

PS 726
Methods and Approaches in the Study of Comparative Politics
Winter 2006

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Course Description

This course aims to make graduate students familiar with some of the major issues, debates, and challenges of conducting research in comparative politics. The goal is for each student to develop a research design for a paper or dissertation proposal that has the potential to contribute to knowledge.

Requirements

* **A five-page initial research design** of a topic of importance to comparative politics. Identify a theoretical or empirical puzzle worthy of your time and outline a way to research it. The paper should be circulated to the class electronically by 5:00 on Feb.1. E-mail is fine. (20% of the final grade).

* **The final research design of a paper or dissertation proposal** is due on March 13th at noon. Make as much progress as you can toward a dissertation proposal or a paper to submit to a journal and pay special to the design of the research. Ideally you will submit a finished paper or dissertation proposal, but if the research requires more time and effort that is no problem at all. Just be sure to defend and explain your research strategy. Please do not let data availability influence your choice of topic. You can build on the 5-page paper submitted earlier. (60% of the final grade).

***Class participation.** Each week students will e-mail a question or comment based on the week's readings for the group to discuss by 5:00 on Monday. This question/comment should not exceed a page - a paragraph is fine - but should be sufficiently developed to provoke discussion. Do not summarize. It is better to make one good point about one work than to make several superficial points. You might take your hints from the assignments section of the syllabus. I'll grade these each week. Your performance in class discussions also contributes to your grade. Be assured that I will call on everyone at least once a week so be prepared. (20% of the final grade).

Academic Honesty: All of the work you do in this course is expected to be your own. No cheating or plagiarism (using someone else's words or ideas without proper attribution). Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will be handled according to university policy. If you have any questions about what needs to be cited and what does not, please talk with me. (For legal reasons I have to put this disclaimer on the syllabus. Don't be offended).

Special Needs: Students with disabilities will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs.

Recommended for Purchase

- 1) Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba's *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*
- 2) Barbara Geddes. *Paradigms and Sand Castles*. University of Michigan Press.
- 3) Henry Brady and David Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Methods*. Cambridge University Press.
- 4) Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton University Press. 1994.
- 5) Carles Boix. *Democracy and Redistribution*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

- 6) Evan Lieberman, *Race and Regionalism in the Politics of Taxation in Brazil and South Africa*. Cambridge University Press. 2003.
- 7) Ashutosh Varshney, *Ethnic Violence and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. Yale University Press, 2003.

*** items with a star will be made available in the Political Science Reading Room in Derby Hall.**

Week 1. January 3. Introduction: Why be concerned with research design and methods?

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

Albert Hirschman. "Paradigms as Hindrance to Understanding." *World Politics* 1970. 22:3, 329-343. (JSTOR)

Henry Brady. "Two Paths to a Science of Politics;" Rogers Smith, "Identities, Interests, and The Future of Political Science;" Jim Granato and Frank Scioli. "Puzzles, Proverbs and Omega Matrices: The Scientific and Social Significance of Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models." All in *Perspectives on Politics*. June 2004, 295-323. Available electronically via OSU library.

Charles Lindblom. "Political Science in the 1940s and 1950s," *Daedalus*, Winter 1997.*

David Laitin. "The Political Science Discipline ," with commentaries by Robert Keohane, Ian Shapiro, and Barry Weingast, in *The Evolution of Political Knowledge*, ed. Edward D. Mansfield and Richard Sisson, Ohio State University Press, 2004.*

Barbara Geddes. *Paradigms and Sand Castles. Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan Press. 1-83

Questions/Assignment.

Where do ideas in political science come from?

What has political science contributed to knowledge?

How should the field of political science be organized?

Recommended

"The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium." *World Politics*. Oct. 1995. 1-49.

Margaret Levi. "The State of the Study of the State." *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*. W.W. Norton. 2002. pp. 33-55.

Max Weber. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Edited by Gunther Roth and Klaus Wittich, Bedminster Press. 212-254.

Karl Polanyi. *The Great Transformation*. Beacon Press. 3-85.

David Laitin. "The Perestroika Challenge to Social Science." *Politics & Society*, 1 March 2003, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 163-184.

Roger Van Oech. *A Whack in the Side of the Head: How You Can Be More Creative*. 1998. Warner Books.

Week 2. January 10. Concepts and Measurement

Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sydney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Chapters 1, 2 and 5. **Review.**

Giovanni Sartori. "Concepts and Misinformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review*, 64:4, December 1033-53. (JSTOR)

Sidney Verba. "Cross-National Survey Research: The Problem of Credibility," In Ivan Vallier, ed., *Comparative Methodologies in Sociology*.*

William Easterly and Ross Levine. 1997. "Africa's Growth Tragedy: Policies and Ethnic Divisions." *Quarterly Journal of Economics*.* These data are available if you want to play around with them.

Daniel Posner. "Measuring Ethnic Fractionalization in Africa," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, 4 (October 2004), pp. 849-863. (JSTOR)

James Fearon and David Laitin. "Ethnic and Cultural Diversity by Country." *Journal of Economic Growth* 8, 2 (June 2003), 195-222. (JSTOR)

Question/Assignment.

Bring your favorite variable to class. Think of 5 ways to measure it.

What are the strengths and weaknesses of your measurements?

Are all measures equally bad?

Anybody interested in reviewing an existing data set for the class? See recommended.

Recommended:

Zachary Elkins. "Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations," *American Journal of Political Science*, 44: 293-300, 2000.

Adam Przeworski, Michael Alvarez, Jose Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World*. Cambridge University Press 2000. <http://pantheon.yale.edu/~jac236/DATASETS.htm>

Week 3. January 17. Comparative Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sydney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Chapters 4, 6. **Review.**

"The Qualitative-Quantitative Disputation: Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba's *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*." *American Political Science Review*. 1995. 89:2, 454-480. (JSTOR)

Henry Brady and David Collier. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman and Littlefield. 2004. Chapter 1, 2, 4, 7,11, and 13. **Review.**

Nathaniel Beck. "Is Causal Process Observation an Oxymoron? A response to Rethinking Social Inquiry." Ms. 1-8.* Available at his webpage.

Evan Lieberman. *Race and Regionalism in the Politics of Taxation in Brazil and South Africa*. Cambridge University Press. 2003.

Jose Cheibub. "Political Regimes and the Extractive Capacity of Governments: Taxation in Democracies and Dictatorships." *World Politics* 1998. 50:3, April. (JSTOR) data-set available at <http://pantheon.yale.edu/~jac236/DATASETS.htm>

Question/Assignment

Is there a single underlying logic of quantitative and qualitative research?
What problems are better addressed with quantitative/qualitative approaches?
What if quantitative and qualitative approaches give different answers?

Recommended:

Edward Leamer. "Lets Take the Con out of Econometrics," *American Economic Review*, March 1983. 73:1, pp. 31-43. (JSTOR)

John Geering, *Social Science Methodology: A Criterial Framework* Cambridge University Press 2001.

Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers. "The Use of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Studies in Society and History*, 1980.

Alexander Gerschenkron. *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective*. Harvard University Press. 1962.

The Historical Turn in Social Science. Ed. Terence McDonald. University of Michigan Press. 1996.

Michael Wallerstein. Various issues in APSA-CP Newsletter.

Week 4. January 24. Research Strategies: New problems, new data, new measures or How to Be Remembered.

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 *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge University Press 2004. Also available in *Political Theory* 30(4) 588-611.*

Adam Przeworski and Fernando Limongi. "Modernization: Theory and Facts:" *World Politics* New method and new data for an old problem. (JSTOR).

Mancur Olson. *The Logic of Collective Action*. Yale University Press. pp. 1-52.*
New theory for an old problem.

John H. Donahue and Steven D. Levitt. "The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*. May 2001, 2: 379-420.* Be provocative.

Ronald Rogowski. *Commerce and Coalitions: How Trade Affects Political Alignments*
Great Importations. Import a theory and apply to a political question.* Pages TBA.

Theda Skocpol. "A Critical Review of Barrington Moore's Social Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship," *Politics and Society*. 4:1, Fall (1973), pp 1-34. Take on a Big Fish.

James Vreeland. *The IMF and Economic Development*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters, 1, 2. New method for an old problem.

Kenneth Scheve and Matthew Slaughter. "Economic Insecurity and the Globalization of Production," *American Journal of Political Science*. 2004. 48:4 October 662-674.
Attack from below by giving microfoundations to macroarguments.

Questions/Assignment

Why do some essays/books get published? Why do some get remembered?

Find an article and tell the class why it was published. Then make a case for/or against its publication.

Recommended:

Ted Hopf. "Polarity, The Offense-Defense Balance, and War." *American Political Science Review*. 1991. 85:2, June 1991. 475-93. Go back in time. New "old" data for an old problem.

Stefanie Coontz. *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap*. Basic Books. 2000. Puncture a myth by showing that the received history is wrong.

Diego Gambetta. *The Sicilian Mafia: The Business of Private Protection*. Interpret an inherently interesting topic with a simple theory.

Richard Samuel. *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Legacy in Japan and Italy*. Cornell University Press. Make an unexpected comparison.

Rebecca Morton. *Methods and Models. A Guide to the Empirical Analysis of Formal Models*. Use a formal model to get a counterintuitive prediction.

Steven Krasner. "Approaches to the State: Alternative Conceptions and Historical Dynamics," *Comparative Politics*, 1984 pp. 223-246. (JSTOR) Great Importations Take 1.

Robert Jervis. *Perceptions and Misperceptions in International Relations*. Princeton University Press. 1976. Great Importations Take 2.

Steven Van Evera. *The Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Cornell University Press. 1997.* Useful hands-on guide to doing research.

Recent dissertation research by your peers.

Susan Hyde and Emily Beaulieu. Cheating Incumbents, International Observers, and Election Boycotts: Evidence of the Second Image Reversed after the Cold War . Ms UCSD.

Edmund Malesky. "Gerry-Mandering Vietnam Style." UCSD.

Week 5. January 31. Case Studies. Initial Research Design Paper Due on Wednesday at noon. Circulate to everyone electronically. We will discuss everyone's paper in class on Thursday.

Harry Eckstein. "Case Study and Theory in Political Science." In Fred Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, vol. 7. (Reading: MA Addison Welsely, 1975), 79-135.*

James Mahoney. "Strategies of Causal Assessment in Comparative Historical Analysis." *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge 2003.*

Lee Alston. "The 'Case' for Case Studies in Political Economy." *The Political Economist*, Spring-Summer 2005.*

Arend Lijphart. "Comparative Politics and Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review*, 65:3 (September 1971.) (JSTOR)

Questions/Assignment

How should one choose cases?

To what ends do different authors use case studies?

What role does narrative play in social science?

Recommended:

Gary Libecap. *Contracting for Property Rights*. 1992. New York Cambridge University Press

Case Study Chapters in Brady and Collier.

Douglass Dion. "Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study." *Comparative Politics*. 30:127-46. 1999. (JSTOR)

Analytic Narratives. Edited by Robert Bates et al. Princeton University Press. *[Jon Elster review of *Analytic Narratives* in the *APSR*.]

Alexander George. "Case Studies and Theory Development." The Method of Structured Focused Comparisons," in Paul Gordon Lauren, ed. *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History*. 1979.

David Collier and James Mahoney. 1996. "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." *World Politics*. 49:56-91. (JSTOR)

Week 6. February 7. Causation and Causal Mechanisms

Sebastio Rosato. "The Flawed Logic of Democratic Peace Theory." *American Political Science Review*. 97:4 November 2003. 585-602. (JSTOR)

Robert Bates. "Macropolitical Economy in the Field of Development," in ed. J. Alt and K. Shepsle, *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy*. Cambridge University Press. 1990. 31-54.*

Gerald Kramer. 1983. The Ecological Fallacy Revisited: Aggregate-Versus-Individual Level Findings on Economics and Elections and Sociotropic Voting. *American Political Science Review*. 77 92-111. (JSTOR)

Ronald Inglehart. "The Renaissance of Political Culture," *American Political Science Review*, 1988. (JSTOR).

Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedborg. 1998, "Introduction." *Social Mechanisms: An Analytic Approach to Social Theory*. Ed. Hedstrom and Swedborg. Cambridge University Press. 1998. 1-30.*

Martin Shefter. "Party and Patronage: Germany, England, and Italy," *Politics and Society* 1977. 7: 403-452.

Questions/Assignments

Is a causal mechanism different from an independent variable?

Is it possible to avoid functionalist arguments?

What role do context and culture play in research design?

How "conceptually distant" is the independent variable in your favorite work in political science?

Recommended:

Jon Elster. *Explaining Technical Change*. Sections on Functionalism.

Jon Elster. "A Plea for Causal Mechanisms," *Social Mechanisms: An Analytic Approach to Social Theory*. Ed. Hestrom and Swedborg. Cambridge University Press. 1998. 45-73.

Jose Cheibub. "Minority Governments, Deadlocks, and the Survival of Presidential Regimes." *Comparative Political Studies*. April 2002. (JSTOR)

Jack Knight. *Institutions and Social Conflict*. Cambridge University Press. p. 1-46.*

David Kreps. "Corporate Culture," in *Perspectives on Positive Political Economy*, ed J. Alt and K Shepsle, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1990).*

David J. Elkins and Richard E.B. Simeon, "A Cause in Search of its Effects, or What Does Political Culture Explain," *Comparative Politics*, 11 (January 1979).

Week 7. February 14. Causal Depth and Endogeneity

Herbert Kitschelt, Accounting for Postcommunist Regime Diversity: What Counts as a Good Cause? In *Capitalism and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. Gregorz Ekiert and Stephen Hanson, Cambridge University Press 2002.*

Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James Robinson, 2001. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation." *American Economic Review* 91 1369-1401. (JSTOR)

Paul Pierson. "Big, Slow-Moving, and...Invisible." *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press. 2003.*

Donald R. Kinder and Thomas R. Palfrey. "On Behalf of Experimental Political Science." In *Experimental Foundations of Political Science*. University of Michigan Press. 1-39.

Steven D. Levitt and Jack Porter, "Sample Selection in the Estimation of Air Bag and Seat Belt Effectiveness," *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, November, 2001. 83(4): 603-615. (JSTOR)

William E. Sewell. "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology," in *The Historical Turn in the Human Sciences*, ed. Terrence McDonald, University of Michigan Press. 1996.*

Recommended:

Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell. *Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues for Field Settings*. Houghton Mifflin. 1979. 1-38.

Donald Green, and Alan S. Gerber, (2002) "Reclaiming the Experimental Tradition in Political Science." In *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*, Third edition, Helen Milner and Ira Katznelson. W.W. Norton and Company.*

Timothy Frye, Reputation and the Rule of Law. Ms. Columbus. OH.

Avner Grief, Cultural Beliefs and the Organization of Society: A Historical and Theoretical Reflection on Collectivist and Individualist Societies." *Journal of Political Economy*, v. 102. 5 1994. 912-950.

Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan. "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An introduction."

Questions/Assignment

Where should we jump into research? How does it affect our results?

Can one step in the same river twice?

What counts as a good explanation?

Week 8. February 21. Marrying Theory and Data.

Susan Stokes, "What Do Policy Switches Tell us About Democracy," in *Democracy, Accountability and Representation*, ed. Adam Przeworski, Susan Stokes, and Bernard Manin. Cambridge University Press.

Carles Boix. *Democracy and Redistribution*. Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Christopher Achen. 1983. "Toward Theories of Data: The State of Political Methodology," in Ada Finifter, *Political Science: The State of the Discipline*

Peter Hall. "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Politics." *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge University Press. 2003.

James Scott. *Seeing Like a State*. Yale University Press. 1998. 1-82.

Edmund Malesky, TBA.

Questions/Assignment

Find an existing data set in comparative politics and critique its application in an article.

Recommended:

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description," in *Interpretation of Cultures*. 1-30.

Analytic Narratives. Edited by Robert Bates et al. Princeton University Press.* [Also Jon Elster review of *Analytic Narratives* in the *APSR*.]

Week 9. February 28. A Close Read of a Multi-Method Work.

Ashutosh Varshney. *Ethnic Violence and Civic Life: Hindus and Muslims in India*. Yale University Press, 2003.

Recommended:

Simeon Djankov et al. "The New Comparative Economics." *Journal of Comparative Economics*. January 2004. (JSTOR).

Peter Evans. "The Challenges of the Institutional Turn and the Field of Development."
<http://sociology.berkeley.edu/faculty/evans/InstitutionalTurn.pdf>

James Coleman. "Meta-Theory in Social Science." *Foundations of Social Theory*, University of Chicago Press. 1-23.

Week 10. March 7. Presentations. Everyone will make one presentation and serve as commentator for a presentation.

Final Papers are due March 13th at noon.