

**GOVERNMENT 2009: METHODS OF POLITICAL ANALYSIS**

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The object of this course is to help those who are planning to undertake an empirical inquiry, such as a doctoral dissertation, to meet the challenges of doing empirical research in the social sciences. The focus is on research design: how to plan a piece of research that will generate important and convincing results and how to present it effectively. The course covers the main issues in research design associated with case selection, concept formation, measurement and the uses of large-n statistical analysis and of small-n case studies. For many such topics, clear-cut principles of good practice can be identified. Since all research designs entail trade-offs, however, the deeper objective of the course is to cultivate a general appreciation for the nature and limits of the research enterprise itself in order to inform the decisions that must be made about any individual piece of research. For this reason, we also look briefly at general issues in social science rooted in the interdependence of theory and data, the problem of establishing causality, and the dilemmas generated by complex causal structures. The course covers the principles of research design for large-n and small-n analysis with some emphasis on the latter, but for lack of time leaves out many practical issues of field research and statistical analysis.

The course is suitable for all doctoral students in Government regardless of year including students in the third -year and above developing dissertation topics or working on dissertations. Advanced undergraduates or graduate students in other fields may be admitted with the permission of the instructor if space allows.

**Requirements**

1. Since the class proceeds largely by discussion, all participants are expected to do the required reading carefully and to join in active discussion. This counts for the grade. Background reading is optional.
2. The written requirement for the course entails developing a proposal for a specific piece of research. On Sept 27<sup>th</sup>, all participants turn in a 2 page proposal for such a piece of research, which can be a planned dissertation topic or any other major research project (however hypothetical) that involves some primary empirical research.
3. On Oct 19<sup>th</sup>, participants turn in a grant proposal of 2000-2500 words based on their initial proposal or a new project. This should be written as if it were an application for funding.
4. On Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> participants turn in a 1 page memo outlining a key concept and measures for it.
5. On Nov 20<sup>th</sup>, participants circulate a 1½ to 3 page evaluation couched as a review for a journal of one of the unpublished papers to be distributed around Nov 14<sup>th</sup>.
6. On or before Dec 11<sup>th</sup>, participants hand in a 4500 word revision of their proposal couched as a dissertation or research prospectus.

## Readings and Course Outline

### 1. (Sept 5) The Evolution of the Discipline

This session will introduce the course and review the development of the discipline of political science.

**Recommended Reading:** Peter A. Hall, "The Dilemmas of Contemporary Social Science," *boundary 2* 34,3 (2007): 121-41.

#### **Background Reading**

C. Wright Mills, "On Intellectual Craftsmanship" in *The Sociological Imagination*: 195-227.

Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder, eds., *Passion, Craft and Method in Comparative Politics*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

Ira Katznelson and Helen V. Milner, eds., *Political Science: State of the Discipline*. (NY: Norton, 2002)

Harry Eckstein and David Apter, eds., *Comparative Politics: A Reader*. (NY: Free Press, 1963).

Ronald H. Chilcote, *Theories of Comparative Politics*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1981).

Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds. *A New Handbook of Political Science*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996).

## PART ONE: SOCIAL SCIENCE AS DISCOVERY AND EXPLANATION

### 2. (Sept 12) What Are We Trying to Do? The Relationship between Theory and the Empirical World

*"I have cleansed the Augean stables only to replace it with this cart of dung"*

-- Johannes Kepler on finding his laws of planetary motion did not conform to geometrical form

This week we consider several alternative visions of what social scientists should be seeking and of what they can – with an emphasis on the relationship between theory and empirical observation. We begin with Moon's account of what positivist political science entails, focused on the nomological-deductive approach and the interpretivist alternative to it. What are the basic features of covering-law models of explanation? What are the advantages and disadvantages of taking a positivist approach to politics? In your view, does Moon's synthesis effectively combine the interpretivist and positivist approaches? We then consider Kuhn's influential challenge to positivist approaches. On what grounds does he challenge the positivist view that empirical evidence can be used to falsify theoretical propositions? In his view, how does 'science' progress? Where do theories come from? What are the key components of the process leading to paradigm shift? What dilemmas does social science face if Kuhn is correct?

#### **Required Reading**

Donald Moon, "The Logic of Political Inquiry", in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science* Vol. 1 (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing, 1975), pp. 131-227.

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1970), 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Chs. 2-6, 8-10, 12-13, parts of the Postscript. (i.e. pp. 1-65, 77-135, 144-173, 198-210)

### Background Reading

- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994), pp. 1-11, chapter 2, and pp. 75-95.
- Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description" in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (NY: Basic 1973), pp. 193-233.
- Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man" *Review of Metaphysics* 25, 1 (September 1971), also in *Collected Papers*. Vol II. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985), pp. 15-57
- Paul W. Holland, "Statistics and Causal Inference," *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 81, 396 (December 1986): 945-960.
- Timothy McKeown, "Case Studies and the Statistical Worldview," *International Organization* 53,1 (Winter 1999): 161-90.
- Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005).
- Peter Kosso, *Reading the Book of Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1992)
- Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 96, 4 (December 2002): 713-28.
- Andrew Sayer, *Method in Social Science: A Realist Approach* (London: Routledge 1992)
- Margaret Archer et al., *Critical Realism*. (London: Routledge, 1998)
- Ruth Lane, "Positivism, Scientific Realism and Political Science," *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 8 (3): 361-82.
- James Johnson, "Consequences of Positivism: A Pragmatist Assessment," *Comparative Political Studies* 39, 2 (March 2006): 224-52.

### **3. (Sept 19) What Are We Trying to Do? Alternative Conceptions of the Research Enterprise**

*"The idea of causality is allowed to survive because, like the British Monarchy, one supposes it to do no harm."*

*-- Bertrand Russell*

This week look more deeply into the relationship between theory and empirical observation to consider, first, the efforts of Lakatos to resolve the dilemmas that follow from Kuhn and, second, some alternative approaches to understanding what social scientists can and should do. Consider the difficult but important essay by Lakatos. How does he think science progresses? How might a 'three-cornered fight' help resolve the problems that arise from the interdependence of theory and data? What is a scientific research program? Do they exist in political science? The chapter by Sayer provides an introduction to 'critical realism' as an alternative to positivist views of the research enterprise. From that perspective, what should social scientists be seeking and why? How does the realist perspective differ from positivist or interpretivist perspectives?

The chapter by Little summarizes the canons of positivism, contrasts it with interpretivism, and seeks another synthesis. This takes us into issues of causation. According to Little and Goldthorpe, what does it mean to say x causes y? Goldthorpe identifies three understandings of the concept of causality. Which do you find more compelling? What are the key implications of each for how we study causation? That takes us to issues about 'mechanisms' about which Hedstrom and Ylikoski provide an overview and Gerring a skeptical comment. What are mechanisms? How do we study them? Should we try?

### Required Reading

Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes" in Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds. *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1970): 91-100, 114-122, 132-138, 173-180.

Andrew Sayer, *Realism and Social Science* (London: Sage 2000), chapter 1.

Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science* (Boulder: Westview, 1991), pp. 1-38.

John H. Goldthorpe, "Causation, Statistics and Sociology," *European Sociological Review* 17, 1 (2001): 1-20.

Peter Hedstrom and Petri Ylikoski, "Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences," *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010): 49-67.

John Gerring, "Causal Mechanisms, Yes, But..." *Comparative Political Studies* 43, 11 (2010): 1499-1526.

### **Background Reading**

Andrew Moravcsik, "Liberal International Relations Theory: A Scientific Assessment." In Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., *Progress in International Relations Theory: Appraising the Field*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003): 159-204.

Robert O. Keohane, "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond," in Keohane, ed. *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986): 158-203.

A. O. Hirschman, "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding." *World Politics* 22(3) (1970): 329-343.

Albert Hirschman, "Against Parsimony: Three Easy Ways of Complicating some Categories of Economic Discourse." *Economics and Philosophy* 1(April 1985): 7-21.

William Outhwaite, "Realism and Social Science" in Margaret Archer et al. *Critical Realism* (London: Routledge 1998), pp. 282-296.

Neil Gross, "A Pragmatist Theory of Social Mechanisms," *American Sociological Review* 74 (June 2009): 358-79.

Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg eds. *Social Mechanisms* (NY: Cambridge University Press 1998).

John Gerring, "The Mechanistic Worldview: Thinking Inside the Box," *British Journal of Political Science*, 38, 1: 161-179.

Charles Tilly, "To Explain Political Processes," *American Journal of Sociology*, 100, 6 (1995): 1594-1610.

Renate Mayntz, "Mechanisms in the Analysis of Social Macro-Phenomena," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 34, 2: 237-54.

## **PART TWO: THE ADVANTAGES OF ALTERNATIVE RESEARCH DESIGNS**

### **4. (Sept 26) The Promise and Pitfalls of Statistical Approaches to Large-N Analysis**

*"Without a constant counterfeiting of the world by means of numbers, mankind could not survive"*  
-- Friedrich Nietzsche

This week we examine the advantages of using statistical techniques for establishing causal relations and some of the potential pitfalls they encounter with an emphasis on estimations based on pooled cross-sectional time-series that are a staple of comparative politics. The essay by Hall and Franzese provides one example then critiqued by Shalev. What is the essence of his critique of multiple authors? If it has merit, what should we do to improve our analyses? In what respects

does the analysis of Hall and Franzese remain convincing? Wallerstein provides a brief discussion of the assumptions that must be made about the structure of causal relations in the world if standard forms of regression analysis are to produce valid results. In what instances, are those assumptions most likely to be satisfied? Kittel and Winner then provide a critique of the article by Garrett and Mitchell. What are the principal problems they identify? To what extent and how can they be resolved?

### **Required Reading**

Peter A. Hall and Robert J. Franzese, Jr. "Mixed Signals: Central Bank Independence, Coordinated Wage Bargaining and European Monetary Union," *International Organization* 52, 3 (Summer 1998): 505-535.

Michael Shalev, "Limits and Alternatives to Multiple Regression in Comparative Research," *Comparative Social Research* 25 (Spring 2006).

Michael Wallerstein, 2000. "Trying to Navigate between Scylla and Charybdis: Misspecified and Unidentified Models in Comparative Politics," *APSA-CP: Newsletter for the Organized Section in Comparative Politics of the American Political Science Association*, 11, 2 (Summer): 1- 21.

Geoffrey Garrett and Deborah Mitchell, "Globalization, Government Spending and Taxation in the OECD," *European Journal of Political Research* 39, 1 (2001): 145-77.

Bernhard Kittel and Hannes Winner, "How Reliable is Pooled Analysis in Political Economy? The Globalization-Welfare State Nexus Revisited," *European Journal of Political Research* (2005) 44: 269-93.

### **Background Reading**

Janet Box-Steffensmeir, Henry Brady and David Collier, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2008).

Jasjeet S. Sekhon, "Opiates for the Matches: Matching Methods for Causal Inference," *Annual Review of Political Science*, 12 (2009): 487-508.

David Hackett Fischer, "Fallacies of Generalization," in Fischer, *Historian's Fallacies*, pp. 103-130.

John Jackson, "Political Methodology: An Overview" in Robert Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingeman, eds., *A New Handbook of Political Science* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996: 717-748.

Mattei Dogan, "The Use and Misuse of Statistics in Comparative Politics" in Mattei Dogan and Ali Kazanufi, eds., *Comparing Nations*. Oxford: Blackwell 1994: 35-70.

Stanley Lieberson, *Making it Count*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

## **5. (Oct 3) The Promise and Pitfalls of Process Analysis in Small N Research Designs**

*Note: This class will be rescheduled as a result of a scheduling conflict.*

*"Every simple statement is false. Every complex statement is useless"*

*-Paul Valéry*

This week we consider the advantages and disadvantages of small-n research designs with an emphasis on those that employ some form of process analysis. The essay by Lijphart is the most famous traditional account of the comparative method. What are its principle features as he describes it? From what do its limitations derive? Hall criticizes conventional approaches to small-n comparison based on the comparative method as described by Lijphart. To what extent is

his critique telling? Why might systematic process analysis be a better alternative? What are its limits? When might you use process analysis and when might you use other approaches to establishing causal explanations? The article by Owen summarizes a book that offers an example of process analysis, used to explain why democratic states are unlikely to go to war with one another. What aspects of his analysis make it more convincing? Where does it fall short? Bennett develops a Bayesian perspective on process analysis which emphasizes that the value of any one piece of evidence depends on our theoretical priors. Note the four types of 'tests' he describes based on van Evera. In the project you are thinking about, try to identify some kinds of evidence that would provide each type of test. What are the principal steps we should take in order to do systematic process analysis effectively? What do we look for in the cases? Does process analysis produce generalizable results?

### **Required Reading**

Arendt Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *American Political Science Review* (September 1971): 682-93.

Peter A. Hall, "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research " in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (NY: Cambridge University Press 2003): 373-406.

John Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19:2 (Fall 1994), pp. 87-125.

Andrew Bennett, "Process-Tracing: A Bayesian Perspective". In J. Box-Steffensmeier, H. Brady and D. Collier, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (New York: Oxford University Press 2008): 702-721.

### **Background Reading**

Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: MIT Press 2005).

Peter A. Hall, "Systematic Process Analysis: When and How to Use It," *European Management Review* (3), 1 (Spring 2006): 24-31. Reprinted in *European Political Science* (2007): 1-14.

Stephen van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1997), esp. pp. 27-40.

Andreas Dür, "Discriminating Among Rival Explanations: Some Tools for Small-N Researchers." In Thomas Geschwend and Frank Schimmelfennig, eds. *Research Design in Political Science* (Palgrave Macmillan 2007).

James D. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics*, 43 (January 1991): 169-95.

"Fallacies of Narration" and "Fallacies of False Analogy," in Fischer, *Historian's Fallacies*, pp. 131-163.

Alexander George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision-Making," *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations* 2: 21-58.

Harry Eckstein, "Case-Study and Theory in Political Science " in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science* Vol. 7 (Reading: Addison-Welsey 1975), pp. 79-139.

Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George, "Case Studies and Process Tracing in History and Political Science: Similar Strokes for Different Foci." In Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds., *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists and the Study of International Relations*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001): 137-166.

Ian Lustick, "History, Historiography and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review* 90:3 (September 1996), pp. 605-618.

Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Methods: Design and Research*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Beverly Hills: Sage, 2008).

## 6. (Oct 10) Small-N Analysis in Action

“Truth lies at the confluence of different streams of evidence.”

-Karl Deutsch

This week we read a well-known work based on a doctoral dissertation, that uses small-N comparison, with a view to evaluating the techniques Skocpol uses to establish her points and considering the issues small-N comparisons raise. Mahoney argues that Skocpol uses multiple methods. Does she? Should we view this as a form of process analysis? What aspects of her analysis do you find most convincing, least convincing, and why? This is also an opportunity to consider how a scholar designs her research and how she presents it. Try to read the book from the perspective of its author. What were the principal analytic challenges this project raised for the author and how did she cope with them? What would you describe as the main features of how she presents her research? What does she do in the Introduction, for instance, and in what order? How does she handle the problem of presenting a comprehensible narrative while also interrogating the evidence? What aspects of the presentation do you find effective? Which ones do you think might better have been done differently?

### Required Reading

James Mahoney, "Nominal, Ordinal and Narrative Appraisal in Macrocausal Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology* 104, 4 (January 1999): 1154-96.

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979). Pp. 3-173.

Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, “Process Tracing from Philosophical Roots to Best Practices.” ms.

### Background Reading

John Gerring, *Case Study Research* (New York: Cambridge University Press 2007).

Bear Braumoeller and Gary Goertz, "The Methodology of Necessary Conditions," *American Journal of Political Science* 44, 4 (October 2000).

William Sewell, "Ideologies and Social Revolutions: Reflections on the French Case," *Journal of Modern History* 57 (1985), pp. 57-85.

William Sewell, "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology" in Terrence J. McDonald, ed., *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996, pp. 245-80.

Stanley Lieberson, "Small N's and Big Conclusions" in Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, eds., *What is a Case?* (NY: Cambridge University Press 1992): 105-118.

Charles Ragin, "Turning the Tables: How Case-Oriented Research Challenges Variable-Oriented Research." *Comparative Social Research* 16 (1997): 27-42.

David Collier, "The Comparative Method" in Ada Finifter, ed. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. (Washington: APSA, 1983) pp. 105-120.

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980): 175-97.

Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry* (New York: Wiley 1970).

John Goldthorpe, "Current Issues in Comparative Macrosociology: A Debate on Methodological Issues," *Comparative Social Research* 16 (1997) 1-26.

Edgar Kiser and Michael Hechter, "The Role of General Theory in Comparative-Historical Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 97 (1991), pp. 1-30.

Hillel Soifer, "The Causal Logic of Critical Junctures," *Comparative Political Studies* 45, 12 (2012): 1572-97.

## **7. (Oct 17) Mixed Methods and Case Selection** (N.B. This class will be rescheduled)

*"If you torture the data long enough, Nature will confess"*

-- Ronald Coase quoted by Edward Leamer

This week we consider the value and limits of using 'mixed methods'. This also allows us to discuss how one should select the cases for a study and how to justify case-selection. Review the guidelines for choosing cases and making observations presented in these useful sections in the work by KKV. What are the most important of their recommendations? What is the core rationale for each of them? Scholars sometimes define a 'case' in different ways. You may find it useful to adopt my principle of defining a case as a unit of analysis that takes one value on the main dependent variable of interest and in which multiple observations can be made. Mixed methods, often characterized by a combination of large-n and small-n analysis, are being used with increasing frequency. The essay by Small reviews some of the combinations available. What are their advantages? When is it useful to supplement one method with another? And what should each method be used for? In some instances, small-n analysis is used to develop a theory and large-n analysis used to test it. However, Lieberman proposes reversing that order and using large-n analysis to select the cases to be examined in more detail. When that approach is used, what are the main principles on which cases are selected for study? Rohlfing is critical of this approach. Fearon and Laitin offer another approach to choosing case-studies. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these two approaches to case selection? Finally, Ahmed and Sil offer a skeptical view of the value of multi-method research. Where do you agree and disagree with them?

### **Required Reading**

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994), Ch. 6.

Mario Small, "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature," *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (2011): 57-86.

Evan Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review* 99, 3 (August 2005): 435-52.

Ingo Rohlfing, "What You See and What You Get: Pitfalls and Principles of Nested Analysis in Comparative Research," *Comparative Political Studies* 41, 11 (Nov 2008): 1492-1541.

James D. Fearon and David Laitin, "Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods." In *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. (NY: Oxford University Press 2008): 756-76.

Amel Ahmed and Rudra Sil, "When Multi-Method Research Subverts Methodological Pluralism – or, Why We Still Need Single-Method Research," *Perspectives on Politics* 10, 4 (December 2012): 935-53.

### **Background Reading**



- Louise Kidder, "Quasi-Experimental Designs" in *Research Methods in Social Relations* (NY: Holt Rinehart and Wilson 1981), ch. 3. (pp. 43-57).
- Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases you Choose Affect the Answers You Get," *Political Analysis* 2 (1990): 131-149.
- Jason Seawright and John Gerring, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research," *Political Research Quarterly*, 61, 2 (June 2008): 294-308.
- Thomas Cook and Donald Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings*. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979). pp. 37-91.
- David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," *World Politics* (October 1996): 56-91.

## **PART THREE: DESIGNING AND CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE RESEARCH**

### **8. (Oct 24) Issues in Concept Formation and Measurement**

*"With eyes-to-see and lips to kiss with, who cares if some one-eyed sonofabitch invents  
an instrument to measure spring with"*

-- e.e. cummings

This week we consider the problem of devising good concepts and measures for use in empirical inquiry. The classic article by Sartori offers one view of the relationship between the 'intension' and 'extension' of a concept. What are the advantages of more or less abstract concepts? At what point does 'conceptual stretching' become unwarranted? Goertz looks more deeply at the problem of developing good concepts. How do his views differ from those of Sartori? The article by Collier and Adcock provides a good survey of the main issues associated with measurement and concept formation. What does the formation of effective concepts require? What are the challenges of securing effective measures and how can they be addressed? The two articles by Putnam provide concrete examples of research in which these issues can be examined. They should be read critically with attention to the adequacy of the concepts at the core of the articles and the measures used to assess them.

Please come to class with examples of good/bad concepts and measures based on your general reading and circulate beforehand a 300 word memo outlining the approach you would take to defining and measure a concept relevant to your work with the justification for your decisions.

#### **Required Reading**

Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review* 64 (1970), pp. 1033-1053 (read mainly 1033-46).

Gary Goertz, *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2006), chs. 1-3 (pp. 1-94).

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994), pp. 51-71.

Robert Adcock and David Collier, "Measurement Validity: Toward a Shared Framework for Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *American Political Science Review* 95, 3 (September 2001): 529-46.

Robert Putnam, "Studying Elite Political Culture: The Case of Ideology: " *American Political Science Review* 65, 1 (Sept. 1971):651-81.

Robert Putnam et al., "Explaining Institutional Success: The Case of Italian Regional Government," *American Political Science Review* (March 1983), pp. 55-74.

### **Background Reading**

Sidney Verba, "Cross-National Survey Research: The Problem of Credibility" in Ivan Vallier, ed., *Comparative Methods in Sociology* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1971), pp. 309-56.

David Collier and Steven R. Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," *World Politics* (April 1997), pp. 430-51.

W. Phillips Shively, *The Craft of Political Research* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall 1974. Pp. 1-30

Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?" in Paul Lewis et al., eds., *The Practice of Comparative Politics*, 2nd ed. (NY: Longman 1978): 266-84.

Dirk Leuffen, Susumu Shikano and Stefanie Walter, "Measurement and Data Aggregation in Small-N Social Scientific Research," *European Political Science* 12 (2013): 40-51.

## **9. (Oct 31) Writing an Effective Grant Proposal**

*"I checked it very thoroughly," said the computer, "and that quite definitely is the answer. I think the problem, to be quite honest with you, is that you've never actually known what the question is."*

*Douglas Adams, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

This week we will consider techniques for writing a good grant proposal. These are also applicable to the problem of writing a good dissertation prospectus. To do so, the class will convene as a 'granting committee' to assess a set of proposals and select those to recommend for funding. A set of proposals, some of them written by members of the class, others by other scholars, will be distributed on Oct 25<sup>th</sup>. Participants should submit scores based on their initial judgment of these proposals (on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 the highest and 1 lowest ranking) by email to Peter Hall by 2 pm on Oct 30<sup>th</sup>. We will conduct the class as a simulation of a committee meeting discussing which proposals to fund. Come prepared to make those choices.

### **Required Reading**

The grant proposals distributed on Oct 25<sup>th</sup>.

## **10. (Nov 7) What Kind of Theories Should We Be Looking For?**

*"Never let one ugly fact get in the way of a beautiful theory"*

*-- Popular distortion of phrase from Thomas Huxley*

Political science progresses not only by testing for the presence of particular causal relations among variables but by developing new theoretical perspectives on the political world. Therefore, we need to ask: how does one design research that will make important theoretical, as well as empirical, contributions to the discipline? Similarly, when assessing whether a set of empirical results confirms or disconfirms a theory, given the susceptibility of such results to errors of measurement or specification, a difficult judgment often has to be made about whether to reject the theory or the relevant results. For that purpose, we need criteria by which to judge, not only our empirics, but also our theories. What makes for a good theory? The literature

provides little guidance on this matter. KKV and Waltz provide useful brief discussions. What distinguishes a theory from a hypothesis? Where does one secure a theory? What criteria can we use to judge a theory a good one? Friedman's famous essay argues that theories should be judged on their predictive power rather than the accuracy of their assumptions. Do you agree or disagree and why? In different ways, Pierson and Hall both worry about whether the theories prominent in political science capture well the character of causal relations in the world? To what extent are their concerns justified? How might we address the issues they raise? What are the implications, if any, for the methodologies we use? Finally, Shapiro raises questions about the role of theory in political science. What role should theory play in the endeavors of political science?

### **Required Reading**

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1994), pp. 12-22 and pp. 99-114.

Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* Reading: Addison-Wesley 1979) pp. 1-17.

Milton Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics" in May Brodbeck, ed., *Readings in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences* (NY: Macmillan, 1968), pp. 508-29.

Paul Pierson, "Big, Slow-Moving and Invisible...Macrosocial Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics" In James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (NY: Cambridge University Press 2003): 177-207.

Peter A. Hall, "Politics as a Process Structured in Space and Time." Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 2010.

Ian Shapiro, "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or: What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do About It" In Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith and Tarek E. Masoud, eds., *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2004): 19:41.

### **Background Reading**

John Gehring, *Social Science Methodology: A Criterial Framework* (New York: Cambridge, 2001).

Geraldo L. Munck, "Game Theory and Comparative Politics," *World Politics* 53 (January 2001): 173-204.

Charles Lave and James March, *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), especially Chapter 3, "The Evaluation of Speculations," pp. 51-78.

David Hackett Fischer, "Fallacies of Causation," in Fischer, *Historian's Fallacies*, pp. 164-186.

John Ferejohn and Debra Satz, "Unification, Universalism and Rational Choice Theory," *Critical Review* (Winter/Spring 1995): 71-84.

Jon Elster, "The Nature and Scope of Rational Choice Explanation" in Michael Martin and Lee C. McIntyre, eds., *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 311-322.

Donald P. Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

Jeffrey Friedman, ed. *The Rational Choice Controversy: Economic Models of Politics Reconsidered* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

Ira Katznelson, "Structure and Configuration in Comparative Politics" in Mark Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman, eds., *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture and Structure* (NY: Cambridge University Press 1997): 81-112.

Andrew Abbot, "Sequences of Social Events: Concepts and Methods for the Analysis of Order in Social Processes," *Historical Methods* 16 (2001): 129-47.

Howard S. Becker, "Cases, Causes, Conjunctures, Stories and Imagery" in Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, eds., *What is a Case?* (NY: Cambridge University Press 1992): 205-216.  
Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2004).  
James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29 (2000): 507-48.

## 11. (Nov 14) Alternative Approaches to Assessing Causal Relationships

"...Nature is pleased with simplicity and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes"  
-- Isaac Newton

This week we consider some alternative approaches to establishing causality, including techniques for qualitative-comparative analysis developed by Charles Ragin and experiments of various kinds. Some scholars now think that, in order to establish causality, alongside the causal regularities identified by statistical methods, there should be investigation of causal mechanisms either via process analysis or via experimentation. To what extent do you think this is necessary? Mahoney surveys recent works to argue that we now have more approaches to empirical testing available including the 'qualitative comparative analysis' of Ragin and various kinds of process tracing. Do you agree with his assessment of the 'new methodology'? What are the key features of QCA identified in the article by Grofman and Schneider? In what ways does it differ from statistical analysis in how it construes and examines causal factors? The articles by McDermott and Gerber and Green provide a brief introduction to the kinds of experiments that can be done in political science. What advantages do they offer? What limits their value or applicability? Cartwright has strong views about this. To what extent do you agree with her? What conclusions do you draw about when we might best use QCA or various kinds of experiments? Finally, the essay by Kubik draws our attention to a third technique, based on ethnography, for establishing causal relationships. Under what circumstances it is likely to be most useful.

### Required Reading

James Mahoney, "After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research," *World Politics* 62,1 (2010): 120-147.

Bernard Grofman and Carsten Q. Schneider, "An Introduction to Crisp Set QCA, with a Comparison to Binary Logistic Regression," *Political Research Quarterly* 62, 4 (Dec 2009): 662-72.

Jan Kubik, "Ethnography of Politics." In Edward Schatz, ed. *Political Ethnography*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2009): 25-52.

Rose McDermott, "Experimental Methods in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002): 31-61.

Alan S. Gerber and Donald P. Green, "Field Experiments and Natural Experiments." In Janet Box-Steffensmeir, Henry Brady and David Collier, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2008): 357-81.

Nancy Cartwright, "Are RCTs the Gold Standard?" *BioSocieties* 2 (2007): 11-20.

### Background Reading

Charles C. Ragin, *Fuzzy-Set Social Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 2000)).

- Carsten Q. Scvhneider and Claudius Wagemann, *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences*. (NY: Cambridge University Press 2012).
- Andrew Abbot, "Transcending Linear Reality," *Sociological Theory* 6 (1988): 169-86.
- Bear Braumoeller, "Causal Complexity and the Study of Politics," *Political Analysis* 11(2003): 209-33.
- Tulia Faletti and Julia Lynch, "Context and Causal Mechanisms in Political Analysis," *Comparative Political Studies* 42, 9 (2009): 1143-66.
- Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman, "Complex Causal Relations and Case Study Methods: The Example of Path Dependence," *Political Analysis* 14 (2006): 250-67.
- Robert Bates *et al.*, *Analytical Narratives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1998), Introduction and Conclusion.
- James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research," *Political Analysis* 14 (2006): 227-49.
- Steven D. Levitt and John A. List, "What Do Laboratory Experiments Measuring Social Preferences Reveal about the Real World?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21, 2 (2007): 153-74.
- Kosuke Imai *et al.* "Unpacking the Black Box of Causality: Learning about Causal Mechanisms from Experimental and Observational Studies," *American Political Science Review* 105 (2011): 765-89.
- Angus Deaton, "Instruments, Randomization and Learning about Development," *Journal of Economic Literature* 48 (June 2010): 424-55.

## 12. (Nov 21) Writing and Publishing a Good Article

*"Truth proceeds more readily from error than from confusion"*

-- Francis Bacon

This week we will consider the practicalities of presenting one's research effectively in article form. We will read a published article and two papers by students being prepared for publication. The student papers will be distributed on Apr. 12<sup>th</sup> and members of the class will be asked to provide a 1 ½ to 3 page review of one of them, equivalent to the review one provides when asked to evaluate a paper submitted to a major journal in the field, including a recommendation to publish, revise and resubmit, or reject. These review are to be anonymous and should contain nothing to identify the author. They should be sent to Peter Hall by 2 pm on Apr. 17<sup>th</sup>. Everyone should read most of the reviews as well as both student papers.

We will devote most of the class to discussing the elements of good presentation using the article by Tsai as an example and have some discussion of the student papers if time permits. Everyone should read the Tsai paper carefully, analyze what the author does in each paragraph of the paper, and come to class with the paper and prepared to answer to the following questions. What are the key tasks a good paper should accomplish? Putting oneself in the author's shoes, what are the major presentational challenges facing her as she began to write each article? How does the author frame the problem? How does she interest the reader in its content? What are the key elements of the article and in what order are they presented? How is the empirical material linked to the presentation of the theory? What does the conclusion do? Are there any ways in which the presentation could have been more effective? What do you find least convincing about the article and what could have been done about that?

### Required Reading

Two student papers to be circulated on Nov 15<sup>th</sup>.

Lily L. Tsai, "Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China," *American Political Science Review* 101, 2 (May 2007): 355-72.

### **Background Reading**

Douglass North and Barry Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth Century England," *Journal of Economic History* 49 (1989): 803-32.

Torben Iversen and Anne Wren, "Equality, Employment and Budgetary Restraint: The Trilemma of the Service Economy," *World Politics* 50 (July 1998) 507-46.

William Germano, *From Dissertation to Book*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

Beth Luey, *Handbook for Academic Authors* (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Robin Derricourt, *An Author's Guide to Scholarly Publishing*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Andrew Abbott, *Methods of Discovery*. (NY: Norton, 2004)