SOCIAL SCIENTIFIC AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH METHODS: 
INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH DESIGN (IR 513, Spring 2004)

Purposes: This course is designed reasonably, historically and experientially to introduce the academically oriented graduate student of International Relations (IR) to the self-conscious, historical and social scientific research practices of their professional peers in history and the social sciences. Its multi-disciplinary character resonates with discussions within IR about “explanation vs understanding” research goals, “constructivist” vs “naturalistic” research methodologies and “theoretical” vs “historical,” “practical” or “policy-oriented” modes of inquiry. These practices of inquiry involve schools of thought, disciplinary and/or paradigmatic orientations, research programs, and knowledge interests embedded in research contexts. Linked to motivating “logics” or philosophies of inquiry, are qualitative and quantitative methodologies and designs implementing such logics. Competent practitioners can also provide situation-specific justifications for, and constructive criticisms of, such research practices, informed by an understanding of the relevant discipline’s history and traditions of research practice. Only such forms of competence justify the making of “rationally redeemable validity claims” (Habermas’ term) that help constitute general or particular bodies of knowledge justifiably described as “truthful,” situationally “adequate,” “historically accurate,” “mature,” “cumulative” or “scientific.” This course aspires to cultivate a moderate, yet discriminating level of competence in delineating, constructively criticizing, adapting and rationally using such research practices. Ph.D students are required as well later on to take a more specialized, advanced methodology course hopefully relevant to shaping their own dissertation research.

Philosophies of knowledge growth (epistemologies), methodologies of inquiry and research methods. Following Lakatos, the course treats methodologies as applied epistemologies, and research methods as replicable procedures giving form and content to these methodologies in particular theoretically and historically structured research contexts. Giving priority of place to the empirical, explanatory focus of “positive” or “naturalistic” social scientific inquiry, the first half of the course will review a variety of increasingly sophisticated modes of explanatory research practice, including Weberian historical sociocultural and socioeconomic inquiry. Weberian efforts to integrate interpretive and explanatory research logics will serve, after a brief look at constructivist approaches, to point us toward more humanistic or hermeneutically oriented historiographic literatures. This means that we shall next turn historical-philosophical lenses on history itself, i.e. on the nature of historical inquiry (the subject of Ringer’s and Iger’s and Hall’s required texts). Finally, we shall look at evaluative methodologies, paying special attention to the truth-uncovering and emancipatory potential of deliberatively oriented feminist social criticism. We thus explore and synthesize what Habermas would describe as the positive, hermeneutic and emancipatory scholarly knowledge interests, respectively, of: 1) discovering valid, perhaps causal, “explanations;” 2) clarifying meanings and “enhancing practical understandings”; and 3) facilitating “progressive, or enlightened, human development.” These deeply held concerns are at the heart of much debate about international inquiry.

LABoratory focus: Besides reading about and critically/constructively discussing research practices and procedures, we shall retrospectively engage in them. This means learning by doing, by actively participating in research efforts. Most of this work will be emulative attempts to understand, rehearse, reproduce, explore and extend select pieces of exemplary research. As should become apparent by the middle of the course, the laboratory...
exercises are designed to help the student bridge some of the most challenging “gaps” identified in the IR literature: first, that between scientific (causal) explanation, and humanly oriented, shared “understanding” as the guiding purpose for socio-historical inquiry; secondly, that between Enlightenment-inspired theoretical or practical inquiry and skepticism about the genuineness of social scientific knowledge enhancement and/or its historically progressive contributions. Topically, we shall look at experimental, historical, participatory, and statistical efforts to provide causal explanations, “narrative intelligibility,” “practical knowledge about…,” “lesson drawing from…,” and “explanatory” or “emancipatory” “understanding”.

Additionally, starting from several outlines of a good research proposal, as modified by the remainder of course readings, the student will prepare a 10-12 page research proposal building on, and attempting to go beyond, an article, chapter or book assigned as required reading in IR500 or one of the 4 domain overview courses.

**Appropriate background knowledge:** This course is oriented towards students in the second term of an IR Ph.D program. An overview treatment of IR theories, such as in IR500, is assumed as background to define the characteristic foci of this rich, inter-disciplinary field of study; similarly, an undergraduate or graduate introduction to empirical/statistical/computational research methods (IR 511 on Multivariate Research Methods or an equivalent course) will this year also be presupposed.

**Required work, purchases, grading.** The grading will reflect the importance of both the PHISS readings and the LAB work. Evaluation formats will differ for these two parts of the course:

- Practice-suggestive summaries of one short and one long optional readings in this Syllabus, to be made available to the class on or before the day the reading is listed (except for the first two weeks). It is the student’s responsibility to find a copy of these items, which usually will NOT be placed on reserve. The readings should be from different sections of the course. 15%
- Mid term open book take home exam, 20%
- Lab exercises, 20%. (Late labs will be reduced by at least one letter grade)
- Student research proposal, 15%
- Closed book final exam, focused on Parts III - V of the Syllabus, 20%
- Class attendance and participation, 10%.

Except for Lab exercises done jointly, all the written work in this course should be solely the student’s own work, with proper citations to the work of others.

Almost all required short readings will be available both in electronic and paper form in or through the Leavy Library. Generally, if several chapters or sections are assigned, it is my preference that the whole book be on reserve, as a way of encouraging further student browsing. Free handouts will sometimes be given out in class, but only there, and on the day they are first handed out. Books by Alker (if available in time), Lakatos and Musgrave, Elman and Elman, Weber, Ringer, Ackerly, Hall, Iggers, are to be purchased. Alker and Hurwitz’s monograph is available as an eBook within the USC/Leavy library resources. If you can’t afford any of these, individual copies of all required books should be on reserve in Leavy Library.

Students requesting academic accommodations based on disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP when adequate documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is open Monday-Friday, 8:30-5:00. The office is in Student Union 301 and their phone number is (213) 740-0776.
I. Introduction and Overview

January 15. Course Overview: Contemporary Social Scientific and Historical Methodological Perspectives


Optional: Alker, “Logic, Dialectics, Politics, from his edited special issue on “Dialectical Logics for the Political Sciences,” Poznan Studies, 1982; or his “Aristotelean Political Methodologies,” in Rediscoveries and Reformulations, suggesting three Aristotelean disciplines of political inquiry: ethical, the synthesis of art and science, and cosmological.

Laboratory, January 15, Due Jan 19th, 10am, in Alker’s VKC330 Mailbox. Graphing Arguments, Debates, Reasoning Processes. This will be an extension of items 3) and 4) above and Ch. 4 (“Argumentation Analysis”) of Chris Hart, Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Social Science Research Imagination, Sage, Thousand Oaks, 1998. Alker will review the Hart and Alker readings in class January 15th during or before the lab hour.

II. The Search for Scientific Explanations of Politics and International Relations

January 22. Statistical/Large-N/Quasi-Experimental Approaches to Explanatory Causal Analysis

This will largely be a review of some major points from IR511, which IR students should have taken by now.

4) Wm. N. Dunn, “Reforms as Arguments,” and D.T. Campbell, “Experiments as Arguments,” Knowledge 3(1982), pp. 293-326 and 327-37. Campbell graciously concedes that experimental standards of inquiry, which are the foundation of the “hard” natural sciences and the analogical basis of his quasi-experimental approach to causal inquiry, are in fact structured argumentation practices. Toumin’s “jurisprudential” model of social scientific inquiry, somewhat similar to his “clinical” mode of inquiry, previously discussed, is also notable.

Optional: Skim or reread the philosophical parts of the main social science text used in IR511: Agresti and Finlay,

This class builds on and amplifies the distinctions and unifications suggested in Alker’s “Logic, Dialectics, Politics,” as initially reviewed the first week of class.

4) James Johnson, “Consequences of Positivism: A Pragmatist Assessment,” APSA Annual Meetings, August 2003, draft made available by the author;

8) For an authoritative and detailed overview of NSF-funded teaching of qualitative research methods used in the teaching of qualitative research methods in International Relations and Foreign Policy, see the Sjoberg volumes on reserve in Leavy library.
February 5 and 12. Liberal Institutionalism, Offensive/Defensive Realism, Democratic Peace as Lakatosian Research Programs

3) Elman and Elman (pp. 1-11, 19-68), Keohane and Martin (pp.71-108), J. L. Ray (pp.205-244), and Robert Jervis (pp.277-310) in Colin Elman and Miriam F. Elman, eds., Progress in International Relations Theory, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2003.


Laboratory: A librarian will help us to get familiar with the Social Science Citation Index and related bibliographic sources.

February 12 and 19 Mixed Mode (Merton + March&Simon, Kuhn + Lakatos+ others) Assessments of Scientific Progress

2) H. R. Alker and R. Hurwitz, Resolving Prisoner’s Dilemmas, APSA, Washington, D.C., 1980, Chs. 1 (Intro), Ch.2 (Paradigms, Paradoxes, and Scientific Progress), 3(The Game Learning Research Paradigm), plus tables summarizing the contributions of other “research paradigm complexes” from Chs. 4-6; Alker, “Beneath Tit-for-Tat,” Ch.9, pp. 303-331, R&R; Both Kuhn’s “disciplinary matrix” reformulation of his “paradigm” idea and Lakatos’ “Sophisticated Methodological Falsificationism” and Habermas’s “sponsorship-application contexts” are at the root of the research paradigm complex notion.


Laboratory: Using Michael Brasser’s SPD Grapher program, the student will have a chance to explore a variety of perspectives for explaining SPD/IPD game behavior in the Alker-Hurwitz-Rothkin data sets.

Midterm Take Home Exam, Due Monday, February 23rd, 10am, in Alker’s VKC330 Mailbox. The student will choose a way of assessing scientific progress based on the previously assigned course readings, justify its appropriateness for application to one of the substantive topics covered in IR500, a Domain course, or a chapter in Walter Carlnaes, T. Risse, B. A. Simmons, eds., Handbook of International Relations ; Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2002. (To be put on 2 hour reserve) The exam should discuss the extent to which knowledge has cumulated in these terms. This exam should be done individually, WITHOUT collaboration.
February 26: Weberian Socioeconomic History


March 4. A Deeper Look at Weberian Theories of Social Interaction, Subsequent Philosophy on Intentional Action, Causation, and Social Constitution seen as Contextual/Processual Challenges to the Adequacy of Causal/Structural Equation Modeling


March 11. Introduction to Social Constructivism

**Required:** 1) N. G. Onuf, *World of Our Making*, Chapter 1 (“Constructivism”), Ch2. (“Law and Language”), “Regimes [including collective security and mutual insecurity maintenance through nuclear deterrence] (pp. 145-159), and the Liberal “Presumption of Anarchy” Ch. 5 (163-195). The pioneering book on contemporary constructivism, grounded in Austin-Wittgenstein-Searle speech act theory, the writings of Weber, Habermas, Kratochwil, etc.
5) Review Wendt’s articles from IR500 on causality and constitution, and on “Anarchy is What States Make of it”, as needed; then read Alker’s “Learning from Wendt,” *Review of International Studies*, 26,1 (2000): 141-150.

**Laboratory:** We will focus on flow charting the research procedures in Duffy-Frederking-Tucker.

**Optional:** 1)Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln, Preface and Introductions, pp. vii-34; Valerie Janesick, “The Dance of Qualitative Research Design: Metaphor, Methodolatry, and Meaning,” pp. 35-56; and J.C. Morse, “Designing Funded Qualitative Research,” pp. 56-85; and Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, “Grounded Theory

SPRING VACATION MARCH 15 - 21

III. Historical Sources, Schools and Sociohistorical Discourses in 19th and 20th Century Historiography

March 25. An Overview of Historiography


Laboratory: If it can be arranged, there will be an introduction to IR relevant historical research resources by a professional librarian.

ONE PAGE PROPOSALS CONCERNING THE STUDENT’S CHOICE OF A TOPIC FOR HIS/HER RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE IN PROFESSOR ALKER’S MAILBOX BY 10am, MARCH 29th. (See assignment below.)
April 1. The Causal-Historical Controversy over the End of the Cold War
Papers by Wolford and English from International Security, plus an unpublished paper by Tannewald on the
controversy. Professor English will help us discuss the issues involved. See also IR500 writings.

April 8. Generalizing and Particularizing Historical Discourses
Required: John R. Hall, Cultures of Inquiry, pp. 33-166, 169-228. (Start by reviewing his introduction to “The
Third Path.”). Were there more time, one could optionally read and discuss any of the numerous sociohistorical
studies Hall mentions.
Optional: 1) Lynn Hunt, ed., The New Cultural History; V. Bonnell and L. Hunt, eds., Beyond the Cultural Turn,
both University of California Press, Berkeley, 1989 and 1999 respectively.
3) Consuelo Cruz, "Identity and Persuasion: How Nations Remember Their Pasts and Make Their Futures," World
Politics, 52,3(April 2000): 275-312
4) James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschhemeyer, eds., Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences,
5) Joan Scott and Debra Keates, eds., Schools of Thought: 25 years of Interpretive Social Science, Princeton U.

IV. Issues of Global and Local Governance

April 15. Deliberatively Oriented Argumentation and Cosmopolitan Political Theory
Required: 1) Thomas Risse, "Let's Argue: Communicative Action in World Politics," International Organization,
2) J. Habermas, The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory, edited by C. Gronin and P. De Greiff.,
264.
3) Brooke Ackerly, Political Theory and Feminist Social Criticism, review pp.1-32; read Chapter 2: “A Third
Press, New York., for the UN Development Program, 2003. pp.1-79. Although its authors are analytically oriented
political economists, consonant with the Hart and Wm Dunn-Donald T. Campbell readings, this summary, like
Ackerley’s feminist political theorizing, will be presented as a case of political argumentation.
Optional: 1) Postmodern/Postcolonial IR books by Sylvester, David Campbell, Connolly, Michael Shapiro, Der
Derian, Ling, Marchand and Pappart, or Mohanty.
2) David Held's books on globalization and cosmopolitan democracy, especially: D. Held and A. McGrew, The
3) Paul Diesing, Reason in Society: Five types of decisions and their social conditions, Greenwood Press, Westport,
CT, 1976(1962). A highly accessible, more general (and earlier) version of arguments about types of rationality and
social action.
reasoning.

April 22. An Emancipatory Methodology of Constructive, Feminist, Social Criticism
Required: 1) Ackerly, pp. 73-203.
Optional: Books by Benhabib, Mouffe, Nussbaum, Sen, Butler, Waltzer, as cited by Ackerly.

Laboratory: The lab hour may be used for some preliminary student research proposals (see below).
V. International Perspectives on Knowledge Cumulation, and Other Course-Related Conclusions

April 29. Dialogical Perspectives on Knowledge Cumulation, plus Student Research Proposals


Secondly, with special reference to the outlines of research proposals in the Appendix of Hart’s text, and Morse’s Tables 3.2 and 3.3 (in Denzin and Lincoln), during the last two weeks of the course, students will orally, and in writing, present 10-12 page research proposals following one or more of the research methodologies outlined (and perhaps flow charted) in the required or optional readings of the course. The student may continue within the subject domain of his/her Take home midterm, but may also pick a new substantive focus related to material covered in IR500 or any of the 4 graduate domain courses. The research proposal should not be one written for another methodology course.

In the scheduled exam period, May 4-11, there will be a 2 hour closed book final exam. The exam will be focused as well on the higher level issues of assessing and promoting knowledge cumulation raised by the individual examples of student research proposals and the differing (overlapping?) views on this subject, and the standards appropriate for making such assessments, raised by the assigned reading for parts III, IV and V of the course compared with the literature in Parts I and II.