political Science Review* 90:3 (September 1996). [EJ]
2. Thies, Cameron G. “A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations.” *International Studies Perspectives* 3 (2002), 351-72. [EJ]
3. Harrison, Hope M. “Inside the SED Archives: A Researcher’s Diary.” *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*. [R]
4. Trachtenberg, Marc. *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), read chapters 1-2, skim 4, read 5 and appendix 2. [L]
5. Gary King and Will Lowe. “An Automated Information Extraction Tool For International Conflict Data with Performance as Good as Human Coders: A Rare Events Evaluation Design.” *International Organization* 57:3 (July, 2003), pp. 617-642. [EJ]

Week 11. November 19**Experiments**

Assignment: What would be the ideal experiment for your research question? (3-5pp)

Guest Professor: Macartan Humphreys

1. Green, Donald P. and Gerber, Alan S. "Reclaiming the Experimental Tradition in Political Science." in Katznelson, Ira and Milner, Helen V., eds. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. (New York: WW Norton, Year?). [R]
2. McDermott, Rose. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science*. 5(2002), 31-61. [EJ]
3. Gerber, Alan S. and Green, Donald P. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 94:3 (September 2000), 653-63. [EJ]
4. Hyde, Susan. "Can International Election Observers Deter Election Day Fraud? Evidence from a Natural Experiment." Typescript – Yale University. [CW]

Note: those interested in learning more about field experiments should check out the ICPSR summer workshop held at Yale. see www.icpsr.umich.edu/sumprog or www.yale.edu/isps/conferences

Weeks 12-14**Class Presentations**

November 26

December 3

December 10

Final Paper is due December 17th by 5pm.