

## **POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

*PO840, Spring 2014*

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**Office hours**

*TBA*

This graduate course provides an introduction to methodological issues faced in empirical work across the social sciences, with primary reference to political science. The issues addressed here are intended to apply to any empirical approach – qualitative or quantitative, experimental or observational – and to any sort of theory, whether descriptive or causal. That said, the emphasis of the course is primarily on causal inference (rather than description) and the explanation of classes of events (rather than particular events), since these are the preoccupations of social science today.

This is not a course in statistics. However, it will be helpful to have some familiarity with this important set of topics. If you have not already taken PO841, you might consider browsing through an introductory stats text.

Because of confusion in the past it is necessary to underline the following point. Although this course is conducted in prose (there is no software and very little math) it is manifestly not about qualitative methods. In my opinion, there are very few methodological issues that are exclusively qualitative or quantitative in nature. This course is about methodology. Period.

The course is designed primarily for graduate students. Qualified undergraduates may also be considered if circumstances warrant, but must receive the permission of the instructor. Students are advised to take this class in their first semester, as the ground covered here will be useful for substantive work in all subfields (except Political Theory). There are no pre-requisites, although the student is assumed to have a background in political science or in some other field of social science.

### **GRADES**

Your grade for this class will be comprised of three components, equally weighted: (a) participation (serving as class discussant at one meeting, presenting your own proposal at another meeting, attendance, in-class quizzes, and general class discussion); (b) a final exam; and (c) an original research proposal. Instructions regarding the proposal are contained in a separate document, to be posted on the course web site.

### **ABSENCES**

Since the class meets a limited number of times throughout the semester, only *one* excused absence will be granted. I shall overlook the first class meeting, which is largely organizational; further absences will be penalized. Late papers will also be penalized. No excused absences, makeups, extensions, or incompletes will be granted without documentation of medical, religious or personal reasons, or for official Boston University business. If you will be missing class for religious reasons you must inform me of these dates *during the first week of class*.

## **MINI-LECTURES**

I will begin most class meetings with a mini-lecture. I will also try to conclude each meeting with a brief wrap-up of the “take-home” messages, along with a brief glance ahead to the readings for the following week. In any case, the lectures are intended to supplement, not replace, that week’s readings. Indeed, there is no way that I can present all the important material in lecture format. There is simply too much of it. Nor would it be helpful for me to spoon-feed the information to you. So, make sure that you do the reading carefully (don’t depend on me to synthesize it) and ask questions about subjects raised in the readings that you do not understand. I will endeavor to explain them, or direct you to more specialized readings.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Whether this course is enlightening or not will depend primarily upon how students contribute to the process. I expect active participation from all students in every session – beyond the mandatory presentations. I will not lecture extensively. Nor do I intend to act as quiz-master, eliciting points. I will play this role if necessary, though I am hoping that the discussants will relieve me of this burden. To reiterate: you must participate regularly in order to get a good grade in this class. Shyness, or unfamiliarity with the English language, is no excuse. This is a talking profession. Yadayadayada. Please be attentive to standard rules of decorum: avoid dogmatism, respect others’ views, and try to move class discussion forward (pay attention to what others say and respond to the previous point).

## **DISCUSSANT**

Each person will be responsible (singly or in tandem with someone else) for leading class discussion for one or two meetings. Your job is to raise questions, to correct mistakes (or at least offer your own opinion, when you have a different interpretation), and in general to ensure that everyone understands the issues raised by the readings for that week. In other words, you’re the instructor. I must emphasize that *this does not let others off the hook for doing careful reading that week*. No free-riding.

## **PRESENTING YOUR PROPOSAL IN CLASS**

At the beginning of the semester you will sign up to present your proposal at a specific class meeting. Only one student will present at each class meeting so we need to space these presentations out over the course of the semester. The advantage of going early in the semester is that it will force you to get started and you will get our feedback at an early stage. The disadvantage, evidently, is that you will have less time to construct your proposal.

In any case, what you present to us is up to you. Keep in mind that the more finished this product is, the better, and more useful, our feedback will be. If you present only a paragraph then you’ll have to spend most of the time telling us more about your project and this will take away from more specific comments that you might receive from the class. Thus, it is in your interest to construct as complete a proposal as you can within the time constraints of the semester. The point to remember is that you will be graded only on the final product – what you turn in at the end of the semester. Thus, the presentation is entirely for *your* benefit. Use it wisely by preparing as good a proposal as you can and by listening carefully (and taking notes) on what members of the class have to say. I hope that the class will function like a dissertation-writing workshop (which I strongly advise you to create, once you reach that stage). I want us each to help each other. Note that I also usually present work-in-progress, so this is truly a community activity.

Please send everyone a copy of your proposal via email by noon one day before the day you are to present. We will critique, and praise, each proposal in class. Ideally, your written proposal will speak for itself, though you will have a chance, of course, to respond to comments and to expatiate on your ideas.

While the primary beneficiary of each of these class discussions will presumably be the writer of that day's proposal, I also expect this to be a learning experience for the rest of us. My own experience is that one learns as much from one's colleagues' successes and failures as one does from general reading about methodological principles or highly polished academic articles. So, the discussion of proposals is an integral part of the course. I hope that you will read each others' work carefully -- out of a sense of mutual obligation *and* as a model for things you might wish to explore (or avoid) in your own work.

### **FINAL EXAM**

The final exam will cover everything -- all required reading and all in-class discussion. (Many of the questions on the final will have been discussed in class.) It is a closed-book, closed-note test -- just you and the exam. I strongly encourage you to study in small groups for the final.

### **READINGS**

The reading for graduate courses is extensive; this course is no exception. As it is, we are barely scratching the surface of this vast subject matter. Each week's reading will probably take you more than one night to get through. Do not wait until the night before to start reading!

Note also that some of the readings are chosen for their heuristic value, not necessarily for their methodological rigor. Just because a book or article appears on this syllabus does not mean that it has received a seal of approval from the rabbinical council.

Most of the assigned readings are available for purchase or can be downloaded from the web. Others will be posted on the course site. Please let me know ASAP if you cannot obtain a reading so I can straighten things out. And please bring all required readings to class (or have them accessible on your laptop) so that we can refer to specific passages.

Additional readings on these and other subjects are contained in an on-line Bibliography posted at CQRM. Additional material to accompany SSM is available on-line at Cambridge University Press - [www.cambridge.org/gb/knowledge/isbn/item6566290/?site\\_locale=en\\_GB](http://www.cambridge.org/gb/knowledge/isbn/item6566290/?site_locale=en_GB).

### **TO PURCHASE**

Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gerring, John. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework, 2d ed.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Do *not* purchase the first edition, as it is very different.]

Fowler, Floyd J. (ed). 2008. *Survey Research Methods*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Sage.

### **RECOMMENDED**

Angrist, Joshua D.; Jorn-Steffen Pischke. 2009. *Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [advanced]

Box-Steffensmeier, Janet; Henry Brady; David Collier (eds). 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Brady, Henry E.; David Collier (eds). 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2d ed. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field Experiments: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Hernan, Miguel A.; James M. Robins. In process. *Causal Inference*. Draft available on the web. [advanced]
- Imbens, Guido W and Donald B Rubin. In process. *Causal Inference in Statistics and Social Sciences*.
- King, Gary; Robert O. Keohane; Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Morgan, Stephen L.; Christopher Winship. 2007. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [advanced]

### **THIS COURSE AND YOUR GRADUATE EDUCATION**

This course is one of a handful you will take at BU as part of your MA or PhD. It offers an opportunity learn a lot about methodology. I have structured the course as best I can to facilitate this. However, how much you take away from this course is primarily up to you. Think of this course as an opportunity to learn, not simply a hoop that you must jump through. Think of me as a facilitator. It will be more fun that way, for me and for you.

### **Introduction (TBA)**

Sign up for class presentations.

#### *Readings:*

Gerring, John. "Guidelines for the Proposal." [Describes the writing assignment, due at the end of the semester. Posted on our site.]

Feel free to consult other papers and books on writing/publishing listed in the on-line bibliography as you craft your proposal.

## **Basics**

In this section of the course, classes will be fairly structured. I will lecture from SSM and will solicit comments, questions, and hopefully some interaction as we go along.

### **General Framework (TBA)**

#### *Proposal:*

#### *Readings:*

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Preface, Chapter 1, Part I]

### **Description (TBA)**

#### *Proposal:*

#### *Readings:*

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Part II]

## **Causation I (TBA)**

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Chapters 8-9]

## **Causation II (TBA)**

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Chapters 10-12]

## **Data Gathering (TBA)**

*Discussant:*

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

Gerring, John; Dino Christenson. 2014. *An Applied Guide to Social Science Methodology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Chapters 14, 18]

## **Expert Coding and Textual Analysis (TBA)**

*Discussant:*

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

*Expert coding...*

Coppedge, Michael; John Gerring; Staffan I. Lindberg. 2012. "Varieties of Democracy: Project Description." [v-dem.net]

For other examples of large-scale coding projects see: Archigos, Comparative Constitutions Project, Correlates of War, Freedom House, Global Leadership Project, NELDA, Polity.

*Archival/document-based Research...*

Harrison, Hope. "Inside the SED Archives: A Researcher's Diary." *CWIHP bulletin*.

Lieshout, Robert H., Mathieu L.L. Segers, and Anna M. van der Vleuten. 2004. "De Gaulle, Moravcsik, and *The Choice for Europe*." *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6:4 (Fall) 89-139. [skim]

*Quantitative text analysis...*

Grimmer, Justin; Brandon M. Stewart. 2012. "Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts." *Political Analysis* (forthcoming).

*Software...*

<http://courses.washington.edu/socw580/contentsoftware.shtml>

## **Experiments (TBA)**

*Discussant:*

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

Deaton, Angus. 2010. "Instruments, Randomization, and Learning about Development." *Journal of Economic Literature* 48:2 (June) 424-55.

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Review chapter 10]

Humphreys, Macartan; Jeremy Weinstein. 2009. "Field Experiments and the Political Economy of Development." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (June) 367-78.

McDermott, Rose. 2002. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5, 31-61.

*Examples...*

Chattapadhyay, Raghavendra; Esther Duflo. 2004. "Women as Policy Makers: Evidence from a Randomized Policy Experiment in India." *Econometrica* 72:5, 1409-43.

Hoff, Karla; Priyanka Pandey. 2004. "Belief Systems and Durable Inequalities: An Experimental Investigation of Indian Caste." World Bank Policy Research Working Paper Series 3351.

Olken, Benjamin A. 2007. "Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia." *Journal of Political Economy* 115:2, 200-49.

**Natural Experiments (TBA)**

*Discussant:*

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Read all chapters except Part II, which you can skim]

**Causal Inference: Debates (TBA)**

*Discussant:*

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

Abbott, Andrew. 1988. "Transcending General Linear Reality." *Sociological Theory* 6:2, 169-86.

Achen, Christopher H. 2002. "Toward a New Political Methodology: Microfoundations and ART." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5, 423-50.

Brady, Henry E. 2008. "Causation and Explanation in Social Science." In Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Henry Brady, and David Collier (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) 217-70.

Dessler, David. 1991. "Beyond Correlations: Toward a Causal Theory of War." *International Studies Quarterly* 35, 337-55.

Freedman, David A. 1991. "Statistical Models and Shoe Leather." *Sociological Methodology* 21, 291-313.

Gerring, John; Jason Seawright; Adam Glynn; Andrew Bennett. 2011. "Symposium: Perfecting Methodology or Methodological Perfectionism?," *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research: Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* (Spring) 8-33.

**Case Studies I (TBA)**

*Discussant:*

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

Gerring, John. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [chs 1-6]

## Case Studies II (TBA)

*Discussant:*

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

Gerring, John. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [ch 7, epilogue]

Humphreys, Macartan; Allan Jacobs. [on process tracing, qual/quant evidence]

*Examples...*

Allison, Graham T. 1969. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *American Political Science Review* 63:3 (September) 689-718. \

Fairfield, Tasha. 2013. "Going Where the Money Is: Strategies for Taxing Economic Elites in Unequal Democracies." *World Development* 47, 42-57.

Harding, David J.; Cybelle Fox; Jal D. Mehta. 2002. "Studying Rare Events Through Qualitative Case Studies: Lessons from a Study of Rampage School Shootings." *Sociological Methods and Research* 11:31, 174-217.

North, Douglass C.; Barry R. Weingast. 1989. "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England." *Journal of Economic History* 49, 803-32.

Posner, Daniel. 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 (November) 529-46.

## Larger Issues

### First draft of research proposal due (TBA)

Turn in your drafts by email attachment. I will try to return them to you with comments in a week.

### History of, and Debates about, Political Science (TBA)

*Discussant:*

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

*History...*

Browse back issues of the APSR, available on JSTOR or in hard-copy format in the library.

Dahl, Robert A. 1961. "The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest." *American Political Science Review* 55:4 (December) 763-72.

Freeman, Donald M. 1991. "The Making of a Discipline." In William Crotty (ed), *Political Science: Looking to the Future* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press) 15-44.

*DSI versus RSI...*

Collier, David; Jason Seawright; Gerardo L. Munck. 2004. "The Quest for Standards: King, Keohane, and Verba's *Designing Social Inquiry*." In Henry Brady and David Collier (eds), *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield) 21-50.

*Multiple Methods ...*

Bennett, Andrew, Bear Braumoeller. 2006. "Where the Model Frequently Meets the Road: Combining Formal, Statistical, and Case Study Methods." Ms. [Should be on CQRM web site]  
Granato, Jim; Frank Scioli. 2004. "Puzzles, Proverbs, and Omega Matrices: The Scientific and Social Significance of Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models (EITM)." *Perspectives on Politics* (June) 313-23.

#### *Interpretivism*

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books).  
<http://growinginsideways.files.wordpress.com/2011/11/thick-discription.pdf>  
Wedeen, Lisa. 2010. "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, 255-72.

### **More Debates (TBA)**

*Discussant:*

*Proposal:*

*Readings:*

*Political Science/Political Praxis, Reaching Consensus, Value-Neutrality,...*

Shapiro, Ian. 2002. "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, Or What's Wrong with Political Science and What to do About It." *Political Theory* (August).

Wilensky, Harold L. 1997. "Social Science and the Public Agenda: Reflections of Knowledge to Policy in the United States and Abroad." *Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law* 22:5 (October) 1241-65.

*Is Truth/Consensus Possible?...*

Tobarrok, Alex. 2005. "Why Most Published Research Findings are False."

[http://marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2005/09/why\\_most\\_public.html](http://marginalrevolution.com/marginalrevolution/2005/09/why_most_public.html)

Smith, Kevin. 2005. "Data Don't Matter? Academic Research and School Choice." *Perspectives on Politics* 3:2 (June) 285-99.

*Broad-based Critiques, Jeremiads, Defenses...*

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Preface, ch 1, Part IV]

Hochschild, Jennifer. 2005. "APSA Presidents Reflect on Political Science: Who Knows What, When, and How?" *Perspectives on Politics* (June) 309-34.

Laitin, David D. 2004. "The Political Science Discipline." In Edward Mansfield, Richard Sisson (eds), *The Evolution of Political Knowledge* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press).

Mr. Perestroika. 2000. "On the Globalization of the APSA and APSR: A Political Science Manifesto." [The email that sparked the movement.]

Rudolph, Susanne Hoeber. 2002. "In Defense of Diverse Forms of Knowledge." *PS: Political Science and Politics* (June) 199-201.

### **Final Exam (TBA)**

#### **Final draft of research proposal due (TBA)**

Turn in drafts by email attachment in Word format.

## **Addendum**

## The Craft of Political Science

### *Career advice...*

Carter, Ralph G.; James M. Scott. 1998. "Navigating the Academic Job Market Minefield." *PS: Political Science and Politics* (November). <http://apsanet.org/imgtest/NavigatingAcademicJob-Carter.pdf>.

Hanley, James E. 2008. "A Primer on Applying to the Liberal Arts College." *PS: Political Science and Politics* xli:4 (October) 809-12.

Hassner, Ron E. 2008. "Trial by Fire: Surviving the Job Talk Q & A." *PS: Political Science and Politics* xli:4 (October) 803-8.

Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [chs 3-4.]

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