Overview: This course is intended as a follow-up to the field seminars for students who are close to or in the midst of designing a dissertation project. We revisit key issues of research design and method; we seek to identify what constitutes a good, manageable research question; to learn how to place it within the relevant literature and debates in the field; and to persuade someone to fund our research. We begin with general issues of epistemology and logic of inquiry. Then we consider the merits of various research designs in the context of specific examples of published work in several subfields. Students will review successful and unsuccessful grant proposals; will hear presentations from faculty and students of their own experiences with grant-seeking; will learn the nuts and bolts of writing proposals directed toward such foundations as the SSRC, NSF, MacArthur, and others; and will present drafts of their own dissertation grant proposals and receive constructive advice from members of the class, and, perhaps, outside reviewers.

Requirements: Course requirements consist of writing short papers analyzing the course readings on methodology and research design; acting as a discussant of other students' papers; giving oral presentations of your own research proposals; providing constructive criticism of others' proposals; preparing drafts of various components of a research proposal; preparing a final proposal.

Specific assignments and due dates are as follows:

Draft prospectus (preliminary statement of research plans), 3 pages maximum, due 10 September. The statement should include brief discussion of the nature of the problem or puzzle you intend to investigate, a cursory summary of the existing literature on the problem, and a mention of the methods you propose to use. This draft will be ungraded but it will be distributed to other members of the class and serve as the basis for our understanding of what you plan to do.

On the following dates, some students will write short (maximum 4 pages) papers on a topic, assigned in advance, linking the week's readings, and other students will serve as discussant: 18 September, 2 October, 23 October, 30 October.
A draft grant proposal is due on 5 November. It should include a statement of the research problem, a brief literature review, and a discussion of methods and sources. It should be no longer than 10 double-spaced pages.

A final grant proposal, of maximum 15 pages, should be turned in by Monday, 9 December.

Each of the papers, except the final one (i.e., draft prospectus, short assignments, and draft proposal) will be made available to the other members of the class a day in advance (by noon on Tuesday in a box outside my office, B-3 McGraw).

The final grade will consist of:

Class participation and service as discussant, 20%
Short paper assignments, 30%
Draft proposal, 20%
Final proposal, 30%

Readings:

Two books are available for purchase:


Other reading assignments will be distributed in class.

A list of grants is available for browsing:

http://www2dgsys.com/~apsa/g&f.html

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1. Introduction (4 September)

Week 2. Enduring Debates about Facts and Assumptions
(11 September)


Week 3. One or Two Logics of Inquiry? (18 September)

King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, chap. 1.


Week 4. Getting Grants: Recent Experiences (25 September)

Some recent grant proposals will be distributed in advance.

Week 5. Using and Abusing History (2 October)


Week 6. Some Basic Advice (9 October)


P. Leeds, "Structure of Research Design."

William B. Castetter and Richard S. Heisler, "Developing and Defending a Dissertation Proposal."

Week 7. If You Can Publish a Research Article You Can Probably Win a Research Grant (16 October)


Stephen Van Evera, "Writing Articles for Publication: The Inside Scoop," pp. 29-33.

Week 8. Does Interest in Policy Help or Hinder Research Design? (23 October)


Week 9. Case Selection (30 October)


King, Keohane, and Verba, Designing Social Inquiry, chaps. 4, 6.

Douglas Dion, "Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study," ms., Univ. of Michigan, July 1994 (revised version forthcoming in Comparative Politics).
Weeks 10, 11, 12. Presentation and Discussion of Student Research/Grant Proposals:

6 November, 13 November, 20 November

Week 13. Recent Challenges to Conventional Research

(4 December)


*** Final grant proposal due Monday, 9 December ***

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P. Leeds, "Structure of Research Design."

William B. Castetter and Richard S. Heisler, "Developing and Defending a Dissertation Proposal."


Stephen Van Evera, "Writing Articles for Publication: The Inside Scoop," pp. 29-33.


Douglas Dion, "Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study," ms., Univ. of Michigan, July 1994 (revised version forthcoming in Comparative Politics).
