

PSCI 5340
Seminar in Political Science Scope and Methods
Fall 2016
John Ishiyama 166 WOOTEN HALL
Office Hours: 1:30 pm- 3:00 pm
Tuesdays and Thursdays
or any time I'm in my office
Phone: 940-565-4326

EMAIL John.Ishiyama@unt.edu (I check it a lot- give me 24 hours to respond):

Required Texts:

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-13277-0

Powner, Leanne. 2015. *Empirical Research and Writing* Los Angeles/Washington DC: Sage/CQ Press. ISBN 978-1-4833-6963-1

Susser, Bernard. 1992. *Approaches to the Study of Politics* New York: Macmillan. (this book is out of print, but available in used copies—look on Amazon and other dealers. Also several readings in book are available as pdf's in academic journals) ISBN 0-02-418710-0

Other readings will be available electronically on Blackboard, JSTOR, or can be found via GOOGLE

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course is a graduate level introduction to empirical research methods. 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. There are three general themes that will be explored in this class. Where did our discipline come from and how do we know what we know? What are the steps in conducting research in empirical political science (and for that matter in empirical social science)? What are the variety of research design strategies that are commonly used in our field? 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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade in this course will be based on a take-home final exam (worth 30% of your final grade), a set of ten (10) weekly reaction papers (in total accounting for 20%), and a research design (worth 30% of your grade) a peer evaluation memo of a research design (15%), with the final 10% determined by class participation. The writing assignments are intended to sharpen your critical and analytical skills and give you some experience with

the kind of analysis that you will be required to do in your other courses, on your comprehensive exams (for Ph.D. students), and in the kind of research and writing you will do as a practicing political scientist.

A. Exam: (25% of final grade)

There will be a take-home final exam that will consist of essay questions. You are free to use any books, notes, or journal articles that you have, but you are not to confer with other students on the test questions. Evidence of collaboration with other students or anyone else will be treated as an instance of cheating and dealt with according to University rules on cheating. You will receive a grade of "0" for the exam and an "F" for the course. The exam will be distributed during the last class week (December 6) and will be due December 13 by 11:59 pm. There is a 5% point penalty for each day you are late turning in an exam.

B. 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 Thursday November 10 by midnight; the final draft is due in class on December 13 by midnight. These must be turned in electronically via email attachment to me at john.ishiyama@unt.edu.

You will be required to present your research design in a "public forum"—I will ask some of your other senior fellow graduate students to attend. I will set up a special session (depending on your schedules) where you will be asked to present your research designs orally. Each of you will have 10 minutes to present (in a "panel" of 5) to be followed by "discussion" period. You will be evaluated by your peers (including other audience members) and the instructor and the format will be similar to what you would find at a typical political science conference.

D. Peer Evaluation Memo, 15%: After students turn in the initial design draft, the drafts will be redistributed by the instructor, 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 as ways in which these weaknesses can be overcome. Reviews should be no more than 1000 words, and they are due on November 22 by midnight 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:

- How well organized is the paper?
- Are the main points organized in a way that is easy to follow?
- 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?
- 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?
- 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.

E. Assignments: 20%: There is one preliminary assignment and 10 subsequent weekly assignments. Students will be required to do weekly assignment papers on the selected question for that week. These papers should be no longer than two pages single spaced 12 point standard font. Assignments are to be handed in at the time of that

day's class session in hardcopy. All students must do Assignments 1, 3, 5, 6, and 10. Of the remaining five (Assignments 2, 4, 7, 8 and 9), you may choose to do two of these. Thus in total you will complete 7 of the 10 assignments, and this will determine your assignment grade.

F. Class Participation: (10%) The quality of your class participation will be assessed both by the instructor and your peers. I pay particular attention to the quality of your comments, not just the quantity. Further, attendance does matter – if you are not in attendance, you are not participating.

COURSE OUTLINE

The course outline that follows delineates in sequence the major themes addressed in the course and the assigned readings for each theme. You are expected to complete the assigned readings before class and come to class prepared to discuss them. Class participation counts 10% of your grade, and informed discussion requires careful reading of the assignments.

August 30: Organizational issues, and a quick review of the research process

Brad Epperly “Institutions and Legacies: Electoral Volatility in the Postcommunist World” *Comparative Political Studies* 44(7) 829–853

Preliminary Assignment—All must complete this Plagiarism Tutorial and Test. Please select the graduate test and obtain the certificate. You can either upload the certificate to a dropbox location I will set up, or you can email it to me as an attachment. Please take this test before September 5 at.

<https://www.indiana.edu/~academy/firstPrinciples/certificationTests/index.html>

September 6: Introduction to the Discipline—where did we come from and where are we now?

Gerring Chapter 2

Macridis Roy C. 1955 *The Study of Comparative Politics* New York: Random House pp-7-14 in Susser

Dahl, Robert. 1961. “The Behavioral Approach in Political Science: Epitaph for a Monument to a Successful Protest” *American Political Science Review* 55:763-772. Also in Susser

Easton, David “The Current meaning of Behavioralism” pp. 47-48 and “Tenets of Post-Behavioralism” in Susser

Bay, Christian 1965. “Politics and Pseudopolitics: A Critical Evaluation of Some Behavioral Literature” *American Political Science Review* 59(1): 39-51 also in Susser (on Blackboard)

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

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

Assignment 1: (ALL DO THIS) What was the Behavioral Revolution and what are some of the criticisms of behavioralism? What are the current key divisions in political science? Are they reconcilable? Is it necessary to take a side?

September 13: Social Science and the Philosophy of Science: Paradigms and Paradigmatic Shifts

Richard von Mises “Positivism” in Susser

Karl Popper “Science: Conjectures and Refutations” in Susser

Thomas S. Kuhn “The Essential Tension: Tradition and Innovation in Scientific Research: in Susser

Imre Lakatos. 1968. “Criticism and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 69:149-186 (on Blackboard)

Thomas Walker, 2010. “The Perils of Paradigm Mentalities :Revisiting Kuhn, Lakatos, and Popper.” *Perspectives on Politics* 8(2);433-451 (on Blackboard)

David Lake. 2011. “Why Isms are Evil: Theory, Epistemology, and Academic Sects as Impediments to Understanding and Progress” *International Studies Quarterly* 55: 465-480 (on Blackboard)

Assignment 2: What is a paradigm? How does science evolve (make sure you compare and contrast Popper, Kuhn and Lakatos) Are paradigms good things for political science? Why or why not?

September 20. Problem Statement and Literature Review

Gerring, Chapter 2

Powner, Chapters 1,2,3

No Assignment

September 27 (need to reschedule will be in Oxford—perhaps September 26?) theory and hypotheses

Gerring, chapters 3, 8

Reread Powner chapters 1,2

Mearsheimer, John J. and Stephen M. Walt. 2013. “Leaving Theory Behind: Why Hypothesis Testing Has Become Bad for IR.” *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3) 427–45 (on Blackboard)

Assignment 3(ALL DO THIS) 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 six journal article or academic book 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. (THIS ASSIGNMENT CAN EXCEED THE TWO PAGE LIMIT FOR OTHER ASSIGNMENTS)

October 4: Concepts, Operationalization and Measurement

Gerring, chapters 4, 5, 7

Powner chp 7

Munck, Gerardo and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating

Alternative Indices.” *Comparative Political Studies* 35: 5-34. (on Blackboard)

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

Assignment 4: What are the characteristics of good measurements? Why are some concepts harder to measure than others? What are the challenges in measuring a concept such as “democracy”?

October 11: General Issues and Experiments

Powner chp 4, 7

Gerring, chapters 9 and 10

Laura Paler 2013. "Keeping the Public Purse: An Experiment in Windfalls, Taxes, and the Incentives to Restrain Government." *American Political Science Review* 107(4): 706-725.(on Blackboard)

Chris Blattman Alexandra Hartman and Robert Blair 2014. “How to promote order and property rights under weak rule of law? An experiment in changing dispute resolution behavior through community education” *American Political Science Review* 108(1): 100–120. (on Blackboard)

Jeremy Ferweda and Nicholas Miller. 2014. “Political Devolution and Resistance to Foreign Rule” *American Political Science Review* 108(3): 642-660.(on Blackboard)

Assignment 5: (ALL DO THIS) What are the essential characteristics of experiments? What are their strengths and weaknesses? For the Paler,Blattman et al, and Ferweda and Miller articles, choose two of them and evaluate them using the following criteria

- (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 politics? Why or why not?

October 18 Quasi experiments: Cross sectional designs and time series

Gerring, chapter 11

Powner chapter 8

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

Blackboard)

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

Assignment 6: (ALL DO THIS) What are the strengths and weaknesses of quasi-experimental designs versus experimental designs? For the Ross and Mason et al, articles evaluate them using the following criteria

- (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 politics? Why or why not?

October 25 Case studies and Qualitative techniques

Gerring Chp 12

Powner, Chapter 5 and chapter 6

Arend Lijphart 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method" *American Political Science Review* 65:682-693. (on Blackboard)

John Gerring. 2004. "What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?" *American Political Science Review* 98: 341-354. (on Blackboard)

David Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44, No. 4 (2011): 823-830 (on Blackboard)

James Mahoney 2007. "Qualitative Methodology and Comparative Politics" *Comparative Political Studies* 40:122-144. (on Blackboard)

Evgeny Finkel. 2015. "The Phoenix Effect of State Repression: Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust" *American Political Science Review* 109(2): 339-353. (on Blackboard)

Assignment 7: What are the primary differences between experimental, quasi experimental quantitative and qualitative designs? Can case studies be used to test theory? Why or why not?

November 1 Survey research

Excerpt from Empirical Political Analysis by Mannheim and Rich (on Blackboard)

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 (look up on JSTOR)

Gonzalez-Ocanatos, Ezequiel, et al. 2012. “Vote Buying the Social Desirability Bias: Experimental Evidence from Nicaragua.” *American Journal of Political Science* 56:202- 17 (look up on JSTOR)

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. (look up on JSTOR)

Assignment 8: What are some of the challenges in survey research? What strategies do the authors use to address these challenges?

November 8 Field Research

Shesternina, Anastasia. 2016. (forthcoming) will be posted soon

Parkinson, Sarah. 2013. “Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War” *American Political Science Review* Volume 107: 418-432 (Look up on JSTOR)

Fenno, Richard F. 1977. “U.S. House Members in their Constituencies.” *American Political Science Review* 71(3): 883-917. (look up on JSTOR)

VonDoepp, Peter. 2008. “Context-Sensitive Inquiry in Comparative Judicial Research: Lessons From the Namibian Judiciary.” *Comparative Political Studies* 41: 1515 - 1540. (look up on JSTOR)

Assignment 9: 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? How do these articles deal with these potential threats?

November 15 (NO CLASS will be out of country)

November 22 (Thanksgiving Break)

November 29 Research Ethics (you should be able to find these via google)

Scott Desposato. 2014. “Ethical Challenges and Some Solutions for Field Experiments” at <http://www.desposato.org/ethicsfieldexperiments.pdf>

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*.

Richard van Norden. 2015. “Political science’s problem with research ethics” *Nature* at <http://www.nature.com/news/political-science-s-problem-with-research-ethics-1.17866>

Willis, Derek. 2014. “Professors’ Research Project Stirs Political Outrage.” *New York Times*.

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.

Assignment 10: (ALL DO THIS) Complete human subjects training from the NIH: <https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>. Turn in your certificates of completion in class.

December 6 and 13 Research Design Presentations

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS--POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

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, which is 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 Policy Manual Section 18.1.16 "Student Standards of Academic Integrity."

Policies on academic dishonesty can be found here: <http://www.vpaa.unt.edu/academic-integrity.htm>

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS-STATEMENT OF ADA COMPLIANCE:

The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable 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 a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable 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 reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. 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](tel:940.565.4323).

OTHER POLICIES

Late assignments: Late assignments are unacceptable and will be penalized 5% for the first day they are late, and a 10% every day thereafter. As with incompletes, extensions are given only under extreme circumstances and after consultation with the instructor – prior to the due date.

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>. The short version is that we must all practice the Golden Rule – treat others as you would like to be treated. Specifically, this means that all students must treat the instructor, the other students, the teaching assistants, and the classroom setting with respect. The same is true for the instructor. Therefore:

- All potentially disruptive electronic devices must be silenced.
- Students should not send text messages, have side conversations, fall asleep, or read irrelevant materials during class. It's impolite and distracting.
- Students should be on time and stay for the entire period.
- Please show respect for alternative opinions and points of view.
- Please note that expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums.