

Research Methods

IR B-6800
Spring 2018
Monday 7:15-9:15
NAC 4/126

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Office Hours
Monday 3:30-5:30
NAC 4/143B
Other Times by Appointment

Description: This course presents an introduction to qualitative research methods and the Masters thesis writing process. It is intended for students who will be writing a Masters thesis in international relations.

Learning Outcomes: Students will learn how to formulate a research question, develop a literature review, and create a research design to answer that question. Additionally, students will learn how to give constructive, critical feedback to other students on their work and receive similar feedback from their peers. Lastly, students will learn how to give professional presentations of their proposed work to an audience.

Course Assignments: There are three primary types of assignments for this course: 1) written; 2) critical feedback; and 3) oral presentations.

- 1) **Written Assignments:** The primary writing assignment for the course is to produce a research proposal suitable for submission to a professional academic funding competition. There will be several short assignments to help students develop the necessary skills to produce a typical thesis proposal that will be submitted throughout the term and a final 10-page research proposal to be submitted at the end, incorporating feedback received throughout the course of the semester.
 - a. Assignment 1: Develop a Research Question/Puzzle
 - b. Assignment 2: Literature Review Assignment
 - c. Assignment 3: Research Design
 - d. Assignment 4: Final Proposal
- 2) **Critical Feedback:** Additionally, students will be required to read and critique work that will be assigned along with each other's work, as is typically done in a graduate school proposal development workshop.
- 3) **Oral Presentations:** Throughout the course of the semester, students will give brief presentations (less than five minutes) of each of the components of their research design. Additionally, at the end of the semester students will give a 15-minute presentation of their final research proposal setting the stage for thesis writing during the second semester of the course.

Grading and Evaluation: The course will be graded on a 100-point scale. The breakdown is as follows:

- Assignment 1: 5 points
- Assignment 2: 10 points
- Assignment 3: 15 points
- Final Proposal: 40 points
- Final Presentation: 20 points
- Participation/Critical Feedback: 10 points

Books to Purchase: Booth, William et al. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. Fourth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Course Overview

Section I: Research Design Overview

Week 1 – Course Introduction

Jan. 29 – Course Introduction

Przeworski, Adam and Frank Salomon. 1995. “On the Art of Writing Proposals.” New York: Social Science Research Council.

Smith, Nicholas Rush. “The Politics of Death: Young Men and Violence in South Africa.” Research Proposal.

Assignment 1 Handed Out: Develop a Research Question/Puzzle

Week 2 – Overview of a Research Proposal and Project

Feb. 5 – Elements of a Research Question

Booth, William et al. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. Fourth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chapters 2-4.

Almond, Gabriel. 1966. “Political Theory and Political Science.” *American Political Science Review* 60(4): 869–879.

King, Gary, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: 3-27.

CASE:

Goodfellow, Tom. 2015. “Taming the ‘Rogue’ Sector: Studying State Effectiveness in Africa through Informal Transport Politics.” *Comparative Politics* 47(2): 127-147.

DUE Assignment 1: Research Question

Assignment 2 Handed Out: Literature Review

Week 3 – Class Cancelled

Feb. 12 - No Class (CUNY Cancellation)

Week 4 – Literature Reviews

Feb. 20 – Elements of a Literature Review

NOTE: Tuesday Class (CUNY Makeup Class)

Booth, William et al. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. Fourth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chapter 5 and 6.

Abbott, Andrew. 2014. *Digital Paper: A Manual for Research and Writing with Library and Internet Materials*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chapter 3.

Trachtenberg, Marc. 2006. *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 6.

CASE:

Berman, Sheri. 1997. "Civil society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic." *World Politics* 49 (3): 401-429.

Read and Be Prepared to Critique Colleagues' Assignment 1

Week 5 – Critiquing a Research Design, Data and Argument

Feb. 26 – Critiquing a Research Design, Data and Argument

Booth, William et al. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. Fourth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chapters 7-10.

CASE:

Smith, Nicholas Rush. 2015. "Rejecting Rights: Vigilantism and Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa." *African Affairs* 114 (456): 342-360.

Smith, Nicholas Rush. Field Notes and Interview Transcript.

DUE Assignment 2: Literature Review

Assignment 3 Handed Out: Research Design

Week 6 – Elements of a Research Design 1

Mar. 5 – Basic Elements of Qualitative Research: Style and Concepts

Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis* 14(3): 227-249.

Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64 (4): 1033-1053.

Schaffer, Frederic Charles. 2016. *Elucidating Social Science Concepts*: Chapter 1.

CASE:

Schaffer, Frederic Charles. 1997. "Political Concepts and the Study of Democracy: The Case of Demokaraasi in Senegal." *PoLAR* 20 (2): 40-49.

Read and Be Prepared to Critique Colleagues' Assignment 2

Week 7 – Elements of a Research Design II

Mar. 12 – Comparative Case Designs

Slater, Dan and Daniel Ziblatt. 2013. "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46 (10): 1301-1327.

Przeworski, Adam and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley-Interscience: Chapter 2.

Dunning, Thad. 2008. "Improving Causal Inference Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments." *Political Research Quarterly* 61 (2): 282-293.

Simmons, Erica and Nicholas Rush Smith. 2017. "Comparison with an Ethnographic Sensibility." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 50 (01): 126-130.

CASE:

Posner, Daniel N. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98 (4): 529-545.

Week 8 – Elements of a Research Design III

Mar. 19 – Single Case Designs and Process Tracing

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

Seawright, Jason and John Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options." *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2): 294-308.

George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2004. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press: Chapter 10.

CASE:

Autesserre, Severine. 2009. "Hobbes and the Congo: Frames, Local Violence, and International Intervention." *International Organization* 63 (02): 249-280.

Week 9 – Elements of a Research Design IV

Mar. 26 – Comparative Historical Analysis

Pierson, Paul. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 1.

Sewell, William H. 2005. *Logics of History*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chapters 3 and 8.

CASE:

Slater, Dan and Nicholas Rush Smith. 2016. "The Power of Counterrevolution: Elitist Origins of Political Order in Postcolonial Asia and Africa" *American Journal of Sociology* 121 (5): 1472-1516.

Week 10 – SPRING BREAK

Apr. 2 - No Class – Spring Break

SECTION II: Preparing to Do Research

Week 11 – Types of Qualitative Research: Fieldwork

Apr. 9 – Fieldwork

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Towards an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: Chapters 1 and 6.

CASE:

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Deep Play: Notes from a Balinese Cockfight." In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books.

Week 12 – Types of Qualitative Research: Archival Research

Apr. 16 – Archival Research

Farge, Arlette. 2015. *The Allure of the Archives*. New Haven: Yale University Press: Selections.

Trachtenberg, Marc. 2006. *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press: Chapter 5.

CASE:

Grant, Daragh. 2015. "'Civilizing' the Colonial Subject: The Co-Evolution of State and Slavery in South Carolina, 1670–1739." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57 (3): 606-636.

DUE Assignment 3: Research Design

Week 13 – Why the Evidence You Use Matters to How You See the World

Apr. 23 – The Consequences of Different Data Sources

Davenport, Christian and Patrick Ball. 2002. "Views to a Kill: Exploring the Implications of Source Selection in the Case of Guatemalan State Terror, 1977-1995." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 46 (3): 427-450.

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2010. "Shades of Truth and Lies: Interpreting Testimonies of War and Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 47 (2): 231-241.

Davenport, Christian. 2014. "Researching While Black: Why Conflict Research Needs More African Americans (Maybe)." *Political Violence @ A Glance*.

CASE:

Carolyn Nordstrom. 2001. "Out of the Shadows." In *Intervention and Transnational in Africa: Global-Local Networks of Power*. Thomas M. Callaghy, Ronald Kassimir, and Robert Latham, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Read and Be Prepared to Critique Colleagues' Assignment 3

Week 14 – Research Ethics and Access Issues

Apr. 30 – The IRB and Problems of Access

The Belmont Report

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2012. "Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 45(4): 717-723.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2007. "Field Research During War: Ethical Dilemmas." In *New Perspectives in Political Ethnography*. Joseph, Lauren et al. eds. New York: Springer.

Schwartz Shea, Peregrine and Dvora Yanow. 2012. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. New York: Routledge Chapter 4.

CASE:

Pachirat, Timothy. 2009. "The Political in Political Ethnography: Dispatches from the Kill Floor." In *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Politics*. Edward Schatz, Ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 15 – Final Presentations

May 7 – Final Presentation and Critique Session of Group 1
No Reading

Week16 – Final Presentations

May 14 – Final Presentation and Critique Session of Group 2
No Reading

Discussion of Outstanding Issues to Begin Researching Thesis

DUE MAY 21: Final Proposals