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POLM141 (30 credits) POLM068 (15 credits) Fall 2011

University of Exeter Syllabus Version: 6.10.11

Elements in Research Design in Politics

Introduction: This module is designed to enable students to learn the principals and practice of: good research design; rigorous data construction and interpretation; the presentation of research findings; and the appraisal and evaluation of research.

Readings: Selected readings will be made available on the module website. You are strongly encouraged to purchase the following text which is available at the Exeter bookshop:

Hoover, Kenneth and Todd Donovan. 2010. *The Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*. 10th Edition. Thomson/Wadsworth.

Assessment: Two practical exercises, (1200 words) 20% each; Research design (4500 words for 30 credits; 2000 words for 15 credits) -60%. The due dates as follows:

October 27: Practical Exercise #1
November 17: Practical Exercise #2
December 15: Research Design

These essays must be submitted to the SSIS college office by 4pm on the due date. Please consult the CSSIS PGT handbook for details on how to submit and penalties for late work. See https://intranet.exeter.ac.uk/socialsciences/ for details.

Schedule

6 October: Introduction

13 October: Getting Started in the Discipline

Topics: Outlets for research, conferences, journals and books, reputations, citations, and peer review.

Discussion: How do you know what separates good research from bad research? What constitutes "world leading" research?

Butler, Linda and Ian McAllister. 2009. "Metrics or Peer Review? Evaluating the 2001 UK Research Assessment Exercise in Political Science" *Political Studies* 7(1): 3-17.

James C. Garand, Micheal Giles, Andre Blais, and Iain McLean. 2009. "Political Science Journals in Comparative Perspective: Evaluating Scholarly Journals in the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdon," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42(4): 695-717.

Garand, James C and Michael W. Giles. 2011. "Ranking Scholarly Publishers in Political Science: An Alternative Approach," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44(2):375-384.

Gupta Devashree, Israel Waismel-Manor. "Network in Progress: A Conference Primer for Graduate Students" *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 485-490.

20 October: The Research Process; from Theory to Evidence

Topics: The scientific method, standards of proof, theories, hypotheses, concepts, variables, relationships, rival hypotheses.

Discussion: What is research for? What is science? What are the justifications for and criticisms of applying that term to the scholarly study of social (including political) phenomena? What is the empirical method? What is a hypothesis? How do scientists establish truth? What is a variable? How is it measured?

- Chapter 1: "Thinking Scientifically" in *Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*.
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. "The *Science* in Social Science" in *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press.
- Lupia, Arthur. 2000. "Evaluating Political Science Research: Information for Buyers and Sellers," *PS:Political Science and Politics* 33(1): 7-13.
- Most, Benjamin A. 1990. "Getting Started on Political Research," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 2(4): 592-596.
- Weingast, Barry R. 1995. "Structuring Your Papers (Caltech Rules)"
- Cohen, David B. 2002. "Surviving the Ph.D.: Hints for Navigating the Sometimes Stormy Seas of Graduate Education in Political Science" *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35(3): 585-588.
- Wuffle. A. 1989. "Uncle-Wuffle's Advice to the Advanced Graduate Student" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 22(4):838-839.
- King, Gary. 2006. "Publication, Publication". PS: Political Science and Politics 39 (1):119-125.

APSA Style Guide. (available at apsanet.org)

27 October: Theories and Hypotheses

Topics: Independent variables, dependent variables, intevening variables *Discussion:* What is the role of theory? What is a variable?

- Chapter 2: "The Elements of Science" and Chapter 3: "Strategies" in *Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*.
- McGuire, William J. 1997. "Creative Hypothesis Generating in Psychology: Some Useful Heuristics," *Annual Review of Psychology* 48: 1-30.
- Nørgaard, Asbjørn S. 2008. "Political Science: Witchcraft or Craftsmanship? Standards for Good Research" *World Political Science Review* 4: 1-28.
- "Field Study: Just How Relevant is Political Science?" New York Times. October 20, 2009.
- Souva, Mark 2007 "Fostering Theoretical Thinking in Undergraduate Classes" *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 557-561.

3 November: Measurement: Concepts and Indicators

Topics: From concepts to indicators. How do you know what will prove to be a good indicator, and what are the qualities that make an indicator "good"? Remembering to go back to concepts. Reliability and validity.

Discussion: Think about some of your favorite concepts and indicators before you come to class. Try to define one, in writing, and identify a good indicator or two.

- Chapter 4: "Refinements"; Chapter 5: "Measuring Variables and Relationships" and "Appendix A: Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital," and Appendix B. "Trust in Government: The United States in Comparative Perspective" in *Elements of Social Scientific Thinking*
- Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 529-546.
- Nagler, Jonathan. 1995. "Coding Style and Good Computing Practices." *PS: Political Science* 28(September): 488-492.
- Dorussen, Han, Lenz Hartmut and Spyros Blavoukos. 2005. "Assessing the Reliability and Validity of Expert Interviews" *European Union Politics*. 6(3): 315-337.
- Gladwell, Malcolm, "Examined Life: What Stanley Kaplan Taught us about the SAT," *The New Yorker*, December 17, 2001.

10 November: Making Causal Inferences and Ruling out Rival Explanations

Topics: Causality in social analysis.

Discussion: Can a "good" research design allow one to make causal inferences?

Ch. 6: "Reflections: Back to the Roots" in Elements of Social Scientific Thinking

- Seawright, Jason. 2002. "Testing for Necessary and/or Sufficient Causation: Which Cases Are Relevant?" *Political Analysis* 10: 178-193.
- Braumoeller, Bear and Gary Goertz. 2002. "Watching Your Posterior: Comment on Seawright." *Political Analysis* 10: 198-203.
- Miller, Warren E. 2000. "Temporal Order and Causal Inference." Political Analysis 8: 119-139.
- Achen, Christopher H. 2000. "Warren Miller and the Future of Political Data Analysis." *Political Analysis* 8: 142-146.

17 November: Experimental Designs

Topics: Randomization and treatment.

Discussion: Experimental design as an "ideal type" of social science research. Come to class prepared with examples of experimental research in political science.

- McDermott, Rose. 2002. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5: 31-61.
- Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia. 2006. "Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 100(4):627-635.
- Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. 2007. The Logic of the Survey Experiment Examined. *Political Analysis* 15: 1-20.
- Barabas, Jason and Jennifer Jerit. 2010. "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?" *American Political Science Review* 104:226-242.
- Lupia, Arthur. 1994. "Shortcuts versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behavior in California Insurance Reform Elections" *American Political Science Review* 88: 63-76.
- Gerber, Alan and Donald Green. 2000. "The Effects of Canvassing, Phone Calls, and Direct Mail on Voter Turnout: A Field Experiment." *American Political Science Review*, 94(3): 653-663.

24 November: Quasi Experimental Designs

Topics: "Real world" experiments.

Discussion: What is the difference between experimental and quasi-experimental? Can a quasi-experimental design be "better" than an experiment? In what ways is a quasi-experiment weaker than an experiment?

- Kidder, Louise H. and Charles M. Judd. 1986. "Chapter 5: Quasi-Experimental Designs" in *Research Methods in Social Relations*. 5th Edition. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Donald T. Campbell and H. Laurence Ross. 1968. "The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time-Series Data in Quasi-Experimental Analysis" *Law & Society Review*, 3(1): 33-54.
- Lawrence S. Rothenberg, Mitchell S. Sanders. 2000. "Severing the Electoral Connection: Shirking in the Contemporary Congress" *American Journal of Political Science*, 44(2): 316-325.
- Mark Schneider, Paul Teske, Melissa Marschall, Michael Mintrom, Christine Roch. 1997. "Institutional Arrangements and the Creation of Social Capital: The Effects of Public School Choice" *American Political Science Review*, 91(1): 82-93.

1 December: Making Observations: Qualitative Approaches

Topics: large vs. small n studies, case studies.

Discussion: Introduction to thinking about data and data quality. What considerations are involved in choosing and evaluating data? How do you know when data are appropriate for your purposes?

Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method" *American Political Science Review* 65(3): 682-693.

- Gerring, John. 2004. "What is a Case Study and What is it Good For?" *American Political Science Review* 98: 341-354.
- Lieberson, Stanley. 2009. "Small Ns and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases." In Gomm, Roger, Martyn Hammersley and Peter Foster (eds.). *Case Study Method*. Sage.
- Hyde, Susan D. 2010. "Experimenting in Democracy Promotion: International Observers and the 2004 Presidential Elections in Indonesia." *Perspectives on Politics* 8(2): 511-527.
- Glaser, James M. 1996. "The Challenges of Campaign Watching: Seven Lessons of Participant-Observation Research." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 29: 533-37.

8 December: Making Observations: Quantitative Approaches

Topics: Why count? Advantages and disadvantages.

Discussion: What good are statistics? How are they used? What assumptions are they based on? What are the limitations?

- Johnston, Richard, and Henry E. Brady. 2002. 'The Rolling Cross-Section Design' *Electoral Studies* 21: 283-95.
- Maltzman, Forrest and Paul J. Wahlbeck. 1996. "Inside the U.S. Supreme Court: The Reliability of the Justices' Conference Records" *Journal of Politics*. 58(May): 528-539.
- Brady, Henry et al. 2001. "Law and Data: The Butterfly Ballot Episode." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 34: 59-69.
- Neumayer, Eric and Thomas Plümper, 2009. "International Terrorism and the Clash of Civilizations", *British Journal of Political Science* 39(4): 711–734.