

Research Design
Political Science 500a
Tuesday 5:00-7:30
3113 Faner Hall
Fall 2009

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1 Course Description

The class is a graduate-level introduction to empirical research in political science. Students will learn how to pose focused research questions, develop answers with theoretical frameworks, formulate and refine concepts, construct valid and reliable measures, and finally to gather data. While other methodology courses teach students how to analyze data, this class emphasizes the process of developing research questions and gathering high quality data for answering them. My goals are for students to understand 1) different styles of political science research, 2) the primary methodological issues surrounding each style of research, and 3) general standards for evaluating research.

This course is only an introduction to these subjects. Mastering the application of research methodology - and understanding how to deal with the substance and art of the discipline - comes through repeated application and experience. Moreover, we will not cover all theoretical and epistemological approaches to political science methodology, nor will we cover the ones we do discuss in equal detail. For those who want to learn more, the syllabus includes a number of recommended readings that you can use to learn about alternative methodological viewpoints. I also strongly recommend the additional methods courses in our department, which expose you in more depth to different modes and methods for data analysis.

2 Course Philosophy

The discipline of political science is a unique blend of substance and science. The ultimate goal of our research is to investigate, identify, interpret, and explain empirical facts about the real political world. Some research has practical policy implications; other work improves our conceptual understanding of the political world and adds to our base knowledge. The vast majority of your training in the discipline of political science focuses on this second kind of research, though the lessons also apply to the first type of research.

In order to claim the mantle of “scientists,” empirical investigations must be systematic and carefully designed. This implies that there must be standards that distinguish good research from the bad, without which little separates our work from that of pundits, politicians, and armchair critics. However, the purusit

of these standards is complicated by the diverse theoretical frameworks, topics, and epistemological stands found in the discipline. As a former instructor of mine once put it, “Anyone looking for pristine purity is bound to be disappointed with the discipline of political science.” As a consequence, no one completely agrees about what standards to employ in evaluating research. In practice, it implies that many scholars often overlook the contributions of scholars who employ different methods, data, and analytic techniques.

Although these conditions complicate the conduct of empirical research, they also create an interesting challenge. How can a scholar design an empirical study that is informative, interesting, and plausible to people who have different substantive, theoretical, and empirical backgrounds? While there is no clear answer to this question, there are well-established principles that can guide our efforts. At the very least, these principles help us avoid clear problems in the conduct of scientific research. At the very most, they provide a common ground upon which empirical research of all varieties can be evaluated. It is these principles - even if incomplete and imperfect - that provide the scientific underpinnings of our studies and promote a sophisticated understanding of politics.

3 Course Requirements

3.1 Class Preparation and Discussion

Attendance and participation are mandatory for this course. Learning is an active exercise, so you must come prepared to discuss the course material each week. To aid in your preparation, some of the important themes and questions for each week are identified on the syllabus. You would be well served to think about those issues before attending class. You should come prepared to answer the following questions for each assigned reading:

1. What are the major themes?
2. What questions of clarification do you have?
3. What criticisms do you have of the arguments it lays bare?
4. What does the reading contribute to your understanding of research design?

3.2 Research Design Paper

Students are required to write a 20-25 page research design in which they state a research question and elaborate a plan for gathering the data necessary for answering that question. Each paper needs to address the following subjects: What is the state of scholarly knowledge on the subject? What is the research question, how does it relate to previous research, and why is it interesting? What are the potential answers to—hypotheses about—the question? What concepts must be defined in order to investigate those possibilities? How will those concepts be measured? What are the threats to validity and reliability? What challenges will occur in gathering the data and how can they be accounted for? What challenges will there be in analyzing the data and how can those be accounted for? Students will present their designs at a research symposium during finals week (tentatively scheduled for December 14th, 8:00 - 10:00 a.m.), along with your colleagues in other classes. The paper is worth 30% of the final grade, with the research presentation accounting for 10%.

3.3 Research Process Assignments

Students are required to hand in five relatively short assignments that cover key elements of the research process. Each assignment requires 2-5 pages of thoughtful writing on a specific class topic. Topics for the assignments are: (1) a summary of a research article from a major political science journal, (2) development of a research question, (3) development of a research hypothesis, (4) a discussion of how to test research hypotheses, and (5) selection of a research technique. **If done properly**, these assignments will be the foundation for your research design. Altogether, these assignments are worth 25% of your final grade.

3.4 Grading

Participation	35%
Assignment #1	5%
Assignment #2	5%
Assignment #3	5%
Assignment #4	5%
Assignment #5	5%
Research Design Paper	30%
Research Symposium Presentation	10%

3.5 Important Dates and Deadlines

September 8	Research summary paper due
September 15	Research question paper due
October 6	Research hypothesis paper due
October 13	Research test paper due
December 1	Observation selection paper due
December 8	Research design paper due in my mail box
December 14	Research presentation

4 Course Policies

4.1 Absences

I expect you to attend every class session. If you must miss this class for some reason, you can receive an excused absence if you contact the instructor in advance. To be absolutely clear - I do not expect to provide any excused absences except in exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Missed Assignments

All assignments are due on the date assigned unless the instructor indicates otherwise. Any assignments that are not turned in on time will lose half a letter grade for each day they are late. Any assignment more than two days late will not be accepted. **It is considered bad form to turn in late work in graduate classes, so I encourage you to meet your deadlines.**

4.3 Incompletes

There will be no incompletes given in this class except in cases of emergency or where university policy applies to the contrary.

4.4 Cheating and Academic Misconduct

Any student engaging in academic misconduct will receive an F in my course and be reported to the Dean. I will also recommend your expulsion from the graduate program. I suggest that, as a start, you use the following common sense criteria:

- Group work not approved by the instructor constitutes academic fraud.
- Representing anyone else's written work as your own is plagiarism.
- Representing anyone else's ideas as your own is academic misconduct.
- Using unauthorized resources on exams or in papers is cheating.

- Turning in work from other classes without permission is academic misconduct.

If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating or academic misconduct, you should examine the university policy and/or ask the instructor prior to turning in any assignment.

4.5 Problems and Emergencies

Anyone who has academic or personal problems is free to see me during office hours or to make appointment. Students that have difficulty making my office hours should inform me immediately. If a student has an emergency - academic or otherwise - s/he can contact me by email. If this attempt is not successful within a reasonable amount of time, it is permissible to call me at home.

4.6 Grading Policies and Standards

Grades on assignments are returned as promptly as possible. There are no guarantees on how quickly graded assignments will be returned. If students receive assignment back and have questions about the grade, they must wait at least two days until asking the instructor to review the grade. If a student wants a re-grade, s/he must submit a single-spaced, single paragraph note explaining why the original grade is inappropriate. All assignments submitted for a re-grade can go up or down.

5 Textbooks

This course is an intensive learning experience. You will learn primarily by reading and then discussing that material with your instructor and classmates. Accordingly, there is a lot of reading for this course. A great deal of this reading is in seven required books that are available from the University Bookstore. Other readings are available on-line at JSTOR (<http://www.jstor.org>), in the library, or through the instructor.

- Campbell, D. and J. Stanley. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1963.
- Frankfort-Nachmias, C. and D. Nachmias. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. Fifth Edition. New York: St. Martin Press, 1996.
- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Boston: MIT Press, 2005. *Recommended*.
- Gerring, John. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007. [CSR]
- Gerring, John. *Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001. [SSM]
- Goertz, Gary. *Social Science Concepts*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- King, G., R. Keohane, and S. Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

6 Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1, August 25. Preliminary Issues: The Idea of a Social Science

What are the goals of social science research? What are the key elements of the scientific method? How does this method apply to the discipline of political science? What are some of the potential drawbacks involved with thinking of ourselves as scientists? What are the potential advantages in thinking of ourselves

as scientists? What kind of research is done in the discipline?

Required Reading

- Almond, G. 1988. "Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 21(4):828-42.
- SSM, Preface, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2
- Grant, J. Tobin. 2005. "What Divides Us? The Image and Organization of Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 28(July):379-86.
- Nacmias and Nacmias, Chapter 1
- Gunnell, J.G. 2005. "Political Science on the Cusp: Rediscovering a Discipline's Past." *American Political Science Review*. 99(4):597-610.

Recommended Reading

- Almond, G. "Political Science: The History of the Discipline" R. E. Goodin and H. Klingemann, eds. *A New Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1996.
- Almond, G. and S. Genco. 1977. "Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of Politics." *World Politics*. 29(4):489-522.
- Collier, D., Jason Seawright, and Henry Brady. 2003. "Qualitative versus Quantitative: What Might This Distinction Mean?" *Qualitative Methods*. 1(1): 4-8.
- Kasza, G. 2001. "For an Ecumenical Science of Politics." Posted to the Perestroika List, May 15, 2001.
- Kramer, G. "Political Science as Science." H. Weisberg, ed. *Political Science*. Agathon Press, 1986.
- Groffman, B. "Seven Durable Axes of Cleavage in Political Science." F. Greenstein and N. W. Polsby, eds. *Handbook of Political Science: Political Science Scope and Theory*. Reading, M.A.: Addison-Wesley, 1997.
- Little, D. *Varieties of Social Explanations: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science*. Boulder, C.O.: Westview Press, 1996.
- MacIntyre, A. "The Idea of a Social Science." *Against the Self-Images of an Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.
- McRae, Jr., D. "The Science of Politics and its Limits." H. Weisberg, ed. *Political Science*. Agathon Press, 1986.
- Shapiro, I. 2001. "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, Or: What's Wrong with Political Science and What to do About It." C.E. Lindblom Lecture in Public Policy. New Haven, CT: Yale University.
- Weisberg, H. "Introduction: The Science of Politics and Political Change." H. Weisberg, ed. *Political Science*. Agathon Press, 1986.

Week 2, September 1. Preliminaries Issues: Motivating Research & Asking Questions

The most difficult part of the scientific process is the first step - asking a good question. In the readings for this week, focus on the questions that drive each piece. Is the question compelling? Why or why not? What kind of a question is it - one that focuses on what or one that focuses on why? How do the authors use previous research? How do the authors develop and ask questions? What are the similarities and differences across authors in developing questions? How do the authors proceed to answer the questions? In short, how is the research discussed in these pieces motivated?

Required Reading

- Gibson, J.L. 2006. "Enigmas of Intolerance: Fifty Years after Stouffer's *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*." *Perspectives on Politics*. 4(1):21-34.
- Frymer, Paul. 2005. "Racism Revised: Courts, Labor Law, and the Institutional Construction of Racial Animus." *American Political Science Review*. 99(3):373-88.
- Putnam, R.D. 2003. "The Public Role of Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics*. 1(2):249-56.
- Wilson, W.J. 2002. "Expanding the Domain of Policy-Relevant Scholarship in the Social Sciences." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 35(1):1-4.
- Read at least **2** of the selections from "'Top Twenty' Commentaries" in the *American Political Science Review*, 100(4):667-89.

Week 3, September 8. The Basics of Methodology: Styles of Research

This week we will focus on the goals and styles of political science research. It is similar to our previous class in that we still are confronting the issue of what makes research interesting and/or worthwhile. However, rather than considering what makes published research good or interesting, we'll look at this topic from the perspective of methodologists. In their opinion, what should research look like in political science? What is methodology? Why is it important? How much emphasis is placed on theory for motivating research? Do they suggest that political research is more likely to be inductive or deductive?

Required Reading

- CSR, Chapter 1.
- Gibbons, M.T. 2006. "Heremeneutics, Political Inquiry, and Practical Reason: An Evolving Challenge to Political Science." *American Political Science Review*. 100(4):563-72.
- King et al., Chapter 1.
- Liberman, E.S. 2005. "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review*. 99(3):435-52.
- Nachmias and Nachmias. Chapter 2. (skim.)
- Rogowski, Ronald, "How Inference in the Social (but Not the Physical) Sciences Neglects Theoretical Anomaly," in *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.

Recommended Reading

- George and Bennett, Chapter 1.
- Shively, W. "Chapter 2: Political Theories and Research Topics." *The Craft of Political Research*. Third Edition. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990.

- “Symposium: Two Paths to a Science of Politics.” 2004. *Perspective on Politics*. 2(2):295-324.
- Taylor, C. 1971. “Interpretation and the Sciences of Man.” *Review of Metaphysics*. 25:3-51.
- *Symposium: Interpretivism*, published in the *Qualitative Methods* newsletter. Read articles by Laitin, Yanow, Adcock, and Dessler.

Week 4, September 15. The Basics of Methodology: Principles of Causal Thinking

Much political science research focuses on testing explanations for political behavior and outcomes. As such, a central issue in conducting research is thinking about what “causation” means and what that implies for the conduct of research. What is causality? How does each author think about causality? Is there another way that we might consider approaching research? Is the idea of causality even a useful one for social scientists? Why or why not? What demands does the definition of causality place on how we conduct research?

Required Reading

- DeFelice, E. 1986. “Causal inference and comparative methods.” *Comparative Political Studies*. 19(3): 415-37
- SSM, Chapter 7
- CSR, Chapter 7
- King et al., Chapter 3.
- Ragin, Charles. “Causal Complexity.” *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Recommended Reading

- Judd, C., E. Smith, and L. Kidder. *Research Methods in Social Relations*. Fort Worth: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1991.
- Shively, W. “Chapter 6: Causal Thinking and the Design of Research.” *The Craft of Political Research*. Third Edition. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Week 5, September 22. The Basics of Methodology: Theory and Hypotheses

Let’s say you have an interesting question. How do you go about finding the answer? One common - but not hegemonic - approach is to develop a set of potential answers called hypotheses. The goal is to use general perspectives on politics (i.e., theories) to develop specific ideas about the empirical world (hypotheses). Ideally, hypotheses can be “tested” using carefully structured research designs. How do this week’s readings suggest you go about developing hypotheses? What does this imply about the type of data that you will need to gather? What *processes* do the readings recommend for producing hypotheses?

Required Reading

- Clake, K.A. and D.M. Primo. 2007. “Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 5(4):741-55.
- SSM, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6
- Lave, C. and J. March. “Chapter 2: An Introduction to Speculation.” *An Introduction to Models in the Social Science*. New York: Harper Row, 1975.

- Lave, C. and J. March. “Chapter 3: The Evaluation of Speculations.” *An Introduction to Models in the Social Science*. New York: Harper Row, 1975.
- Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapter 3.

Recommended Reading

- Mill, J. “Types of Theorizing.” *Comparative Perspectives: Theories and Methods*. Boston, M.A.: Little Brown, 1970. pp. 205-13.

Week 6, September 29. Elements of Empirical Inquiry: Concept Formation

In between theory and data are concepts. Theories are abstract arguments about how the world works. Concepts are the building blocks of theory and serve as our guide to measuring the real world. Unfortunately, many parts of the discipline devote little attention to concepts and measures. This week the readings focus on the notion of concept formation. What is a “concept?” How do you develop one? What role do empirical considerations play in the formation of concepts? What is a variable? How does it compare to a concept?

Required Reading

- SSM, Chapter 3 and Chapter 4
- Goertz, Chapter 1 - 5
- Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapter 3

Recommended Reading

- Collier, D. and J. Mahon, Jr. 1993. “Conceptual ‘Stretching’ Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Politics.” *American Political Science Review*. 87(4): 845-55.
- Kaplan, A. *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science*. Scranton, P.A.: Chandler Publishing, 1964. Chapters 1 & 2.
- Ragin, Charles. “Diversity-Oriented Research: Between Complexity and Generality.” *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 21-42.
- Sartori, G. 1970. “Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics.” *American Political Science Review*. 64:1033-1053.
- Shively, P. “Chapter 3: The Importance of Dimensional Thinking.” *The Craft of Political Research*. Third Edition. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Week 7, October 6. Elements of Empirical Inquiry: Measurement

Although developing concepts is a difficult task, it is just as challenging to develop good measures of those concepts. Unlike the pure sciences which often use mechanical instruments to measure stable and unthinking phenomena, political scientists are left to use human judgment in coding phenomena that are both aware of being observed and oftentimes responsive to measurement. What are the goals of measurement? What are reliability and validity? Is there a trade off between reliability and validity? How might these ideas of reliability and validity apply to interpretive or qualitative research?

Required Reading

- Abdelal, R. Y.M. Herrera, A.I. Johnston, and R. McDermott. 2006. “Identity as a Variable.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 4(4):713-28.

- Adcock, R. and D. Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review*. 95(3):529-46.
- Carmines and Zeller, excerpts
- King *et al.*, Chapter 2
- Nachmias and Nacmias, Chapter 7

Examples of Concept Development & Measurement (read one topic)

1. Measurement of Democracy

- Bollen, K. and R. Jackman. 1989. "Democracy, Stabilities, and Dichotomies." *American Sociological Review*. 54:612-21.
- Elkins, Z. 2000. "Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations." *American Journal of Political Science*. 44:293-300.

2. Measurement of Racial Prejudice

- Sniderman, P.M., T. Piazza, P.E. Tetlock, and A. Kendrick. 1991. "The New Racism." *American Journal of Political Science*. 35(2):423-47.
- Sniderman, P.M. and E. Carmines. "The List Experiment." *Reaching Beyond Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997.

3. Measurement of Elite Political Ideology

- Laver, M., K. Benoit, and J. Garry. 2003. "Extracting Policy Positions from Political Texts Using Words as Data." *American Political Science Review*. 97(2):311-32.
- Poole, K.T. and H. Rosenthal. 1991. "Patterns in Congressional Voting." *American Journal of Political Science*. 35(1):228-78.

Recommended Reading

- Altheide, D. and J. Johnson. "Criteria for Assessing Interpretive Validity in Qualitative Research." Denzin and Lincoln, eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, C.A.: Sage Publications, 1994. Chapter 30.
- Kirk, J. and M. Miller. *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*. Newbury Park, C.A.: Sage Publications, 1986.
- Shively, W. "Chapter 4: Problems of Measurement: Accuracy." *The Craft of Political Research*. Third Edition. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990.
- Shively, W. "Chapter 5: Problems of Measurement: Precision." *The Craft of Political Research*. Third Edition. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1990.

Week 8, October 13. Research Design Issues: Introduction

We have discussed the building blocks of empirical research - questions, concepts, theory, and measurement. The next step is to think about how to construct and execute a research design that provide data for investigating those research questions. What are the main elements of a research design? What is the goal of a research design? What questions must you confront in outlining a research design? What affects how researchers answer those questions? Why are there many different ways to conduct research on the same question? What does that imply about the research process?

Required Reading

- Campbell and Stanley, p. 1-6.
- SSM, Chapters 8 - 10
- CSR, Chapter 4

Week 9, October 20. Research Design Issues: Experimental Design & Internal Validity

For the researcher interested in establishing a causal link between two variables, experimental designs are considered ideal. In general, this is true because experiments maximize scientific control and minimize possible explanations for results. They are, however, extremely divorced from the real world. What is the power of pure experimental designs for establishing causality? What are the potential drawbacks for employing pure experimental designs in political science? What lessons can political scientists draw from experimental research? What are the different threats to the validity of a research design? In what ways can these threats manifest themselves?

Required Reading

- Campbell and Stanley, p. 13-71
- Druckman, J.N., D.P. Green, J.H. Kuklinski, and A. Luipa. 2006. "The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science." *American Political Science Review*. 100(4):627-36.
- McDermott, R. 2002. "Experimental Methodology in Political Science." *Political Analysis*. 10(4):325-61.
- Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapter 5.
- Nickerson, David. 2008. "Is Voting Contagious? Evidence from Two Field Experiments." *American Political Science Review*. 102(1):49-57.

Week 10, October 27. Research Design Issues: Basics of Observational Designs

A key element of any research design is determining how to gather observational data, or to state this differently, information from the real world. For obvious reasons, research that is not based on hard information (i.e., survey responses, documents, observation of behavior, people's perceptions, and so on) lacks substantive content. But what do you want to observe? What is an observation? How many observations do you need to make? What is the difference between an observation and a case? What kinds of problems do researchers run into when they try to make observations in the real world? The readings this week focus on some general issues revolving around the process of basing research on observation of political behavior and outcomes.

Required Reading

- Campbell and Stanley, pp., 6-13
- CSR, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3
- King et al., Chapter 5
- Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapters 6 and 8

Recommended Reading

- Collier, D. "The Comparative Method." A. Finifter, ed. *Political Science: State of the Discipline II*. Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, 1993.

- Eckstein, H. "Case Study and Theory in Political Science." F. Greenstein and N. Polsby, eds. *Handbook of Political Science*. Volume 7. Reading, M.A.: Addison-Wesley, 1975.
- George and Bennett, Chapter 5 and Chapter 6
- Gerring, John. 2004. "What is a Case Study? What is It Good For?" *American Political Science Review*. 98(2):341-54.
- MacIntyre, A. "Is A Science of Comparative Politics Possible?" *Against the Self-Images of the Age: Essays on Ideology and Philosophy*. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.
- Mahoney, J. 2000. "Path dependence in historical sociology." *Theory and Society*. 29: 507-48.
- Ragin, Charles. 1981. "Comparative sociology and the comparative method." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*. 22(1-2): 102-20.

Week 11, November 3. Research Design Issues: Selecting Cases in Observational Designs

After a plan for research has been outlined, the next thing is to select observations for analysis. Regardless of the number of observations, from one to fifteen hundred, all researchers must make difficult decisions about which observations to include in their analysis. The readings this week discuss this topic primarily from the perspective of comparative research. What are the different types of comparative designs? What do they suggest about what kinds of cases to select for observation? Why is a random selection method inappropriate in small N research? What is matching? Does it work? Why or why not?

Required Reading

- CSR, Chapter 5
- Goertz, Chapters 6 - 8
- King et al., Chapters 4 and 6
- Slantchev, B., A. Alexandrova, and E. Gartzke. 2005. "Probabilistic Causality, Selection Bias, and the Logic of the Democratic Peace." *American Political Science Review*. 99(3):459-62.

Recommended Reading

- Campbell, D. 1975. "Degrees of Freedom and the Case Study." *Comparative Political Studies*. 8(2):178-93.
- Dion, D. 1998. "Evidence and inference in the comparative case study." *Comparative Politics*. 30: 127-45.
- Geddes, B. 1990. "How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics." *Political Analysis*. 2: 131-50.
- Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2004. "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review*. 98(4):633-52.
- Przeworski, A. and H. Teune. "Introduction: An Overview of Problems." *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1970.
- Przeworski, A. and H. Teune. "Research Designs." *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1970.

Week 12, November 10. Gathering Information: History and Non-Observational Approaches

The final step in a research plan is to decide what kind of tool you will use to collect your observations. In general terms, there are two types of data that social scientists use - information that comes from direct observation or interaction and information that comes from the historical record and other documents. Each type of data poses different kinds of methodological problems for the researcher. The readings this week focus primarily on the use of history, though there is one example of a broader non-observational approach. What are the methodological problems involved in using historical data? What suggestions do the authors have for dealing with these problems? Do you think that historical data is useful in political science for more than providing background? What kind of information do the examples use to build their case? What do they use the data for?

Required Reading

- George and Bennett, Chapter 10
- Hacker, Jacob S. 2001. "Learning from Defeat? Political Analysis and the Failure of Health Care Reform in the United States." *British Journal of Political Science*. 31: 61-94.
- Lustick, Ian S. 1996. "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review*. 90(3): 605-18.
- Pierson, Paul. 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review*. 94(2):251-68.
- Skocpol, T. 1976. "France, Russia, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions." *Comparative Studies in Society & History*. 18(2):175-210.
- Skocpol, T. and M. Somers. 1980. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 12: 174-97.

Recommended Reading

- Buthe, T. 2002. "Taking Temporality Seriously: Modeling History and the Use of Narratives as Evidence." *American Political Science Review*. 96(3):481-94.
- Winchham-Crowley, T. 1991. "A Qualitative Comparative Approach to Latin American Revolutions." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*.

Week 14, November 17. Gathering Information: Qualitative Approaches to Observation

This week we shift our focus to observational information. As is often the case, there are multiple ways to gather data via observation / interaction. The most heterogeneous approaches come through what I will call qualitative approaches (though they are really more accurately labeled small-N or interpretive approaches). The questions you should focus on this week are the same as in the previous week.

Required Reading

- CSR, Chapter 6
- George and Bennett, Chapter 2
- Fenno, R. "Appendix - Notes on Method: Participant Observation." *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. pp. 249-55, 274-95.

- Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapter 12.
- Rabinow, P. *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977. Introduction, Chapters 1, 3, and 5.

Recommended Reading

- Geertz, C. “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture.” *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Rubin, H. and I. Rubin. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks, C.A.: Sage Publications, 1995.

Week 15, November 24. No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Week 16, December 1. Gathering Information: Quantitative Approaches to Observation

The final approach to gathering information that we will consider are so-called “quantitative” approaches. Here the emphasis is not so much on gathering quantitative information from resources (such as how many years of education people possess), but on gathering information from a large number of cases and representing it numerically. Accordingly, this approach encompasses both survey interviews as well as analysis of official information (e.g., voter turnout in the states). We will remain focused on the same questions as before.

Required Reading

- Berinsky, Adam. *Silent Voices: Public Opinion and Political Participation in America*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004. pp. 15-50.
- Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapters 9, 10, 11, and 13. (skim.)
- Huckfeldt, R. and J. Sprague. “Chapter 2: A Strategy for Studying Electoral Politics.” *Citizens, Politics, and Communication*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Prior, M., and A. Lupia. 2008. “Money, Time, and Political Knowledge: Distinguishing Quick Recall and Political Learning Skills.” *American Journal of Political Science*. 52(1):169-83.
- Schuman, H. and S. Presser. *Questions & Answers in Attitude Surveys*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996. Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

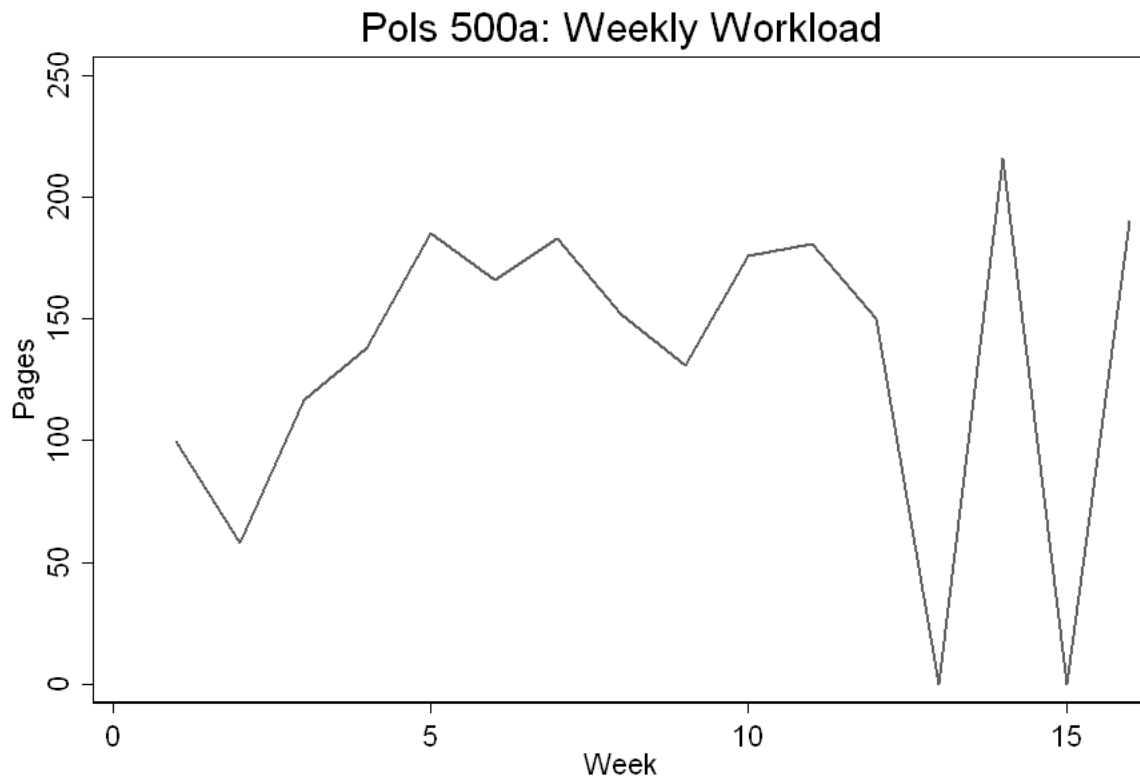
Week 17, December 8. Putting It All Together: The Practice of Social Science and the Accumulation of Knowledge

Despite the focus on scientific principles and sensible data collection in this class, it has long been clear that the production of knowledge in political science is susceptible to non-scientific influences and personal agendas. It is important to consider the role that these influences play in the production of knowledge. How do social pressures affect the questions and methodologies employed by political scientists? What psychological and personal factors influence the conduct of research?

Required Reading

- “Symposium: APSA Presidents Reflect on Political Science.” *Perspectives on Politics*. 3(2):309-34.
- Schatz, E. and I. Schatz. 2003. “Medicine and Political Science: Parallel Lessons in Methodological Excess.” *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 36(3):417-22.
- Smith, K. 2005. “Data Don’t Matter? Academic Research and School Choice.” **Perspectives on Politics**. 3(2):285-300.

Workload Information... Why You Need to Plan in Advance



- This is an *estimate* of how many of pages you are assigned each week, but it should give you a good sense of what lies ahead. Note that the amount of reading generally *increases* over the semester, so your reading load will generally be higher at the same time your papers are coming due and exams are being taken. Plan accordingly.
- The weeks with no reading are those that are holidays, not me being nice.
- The (estimated) total number of assigned reading pages is 1764.