

PSCI 5340, Seminar in Political Science Scope and Methods
T 6.30-9.20p, WH 130
Syllabus, Fall 2015

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Office hours: W 9.00-10.00a, R 1.00-3.00p, and by appt.

“...there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know.” ~ Donald Rumsfeld

Seminar Description

This course is a graduate level introduction to empirical research methods. It is a course that helps us discern unknown from knowns. While there are a variety of ways to “know,” we will focus on social scientific inquiry. The goal is to help students think systematically about politics and to prepare them to conduct scholarly research. After completion of the course students should be able to formulate political questions that can be answered using an empirical approach, reformulate the questions into testable hypotheses that are informed by theory, and design projects that allow them to collect and analyze the information necessary to determine the truth or falsity of hypotheses.

This course will be conducted as a seminar. As such, much of the success or failure of the course will rest with the students. Students are expected to attend all classes, read all assigned material, and participate thoughtfully in class discussions. Participation involves more than simply restating the material that is assigned, but instead involves making insightful points about those readings and raising thoughtful questions about the material that stimulate discussion.

Required Reading

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Watson, James D. 1996. *The Double Helix: A Personal Account of the Discovery of The Structure of DNA*. New York: A Touchstone Book.

Other readings will be available electronically.

Recommended: Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava and David Nachmias. 2007. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. New York: Worth Publishers. (Earlier editions are fine.)

Course Requirements and Grading

Seminar grades will be assigned according to the following schedule: A, 90-100%; B, 80-89.9%; C, 70-79.9%; D, 60-69.9%; F, below 60%.

Participation and Attendance, 20%: Students are required to attend each class meeting having completed the reading assignment and ready to participate in a discussion of the material. I suggest you prepare

notes on the readings we are discussing as a guide for class discussion. To prepare yourself adequately for seminar, focus on the following questions as you complete the readings.

- (a) What is the principal research question or problem being studied?
- (b) What are the hypotheses being tested? What theory informs the hypotheses?
- (c) What types of evidence are presented in support of the author's conclusions? What is the source of the evidence or data?
- (d) What method is used to analyze the evidence presented by the author? Is this method appropriate to the research problem?
- (e) How sound are the conclusions drawn by the author? How might the study have been strengthened?
- (f) So what? Does the study make an important contribution to our understanding of religion and politics? Why or why not?

Research Design, 30%: Each student is required to write a research design. A research design is a blueprint for research. It should raise a research question, synthesize the relevant literature, state theoretically informed hypotheses, and propose a method of investigation. Ideally, this will be a design that you could execute for an advanced seminar and eventually a conference. Papers should be no more than 3000 words, not counting the works cited section. Papers should double-spaced, with one-inch margins and a reasonable font. The paper is due in two parts: a complete initial draft is due **November 6** by noon; the final draft is due in class on **December 8** by noon. These must be turned in electronically. The November 6 draft must also be turned in in hard copy.

Peer Evaluation Memo, 20%: After students turn in the initial design draft, the drafts will be redistributed, and each student will be required to critique the draft of one of their peers. It may be uncomfortable, but this is what we do. In writing the reviews, students are expected to evaluate the papers constructively, pointing out both weaknesses of the papers as well ways in which these weaknesses can be overcome. Reviews should be no more than 1000 words, and they are due on **November 16** at noon in hard copy and electronically. Be sure to provide points of praise as well as constructive criticism. You may choose to focus on one or more of these points:

- (a) How well organized is the paper? Are the main points organized in a way that is easy to follow?
- (b) Is the theoretical logic sound and are the hypotheses clearly derived from the theory? Is the causal logic presented in the paper convincing, or are there alternative explanations that are not adequately considered? How convincing is the theoretical framework?
- (c) Are the methods and data appropriate for testing the hypotheses? Is the operationalization of concepts convincing? Is the methodological approach chosen adequately able to test the proposed hypotheses or should alternative methods be considered?
- (d) Is the style and grammar easy to follow? Is the prose well written, or are there significant grammatical errors and stylistic choices that distract from the main argument.

Homework, 30%: Students will be required to complete three homework assignments. Assignments are due by 9am on the due date. Details are provided in the schedule.

Schedule and Outline

I. Science and Studying Politics

Week 1, August 25

Organizational Meeting

~~Watson, *The Double Helix*, all~~

Question: How does scientific discovery happen?

Week 2, September 1

An Introduction to the Discipline

Almond, Gabriel A. and Stephen J. Genco. 1977. "Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of Politics." *World Politics* 29: 486-522.

~~Kasza, Gregory. 2001. "Perestroika: For An Ecumenical Science of Politics." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34(3): 597-599.~~

~~Perestroika, "On Globalization of the APSA and APSR: A Political Science Manifesto"~~

~~Lawrence Mead. 2010. "Scholasticism in Political Science." *Perspectives on Politics* 8(2): 453-464.~~

~~Grofman, Bernard. 1997. "Seven Durable Axes of Cleavage in Political Science." In Kristen Renwick Monroe, ed. *Contemporary Empirical Political Theory*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 73-86.~~

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

~~Gerring, chapter 2~~

Questions: What are the key divisions in political science? Are they reconcilable? Is it necessary to take a side?

Homework assignment: Complete a short essay reflecting on why you're in graduate school and what your larger professional goals are. Turn in hard copies in class. One page, single-spaced.

Week 3, September 8

How Do You Know What You Know? Explanation and Understanding

Kuhn, Thomas S. [1962] 1996. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, chapters 2, 4, 6.

Popper, Karl. [1959] 2002. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. New York, NY: Routledge Classics, chapters 1.1, 1.3, 1.4-7, 3.12, and 4.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, chapter 1.

Questions: How do different ways of knowing produce a trade-off between understanding and explanation? Which do you value more in your own research? Why?

Week 4, September 15
Concepts and Measurement

Gerring, chapters 4, 5, 7

Brown, Mike. 2010. *How I Killed Pluto and Why it Had it Coming*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau, pp.182-190.

Munck, Gerardo and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35: 5-34.

Adcock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 529-546.

Questions: What are the characteristics of good measurements? Why are some concepts harder to measure than others?

Week 5, September 22
Theory

Gerring, chapters 3, 8

Ross, Michael. 2008. "Islam, Oil, and Women." *American Political Science Review* 102(1): 107-123.

Mayhew, David. 2004 [1974]. *Congress: The Electoral Connection, Second Edition*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, part 1.

Mearsheimer, John J. and Stephen M. Walt. 2013. "Leaving Theory Behind: Why Hypothesis Testing Has Become Bad for IR." Harvard Kennedy School Faculty Research Working Paper Series RW13-001.

Questions: What's the role of theory? Do we need it? Why or why not? In the Ross and Mayhew pieces, does theory fall short?

II. Research Techniques

Week 6, September 29
Experimental Designs

Gerring, chapters 9 and 10

Glynn, Adam N. and Maya Sen. 2014. "Identifying Judicial Empathy: Does Having Daughters Cause Judges to Rule for Women's Issues?" *American Journal of Political Science* 59: 37-54.

Olken, Benjamin . 2010 "Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia." *American Political Science Review* 104: 243-267.

Hurwitz, Jon and Mark Peffley. 2005. "Playing the Race Card in the Post-Willie Horton Era: The Impact of Racialized Codewords on Support for Punitive Crime Policy." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 69: 99-112.

Questions: What are the essential characteristics of experiments? What are their strengths and weaknesses? Evaluate those strengths and weaknesses with respect to the assigned articles.

Week 7, October 6

Quasi-Experiments: Cross-sectional Designs and Time Series

Gerring, chapter 11

Campbell, Donald T., and H. Laurence Ross. 1968. "The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time Series Data in Quasi-Experimental Analysis." *Law & Society Review* 3:33-53.

Mason, T. David et al. 2011. "When Civil Wars Recur: Conditions for Durable Peace after Civil Wars." *International Studies Perspectives* 12: 171-189.

Lewis, Daniel C. 2011. "Bypassing the Representational Filter?: Minority Rights Policies under Direct Democracy Institutions in the U.S. States." *State Politics and Policy Quarterly* 11: 198-222.

Delhey, Jan and Kenneth Newton. 2005. "Predicting Cross-National Levels of Social Trust: Global Pattern or Nordic Exceptionalism?" *European Sociological Review*. 21(4): 311-327.

Questions: What are the strengths and weaknesses of quasi-experimental designs versus experimental designs? Are the readings for this week high in external validity, internal validity, neither, or both?

Homework Assignment: Develop a hypothesis about some aspect of political behavior that could be tested in an experiment. Briefly describe how such an experiment would be conducted, and explain how the experiment would provide a good test of your hypothesis. Limit your paper to 1,000 words. Due in class.

Week 8, October 13

Case Studies

Gerring, John. 2004. "What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?" *American Political Science Review* 98: 341-54.

Collier, David and James Mahoney. 1996. "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." *World Politics* 49: 56-91.

Krook, Mona Lena. 2009. *Quotas for Women in Politics: Gender and Candidate Selection Reform Worldwide*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, chapters 1, 4, and 5.

Questions: What are the advantages and disadvantages of a focused case study as compared to a large-N analysis?

III. Gathering and Using Information

Week 9, October 20

Finding and Using Literature

Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39(1): 127-132.

Orwell, George. 1946. "Politics and the English Language"

Weingast, Barry. 1995. "Structuring Your Papers (Caltech Rules)"

Homework Assignment: Develop a hypothesis. Identify the independent and dependent variables. Accompanying the hypothesis, write a short essay that builds a theory informed by the literature. The essay should include no fewer than three citations. Essays should be limited to 1,000 words, not including the citation page. Use APSA citations. Essays should be double-spaced. Essays are due in class.

Week 10, October 27

Survey Research

Davis, Darren W., and Brian D. Silver. 2003. "Stereotype Threat and Race of Interviewer Effects in a Survey on Political Knowledge." *American Journal of Political Science* 47:33-45.

Gelman, Andrew and David Rothschild, "Modern polling needs innovation, not traditionalism," *Washington Post*,
<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/08/04/modern-polling-requires-both-sampling-and-adjustment/> (accessed August 15, 2014).

Gonzalez-Ocanatos, Ezequiel, et al. 2012. "Vote Buying the Social Desirability Bias: Experimental Evidence from Nicaragua." *American Journal of Political Science* 56:202-17.

Schaeffer, Nora Cate, and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29:65-88.

Canache, Damarys, Jeffery Mondak and Mitchell Seligson. 2001. "Meaning and Measurement in Cross-National Research on Satisfaction with Democracy." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65(4): 506-528.

Squire, Peverill. 1988. "Why the 1936 *Literary Digest* Poll Failed." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 52:125-33.

Questions: What are some of the challenges in survey research? What strategies do the authors use to address these challenges?

Week 11, November 3
Field Research

Fenno, Richard F. 1977. "U.S. House Members in their Constituencies." *American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883-917.

VonDoepp, Peter. 2008. "Context-Sensitive Inquiry in Comparative Judicial Research: Lessons From the Namibian Judiciary." *Comparative Political Studies* 41: 1515 - 1540.

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2008. "The Power of Local Ties: Popular Participation in the Rwandan Genocide." *Security Studies* 17: 568-597

Mazie, Steven V. and Patricia J. Woods. 2003. "Prayer, Contentious Politics, and the Women of the Wall: The Benefits of Collaboration in Participant Observation at Intense, Multifocal Events." *Field Methods* 15: 25-50.

Questions: Are there any advantages or disadvantages to participant observation techniques to gather data? Do these strategies pose any threats to the internal validity of the research design?

Week 12, November 10
Research Ethics

Dreifus, Claudia, "Finding Hope in Knowing the Universal Capacity for Evil," *New York Times*, April 27, 2007.

Martinson, Anderson, Melissa Anderson, and De Vries. 2005. "Scientists Behaving Badly." *Nature* 435: 737-38.

Singal, Jesse. 2015. "The Case of the Amazing Gay-Marriage Data: How a Graduate Student Reluctantly Uncovered a Huge Scientific Fraud." *New York Magazine*.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Human Research Protection. 1979. "The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects." Washington, DC: Department of HHS.

Willis, Derek. 2014. "Professors' Research Project Stirs Political Outrage." *New York Times*.

Quiet Rage – The Stanford Prison Experiment (documentary)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_LKzEqIPto

Questions: What are our obligations to human subjects? Does the value of our research ever outweigh the rights of subjects? When?

Homework assignment: Complete human subjects training from the NIH:
<https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>. Turn in your certificates of completion in class.

Week 13, November 17
Work shopping research design drafts

Week 14, November 24
No class

Week 15, December 1
Research Design Presentations

Seminar policies

For course drop information, see schedule at essc.unt.edu/registrar/schedule/scheduleclass.html.

Policies on academic dishonesty are available at <http://www.vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>.

Laptops Research suggests that using laptops in class is negatively associated with student success. I advise against using laptops, but it is up to you. The larger problem is that laptop use negatively affects student success for the people sitting around laptop users. Laptop users should take care not to distract their peers.

Late Assignments If for some substantial reason you cannot turn in your assignments at the scheduled time, you should contact me prior to the due date to request an extension. Assignments turned in late but on the due date will be eligible for 90% of the total points; assignments turned in the day following the due date will be eligible to receive 80% of the total points; assignments turned two days following the due date will be eligible to receive 70% of the total points. Assignments turned in three days following due date or later will not be eligible to receive any credit. Please note that assignments may be turned in early.

Department of Political Science Statement on Acceptable Student Behavior Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at <https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>.

Departmental Statement of ADA Compliance The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation.

Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Department of Political Science Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines cheating and plagiarism as the use of unauthorized books, notes, or otherwise securing help in a test; copying others' tests, assignments, reports, or term papers; representing the work of another as one's own; collaborating without authority with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work; or otherwise practicing scholastic dishonesty.

Normally, the minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is a grade of "F" in the course. In the case of graduate departmental exams, the minimum penalty shall be failure of all fields of the exam. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course, or by the field faculty in the case of departmental exams. Cases of cheating or plagiarism on graduate departmental exams, theses, or dissertations shall automatically be referred to the departmental Graduate Studies Committee.

Cases of cheating or plagiarism in ordinary coursework may, at the discretion of the instructor, be referred to the Undergraduate Studies Committee in the case of undergraduate students, or the Graduate Studies Committee in the case of graduate students. These committees, acting as agents of the department Chair, shall impose further penalties, or recommend further penalties to the Dean of Students, if they determine that the case warrants it.

In all cases, the Dean of Students shall be informed in writing of the case. Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

Department of Political Science Policy on Academic Integrity The Political Science Department adheres to and enforces UNT's policy on academic integrity (cheating, plagiarism, forgery, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty and sabotage). Students in this class should review the policy (UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16), which may be located at:
http://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/untpolicy/pdf/7-Student_Affairs-Academic_Integrity.pdf.

Violations of academic integrity in this course will be addressed in compliance with the penalties and procedures laid out in this policy. Students may appeal any decision under this policy by following the procedures laid down in the UNT The UNT Policy Manual Section 18.1.16 "Student Standards of Academic Integrity."

Recommended Reading

Allison, Graham T. 1971. *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Almond, Gabriel A. 1988. "Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 21(4): 828-42.

-----. 1996. "Political Science: The History of the Discipline." In *A New Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 50-96.

APSA Committee on Professional Ethics, Rights and Freedoms. 2008. *A Guide to Professional Ethics in Political Science*. Washington, DC: American Political Science Association.

- Baumrind, Diana. 1985. "Research Using Intentional Deception: Ethical Issues Revisited." *American Psychologist* 40: 165-174.
- Most, Benjamin A. 1990. "Getting Started on Political Research." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 23 (4): 592-596.
- Brady, Henry E. 2000. "Contributions of Survey Research to Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33: 47-57.
- Campbell, Donald T. and Julian C. Stanley. 1963. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*. Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Collier, David and James Mahoney. 1996. "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." *World Politics* 49: 56-91.
- Dryzek, John S. and Stephen T. Leonard. 1988. "History and Discipline in Political Science History and Discipline in Political Science." *The American Political Science Review* 82: 1245-1260.
- Fearon, James D. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43: 169-195.
- Goodin, Robert E. and Hans-Dieter Klansman. 1986. "Political Science: The Discipline." In *Political Science: The Science of Politics*, ed. Herbert F. Weisberg. New York: Agathon Press, Inc.
- Herrera. C.D. 2001. "Ethics, Deception, and "Those Milgram Experiments."" *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 18: 245-256.
- Hill, Sir Austin Bradford. 1965. "The Environment and Disease: Association or Causation?" *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 58: 295-300. <<http://www.edwardtuftte.com/tuftte/hill>>
- Kaarbo, Juliet and Ryan K. Beasley. 1999. "A Practical Guide to the Comparative Case Study Method in Political Psychology." *Political Psychology* 20: 369-391.
- Kalleberg, Arthur L. 1966. "The Logic of Comparison: A Methodological Note on the Comparative Study of Political Systems." *World Politics* 19: 69-82.
- Kramer, Gerald H. 1986. "Political Science as Science." In *Political Science: The Science of Politics*, ed. Herbert F. Weisberg. New York: Agathon Press, Inc.
- Krosnick, Jon A. and Matthew K. Berent. 1993. "Comparisons of Party Identification and Policy Preferences: The Impact of Survey Question Format." *American Journal of Political Science* 37: 941-964.
- Lakatos, Imre. 1970. "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes." *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, eds. Lakatos et. al. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Parts 1, 3.0, 3a-3b, 3d, 4
- Lave, Charles A. and James G. March. 1975. *An introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*. New York: Harper & Row.

- Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65: 682-693.
- Lowi, Theodore J. 1992. "The State in Political Science: How We Become What We Study." *The American Political Science Review* 86: 1-7.
- Mahoney, James and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. 2003. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ostrom, Elinor. 1998. "A Behavioral Approach to the Rational Choice Theory of Collective Action." *American Political Science Review* 92(1): 1-22.
- Richardson, Frank C. and Blaine J. Fowers. 1998. "Interpretive Social Science: An Overview." *American Behavioral Scientist* 41: 465-495.
- Riker, William H. 1982. "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *The American Political Science Review* 76(4): 753-766.
- Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. 2004. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Schaeffer, Nora Cate, and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29:65-88.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet S. 2004. "Quality Meets Quantity: Case Studies, Conditional Probability, and Counterfactuals." *Perspectives on Politics* 2: 281-293.
- Shively, W. Phillips. 2010. *Craft of Political Research, 8th Edition*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Sigelman, Lee. 1977. "How to Succeed in Political Science by Being Very Trying: A Methodological Sampler." *PS* 10: 302-304.
- Snyder, R. Claire. 2001. "Should Political Science Have a Civic Mission? An Overview of the Historical Evidence." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34:301-5.
- Schuman, Howard and Stanley Presser. 1996. *Questions and Answers in Attitude Surveys*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Tanur, Judith. M., ed. 1992. *Questions about Questions*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Tufte, Edward R. 2001. *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press.
- Waldo, Dwight. 1975. "Political Science: Tradition, Discipline, Profession, Science, Enterprise." In *Handbook of Political Science*, ed. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.