11th ECPR Summer School in Methods and Techniques, 27th July - 7th August
Central European University, Budapest, Hungary
Course Description Form[1] - 2nd week course (15 hrs) (8 August - 12 August)

1. Course title

Process-tracing methodology II – Evidence and empirical testing in practice

2. Instructor details

First name, last name: Derek Beach
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Short Bio (ca. 50-70 words):

Derek Beach (Author) is an associate professor of Political Science at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, where he teaches international relations and methodology. He has authored articles, chapters, and books on international negotiations, referendums, and European integration, and co-authored the book *Process-tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines* (University of Michigan Press), and currently is engaged in writing a book together with Rasmus Brun Pedersen on Causal Case Study Methods (contracted with University of Michigan Press).He has taught qualitative case study methods at ECPR and IPSA summer and winter schools, and held numerous workshops and seminars on qualitative methods throughout the world. He is also one of the academic co-convenors of the ECPR Methods School.

3. Short outline (150 words)

This course is a more practical, hands-on course in using Process Tracing (PT) methods in one's own research, complementing the more theoretical PT I ECPR Summer School course held in the first week, which focuses on the research design aspects of the method. The course requires that one has already had some form of introduction to PT, either by taking the week 1 course, the course at the ECPR Winter School, or another introductory course on PT.

This course focuses on how we can use within-case evidence to make causal inferences about mechanisms. The course starts with an introduction to how we can make causal inferences using Bayesian logic, i.e. when we have no variation upon which to make inferences. We then turn to the practicalities of empirical testing and making causal inferences in days 2 and 3, focusing on how we can strengthen the inferences we can make by improving the empirical tests that we employ in our research. We will work on this topic using a combination of analysis of existing work and tests

[1] *Disclaimer: the information contained in this course description form may be subject to subsequent adaptations (e.g. taking into account new developments in the field, specific participant demands, group size etc.). Registered participants will be informed in due time in case of adaptations.*

developed based on your own research. Day 4 discusses inductive theory-building using PT. The final day discusses how we can utilize PT in practical case study research.

The course requires active participation. It is expected that participants are able to use parts of their own research in the exercises and group work during the course.

4. Long outline (800 to 1200 words)

This course is a more practical, hands-on course in using Process Tracing (PT) methods in one's own research, complementing the more theoretical PT I ECPR Summer School course held in the first week, which focuses on the research design aspects of the method. The course requires that one has already had some form of introduction to PT, either by taking the week 1 course, the course at the ECPR Winter School, or another introductory course on PT.

In comparison to other research methods such as large-N correlation-based analysis and comparative methods, process-tracing as a distinct method involves research where, 'The cause-effect link that connects independent variable and outcome is unwrapped and divided into smaller steps; then the investigator looks for observable evidence of each step.' (Van Evera 1997:64). The promise of process-tracing as a methodological tool is that it enables the researcher to study more-or-less directly the *causal mechanism(s)* linking an independent variable (or set of variables) and an outcome, allowing us to open up the 'black box' of causality itself.

The first day introduces the Bayesian logic of inference, followed by hands-on exercises for how we can develop and improve empirical tests in ways that enable strong causal inferences to be made, using an example from a Sherlock Holmes story.

Day 2 introduces recent developments in empirical testing in PT, focusing on the Bayesian underpinnings of two dimensions of test strength (certainty and uniqueness). We utilize Tannenwald's well-known article to illustrate Bayesian logic and empirical tests.

Day 3 introduces source criticism and the practical challenges in working with empirical evidence in PT. We focus upon archival material, elite interviews and secondary historical sources. This includes questions such as how we should evaluate bias, what a 'good' source is, and how we deal with bias in secondary historical material. We will utilize a set of materials from the Cuban Missile Crisis to discuss the challenges relating to evidence in PT.

Day 4 turns to a discussion of how we can use empirical material to build theorized causal mechanisms, using Janis' study of Groupthink as an example.

The course concludes with a discussion of practical challenges in using PT, drawing on the exercises participants will be drafting during the week.

5. Day-to-day schedule

	Topic(s)	**Details [NB : incl. timing of lecture v/s lab or fieldwork etc. hours]**
Day 1	Making causal inferences using within-case evidence – Bayesian logic	
Day 2	Operationalization of tests	
Day 3	Working with evidence	
Day 4	Building theorized mechanisms	
Day 5	Using PT in practice	

6. Day-to-day reading list

	Readings (please read at least the compulsory reading for the scheduled day)
Day 1	Making causal inferences using within-case evidence • Beach and Pedersen (2013) *Process Tracing: Foundations and Guidelines.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapter 5. • Beach and Pedersen (2016) Chapter 6 from *Causal Case Studies* (forthcoming). • Howson and Urbach (2006) *Scientific Reasoning: the Bayesian Approach.* Third Edition. La Salle, Il: Open Court. Chapter 4. • *Silver Blaze (*will be provided)
Day 2	Operationalization of tests • Beach and Pedersen (2013) *Process Tracing: Foundations and Guidelines.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapter 6 (only pages 107-119) • Tannenwald (1999) 'The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use', *International Organization,* 53(3): 433-468.
Day 3	Working with evidence • Beach and Pedersen (2013) *Process Tracing: Foundations and Guidelines.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapter 7. • Lustick (1996) 'History, Historiography and Political Science.', *APSR*, 90(3), pp. 605-618. • Case material on Cuban Missile Crisis. Will be provided
Day 4	Building theorized mechanisms using empirical material

	• Beach and Pedersen (2013) *Process Tracing: Foundations and Guidelines.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Pp. 60-63. • Beach and Pedersen (2016) Chapter 9 from *Causal Case Studies* (forthcoming). • Janis (1983) *Groupthink.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin. pp. 1-71.
Day 5	Using PT in practice Discussion based on exercises during the week.

9. Software and hardware requirements

9.1. Software programme
None

9.2. Hardware requirements
None

10. Literature

11. Lecture room requirement
A seminar room that is conducive to extensive discussions with participants is preferred over a traditional lecture room. A blackboard or whiteboard along with Powerpoint is mandatory.

12. Preferred time slots
Mornings

13. Other recommended courses (before or after this course)
The following other ECPR Methods School courses could be useful in combination with this one in a 'training track'. NB this is an indicative list.

Before this course:

	Course title	Summer School	Winter School
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

After this course:

	Course title	Summer School	Winter School
1	Process tracing methods II	X	
2	Advanced Process tracing		X
3	Advanced Mixed-methods		X
4	Qualitative Comparative Analysis	X	
5			

7. Requested prior knowledge

The course requires that one has already had some form of introduction to Process-tracing, either by taking the week 1 ECPR Summer School course, the course in PT at the ECPR Winter School, or another introductory course on Process-tracing.

8. Software used

None

9. Literature

Beyond the above course literature, the following are cited above.

10. Lecture room requirement

A seminar room that is conducive to extensive discussions with participants is preferred over a traditional lecture room. A blackboard or whiteboard along with Powerpoint is mandatory.