

GOVT 299: Research Methods
Summer 2007, Session 1
Mondays 6:15 – 8:15 pm, ICC 104

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 4 to 5 pm or by appointment

Course Description

This course provides an overview of major terminology and methodologies used by political scientists for asking and answering observable questions. In introducing students to the basics of qualitative and quantitative methods, students will learn how to use case-study analysis, basic strategies for research (i.e. interviews, survey), as well as perform and interpret descriptive statistical analysis. We will also explore a variety of information sources, learning how to manage sources as diverse as datasets and archives. The course is designed to offer the student an introduction to the way in which political *science* research is conducted and interpreted, as well as offer a real, hands-on opportunity to develop their research and writing skills for the production of quality research papers in their individual area of study. Upon completion of this course, students should be able to understand and generally interpret published research in political science and be prepared for future coursework in the social sciences.

Course Goals

- To provide students with the analytic tools to critically evaluate social science research and causal arguments found in everyday life
- To introduce students to the variety of methods and strategies for answering interesting questions in their own area or topic of study
- To improve students' abilities to pose and answer research questions
- To foster strong writing and research skills
- Have fun exploring different ways of answering the same question!

Course Requirement

This is a condensed introduction to the variety of research methods and strategies used in the discipline of political science (and social science generally). As this is a summer school course, we will be looking at various topics in "iterated sprints." We will not be able to go into much detail, but it is my hope that you will obtain the basic tools, and pursue some of the introduced methods or strategies in later coursework. For the class to be successful, it is required that every student stays on top of the assignments and readings, as well as attends and participate in *every*

class. Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned each day. Success in this course will come with *participation, attendance, meeting deadlines*, and the production of *quality work*. Late work will be penalized 10% per day.

Course grades will be determined as follows:

- 40% - Homework (four homework assignments, handed out Thursday and due Monday)
- 15% - Quizzes
- 10% - Attendance and Participation
- 35% - Final Paper (Research Design)

Each homework assignment will be handed out on Thursday and will not be due until the following Monday. As there are no “in-class” midterms, these homework assignments are very important in terms of applying class information and assessing student performance. Additionally, we will have three unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. The quizzes will be in a short-answer format. They will assess how closely you have followed the required readings. Provided you have done the reading, the quiz should be straightforward. Class participation and attendance are worth 10%. And, instead of a final exam, students will be required to prepare a research design on a topic of their choice, applying class themes, readings and methods to constructing an appropriate strategy for pursuing this topic. See the instruction sheet for the final research design project for more information.

Final research designs are due Monday, July 9th by 5:00 pm in the digital drop-box on Blackboard.

Readings

The following books are available for purchase at the Georgetown University Bookstore (and on reserve at Lauinger Library):

Johnson, Janet Buttolph and H.T. Reynolds. 2005. *Political Science Research Methods*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

All other readings are available on Blackboard under “Course Documents.” I may also distribute timely newspaper or journal articles as they relate to our discussions, and I encourage you to do so as well.

A word on reading: Some of the assigned readings are challenging (in other words, graduate-level). While they might seem impenetrable, try to take a good crack at them. Learn to read for the main idea and not minutiae. Optional readings are optional. They are either explicitly graduate-level or supplemental.

Course Schedule

Date	Topic and Assignments	Announcements and Deadlines
Week One: Introduction to Methodology – Theories and Concepts		
Mon, June 4:	Introduction	
Tues, June 5:	Hypotheses, Theories, and Variables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson, ch. 2 (38-48), ch. 4 (103-129) • Van Evera, ch. 1 (7-48) • Lupia, Arthur. 2000. “Evaluating Political Science Research: Information for Buyers and Sellers.” <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>, 33(1). 	
Wed, June 6:	Concepts Formation: Measurement, Validity and the Research Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson, ch. 6 (153-183) • Adcock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research” <i>American Political Science Review</i> 95 (Sept): 529-546. • Wagenaar, Willem A. and Jop Groeneweg. 1990. “The Memory of Concentration Camp Survivors.” <i>Applied Cognitive Psychology</i> 4:77-87. <i>Optional:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collier, David and Stephen Levitsky. 1997. “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research.” <i>World Politics</i> 49 (3): 430-51 	
Thurs, June 7:	Research Designs: Constructing a Roadmap for Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson, ch. 3, 5 (49 - 102, 130 - 152) • KKV, <i>DSI</i>, 12-28 • Handouts on research design 	
Week Two: Qualitative Methods		
Mon, June 11:	Small N Studies (Case Studies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van Evera, ch. 2 (49-88) • Gerring, John. 2004. “What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?” <i>American Political Science Review</i>. 98 (May): 341-54 <i>Optional:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George and Bennett, “Case Study and Theory Development,” ch. 1 in <i>Case Studies and Theory Development</i> (3-36) 	Homework #1 Due

Tues, June 12:	Comparative Research Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ragin, <i>The Comparative Method</i> pp. vii-xv, 12-33, 34-52. • Selections from Robert Putnam, <i>Making Democracy Work</i> <i>Optional:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," <i>Political Analysis</i> 2: 131-150. 	
Wed, June 13:	Historical Analysis and Path Dependence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selections from Mahoney and Rueschemeyer ed. <i>Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences</i>. Cambridge, 2003. • Brian Downing, <i>The Military Revolution and Political Change</i>, pp. 1-18, 239-55 <i>Optional:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Increasing returns, path dependence, and the study of politics." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 94(2). 	
Thurs, June 14:	Counterfactuals, Process tracing, and Typological Theories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebow, Richard Ned. 2000. "What's So Different About a Counterfactual?," <i>World Politics</i> 52 (4) 550-85. • David, Paul. "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY." <i>The American Economic Review</i>, Vol. 75, No. 2(May, 1985), pp. 332-337. • Edelstein, David. 2004. "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail," <i>International Security</i> 29 (1): 49-56, 80-91. <i>Optional:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elman, Colin. 2005. "Explanatory Typologies in Qualitative Studies of International Politics." <i>International Organization</i> 59:293-326. • George and Bennett, "Integrating Comparative and Within-Case Analysis: Typological Theory," chapter 11 of <i>Case Studies and Theory Development</i>. 	<i>Movie day!</i>
Week Three: Quantitative Methods		
Mon, June 18:	Large N Studies: Sampling and Randomness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson, ch. 9 (238-269) 	Homework #2 Due
Tues, June 19:	Descriptive Statistics I: Central Tendency, Dispersion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson, ch. 11(305-338) • Examine a codebook from a major dataset (ex: Correlates of War, Polity, Eurobarometer) 	

Wed, June 20:	Descriptive Statistics II: Correlation and Bivariate Analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johnson, ch. 12 (339-402) 	
Thurs, June 21:	Descriptive Statistics III: Underlying Logic and Application <ul style="list-style-type: none"> KKV, <i>DSI</i> (217-230) Gerber, Alan S. and Green, Donald P. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Telephone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." <i>American Political Science Review</i> 94(3): 653-63. 	Bring in article
Week Four and Five: Putting it all Together and Collecting Evidence		
Mon, June 25:	Mixed Methods: Combining Qual and Quant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Symposium: The Quantitative/Qualitative Distinction" in <i>Qualitative Studies</i>, Spring 2005 3(1). Levy, Jack. 2007. "Qualitative Methods and Cross-Method Dialogue in Political Science." <i>Comparative Political Studies</i> 40 (2): 196-14. <i>Optional:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coppedge, Michael. 1999. "Thickening thin concepts and theories: Combining large N and small in comparative politics." <i>Comparative Politics</i> 31 (4): 465-76. Caporaso, James. 1995. "Research Design, Falsification, and the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide," <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 457-60. Laitin, David. 1995. "Disciplining Political Science," <i>American Political Science Review</i>, 454-56. 	Homework #3 Due
Tues, June 26:	Elite Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johnson ch. 7, 10 (185-205; 270-304) "Interview Methods in Political Science." 2002. <i>PSOnline</i> Symposium. "Symposium: Field Research." 2004. <i>Qualitative Methods</i> 2. Read contributions by Lieberman, Howard and Lynch. <i>Optional:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tansey, Oisín. "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-probability Sampling." Nuffield College Working Paper in Politics, No.2006-W8, 2006. Peabody, Robert. et. al. 1990. "Interviewing Political Elites." <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i> 23:3, 451-55. 	

Wed, June 27:	<p>Archives– Field trip to the library</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Johnson ch. 8 (206-237) • Lustick, Ian. 1996. “History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias.” <i>APSR</i> 90 (3): 605-618. • Thies, Cameron G. 2002. “A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations.” <i>International Studies Perspectives</i> 3: 351-72. <p><i>Optional:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levy, Jack. 1997. “Too Important to Leave to the Other,” <i>International Security</i> 22(1): 22-33. • Anderson, Benedict. 1998. “Census, Map, Museum,” in <i>Imagined Communities</i>. London: Verso, pp. 163-185. Available at books.google.com <p><i>Recommended:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nobles, Melissa. 2000. <i>Shades of Citizenship: Race and the Census in Modern Politics</i>. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 1-128; 163-184. 	
Thurs, June 28:	<p>Workshop on Research Designs</p>	
Mon, July 2:	<p>Participant Observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geertz, Clifford. <i>The Interpretation of Cultures</i>. New York: Basic Books, 1973, pp. 412-454 (“Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight”) reprinted in <i>Daedalus</i> (Fall 2005). • Bayard de Volo, Lorraine and Edward Schatz. 2004. “From the Inside Out: Ethnographic Methods in Political Research.” <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>. 37(2): 267-271 • DeWalt, Kathleen and Billie R. DeWalt. 2006. <i>Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers</i>. Pp. 1-15, 92-109. <p><i>Optional:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scott, James. 1985. <i>Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance</i>. New Haven: Yale University Press, chapters 1 and 2. • Cammett, Melani. 2006. “Political Ethnography in Deeply Divided Societies.” <i>Qualitative Methods</i> 4 (Fall): 15-18. • Vidich, Arthur J. 1955. “Participant Observation and the Collection and Interpretation of Data.” <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 60:4, 354-60. 	Homework #4 Due

Tues, July 3:	<p>Survey Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boyd, Richard W. and Herbert H. Hyman. 1975. "Survey Research," in Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, <i>Handbook of Political Science</i>, Vol. 7, Reading: Addison-Wesley, pp. 265-350. • Excerpt from Sidney Verba, Norman Nie, and Jae-On Kim, <i>Participation and Political Equality: A Seven Nation Comparison</i>. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978. <p><i>Optional:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seligson, Mitchell. 2005. "Improving the Quality of Survey Research in Democratizing Countries," <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i>, 51-56. 	
Wed, July 4:	No Class – Happy Fourth of July!!	
Thurs, July 5:	<p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smith, Rogers. "Should We Make Political Science More of a Science or More About Politics?" <i>PS</i> (June 2002): 199-201. • Oren, Ido. Et al. "Notes: Is Political Science Really Young?" <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i> (Jan 2005): 3-7. 	Examine undergraduate opportunities for research and publication

****RESEARCH DESIGN DUE MONDAY, JULY 9TH BY 5PM ****

Research Design Final Assignment – GOVT 299

The final assignment for this course is writing a research design. Students are expected to design a research project that could be utilized to evaluate the empirical validity of a single hypothesis or set of hypotheses pertaining to the political phenomenon under study. There are several components to the research design that will reflect the content of this course, as well as independent research on your selected topic. Therefore, you'll want to select your topic as early as possible and keep it in the front of your mind as we explore different methodologies, strategies, and concepts of research.

You will NOT be conducting actual research for your design. What you will do is present a design – or roadmap – to enable a researcher (possibly you for a future class or thesis!) to go out and run. This is a different kind of “paper.” Instead of “making an argument” you will lay out all the steps, present all the relevant theories, and predict the type of possible outcomes without drawing conclusions to which of these predictions are “true.”

You are required to include in your design:

- A researchable question
- What is the research goal? Theory developing? Testing? Typological building? Identifying casual mechanisms?
- A review of the empirical and theoretical literature to make the case why your puzzle is important and where it fits in the greater context of political science research
- An explicit operationalization of your variables – what is your DV? Your IVs? Consider whether or not there are intervening variables at play.
- Hypotheses and specific predictions about outcomes, as well as the type of evidence you would need to find to support each hypothesis.
- Methodology – how are you going to test yours and alternative hypotheses? Who do you need to talk to? What type of questions will you need to ask? Are there relevant archives you'll need to look at? Which dataset are you using and which variables/questions?
- A “hunch” – what is your prediction? Which hypothesis do you think is accurate? Is it falsifiable? How?

Use the “Case study research design tasks” handout as a rough guideline, as well as the various readings from the syllabus that explain research design goals and strategies.

As a course final, the research design will be assessed on the following:

- Did you address all the requirements for a successful research design?
- Is your review of the literature sophisticated? (Using a variety of sources)
- Have you considered the varieties of strategies and evidence to support your hypothesis and invalidate other explanations?
- The inclusion of a bibliography
- Clear, concise writing

Your research design should be between 10 -12 pages, double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman. No funny margins! Keep it simple and direct. The paper is worth 35% of your grade. Good luck!