

Government 694

Designing Research and Writing Proposals

Matthew Evangelista Fall 1996

telephone: 255-8672 Wednesday,

email: mael10@cornell.edu 10:10 am - 12:05 pm

Office: McGraw B-3 Classroom: Baker

Office Hours: Tuesdays, 12:30 - 2:30 pm, by appt.

Overview: This course is intended as a follow-up to the field seminars for students who are close to or in the midst of designing a dissertation project. We revisit key issues of research design and method; we seek to identify what constitutes a good, manageable research question; to learn how to place it within the relevant literature and debates in the field; and to persuade someone to fund our research. We begin with general issues of epistemology and logic of inquiry. Then we consider the merits of various research designs in the context of specific examples of published work in several subfields. Students will review successful and unsuccessful grant proposals; will hear presentations from faculty and students of their own experiences with grant-seeking; will learn the nuts and bolts of writing proposals directed toward such foundations as the SSRC, NSF, MacArthur, and others; and will present drafts of their own dissertation grant proposals and receive constructive advice from members of the class, and, perhaps, outside reviewers.

Requirements: Course requirements consist of writing short papers analyzing the course readings on methodology and research design; acting as a discussant of other students' papers; giving oral presentations of your own research proposals; providing constructive criticism of others' proposals; preparing drafts of various components of a research proposal; preparing a final proposal.

Specific assignments and due dates are as follows:

Draft prospectus (preliminary statement of research plans), 3 pages maximum, due 10 September. The statement should include brief discussion of the nature of the problem or puzzle you intend to investigate, a cursory summary of the existing literature on the problem, and a mention of the methods you propose to use. This draft will be ungraded but it will be distributed to other members of the class and serve as the basis for our understanding of what you plan to do.

On the following dates, some students will write short (maximum 4 pages) papers on a topic, assigned in advance, linking the week's readings, and other students will serve as discussant: 18 September, 2 October, 23 October, 30 October.

A draft grant proposal is due on 5 November. It should include a statement of the research problem, a brief literature review, and a discussion of methods and sources. It should be no longer than 10 double-spaced pages.

A final grant proposal, of maximum 15 pages, should be turned in by Monday, 9 December.

Each of the papers, except the final one (i.e., draft prospectus, short assignments, and draft proposal) will be made available to the other members of the class a day in advance (by noon on Tuesday in a box outside my office, B-3 McGraw).

The final grade will consist of:

Class participation and service as discussant, 20%

Short paper assignments, 30%

Draft proposal, 20%

Final proposal, 30%

Readings:

Two books are available for purchase:

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

Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987).

Other reading assignments will be distributed in class.

A list of grants is available for browsing:

<http://www2dgsys.com/~apsa/g&f.html>

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1. Introduction (4 September)

Week 2. Enduring Debates about Facts and Assumptions

(11 September)

E.H. Carr, "The Historian and His Facts," chap. 1 in Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Random House, 1961).

Milton Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics," in Friedman, *Essays in Positive Economics* (Chicago, 1962), pp. 3-43.

Albert O. Hirschman, "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding," *World Politics*, vol. 22, no. 3 (April 1970), pp. 329-343.

Alan Sokal, "A Physicist Experiments with Cultural Studies," *Lingua Franca* (May/June 1996), pp. 62-64.

Week 3. One or Two Logics of Inquiry? (18 September)

King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, chap. 1.

Ragin, *The Comparative Method*, chap. 1-6.

Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses, Laws, and Theories: A User's Guide"

Week 4. Getting Grants: Recent Experiences (25 September)

Some recent grant proposals will be distributed in advance.

Week 5. Using and Abusing History (2 October)

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Sommers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 22, no. 2 (April 1980), pp. 174-197, reprinted as chap. 3 in Theda Skocpol, *Social Revolutions in the Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Ian S. Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review*, vol. 90, no. 3 (September 1996), pp. 605-618.

Sidney Tarrow, "Making Social Science Work Across Space and Time: A Critical Reflection on Robert Putnam's, *Making Democracy Work*," in *American Political Science Review*, vol. 90, no. 2 (June 1996), pp. 389-397.

G.E. Schafft and William H. Kincade, "Holes in Their Histories: Public History and Public Policy," *International Studies Notes*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Spring 1993), pp. 6-14.

Week 6. Some Basic Advice (9 October)

Jonathan Kirshner, "Alfred Hitchcock and the Art of Research," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 29, no. 3 (September 1996), pp. 511-513.

P. Leeds, "Structure of Research Design."

William B. Castetter and Richard S. Heisler, "Developing and Defending a Dissertation Proposal."

Week 7. If You Can Publish a Research Article You Can Probably Win a Research Grant (16 October)

Benjamin Frankel, "A Guide to Authors," pp. 7-24.

Teresa Pelton Johnson, "Elements and Format of a Good...Article," pp. 25-28.

Stephen Van Evera, "Writing Articles for Publication: The Inside Scoop," pp. 29-33.

Week 8. Does Interest in Policy Help or Hinder Research Design? (23 October)

Jack Snyder, "Richness, Rigor, and Relevance in the Study of Soviet Foreign Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Winter 1984-85), pp. 89-108.

Jack Snyder, "Science and Sovietology: Bridging the Methods Gap in Soviet Foreign Policy Studies," *World Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (January 1988), pp. 169-193.

Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making," *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, vol. 2 (1985), pp. 21-58.

Week 9. Case Selection (30 October)

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

King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, chaps. 4, 6.

Douglas Dion, "Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study," ms., Univ. of Michigan, July 1994 (revised version forthcoming in *Comparative Politics*).

Weeks 10, 11, 12. Presentation and Discussion of Student Research/Grant Proposals:

6 November, 13 November, 20 November

Week 13. Recent Challenges to Conventional Research

(4 December)

David Dessler, "Talking Across Disciplines in the Study of Peace and Security: Epistemology and Pragmatics as Sources of Division in the Social Sciences," Stanford University, Center for International Security and Arms Control, June 1996.

Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory (A Review Essay)," September 1996.

*** Final grant proposal due Monday, 9 December ***

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E.H. Carr, "The Historian and His Facts," chap. 1 in Carr, *What Is History?* (New York: Random House, 1961).

Milton Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics," in Friedman, *Essays in Positive Economics* (Chicago, 1962), pp. 3-43.

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