

Methods of Political Inquiry

Poli.Sci. 490
Fall 2012

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Seminar: Ripton Room, Wednesday 9-12
Office hours: Tuesday 12:30-2:30

This seminar is intended for graduate students in political science and related fields who are interested in empirical research using interpretive methods. It examines a wide range of logics of research and argument and considers their utility for the study of politics. Its goal is to provide an opportunity for students to consider their methodological choices, with one eye on their internal logic and presumptions and another on their applicability to real-world research questions. Students are encouraged to bring their own research questions into the seminar and apply the resources of the course to those questions.

The class considers, among other topics, the nature of scientific claims and their alternatives, competing views of causation, approaches to studying discourse and practice, and the implications of human consciousness for social study.

In offering the class, I have three goals: i) to provide useful examples that might guide students in the construction of their own research projects, ii) to provide resources for answering outsiders' questions about the methods used in your research and the commitments that they imply, and iii) to provide space for thinking about interpretive research in relation both to social theory and to the practice of political inquiry in the academic professions.

Assignments

1-page sketch of research question, Oct. 17th

Sketch of a research problem, 4 pages, Oct. 31st

Response essay on a 'role model' article or book, 4 pages, Nov. 7th

- discuss how the author constructs their argument, their use of sources, their use of evidence, strengths and weaknesses of the argument.

Small group meetings around November 20-27th

- written comments to each other, and to me

Small group meetings with me December 5th

Research proposal essay, 12-15 pages, Dec. 10th

- research question, relation to models of political inquiry, relation to existing literature, sketch of how to go about investigating the question
- sketch how three approaches would see the same problem and perhaps lead to different insights or conclusions
- annotated bibliography

Participation in the seminar

Resources

Séverine Autessere. 2010. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*. Cambridge University Press.

Charlotte Epstein. 2008. *The Power of Words in International Relations: Birth of an Anti-Whaling Discourse*. Cambridge University Press.

Paul Feyerabend. 2010. *Against Method*. New edition. Verso.

Martin Packer. 2011. *The Science of Qualitative Research*. Cambridge University Press.

Bruce M. Russett. 1994. *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*. Princeton University Press.

Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud. 2004. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Philip E. Steinberg. 2001. *The Social Construction of the Ocean*. Cambridge University Press.

Scott Veitch. 2007. *Law and Irresponsibility: On the Legitimation of Human Suffering*. Routledge-Cavendish.

William Walters. 2012. *Governmentality: Critical Encounters*. Routledge.

Schedule of Topics

October 3rd -- Introduction

Ian Shapiro. 2004. "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*. Cambridge University Press.

Martin Packer. 2011. *The Science of Qualitative Research*. Cambridge University Press. Introduction and Chapters 1 and 15.

William E. Connolly. 2004. "Method, Problem, Faith." In Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, eds. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Michael Chabon. 2012. "What to Make of Finnegans Wake?" *New York Review of Books*, July 12.

Gabriel A. Almond and Stephen J. Genco. 1977. "Clocks and Clouds and the Study of World Politics," *World Politics*, 29(4):489-522.

Further reading

Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds. 2006. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. M.E. Sharpe.

J. Donald Moon. 1975. "The Logic of Political Inquiry: A Synthesis of Opposed Perspectives," in Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby eds. *The Handbook of Political Science*. Addison-Wesley.

Audie Klotz and Cecelia Lynch. 2007. *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations*. ME Sharpe.

John Searle. 1995. *The Construction of Social Reality*. Free Press.

Peter Katzenstein and Rudra Sil. 2010. *Beyond Paradigms: Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Vincent Pouliot. 2007. "'Subjectivism': Toward a Constructivist Methodology," *International Studies Quarterly*, 51(2):359-384.

October 10th -- Positivism

Bruce M. Russett. 1994. *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*. Princeton University Press.

Mary Hawkesworth. 2006. "Contending Conceptions of Science and Politics: Methodology and the Constitution of the Political." In Yanow and Schwartz-Shea *Interpretation and Method*.

Dean E. McHenry, Jr. 2006. "The Numeration of Events: Studying Political Protest in India." In Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method*.

Ian Shapiro. 1989. "Gross Concepts in Political Argument," *Political Theory*, 17(1):51-76.

James Johnson. 2006. "Consequences of Positivism: A Pragmatist Assessment," *Comparative Political Studies*, 39(2):224-252.

Further reading

Michael Brown, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, Steven E. Miller, eds. 1996. *Debating the Democratic Peace*. MIT Press.

Lisa Wedeen. 2004. "Concepts and Commitments in the Study of Democracy." In Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, eds. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Carl Hempel. 1942. "The Function of General Laws in History," *Journal of Philosophy*, 39:35-48.

Kenneth N. Waltz. 1986. "Laws and Theories." In Robert O. Keohane, ed. *Neorealism and its Critics*. Columbia University Press.

October 17th -- Quantification, Causality, Science

Martin Packer. 2011. *The Science of Qualitative Research*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 6, 8.

Wendy Nelson Espeland and Mitchell L. Stevens. 2008. "A Sociology of Quantification," *European Journal of Sociology*. 49(3), 401-436.

Alexander Wendt. 1998. "On Constitution and Causation in International Relations," *Review of International Studies*, 24(5), 101-118.

Ido Oren. 2006. "Political Science as History: A Reflexive Approach." In Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. M.E. Sharpe.

Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedborg. 1996. "Social Mechanisms," *Acta Sociologica*, 39:281-308.

Stuart Glennan. 2010. "Ephemeral Mechanisms and Historical Explanation," *Erkenntnis*, 72:251-266.

Further Reading

Dave Elder-Vass. 2010. *The Causal Power of Social Structures: Emergence, Structure and Agency*. Cambridge University Press.

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press.

Charles Perrow. 1999. *Normal Accidents: Living With High-Risk Technologies*. Princeton University Press.

Ian Hacking. 2000. *The Social Construction of What?* Harvard University Press.

Karl E. Weick. 1995. *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Sage. Ch. 1.

Colin Wight. 2006. "IR: A Science without Positivism?" In Wight *Agents, Structures and International Relations: Politics as Ontology*. Cambridge University Press.

October 24th -- Political Ethnography

Séverine Autessere. 2010. *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*. Cambridge University Press.

Martin Packer. 2011. *The Science of Qualitative Research*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5.

Paul Feyerabend. 2010. *Against Method*. New edition. Verso. Hacking's "Introduction to the Fourth Edition"; Prefaces, Chapters 1-6, 17, 20.
- generally, on the construction of the autonomy of facts

Further reading

Jack Katz. 2001. "From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography; Part 1," *Ethnography*, 2(4):443-473.

Jack Katz. 2002. "From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography; Part 2," *Ethnography*, 3(1):63-90.

October 31st -- Discourse Analysis

Charlotte Epstein. 2008. *The Power of Words in International Relations: Birth of an Anti-Whaling Discourse*. Cambridge University Press.

Martin Packer. 2011. *The Science of Qualitative Research*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 10, 14, 15.

Srdjan Vucetic. 2011. "Genealogy as a Research Tool in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations*. 37(3):1295-1312.

William Walters. 2012. *Governmentality: Critical Encounters*. Routledge.

Further reading

Keith Topper. 2011. "Arendt and Bourdieu Between Word and Deed," *Political Theory* 39(3):352-377.

Loizos Heracleous. 2006. *Discourse, Interpretation, Organization*. Cambridge University Press.

November 7th -- Historical Materialism

Philip E. Steinberg. 2001. *The Social Construction of the Ocean*. Cambridge University Press.

Karl Marx. 1978 [1852]. "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte." In Robert C. Tucker, ed. *The Marx-Engels Reader*. 2nd ed. Norton.

Martin Packer. 2011. *The Science of Qualitative Research*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 11.

Alexander Wendt. 2003. "Why a World State is Inevitable," *European Journal of International Relations*, 9(4): 491-542.

Robert W. Cox. 1986. "Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory." In Robert O. Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics*. Columbia University Press.

Further reading: Studying and organizing space

James C. Scott. 1998. "The High Modernist City: An Experiment and a Critique," in Scott *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. Yale University Press.

Jane Jacobs. 2011. *Death and Life of the Great American Cities*. Modern Library.

Dvora Yanow. 2006. "How Built Spaces Mean," in Yanow and Schwartz-Shea eds. *Interpretation and Method*. ME Sharpe.

Bill Hillier and Julienne Hanson. 1984. *The Social Logic of Space*. Cambridge University Press.

November 14th -- Critical Approaches to 'Norms'

Antje Weiner. 2008. *The Invisible Constitution of Politics: Contested Norms and International Encounters*. Cambridge University Press.

Martin Packer. 2011. *The Science of Qualitative Research*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 13.

Charles Taylor. 1989. "Explanation and Practical Reason." Wider/UNU Working Paper.

Lisa Wedeen. "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *American Political Science Review*. 96(4):717-.

Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot. 2011. "International Practices," *International Theory*, 3(1):1-36.

Further reading

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson. 2006. "Making Sense of Making Sense: Configurational Analysis and the Double Hermeneutic." In Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method*.

Paul Sharp. 2009. *Diplomatic Theory of International Relations*. Cambridge University Press.

Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, eds. 2011. *International Practices*. Cambridge University Press.

W. Michael Reisman and Andrew R. Willard. 1988. *International Incidents: The Law that Counts in World Politics*. Princeton University Press.

Jutta Brunnée and Stephen J. Toope. 2010. *Legitimacy and Legality in International Law: An Interactional Account*. Cambridge University Press.

November 21st -- Legal Authority: Methods and Debates

Scott Veitch. 2007. *Law and Irresponsibility: On the Legitimation of Human Suffering*. Routledge-Cavendish.

Sibo Grovogui. 2002. "Regimes of Sovereignty: Rethinking International Morality and the African Condition," *European Journal of International Relations*, 8(3):315-338.

Charles Taylor. 1993. "... to Follow a Rule." In Craig Calhoun, Edward Lipuma, and Moishe Postone, eds. *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*. University of Chicago Press.

Further reading

Michael Doyle. 2008. *Striking First: Preemption and Prevention in International Conflict*. Princeton University Press.

Michael Walzer. 1987. "The Practice of Social Criticism." Chapter 2 of Walzer *Interpretation and Social Criticism*. Harvard University Press.

Frances Fox Piven. 2004. "The Politics of Policy Science." In Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, eds. *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Robert W. Cox. 2008. "The Point is not Just to Explain the World but to Change it." In Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. Oxford University Press.

November 28th -- No Meeting

December 5th -- Small Group Meetings on Research Proposals

December 12th -- Proposals Due