

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

POL 2505H: QUALITATIVE METHODS IN POLITICAL RESEARCH

WINTER 2018
WEDNESDAYS 4-6, SS 3130

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WHAT THIS COURSE IS ... AND IS NOT

The aims of this course are twofold: first, to orient PhD students with a range of methods that are appropriate for large-scale research projects; second, to encourage students to start thinking about research design (including methods) and to begin work on their dissertation prospectus.

The main readings will be monographs by scholars across different subfields. We will examine these works to see how authors utilize various methods to address specific research questions or puzzles.

Because this course is only one semester, there are many topics we will not be able to cover, such as readings in the philosophy of science or methodological debates. I encourage students to seek out these literatures on your own or as needed as you work through drafts of your prospectus.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of this course, you will:

- Become familiar with key works in qualitative methods
- Understand the difference between method and methodology
- Understand the basic constraints and trade-offs among different methods
- Understand the specific assumptions underlying different methodological approaches
- Be able to read works in the social sciences with a critical eye toward the methodology and methods the author is using

BOOKS RECOMMENDED FOR PURCHASE

- Wood, Elisabeth. 2000. *Forging democracy from below: Insurgent transitions in South Africa and El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The politics of resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Thomson, Susan. 2013. *Whispering truth to power: Everyday resistance to reconciliation in postgenocide Rwanda*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

These books are available through the library, the bookstore, or online retailers. Kindle versions are acceptable; just be sure to cite these versions properly. All other books are available in electronic version through the library website.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

METHODS ESSAY

You will write one 2-3 page (double-spaced, readable font) “methods” essay on the readings for one week. **This essay is due the same day you present.** The essay should focus on what you learned from the readings that might (or might not) be relevant to your own work in terms of methods or methodology.

WRITE-UP OF INTERVIEW OR PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION EXPERIENCE

Mid-semester all students will do an exercise in conducting interviews or using participant-observation. The topic will be of your own choosing but be sure to choose the topic beforehand. You will then need to consider whom you want to talk to and what questions to ask; or what location or activity you would like to observe and participate in if appropriate.

You will write up the experience in a short essay (3-5 pages, double-spaced, readable font). **This write-up is due in class on Feb. 28.**

PROSPECTUS

The main writing assignment for this class is a 10-20 page prospectus that outlines a major research project, such as your dissertation. It should follow a standard format and include your research question, why this question is important (“so what?”), what possible answers already exist in the literature (lit review and contribution), and how you will go about answering this question (methods). *******Please note that lit reviews should be structured around what existing literatures shine (or fail to shine) on your puzzle/research question. It should also be as brief as possible.*******

As a template for this paper, you might look at the formats that grant-makers require applicants to follow, such as the United States Institute of Peace Randolph Jennings dissertation fellowship or the Social Science Research Council (SSRC).

You will be handing in two versions of this paper. Each will be graded separately. The second draft should incorporate comments from your discussant and professor.

The first draft should be 8-10 pages in length (double-spaced, readable font). **This draft is due the day of your presentation (see below). The second draft can be 10-20 pages and is due one week after the last day of class, exact date TBD.**

PRESENTATIONS

In addition to your written assignment, you will do two presentations.

The first will be on the readings for a given week. Your presentation should not summarize the readings since you can assume that everyone will have read them. Instead, your presentation should focus on the methods used or discussed in the reading(s) and how those methods might or might not be of use in your own project.

Note: For your presentation on the readings, do not read your essay; rather, try to put together a 5-7 minute talk that is organized and conceived as an oral presentation.

The second will take place in the last 3 weeks of class. You will serve as discussant for another student's prospectus. This presentation should be 8-10 minutes. The author will have 1-2 minutes to respond if s/he wishes to. Q&A with the entire class will follow.

EXTENSIONS AND LATE PENALTIES

I will give extensions for a documentable personal emergency (e.g., hospitalization) or anything related to Accessibility, in which case the request should come from your Accessibility adviser.

Besides these exceptions, I will penalize late papers 1/3 of a grade per day so please hand in all assignments on time.

GRADING POLICIES

I will calculate your course grade as follows:

Class participation	20%
Presentation on readings	10%
Presentation as discussant	10%
Essay on readings	10%
Field method write-up	10%
First draft of prospectus	20%
Second draft of prospectus	20%

All work must also be your own. Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own. Penalties for plagiarism will be pursued at the department and university levels. For further information, consult the last page of this syllabus.

READINGS

All readings are required except those listed under “Recommended.” NOTE: READINGS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE BUT I WILL ALWAYS GIVE YOU AMPLE NOTICE.

1. JANUARY 10: COURSE OVERVIEW

- Review of syllabus
- Choosing presentation dates

ASSIGNMENT

- Read the following article and come up with at least one idea for a research question
 - https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/01/18-refugees-18-countries-and-their-hopes-for-2018?CMP=share_btn_tw

RECOMMENDED

- Becker, Howard S. 1998. *Tricks of the trade*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Dvora Yanow. 2012. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. New York: Routledge.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Verba, Sidney. 1994. *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Alford, Robert R. 1995. Review of KKV. *Contemporary Sociology* 24(3): 424-27.
- Brady, Henry E. and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Patrick T. Jackson. 2011. *The conduct of inquiry in international relations: Philosophy of science and its implications for the study of world politics*. New York: Routledge.

2. JANUARY 17: CASE STUDY METHOD

THEORY

- Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2006. Five misunderstandings about case studies. *Qualitative Inquiry* 12(2): 219-45.

EXEMPLAR

- Finnemore, Martha. 2004. *The purpose of intervention: Changing beliefs about the use of force*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [ONLINE]

RECOMMENDED

- Collier, David, and James Mahoney. 1996. Insights and pitfalls: Selection bias in qualitative research. *World Politics* 49(1): 56-91.
- Gerring, John. 2004. What is a case study and what is it good for? *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 341-54.
- Symposium on John Gerring’s Case Study Research - Principles and Practices.” 2007. *Qualitative Methods Newsletter* 5:2 (2007), 2-15.
[<http://www1.maxwell.syr.edu/uploadedFiles/moynihan/cqrm/Newsletter5.2.pdf>]

- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

3. JANUARY 24: COMPARATIVE METHOD

THEORY

- Geddes, Barbara. 1990. How the cases you choose affect the answers you get: Selection bias in comparative politics. *Political Analysis* 2(1): 131-50.

EXEMPLAR

- Wood, Elisabeth. 2000. *Forging democracy from below: Insurgent transitions in South Africa and El Salvador*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

RECOMMENDED

- Small, Mario L. 2009. 'How Many Cases do I Need?' On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field Based Research. *Ethnography* 10(1):5-38.
- Burawoy, Michael. 2009. *The extended case method: Four countries, four decades, four great transformations, one theoretical tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Burawoy, Michael. 1998. "The extended case method." *Sociological Theory* 16 (1):4-33.
- Dion, Douglas. 1998. Evidence and inference in the comparative case study. *Comparative Politics* 30(2): 127-45.
- Tilly, Charles. 1984. *Big structures, large processes, huge comparisons*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Lijphart, Arend. 1971. Comparative politics and the comparative method. *American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-93.
- Evans, Peter. 1995. *Embedded Autonomy: States and industrial transformation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and social revolution: A comparative analysis of France, Russia, and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

4. JANUARY 31: ELITE INTERVIEWING

THEORY

- Fujii, Lee Ann. 2018. *Interviewing in social science research: A relational approach*. New York: Routledge. ***Ch. 2 [[ONLINE](#)]

EXEMPLAR

- Tolley, Erin. 2016. *Framed: Media and the coverage of race in Canadian politics*. [[ONLINE](#)]

RECOMMENDED

- Bogner, Alexander, Beate Littig, and Wolfgang Menz, eds. 2009. *Interviewing experts*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Leech, Beth L. 2002. Asking questions: Techniques for semistructured interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35 (4):665-68.

5. FEBRUARY 7: NON-ELITE INTERVIEWING

THEORY

- MacLean, Lauren M. 2013. "The power of the interviewer." In *Interview research in political science*, ed. Layna Mosley, 67-83. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. [\[ONLINE\]](#)

EXEMPLAR

- Young, Alford A. Jr. 2006. *The minds of marginalized black men: Making sense of mobility, opportunity, and future life chances*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [\[ONLINE\]](#)

RECOMMENDED

- Fujii, Lee Ann. 2018. *Interviewing in social science research: A relational approach*. New York: Routledge.
- Soss, Joe. 2012. Talking our way to meaningful explanations: A practice-centered approach to in-depth interviews for interpretive research. In *Interpretation and Method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*, eds. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 127-49.
- Spradley, James P. 1979. *The ethnographic interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Bogner, Alexander, Beate Littig, and Wolfgang Menz, eds. 2009. *Interviewing experts*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

6. FEBRUARY 14: PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION

THEORY

- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2001. Participant observation and fieldnotes. In *Handbook of ethnography*, ed. P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland and L. Lofland, 352-68. London: Sage. [\[ONLINE\]](#)

EXEMPLAR

- Cramer, Katherine J. 2016. *The politics of resentment: Rural consciousness in Wisconsin and the rise of Scott Walker*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

ASSIGNMENT (DUE IN CLASS FOLLOWING READING WEEK): CHOOSE ONE

- Use participant-observation in two different locations/spaces to understand [your choice of topic]. Decide what it is you want to observe (e.g., bureaucratic authority, resistance, social power, powerlessness) before you start. Then write up your findings in field notes.
- Interview two people about the same general topic, at least one of whom should be a stranger. Then write up your observations of the process in field notes.

READING WEEK: 19-23 FEBRUARY – NO CLASS

7. FEBRUARY 28: ETHNOGRAPHY

THEORY

- Shehata, Samer. 2014. Ethnography, identity, and the production of knowledge. In *Interpretation and Method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*, eds. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 244–63. [ONLINE]

EXEMPLAR

- Thomson, Susan. 2013. *Whispering truth to power: Everyday resistance to reconciliation in postgenocide Rwanda*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.

RECOMMENDED

- Schatz, Edward, ed. 2009. *Political ethnography: What immersion contributes to the study of power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Pachirat, Timothy. 2011. *Every twelve seconds: Industrialized slaughter and the politics of sight*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scott, James C. 1998. *Weapons of the weak*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Fujii, Lee Ann. 2014. Five stories of accidental ethnography: Turning unplanned moments in the field into data. *Qualitative Research* 15(4): 525-39.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Walford, Geoffrey. 2009. The practice of writing ethnographic fieldnotes. *Ethnography and Education* 4 (2):117-30.
- Wolfinger, Nicholas H. 2002. On writing fieldnotes: Collection strategies and background expectancies. *Qualitative Research* 2 (1):85-95.

8. MARCH 7: RESEARCH ETHICS

THEORY

- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2006. The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones. *Qualitative Sociology* 29 (3):373-86.
- Fujii, Lee Ann. 2012. Research ethics 101: Dilemmas and responsibilities. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 45 (4):717-23.

EXEMPLAR

- Carpenter, Charli. 2012. "'You Talk of Terrible Things So Matter-of-Factly in This Language of Science': Constructing Human Rights in the Academy." *Perspectives on Politics* 10 (2):363-83.

GUEST LECTURE

- Dean Sharpe, PhD, Research Ethics Board Manager--Social Sciences and Humanities Office of Research Ethics, University of Toronto

9. MARCH 14: PROCESS TRACING

THEORY

- Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds. 2014. *Process tracing: From metaphor to analytic tool*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ***Chs. 1, 10 [ONLINE]

EXEMPLAR

- Chs. 4, 6.

RECOMMENDED

- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press. Chapter 10: Process-tracing and historical explanation.
- Oren, Ido. 2006. Political science as history: A reflexive approach. In *Interpretation and Method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*, eds. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 215-27.
- Tansey, Oisín. 2007. Process tracing and elite interviewing: A case for non-probability sampling. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 40(4): 765-72.
- Tilly, Charles. 1978. *From mobilization to revolution*. New York: Random House.

10. MARCH 21: TEXT AND DOCUMENT SOURCES

THEORY

- Brandwein, Pamela. 2014. Studying the careers of knowledge claims: Applying science studies to legal studies. In *Interpretation and Method: Empirical research methods and the interpretive turn*, eds. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 284-99. [ONLINE]

EXEMPLAR

- Thompson, Debra. 2016. *The schematic state: Race, transnationalism, and the politics of the census*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [ONLINE]

RECOMMENDED

- Meierenrich, Jens. 2008. *The legacies of law: Long-run consequences of legal development in South Africa, 1652-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Milliken, Jennifer. 1999. The study of discourse in International Relations: A critique of research and methods. *European Journal of International Relations* 5(2): 225-54.

- Rudolph, Lloyd I., and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph. 2003. Engaging subjective knowledge: How Amar Singh's diary narratives of and by the self explain identity formation. *Perspectives on Politics* 1 (4): 681-94.
- Brass, Paul R. 1997. *Theft of an idol*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

11. MARCH 28: PRESENTATIONS

- **Group 1 papers due**
- Group 1 presentations

12. APRIL 4: PRESENTATIONS

- **Group 2 papers due**
- Group 2 presentations

A WARNING ABOUT PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an academic offence with a severe penalty.

It is essential that you understand what plagiarism is and that you do not commit it. In essence, it is the theft of the thoughts or words of others, without giving proper credit. You must put others' words in quotation marks and cite your source(s). You must give citations when using others' ideas, even if those ideas are paraphrased in your own words. Plagiarism is unacceptable in a university.

The University of Toronto provides a process that faculty members must initiate when they suspect a case of plagiarism. In the Department of Political Science, suspected evidence of plagiarism must be reported to the Chairman.

A faculty member may not mark an assignment or assess a penalty if he or she finds evidence of plagiarism – the matter must be reported. The Chairman, or Dean, will assess the penalty.

The following are some examples of plagiarism:

- **Submitting as your own an assignment written by someone else.**
- **Quoting an author without indicating the source of the words.**
- **Using words, sentences, or paragraphs written by someone else and failing to place quotation marks around the material and reference the source and author. Using either quotation marks or reference alone is not sufficient. Both must be used!**
- **Adapting an author's ideas or theme and using it as your own without referencing the original source.**

- Seeking assistance from a friend or family member in respect to work you claim as your own.

If you are not sure whether you have committed plagiarism, it is better to ask a faculty member than risk discovery and be forced to accept an academic penalty.

Plagiarism is **cheating**. It is considered a **serious offence** against intellectual honesty and intellectual property. Penalties for an undergraduate can be **severe**.

At a minimum, a student is likely to receive a “0” mark for the assignment or test in question. But a further penalty is often assessed, such as a further reduction from the course mark or placing a permanent notation of the incident on an academic record.

Some website listed below on avoiding plagiarism:

‘How to Use Sources and Avoid Plagiarism’ - available at:

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Other Advisory Material available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/home>.