

Research Design

Course description

This course will help you understand how we study politics and provide guidance on conducting original political science research. We will discuss the challenges that all political science researchers face with the core issues of research design. A research design is a plan that specifies how you plan to carry out a research project and how you expect to use your evidence to answer your research question. This course aims to provide an overview of potential research designs for establishing causal inference and their advantages and disadvantages. Students should understand the trade-offs involved in choosing a particular research design. Students are expected to develop their own ideas about potential research questions to be able to actively participate in seminars within this course.

Time: Wednesday, 10:15-11:45, Autumn 2017

Room: B6, A103

Office hours: Wednesday 12:00-13:00), A5,6 room C217

Language: The language of this course is English, including all instruction, readings and assignments.

Course requirements

I expect you to prepare the readings in advance so that you can come to class with particular questions in mind. You will learn primarily by reading and then discussing that material with your instructor and classmates. The more actively you participate in the discussions the easier it will be to comprehend the material. I expect you to attend every class. If you are unable to attend for any reason you should send an email explaining your absence, preferably before class. All readings are provided on ILIAS in advance. In addition to regular attendance and active class participation, you are also required to write a research design suitable for a realisable research project as well as read and provide feedback on the proposed research of others on the course. You must pass every assignment in order to pass the course.

1. Research Proposal

I expect you to devise a research question and write a short draft research proposal. This proposal should demonstrate your competence in applying some of the issues covered in this course to the design of a potential research project (one suitable for a Master's thesis) that will address your research question. This exercise should be of help for a future Master's thesis and I suggest emphasizing methods and analysis more than demonstrating an in-depth knowledge of the research area (i.e. try to avoid an overly long literature review). For this class I will be looking for a project that is well defined and feasible as well as methodologically sound. Consider the draft proposal (no more than 10 pages, double-spaced) a take-home exam that is due before noon, **8 January 2017**.

2. Research Design and feedback (Pass/Fail)

Besides reading and discussing the material, an effective way to gain a better understanding for issues relating to research design is to provide and receive constructive criticism. To this end you will write a summary of a research design, which will presumably form the larger research proposal due later in the semester. This summary will be no more than three pages (double-spaced) in length and must be sent to me via email by noon, **Tuesday 10 October**. These short research designs will then be circulated to the rest of the class and you will provide constructive criticism for a selection of your colleagues that will be submitted to me via email by noon, **Tuesday 17 October**. These will then be circulated to the rest of the class when we meet the following day.

Reading

Week 1 (6 September): Introduction

Isaac, Jeffrey. 2015. Varieties of Empiricism in Political Science. *Perspectives on Politics* 13(4): 929-934.

Kellstedt, Paul & Guy Whitten. 2013. The Scientific Study of Politics. In *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research* 2nd ed., Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1, 1-21.

Kellstedt, Paul & Guy Whitten. 2013. Putting It All Together to Produce Effective Research. In *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research* 2nd ed., Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 12, 273-293.

Week 2 (13 September): Core Issues of Research Design

De Vaus, David. 2001. The Context of Design. In *Research Design in Social Research*. Thousand Oaks, USA: Sage, Chapter 1, 1-16.

King, Gary, Robert Keohane & Sidney Verba. 1994. The Science in Social Science. In *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Chapter 1, 3-33.

Gschwend, Thomas & Frank Schimmelfennig. 2007. Introduction: Designing Research in Political Science-A Dialogue. In Gschwend & Schimmelfennig, eds. *Research Design in Political Science: How to Practice What They Preach?* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 1-18.

Week 3 (20 September): Conceptualization and Measurement

De Vaus, David. 2001. Tools for Research Design. In *Research Design in Social Research*. Thousand Oaks, USA: Sage, Chapter 2, 17-33.

Wonka, Arndt. 2007. Concept Specification in Political Science Research. In Gschwend & Schimmelfennig, eds. *Research Design in Political Science: How to Practice What They Preach?* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 41-61.

Gerring, John. 2011. Measurements. In *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, Chapter 7, 155-194.

Week 4 (27 September): Case Selection

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

King, Gary, Robert Keohane & Sidney Verba. 1994. Determining What to Observe. In *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press, Chapter 4, 115-149.

Abadie, Alberto, Alexis Diamond & Jens Hainmueller. 2015. Comparative Politics and the Synthetic Control Method. *American Journal of Political Science* 59(2): 495-510.

Week 5 (4 October): Experiments

Druckman, James, Donald Green, James Kuklinski & Arthur Lupia. 2006. The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science. *American Political Science Review* 100(4): 627-635.

Green, Jane. 2010. Points of Intersection between Randomized Experiments and Quasi-Experiments. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628(1): 97-111.

McDermott, Rose, Dustin Tingley & Peter Hatemi. 2014. Assortative Mating on Ideology Could Operate Through Olfactory Cues. *American Journal of Political Science* 58(4): 997-1005.

Week 6 (11 October): Statistical Control

Clarke, Kevin A. 2005. The Phantom Menace: Omitted Variable Bias in Econometric Research. *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22(4): 341-352.

Sieberer, Ulrich. 2007. Selecting Independent Variables: Competing Recommendations for Factor-Centric and Outcome-Centric Research Designs. In Gschwend and Schimmelfennig, eds. *Research Design in Political Science: How to Practice What They Preach?* Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 163-182.

Jacobsmeier, Matthew & Daniel Lewis. 2013. Barking up the Wrong Tree: Why Bo Didn't Fetch Many Votes for Barack Obama in 2012. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46(1): 49-59.

Week 7 (18 October): Causal Inference

De Vaus, David. 2001. Causation and the Logic of Research Design. In *Research Design in Social Research*. Thousand Oaks, USA: Sage, Chapter 3, 34-52.

King, Gary; Robert Keohane & Sidney Verba. 1994. Causality and Causal Inference. In *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press, Chapter 3, 75-91.

Winship, Christopher & Stephen L. Morgan. 1999. The Estimation of Causal Effects from Observational Data. *Annual Review of Sociology* 25: 659-706.

Week 8 (25 October): Case Studies

Gerring, John. 2004. What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for? *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 341-354.

Gerring, John & Rose McDermott. 2007. An Experimental Template for Case Study Research. *American Journal of Political Science* 51(3): 688-701.

Moses, Jonathon and Torbjørn Knutsen. 2012. The Comparative Method. In *Ways of Knowing: Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research* 2nd ed. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 94-115.

Week 9 (1 November): No class (All Saints Day)

Week 10 (8 November): Mixed Methods

Lieberman, Evan S. 2005. Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research. *American Political Science Review* 99(3): 435-452.

Rohlfing, Ingo. 2008. 'What You See and What You Get – Pitfalls and Principles of Nested Analysis in Comparative Research.' *Comparative Political Studies* 41(11): 1492-1514.

Evertsson, Nubia. 2015. A Nested Analysis of Electoral Donations. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* Online early.

Week 11 (15 November): Replication & Publication

King, Gary. 1995. Replication, Replication. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 28(3): 444-452.

Herrnson, Paul. 1995. Replication, Verification, Secondary Analysis, and Data Collection in Political Science. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 28(3): 452-455.

King, Gary. 2006. Publication, Publication. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 119-125.

Schwartz, Martin. 2008. The Importance of Stupidity in Scientific Research. *Journal of Cell Science* 121: 1771.

Thunder, David. 2004. Back to Basics: Twelve Rules for Writing a Publishable Article. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37(3): 493-495.

Zigerell, Lawrence. 2013. Rookie Mistakes: Preemptive Comments on Graduate Student Empirical Research Manuscripts. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 46(1): 142-146.

Week 12 (22 November): Research Design Presentations

Week 13 (29 November): Research Design Presentations

Week 14 (6 December): Research Design Presentations & Semester Wrap-up