

Research Design (GOVT 615)

American University, Fall 2022
Monday, 5:30-8, East Quad Building, 11

Professor Elizabeth Suhay
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Office hours: Friday, 4-6 (via Zoom) and by appointment

Course Description

This seminar offers an introduction to epistemology and empirical research design. It is not a course on data analysis; it focuses on how to create, gather, and find data that are worth analyzing.¹ The course begins with an introduction to philosophy of science and social scientific inquiry. This is followed by a grand tour of common empirical research designs, including qualitative interview, observation, survey, experiment, comparative case study, historical, and mixed-method approaches. Students will read general methodological advice regard how to execute a particular approach as well as examples of research studies employing each approach. The final portion of the course focuses on ethics and values in the social sciences. Students will be asked to write several papers and actively participate in class discussions and activities throughout the semester. At the conclusion of the course, students will complete an original research design on a topic, and using an approach, of their choosing.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- **Understand** various perspectives on the philosophy of science and social science
- **Relate** those perspectives to contemporary social scientific empirical research
- **Inventory** an array of empirical approaches to social science
- **Evaluate** the strengths and weaknesses of various empirical approaches
- **Critique** other scholars' research designs
- **Conceive and design** an original empirical research project

¹ My thanks to Don Kinder, whose emphasis and phrasing I have borrowed here. I took his Behavioral Research Methods course at the University of Michigan many years ago and am forever grateful for the knowledge I gained from it. Some of the structure and readings of this course reflect his syllabus.

Course Assignments and Expectations

Participation 20%

This course is a seminar, and, thus, its success depends on your preparation. Please read assigned readings in their entirety before each class and record notes on the authors' main points and your reflections. Consider each publication's strengths, weaknesses, implications, and any questions you have about it. With respect to example articles, pay special attention to the "methods" portions.

In weeks focused on learning a particular empirical approach, we will often engage in hands-on learning in class via informal activities. The activities include: practicing interviewing, writing survey questions, designing an experiment or natural experiment, and designing a case study or historical study.

Students' participation will be graded according to quantity and quality of participation, with quality reflecting preparation and constructive engagement with readings, classmates' ideas, and activities. Unexcused absences and/or repeatedly arriving late will negatively affect the participation grade.

Assignments 80%

Paper 1 on philosophy of science 15%
DUE DATE Friday, September 23

Paper 2 on social scientific inquiry 10%
DUE DATE Friday, October 7

Research proposal topic, question, and empirical approach 5%
DUE DATE Friday, October 14

IRB certification (*pass/fail*) 5%
DUE DATE Friday, October 28

Paper 3 comparing and contrasting empirical approaches 15%
DUE DATE Tuesday, November 22

Research proposal draft and peer review (*pass/fail*) 5%
DUE DATE Friday, December 2 (draft) and December 9 (peer review)

Final research proposal 25%
DUE DATE Friday, December 16

Assigned Readings

The following six books should be purchased or obtained via library reserves. (You can purchase any edition of the older texts; however, be sure to get the *second* edition of Brady and Collier.)

1. Karl Popper. 1959. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. Routledge.
2. Thomas S. Kuhn. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press.
3. Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press.
4. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards, Second Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield.
5. Annette Lareau. 2021. *Listening to People: A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing It All Up*. University of Chicago Press.
6. Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley. 1963. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Houghton Mifflin.

All other assigned readings will be made available via Canvas.

Note that readings listed as “additional” are mainly provided for further reading at a later date.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Week 1 Course Introduction – August 29

Week 2 Philosophy of Science I – September 5 (*Labor Day; no class meeting*)

Karl Popper. 1959. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. Routledge.

Part I: Introduction to the Logic of Science

Chapter I: A Survey of Some Fundamental Problems

Chapter II: On the Problem of a Theory of Scientific Method

Part II: Some Structural Components of a Theory of Experience

Chapter III: Theories

Chapter IV: Falsifiability

Chapter V: The Problem of the Empirical Basis

Chapter VI: Degrees of Testability

Chapter VII: Simplicity

Chapter X: Corroboration, or How a Theory Stands Up to Tests

Week 3 Philosophy of Science II – September 12

Thomas S. Kuhn. 1962. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press. (*entire*)

I. Introduction: A Role for History

II. The Route to Normal Science

III. The Nature of Normal Science

IV. Normal Science as Puzzle-solving

V. The Priority of Paradigms

VI. Anomaly and the Emergence of Scientific Theories

VII. Crisis and the Emergence of Scientific Theories

VIII. The Response to Crisis

IX. The Nature and Necessity of Scientific Revolutions

X. Revolutions as Changes of World View

XI. The Invisibility of Revolutions

XII. The Resolutions of Revolutions

XIII. Progress through Revolutions

Postscript 1969

ADDITIONAL READING

Thomas Kuhn. 1978. Second thoughts on paradigms. In *The Essential Tension*, edited by Thomas Kuhn. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 293-319.

William H. Riker. 1982. The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science. *American Political Science Review* 76(4): 753-766.

Week 4 Philosophy of Science III – September 19

P.K. Feyerabend. 1970. Against method: Outline of an anarchist theory of knowledge. In *Analysis of Theories of Physics and Psychology*, edited by Radner and Winokur. *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science IV*: 17-92. (you can skip the endnotes)

Mark Bevir. 2008. Meta-methodology: Clearing the Underbrush. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Janet T. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. Oxford University Press. Pp. 48-70.

ADDITIONAL READING

Imre Lakatos. 1970. Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs. In *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, edited by Lakatos and Musgrave. Cambridge University Press. Pp. 91-138; 173-180.

Week 5 Social Scientific Inquiry I – September 26

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. (entire)

1. The Science in Social Science
2. Descriptive Inference
3. Causality and Causal Influence
4. Determining What to Observe
5. Understanding What to Avoid
6. Increasing the Number of Observations

ADDITIONAL READING

Abraham Kaplan. 1964. *The Conduct of Inquiry*. Chandler Publishing Company.

Week 6 Social Scientific Inquiry II – October 3

Henry E. Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards, Second Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield.

- B. Critiques of the Quantitative Template
 3. Doing Good and Doing Better: How Far Does the Quantitative Template Get Us? by Henry E. Brady
 4. Some Unfulfilled Promises of Quantitative Imperialism, by Larry M. Bartels
 5. How Inference in the Social (but Not the Physical) Sciences Neglects Theoretical Anomaly, by Ronald Rogowski
- C. Linking the Quantitative and Qualitative Traditions
 6. Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide, by Sidney Tarrow

7. The Importance of Research Design, by Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Vera

D. Diverse Tools, Shared Standards

8. Critiques, Responses, and Trade-Offs: Drawing Together the Debate, by David Collier, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright

9. Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference: Toward an Alternative View of Methodology, by David Collier, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright

Dvora Yanow. 2005. In the House of “Sciences,” There Are Many Rooms: Perestroika and the “Science Studies” Turn. In *Perestroika! The Raucous Rebellion in Political Science*, edited by Kristen Renwick Monroe. Yale University Press. Pp. 200-217

ADDITIONAL READING

Henry E. Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards, Second Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield.

A. Refocusing the Debate

1. Refocusing the Discussion of Methodology, by Henry E. Brady, David Collier, and Jason Seawright

2. The Question for Standards: King, Keohane, and Verba’s *Designing Social Inquiry*, by David Collier, Jason Seawright, and Gerardo L. Munck

Week 7 Concepts, Questions, and Theory – October 10

John Gerring. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework, Second Edition*. Cambridge University Press.

2. Beginnings / Finding a Research Question

3. Arguments

5. Concepts

Giovanni Sartori. 1970. Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics. *American Political Science Review* 64(4):1033–1046.

Example

Gerardo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices. *Comparative Political Studies* 35(1): 5–34.

ADDITIONAL READING

Gary Goertz. 2012. *Social Science Concepts*. Princeton University Press.

Week 8 Qualitative Interviews & Observation – October 17

Annette Lareau. 2021. *Listening to People: A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing It All Up*. University of Chicago Press.

4. Learning to Interview
5. How to Conduct a Good Interview
6. Learning to Do Participant Observation
7. Writing High-Quality Field Notes

Clifford Geertz. 1973. Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. Basic Books.

Examples

Sadé L. Lindsay. 2021. Damned if you do, damned if you don't: How formerly incarcerated men navigate the labor market with prison credentials. *Criminology* 60: 455-479.

Bernardo Zacka. 2017. *When the State Meets the Street: Public Service and Moral Agency*. Belknap Press.

- Introduction
2. When the Rules Run Out

ADDITIONAL READING

Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Second Edition*. University of Chicago Press.

Diana Kapiszewski, Lauren M. MacLean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge University Press.

Daniel Steiman and Elizabeth Suhay. 2022. Conducting Interview Projects in the U.S. Congress: Perspectives from Experts in the Field. Manuscript.

Matthew Longo and Bernardo Zacka. 2019. Political Theory in an Ethnographic Key. *American Political Science Review* 113(4): 1066-1070.

Richard F. Fenno, Jr. 1977. U.S. House Members in Their Constituencies: An Exploration. *The American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883-917.

Week 9 Surveys – October 24

Peter V. Marsden and James D. Wright. 2010. *Handbook of Survey Research, Second Edition*. Emerald.

1. Survey Research and Social Science: History, Current Practice, and Future Prospects, by James D. Wright and Peter V. Marsden.
2. Overview of Design Issues: Total Survey Error, by Paul P. Biemer.
5. Fundamentals of Applied Sampling, by Thomas Piazza.
9. Question and Questionnaire Design, by Jon A. Krosnick and Stanley Presser

Examples

Angela Bos et al. 2022. This One's for the Boys: How Gendered Political Socialization Limits Girls' Political Ambition and Interest. *American Political Science Review* 116(2): 484-501.

Diana Mutz. 2018. Status threat, not economic hardship, explains the 2016 presidential vote. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115(19): E4330-9.

ADDITIONAL READING

Leslie Kish. 1965. *Survey Sampling*. Wiley.

Week 10 Experiments – October 31

Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley. 1963. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Houghton Mifflin. Pp. 1-34.

James N. Druckman and Donald P. Green, eds. 2021. *Advances in Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press.

2. Conjoint Survey Experiments, by Kirk Bansak, Jens Hainmueller, Daniel J. Hopkins, and Teppei Yamamoto
3. Audit Studies in Political Science, by Daniel M. Butler and Charles Crabtree
12. Improving Experimental Treatments in Political Science, by Diana Mutz

Examples

Joshua Kalla and David Broockman. 2020. Reducing Exclusionary Attitudes through Interpersonal Conversation: Evidence from Three Field Experiments. *American Political Science Review* 114(2): 410-25.

Christi Metcalfe and Justin T. Pickett. 2021. Public fears of protesters and support for protest policing: An experimental test of two theoretical models. *Criminology* 60: 60-69.

ADDITIONAL READING

Henry E. Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards, Second Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield.

13. Regression-Based Inference: A Case Study in Failed Causal Assessment, by Jason Seawright

William R. Shadish, Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. 2001. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference, 2nd Edition*. Cengage.

Ismail K. White, Chryl N. Laird, and Troy D. Allen. 2014. Selling Out?: The Politics of Navigating Conflicts between Racial Group Interest and Self-Interest. *American Political Science Review* 108(4): 783-800

Scott Clifford, Geoffrey Sheagley, and Spencer Piston. 2021. Increasing Precision without Altering Treatment Effects: Repeated Measures Designs in Survey Experiments. *American Political Science Review* 115(3): 1048-1065.

Ryan T. Moore, Katherine N. Gan, Karissa Minnich, and David Yokum. 2022. Anchor management: a field experiment to encourage families to meet critical programme deadlines. *Journal of Public Policy*.

Diana Mutz. 2021. (Mis)Attributing the Causes of American Job Loss: The Consequences of Getting It Wrong. *Public Opinion Quarterly* 85(1): 101-122.

Week 11 Natural Experiments – November 7

Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley. 1963. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Houghton Mifflin. Pp. 34-64.

Henry E. Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards, Second Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield.

14. Design-Based Inference: Beyond the Pitfalls of Regression Analysis? by Thad Dunning

James N. Druckman and Donald P. Green, eds. 2021. *Advances in Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press.

6. Natural Experiments, by Rocío Titiunik

Examples

Anna Getmansky and Thomas Zeitzoff. 2014. Terrorism and Voting: The Effect of Rocket Threat on Voting in Israeli Elections. *American Political Science Review* 108(3): 588-604.

Melissa Dell, Nathan Lane, and Pablo Querubin. 2018. The Historical State, Local Collective Action, and Economic Development in Vietnam. *Econometrica* 86(6): 2083-2121.

Nicholas Eubank and Adriane Fresh. 2022. Enfranchisement and Incarceration after the 1965 Voting Rights Act. *American Political Science Review* 116(3): 791-806.

ADDITIONAL READING

Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell. 1979. *Quasi-Experimentation: Design & Analysis Issues for Field Settings*. Houghton Mifflin.

John Sides, Lynn Vavreck, and Christopher Warshaw. 2022. The Effect of Television Advertising in United States Elections. *American Political Science Review* 116(2): 702-718.

Week 12 Case Studies – November 14

Arend Lijphart. 1971. Comparative politics and the comparative method. *American Political Science Review* 65: 682-693.

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

John Gerring. 2008. Case Selection for Case-Study Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Techniques. In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Janet T. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. Oxford University Press. Pp. 645-684.

Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel, eds. 2015. *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytical Tool*. Cambridge University Press.

1. Process tracing: from philosophical roots to best practices, by Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel

James Mahoney and Goertz. 2006. A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research. *Political Analysis* 14: 227-249.

Example

Thomas Banchoff. 2005. Path Dependence and Value-Driven Issues: The Comparative Politics of Stem Cell Research. *World Politics* 57: 200-230.

ADDITIONAL READING

Donald Campbell. 1975. Degrees of freedom and the case study. *Comparative Political Studies* 8: 178-85.

John Gerring. 2017. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices, Second Edition*. Cambridge University Press.

Harold Kincaid, ed. 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Social Science*. Oxford University Press.

4. Process Tracing and Causal Mechanisms, by David Waldner

Ingo Rohlfing. 2014. Comparative Hypothesis Testing Via Process Tracing. *Sociological Methods & Research* 43(4): 606-642.

Henry E. Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards, Second Edition*. Rowman & Littlefield.

E. Qualitative Tools for Causal Inference

11. On Types of Scientific Inquiry: The Role of Qualitative Reasoning, by David A. Freedman
12. Data-Set Observations versus Causal-Process Observations: The 2000 U.S. Presidential Election, by Henry E. Brady

Week 13 Archival and Historical Approaches – November 21

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

1. The Theory of Historical Inquiry

Niamh Moore, Andrea Salter, Liz Stanley, and Maria Tamboukou. 2017. *The Archive Project: Archival Research in the Social Sciences*. Routledge.

2. Archival methodology inside the black box: noise in the archive!

Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek. 2004. *The Search for American Political Development*. Cambridge University Press.

1. The Historical Construction of Politics
4. Political Development: The Definition

Examples

Elizabeth N. Saunders. 2009. Transformative Choices: Leaders and the Origins of Intervention Strategy. *International Security* 34(2): 119-161.

Yannick I. Pengl, Philip Roessler, and Valeria Rueda. 2022. Cash Crops, Print Technologies, and the Politicization of Ethnicity in Africa. *American Political Science Review* 116(1): 181-199.

Yuhua Wang. 2022. Blood is Thicker Than Water: Elite Kinship Networks and State Building in Imperial China. *American Political Science Review* 116(3): 896-910.

ADDITIONAL READING

Paul Pierson. 2000. Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics. *American Political Science Review* 94(2): 251-268.

Week 14 Interdisciplinary Research and Mixed Methods – November 28

Donald T. Campbell. 1969. Ethnocentrism of disciplines and the fish-scale model of omniscience. In *Interdisciplinary Relationships in the Social Sciences*, edited by M. Sherif and C. Sherif. Aldine.

Mario Luis Small. 2011. How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature. *Annual Review of Sociology* 37: 57-86.

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

Examples

Anselm Hager and Krzysztof Krakowski. 2022. Does State Repression Spark Protests? Evidence from Secret Police Surveillance in Communist Poland. *American Political Science Review* 116(2): 564-579.

Max Schaub. 2021. Acute Financial Hardship and Voter Turnout: Theory and Evidence from the Sequence of Bank Working Days. *American Political Science Review* 115(4): 1258-1274.

Week 15 Values and Ethics in Social Science – December 5

Abraham Kaplan. 1964. *The Conduct of Inquiry*. Chandler Publishing Company.
X: Values

Philip E. Tetlock. 1994. Political Psychology or Politicized Psychology: Is the Road to Scientific Hell Paved with Good Moral Intentions? *Political Psychology* 15(3): 509-529.

APSA Principles and Guidance for Human Subjects Research. 2020.

Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. 2016. Encountering Your IRB 2.0: What Political Scientists Need to Know. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49(2): 277-285.

Trisha Phillips. 2021. Ethics of Field Experiments. *Annual Review of Political Science* 24: 277-300.

Arthur Lupia and Colin Elman. 2014. Openness in Political Science: Data Access and Research Transparency. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47(1): 19-42.

ADDITIONAL READING

David O. Sears. 1994. Ideological Bias in Political Psychology: The View from Scientific Hell. *Political Psychology* 15(3): 547-556.

Philip E. Tetlock. 1994. How Politicized Is Political Psychology and Is There Anything We Should Do about It? *Political Psychology* 15(3): 567-577.

Scott Desposato. 2018. Subjects and Scholars' Views on the Ethics of Political Science Field Experiments. *Perspectives on Politics* 16(3): 739-750.

James N. Druckman and Donald P. Green, eds. 2021. *Advances in Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge University Press.

7. Virtual Consent: The Bronze Standard for Experimental Ethics, by Dawn Langan Teele

Annie Franco, Neil Malhotra, and Gabor Simonovits. 2014. Publication bias in the social sciences: Unlocking the file drawer. *Science* 345(6203): 1502-1505.

Colin Elman and Diana Kapiszewski. 2014. Data Access and Research Transparency in the Qualitative Tradition. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47(1): 43-47.

Kristen Renwick Monroe. 2018. The Rush to Transparency: DA-RT and the Potential Dangers for Qualitative Research. *Perspectives on Politics* 16(1): 141-148.

Jonathan Grossman and Ami Pedahzur. 2020. Can We Do Better? Replication and Online Appendices in Political Science. *Perspectives on Politics* 19(3): 906-911.