

University of California, Los Angeles  
Fall 2014

## Political Science 292B

### Research Design

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REVISE TO MORE CONSCIOUSLY LEAD FROM SELECTION BIAS TO EXPS AND NAT EXPS. ELIMINATE WK ON N OF CASES &/OR CAMPBELL & STANLEY. NEED TO RETAIN REGRESSION TO THE MEAN, PLATT, AND CHAMBERLIN (IDEA OF CRUCIAL TEST), BUT MAYBE NOT A SEPARATE WK FOR THEM.  
START TALKING ABOUT NEED FOR EXOGENOUS IVS TO EST CAUSE MUCH EARLIER.

This course is designed to help students design good, theoretically informed empirical research projects and write effective funding proposals. The emphasis will be on methods and issues related to research in less developed and ex-communist countries, but students with other interests may take the class if they and the professor believe it will be useful to them.

The purpose of research is to build theories that help us to understand the world. Good research is both theoretically interesting and empirically persuasive. The course has two purposes: to help students choose theoretically interesting and researchable dissertation and paper topics; and to increase students' general sophistication in designing research strategies that will make their research findings persuasive. The first meeting of the class will be spent making sure that everyone has at least the beginning of a research proposal idea. In later sessions, we will discuss transforming vague topics and inchoate ideas into testable hypotheses; linking current events to appropriate theoretical ideas; and non-quantitative methodological issues that determine whether one's research is ultimately persuasive. The (reasonably short) readings on these subjects will be discussed in the context of the research ideas proposed by members of the class. Students are expected to do the assigned reading, much of which is boring, and to think and talk about how the issues raised might be relevant to their own research projects. Students will also have the opportunity to discuss the nitty gritty details of fieldwork.

Assignments in the class will include three preliminary research designs and a finished dissertation, paper, or funding proposal. Though some readings will be assigned, students will be expected to devote most of their time to working on their own research proposals. Each student should finish the class with a usable proposal and a reasonable idea of what to do next in the research process. Only students who have taken the class before may audit, and auditors will be expected to do all assignments. Incompletes will be given only in the most extraordinary circumstances. You must do the assignments for this class on time, just as you must finish funding proposals by funders' deadlines.

The course is designed primarily to meet the needs of second and third year students who are thinking seriously about research, though more advanced students are welcome. If you have questions, feel free to call or email me.

Required reading:

Excerpts from Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, available at <http://www.soc.washington.edu/users/brines/King.pdf>

Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Pages 1-33 available at googlebooks. Other assignments posted on the class website.

These books should also be available used from Amazon.com, or you can borrow my copies in order to xerox excerpts.

Other readings are either posted on the class website

(<https://moodle2.sscnet.ucla.edu/course/view/14F-POLSCI292B-1>) or available at internet sites shown below.

### Reading and Discussion Schedule

Week 1, Oct 6: Intellectual introductions: Choosing a Research Topic

Reading: King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, pp. 1-23, 29-33, 46-50, and 100-114;

Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles*, pp. 27-37

Week 2, Oct 13: Explaining Outcomes vs. Testing Arguments

Reading: Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles*, chap. 1 and the rest of chap. 2

"I am become death, destroyer of worlds"

FIRST RESEARCH DESIGN ASSIGNMENT DUE THURSDAY, OCT 16, 5:00 PM, in my box or as an email attachment. (The grade on this assignment is for your information and will not count toward your grade in the class. If you do not turn the assignment in, however, you may not take the class.)

Week 3, Oct 20: Small N Issues

Reading: Lijphart, Arendt, 1975, "The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," *Comparative Political Studies*, 8 (July) 158-77, on class website

Lieberson, Stanley, 1991, "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases," *Social Forces* 7 (December), 307-20, on class website

King, Keohane, and Verba, 208-228

Week 4, Oct 27: Case Selection

Reading: Achen, Christopher and Duncan Snidal, 1989, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," *World Politics* 41: 2, 143-169.

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010405>

Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles*, pp. 89-114

King, Keohane and Verba, pp. 128-48

Week 5, Nov 3: Rival Hypotheses and Crucial Tests

Reading: Chamberlin, T.C., 1965, "The Method of Multiple Working Hypotheses," *Science* 148: 3671, 754 – 759 (May 7), on class website

Platt, John R., 1964, "Strong Inference," *Science* 146: 3642 (16 Oct), on class website

Van Evera, Stephen, 1997, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press) pp. 7-48, on class website

Campbell, Donald and Julian Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research*, pp. 1-22, 34-43, 47-50, and 55-60, on class website

Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles*, pp. 117-129

SECOND RESEARCH DESIGN ASSIGNMENT DUE THURSDAY, NOV 6, 5:00 PM

Week 6, Nov 10: Operationalizing and "Measuring" Qualitative and Quantitative Variables

Elkins, Zachary. 2000. "Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations," *AJPS* 44:2, 293-300. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2669311>

Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles*, pp. 142-73  
Haggard and Kaufman, 2012, "Inequality and Regime Change: Democratic Transitions and the Stability of Democratic Rule," *APSR*, available through the UCLA Library eLinks, [http://ucelinks.cdlib.org:8888/sfx\\_local?sid=jstor:jstor&genre=article&issn=00030554&eissn=15375943&volume=106&pages=+495-516&spage=495&epage=516&atitle=Inequality+and+Regime+Change%3A+Democratic+Transitions+and+the+Stability+of+Democratic+Rule&date=2012&title=The+American+Political+Science+Review&issue=3](http://ucelinks.cdlib.org:8888/sfx_local?sid=jstor:jstor&genre=article&issn=00030554&eissn=15375943&volume=106&pages=+495-516&spage=495&epage=516&atitle=Inequality+and+Regime+Change%3A+Democratic+Transitions+and+the+Stability+of+Democratic+Rule&date=2012&title=The+American+Political+Science+Review&issue=3)

Week 7, Nov 17: Experimental Research Designs

Reading: Humphreys, Macartan and Jeremy Weinstein. 2009. "Field Experiments and the Political Economy of Development." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12: 367-78. [www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.polisci.12.060107.155922](http://www.annualreviews.org/doi/full/10.1146/annurev.polisci.12.060107.155922)  
Duflo, Esther, Rachel Glennerster, and Michael Kremer. 2006. "Using Randomization in Development Economics Research: A Toolkit." MIT Department of Economics Working Paper No. 06-36. [www.povertyactionlab.org/](http://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/documents/Using%20Randomization%20in%20Development%20Economics.pdf) or <http://www.povertyactionlab.org/sites/default/files/documents/Using%20Randomization%20in%20Development%20Economics.pdf>

[You can skim large parts of this. I want you to understand the basic ideas about how experiments can eliminate selection bias, how randomization can be accomplished, and power. And then I want you to know where you can go to read about the details if they are relevant to your own research.]

Week 8, Nov 24, "Natural Experiments"

Reading: Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences*, pp. 1-21, 48-102, 235-43, 300-2, available on the class website

THIRD RESEARCH DESIGN ASSIGNMENT DUE MONDAY, DEC 1, IN CLASS

Week 9, Dec 1: Comparative Historical Research and Path Dependence;

Reading: Lieberman, Evan, 2001, "Causal Inference in Historical Institutional Analysis: A Specification of Periodization Strategies," *Comparative Political Studies* 34:9, 1011-1034. <http://cps.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/34/9/1011>  
Beck, Nathaniel. 2010. "Time Is Not a Theoretical Variable." *Political Analysis* 18, 293-94. <http://pan.oxfordjournals.org/content/18/3/293.full>  
Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles*, pp. 131-42

Week 10, Dec 8: Fieldwork Experiences and Techniques

Reading:

Wood, Elisabeth, 2007, "Field Research," in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*, ed., Carles Boix and Susan Stokes. <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=en&id=kTt-xxNlsrcC&oi=fnd&pg=PA123&dq=%22Field+Methods%22+Elisabeth+Wood&ots=zsGrgGvOKp&sig=0Cf8Z4shE9f8ypdzugRaK2jmbc#v=onepage&q=%22Field%20Methods%22%20Elisabeth%20Wood&f=false> website doesn't work. I had it scanned.

Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, pp. 115-116 and 97-113, on class website

Przeworski, Adam and Frank Salomon, 1995, "On the Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council Competitions," NY: SSRC. <http://www.ssrc.org/publications/view/7A9CB4F4-815F-DE11-BD80-001CC477EC70/m>

FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2014. Please send by email attachment as I will be out of town.

