

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

POLSCI 796

Term 1, Fall 2019

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Course Description

Designed to explore philosophical assumptions in political science, theory, and matters of evidence and judgment, this course presents an introduction to research design, empirical methods, and the execution of research. The primary aims are to make you a more sophisticated consumer of diverse empirical research, to heighten your attention to the need for methodological rigour, and expose you to a variety of strategies and methods for conducting good research. The course will not cover every method or every approach. There is simply not time. However, it is expected that by the end of the course, you will be a better reader of empirical research, and will have a better understanding of how to design and conduct your own original, independent research. This is not a course in data analysis. Students looking for coverage of quantitative research methods should consider taking POL 784 as a complement to this course.

Note: There is an undeniable plurality of approaches and methods within the discipline of political science. And while there is public acceptance of this fact, in private there is a quiet war going on, in which supporters of specific methods can be highly dismissive and unsympathetic to others. My hope for this course is that we can move from grudging acceptance to something closer to a celebration of this diversity. Students are expected to come with an open mind and be prepared to critically analyze and challenge their own preconceptions about how political science research should be conducted and what makes for good research. As one aim of this course is to help students to advance their own research projects, it is expected that you will approach discussions in the spirit of genuine respect and mutual support for each other and our various projects.

Course Objectives

The primary goal of this course is to assist students in preparing and carrying out their own original, empirical research (for example, as part of a Masters or PhD thesis). In particular, the course aims to:

- develop students' critical understanding of the philosophical commitments and assumptions in political science research, and the connection between particular methodological choices and broader theoretical and conceptual issues;
- build students' capacity in identifying and refining research questions, formulating research proposals, and developing research designs that bring evidence to bear on causal or descriptive/conceptual propositions;
- familiarize students with a variety of empirical research approaches (including comparative, case study and experimental), and selected qualitative methods that are commonly used in political science;
- sensitize students to the ethical issues in social science research.

Required Materials and Texts

- F. Chalmers. 2103. *What is this thing called science?* Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co. Available at Campus Bookstore (3rd or 4th edition is acceptable).
- Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds.). 2008. [*Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*](#). New York: Cambridge University Press.

We will be reading selected chapters and articles over the course of the term, as listed in the pages below. Readings are accessible via Scholars Portal, or in the case of book chapters, will be made available on the [Avenue To Learn](#) course website.

Course Evaluation – Overview

Evaluative component	MA students	PhD students
Participation	10%	10%
Seminar leader	2 x 5% = 10%	2 x 5% = 10%
Methods reflection memos	3 memos x 5% = 15%	4 memos x 5% = 20%
Book or article review - due Oct 2 and Oct 30	2 article reviews x 15% = 30% OR Book review: summary of RD (10%) and methodological critique (20%) = 30%	Book review: Summary of RD (5%) and methodological critique (20%) = 25%
Qualitative method - due Nov 6/13	10%	10%
Final paper - due Dec 13	25%	25%

Course Evaluation – Details

Attendance and participation (10%)

Attendance and active participation in seminar are central to succeeding in this course. You are expected to complete all reading assignments, and should have thoughtful questions or reflections ready to advance the discussion each week. The following rubric provides a guide:

Grade	Attendance	Discussion	Reading
9-10	Always	<i>Excellent:</i> leads discussion with useful comments and analysis; always has ideas on theme of the readings; can effectively leverage the readings to address a range of research projects that are being developed by students in the course; takes care not to dominate discussion or impose own epistemological and RD preferences on others.	Clearly has done the readings and prepared helpful, relevant questions that can be used to advance discussion.
8	Almost always	<i>Very good:</i> thoughtful comments and questions; willing and able contributor with good grasp of ideas and problems developed across the readings; can apply readings to own research challenges, and occasionally to other students' projects.	Has done readings and provides competent analysis when prompted.
7	Frequent, though sometimes arrives late/departs early	<i>Good:</i> basic grasp of concepts; arguments and questions are sporadic or unprepared, poorly supported at times; meagre ability to connect the readings to own or others' research projects.	Familiar with readings, but tends not to analyze or to relate to wider course material.
5-6	Occasional	<i>Somewhat poor:</i> misunderstandings of key concepts; seldom contributes effectively; digresses in unhelpful ways.	Knowledge of material outweighed by improvised comments and remarks.
Less than 5	Rare	<i>Very Poor:</i> rarely speaks, parrots text or comments of others; little to no constructive contribution to the class; combative attitude.	Little to no apparent familiarity with readings.

Seminar leader (2 x 5%)

Beginning at week 3, each class meeting will start with students making a brief presentation (10-12 minutes max. each presenter) on two or three selected readings. In your presentation, you are expected to do the following: i) provide an overview of the text's main points (which may require drawing on secondary literature; this should not be a point-by-point review of the entire text, but should simply help to remind us what are the main take-aways); ii) provide a critical response directly to each reading (can be a key argument or idea that you question or disagree with, or would like more elaboration on); and iii) make an argument or raise a question that flows from or adds to this selection of readings and can be a point of departure for further discussion (can be in relation to course themes, or drawn from your own or other students' research plans and challenges). Each student will assume this role twice over the term. There may be up to two students per week, in which case please organize among yourselves who will discuss which texts.

Methods reflection memos (MAs 3 x 5%; PhDs 4 x 5%)

You are to write a set of brief methods reflections memos, focusing on selected weeks' themes and readings. MA students must submit 3 memos on your choice of dates; PhD students must submit 4 memos including a mandatory one on Week 4. I am looking for analytically sharp, well-reasoned think-pieces, demonstrating a solid grasp and thoughtful engagement with key concepts and arguments developed across the readings. In a number of cases, you are expected to leverage the readings to develop aspects of your own research design, or to assess research design elements of other projects or published papers. Memos should be brief (1,000 words max.). They are due in class on the weeks of your choice, and it is fine if they overlap with your weeks of seminar leadership. No late submissions will be accepted.

Methodological critique (MAs 30%; PhDs 25%), due Oct 2 and 30

Review of award-winning thesis/1st book OR two published articles

MA students can choose either option 1 or 2 (worth 30%), while PhD students must complete option 1 (worth 25%).

Option 1: Award winning thesis/First book review.

Students are to select a prize-winning dissertation (e.g., recipient of a prize awarded by the CPSA or one of the APSA organized sections, or a similar prize from another similar scholarly association), or a published book based on a dissertation (i.e., a scholar's "first book"). The dissertation/book may be in political science or a cognate discipline such as anthropology, sociology, or any number of interdisciplinary social science programs. It must have an empirical component. Students will write their review in two parts. The first part will be a short paper (1-2 pages, single-spaced) that summarizes the research question, research design and methods used to answer the research question. This is due as a hard copy in class on Oct. 2. For the second part, you are to return to the book in light of the material covered in class, and write a critical/constructive review of the strengths and weaknesses of the research design and empirical analysis, focusing on

things like fecundity of the research question, theoretical and conceptual innovation, case selection and justification, measures and data collection techniques, methods of analysis, etc. In short, what makes it a strong design (it was prize-winning or got published, after all), are there better/different design choices that could have been made, and what benefits might be gained from the alternative specifications? Where relevant, I expect you to draw on course readings and discussions to inform your critique. This second part should be approximately 3-4 pages (single-spaced), and is due in class on Oct. 30. Please submit with the first part (marked-up and graded) stapled to it.

Option 2: Review of two published articles.

This is similar to option 1, but on a smaller scale. You are to submit two short papers, each offering a concise summary and critical/constructive review of the research question and overall study of an empirical research article that has been recently published in a peer-reviewed journal. Or you may ask me, or another faculty member if they could share with you a manuscript that they have been invited to blind-review for a scholarly journal. Each submission should be no more than 2-3 pages (single-spaced). Due dates are Oct. 2 and Oct. 30. Please submit a hard copy, with the actual article or manuscript as an attachment.

Qualitative method presentation and handout (10%), due Nov. 6th and 13th

Each student will choose a qualitative research method (e.g., elite interviewing, focus groups, participant observation, content analysis, archival methods, etc.), and present a 15 to 20-minute overview of that method in class. A detailed handout of selected methods and associated readings will be available on ATL. You are to look this over, and come to class on Week 6 prepared to sign up for a selected method (please have a first and second choice ready). We will organize a mini-qualitative methods workshop over Weeks 9 and 10. Based on your selected method, you will read 4 or 5 related readings, and then present an overview addressing: i) the nuts and bolts of what the method is and involves; ii) the kinds of research problems to which it can be usefully applied; iii) its strengths and weaknesses; iv) tips and traps for applying it effectively; and v) how you might apply the method in the context of your own research. Please provide a short handout that can be shared with the other members of the class to help build a personal resource library. You are also welcome to make a Power-point presentation.

Research Design Proposal (25%), due Dec. 13th

The final paper for the course requires you to develop your own research design proposal, addressing all of points enumerated below. In addition, PhD students are expected to effectively leverage the relevant research design and methodological literature introduced throughout the course. It is not necessary to refer to every component of the course. Rather, the best research proposals will use the background methodological literature selectively and strategically to show the critical reader or reviewer that you have made key choices thoughtfully, and with awareness of sound

research design practices, so that the validity of your eventual findings and overall value of the research are apparent. You will present a short oral summary of your paper in class on Dec. 4. The final paper is due no later than 4pm on Friday, Dec. 13.

- i) Specify your research question, and explain why this question matters. This can be in relation to the relevant scholarship or research program, contested concepts and rival explanations, pressing social concerns, as well as your own personal experiences.
- ii) Provide an analytically appropriate specification of the phenomenon to be investigated in order to answer your research question, and justify why the related decisions you are making are reasonable. If you are trying to establish causal inferences, you need to think about and make choices regarding causal and outcome variables, likely intervening factors, and hypothesized causal mechanisms at work. If you are seeking to develop an in-depth interpretive/explanatory account, you need to think and make choices about the spatial and temporal context(s) of the phenomenon of interest. In other words, what cases (whether countries, policies, episodes, or events, etc.), geographic locations, or time periods will you focus on, and why? For example, consider research question “do electoral gender quotas lead to improved socio-economic outcomes for women and girls?” You could re-specify this in a number of different ways that suggest quite different causal or explanatory theories, research designs and methods. For example: “Does the presence/absence of electoral gender quotas across different panchayats in India lead parents to hold to different educational aspirations for their daughters?” OR: “Has the gender income gap narrowed in countries where gender quotas have been in place for at least 3 electoral cycles?” OR “Have female legislators elected via quotas been effective in introducing policies that can improve women’s socio-economic status?”
- iii) Discuss the empirical basis for your project. What kind(s) of data do you need, and where will you find it? If you will generate the data yourself, describe the techniques you intend to use. For example, will you undertake survey research, experiments, structured, semi-structured or unstructured interviews, ethnography or participant observation of daily life? Or can you turn to archival records or other pre-existing materials and sources (e.g., government or international organization data, newspaper articles, cartoons, graffiti, etc.)? Aim to be as detailed as possible, and stick to what is reasonable and feasible. Rather than simply a laundry list of all possible data and methods, explain concretely what kind of data you need most of all, where and how you will get it. If you are already making some concrete advances on establishing appropriate cases, and on getting good data, you can also discuss that.
- iv) Though this is likely a good deal more provisional, think about some of the specific steps, challenges and opportunities you foresee in measuring, gathering and analysing data. For example, how will you recruit research

- participants, and what kind of questions will you ask? What are the tools of quantitative and/or data analysis you expect to employ (e.g., regression analysis, t-tests of difference, automated content analysis, discourse analysis, process-tracing, etc.)? Are there particular kinds of data analysis software that you intend to use, and that you will need training for? Consider cost, ethical, language, trust or safety problems you may have to confront; assess the availability of existing data, expert reports, or access to key actors/informants related to your specific topic.
- v) Finally, as with any grant proposal, aim for clarity, avoid jargon, and do not assume that your reader knows the idiosyncrasies of your particular sub-field or research domain. Write in a way that should convince any informed reader why your research question is an important one, and why your design is capable of yielding valid answers and explanations.

Weekly Course Schedule and Required Readings

Week 1 (Sept 4) Introduction

Topic: Introductory meeting and course overview

We will review course expectations and get to know one another. Come to class prepared to discuss your own research interests. What are you interested in studying? Why? How? Where? What kinds of methods were you thinking of using?

Week 2 (Sept 11) An overview of political science

Topic: An overview of political science: What/where are we as a discipline?

Unity, plurality of methodology. Relevance of political science research. Perestroika, gender gaps, and other developments/challenges in the discipline of political science in the US and Canada.

Do you think that, as a discipline, political science is in good shape? Is the knowledge we are contributing valuable? What makes it worth investing in or pursuing this discipline as a scholar? Is political science, as a discipline, engaged enough? If not, what are the barriers to engagement, and what steps can/should be taken to make our research more relevant? What specific forms of engagement do you see as important? What opportunities or barriers are there to engagement, whether from the university and scientific community, or from the communities that might benefit from research? From the perspective of your own research interests, what are the costs, benefits and risks to being an engaged scholar?

- Various. 2010. Symposium: Perestroika in Political Science. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 43(4): 725-754. Read especially the Luke & McGovern, Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, Sadiq & Monroe, and Caterino pieces.

- Gerring, John. 2012. Chapter 1 and “Postscript: Justifications.” In *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press, pp 1-23 and 394-401. (ATL)
- Achen, Christopher H. 2014. “[Why do we need Diversity in the Political Methodology Society?](#)” *The Political Methodologist*, 22(2): 25-28.
- Kovach, Margaret. 2009. “Situating Indigenous Research within the Academy.” *Indigenous Methodologies*. University of Toronto Press. (ATL)
- Goodman, Nicole, Karen Bird, and Chelsea Gabel. 2017. “Towards a More Collaborative Political Science: A Partnership Approach.” *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 50(1): 201-218.
- Alcantara, Christopher, Dianne Lalonde, and Gary N. Wilson. 2017. “[Indigenous Research and Academic Freedom: A View from Political Scientists.](#)” *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, 8(2): 1-19.

Week 3 (Sept 18) What is science?

Topic: What is science? Is political science a science? Positivist, interpretivist and poststructuralist approaches.

At McMaster, our department calls itself one of political “science” whereas some other institutions instead refer to themselves as departments of politics or political studies. It is unclear whether or not these semantic differences matter in terms of the actual endeavour of knowledge discovery going on in those departments. But it does seem that one's assumptions about human behavior, and various social, economic and political processes – and what kind of *knowledge* we think we can obtain about those phenomena – will shape one's approach to research. Can politics and other decisional aspects of human behavior be studied scientifically? Where do you stand on the scientist-humanist (or the positivist – interpretivist – poststructuralist) divide? How are the research questions *you* ask, the kinds of data you aim to collect and analyze, and the kinds of “findings” you find interesting, shaped by your own underlying assumptions.

- Chalmers, ch. 1, 5-9.
- Dryzek, John S. 1986. “The Progress of Political Science.” *Journal of Politics* 48(2): 301-320.
- Grant, Ruth. 2002. “Political Theory, Political Science, and Politics.” *Political Theory* 30(4): 577-595.
- Shreeve, Jamie. 2015. “[This Face Changes the Human Story. But How?](#)” *National Geographic* (10 Sept.)

Week 4 (Sept 25) Research questions

Topic: Coming up with a compelling research question, and making revisions along the way.

Write a memo describing your own research question. How did you "discover" this question? What makes it important to you? What personal, as well as practical and intellectual goals do bring to your proposed study? What potential benefits or liabilities do these more personal interests have for your research? Anticipating your final research design paper, say a bit about how you propose to answer this question, and some of the challenges you anticipate in the course of that research.

- Schmitter, Philippe. 2008. "The Design of Social and Political Research." Ch. 14 in Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, pp 263-295.
- Gerring, John. 2012. "Beginnings." Ch. 2 in *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press. (ATL)
- Gustafsson, Karl, and Linus Hagström. 2017. "[What is the Point? Teaching Graduate Students how to Construct Political Science Research Puzzles.](#)" *European Political Science*, 17(4), 634-648.
- Bloemraad, Irene. 2007. "Of Puzzles and Serendipity: Doing Cross-national, Mixed Method Immigration Research." Pp 34-49, in Louis DeSipio (ed.), *Researching Migration: Stories from the Field*. New York: SSRC. Online at
- Smith, Rogers M. 2007. "[Systematizing the Ineffable: A Perestroikan's Methods for Finding a Good Research Topic.](#)" *Qualitative Methods: Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative Methods*, 5, 1 (Spring): 6-8.
- LaPorte, Jody. 2014. "Confronting a Crisis of Research Design." *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 47(2): 414-417.

Week 5 (Oct 2) Just exactly what do you mean?

Topic: Conceptualization, operationalization and measurement.

You can approach this memo in one of at least two ways. The first is to consider a concept that you find interesting, and discuss at least two contending ways that it has been operationalized and measured in existing research (ideally, you should find two articles that apply these different ways of operationalizing and measuring the same concept). You can choose "democracy" as your concept (as per Coppedge & Gerring 2011), or choose something more closely related to your research interests. What distinctive assumptions, expectations and theories, or contextual factors underlie these different treatments? What implications does this have for the way the research was carried out, and for the findings? The second is to work on your own concept map that can inform and guide your research (*à la* Maxwell). The aim here is to identify one concept that is central to your project, and lay out (as well as question, problematize) your assumptions, expectations and nascent theories with respect to the phenomena of interest to you. Where possible, use arrows to show how elements are related. You cannot map a theory of everything, so this exercise will force you to narrow and refine

your research focus, or at least prioritize key areas of inquiry. Don't worry about perfection. A concept map is not intended to be definitive, but rather is a process for reflection, making hunches or implicit ideas more explicit, and beginning to theorize about causes, effects, processes, mechanisms, etc. Write a brief narrative to accompany the visual map, explaining key points of interest and areas of the map that you want to further develop through background reading, theorizing and exploratory research.

- Maxwell, Joseph A. 2013. "Conceptual Framework: What Do You Think is Going On?" Ch. 3 in *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. (ATL)
- Gerring, John. 1999. "What Makes a Good Concept? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences." *Polity* 31(3): 357-393.
- Mair, Peter. 2008. "Concepts and Concept Formation." Ch. 10 in Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, pp 177-197.
- Jones, Charles O. 1974. "Doing Before Knowing: Concept Development in Political Research." *American Journal of Political Science*, 18, 1: 215-228.
- Coppedge, Michael, and John Gerring. 2011. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: A New Approach." *Perspectives on Politics*, 9, 2 (June): 247-67.

Week 6 (Oct 9) Causation and explanation

Topic: What is causal explanation, and (why) should we as political scientists care about it? Why is the experimental method considered best for establishing causation? Can qualitative methods establish causality?

Write a short memo on any research article or book that advances a reasonably convincing *causal* explanation. If you prefer, you may focus on Ross (2008). Briefly explain what research question(s) the author posed, and what they found. What form(s) does the author's causal reasoning take, what alternative explanations were considered? Discuss any particular aspects of the research design that strengthened the researcher's ability to understand causal processes involved, or eliminate alternative causal explanations. Draw on core readings to explain whether you are satisfied with the causal argument the author makes, and to consider further strategies that might strengthen or render less ambiguous the causal explanation.

- Brady, Henry E. 2011. "Causation and Explanation in Social Science." In Robert E. Goodin (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199604456.013.0049
- Gerring, John. 2012. "Causal Arguments." In *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press, pp 197-217 and 321-324. (ATL)

- Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A tale of two cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative research." *Political Analysis* 14(3): 227–249.
- Beach, Derek. 2016. "It's All About Mechanisms – What Process-tracing Case Studies Should be Tracing." *New Political Economy*, 21(5): 463-472.
- Brady, Henry E. 2004. "Data-set Observations vs. Causal-Process Observations: The 2000 US Presidential Election." Appendix in Henry E. Brady and David Collier (eds.) *Rethinking Social Inquiry* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. (ATL)
- Ross, Michael L. 2008. "Oil, Islam, and Women." *American Political Science Review*, 102(1), 107-123.

Week 7 (Oct 16) Fall mid-term recess, NO CLASS

Week 8 (Oct 23) Comparative & case study methods

Topic: What is the logic and purpose of comparison? Is it better to study one case, or many? How should cases be chosen for comparison? What counts as a case? Can we use cases to test theory, or only to develop theories and concepts?

Choose a research article or book that employs a small-n comparison or a case study for testing or developing a theory. If you prefer, you may focus on Varshney (2001). How did the author justify the case selection strategy, or decide what country, village, town, factory, or institution should be selected for the study? Do you think the criteria were appropriate? Does the study present a "crucial" test for the theory? Can any generalizations be drawn from the study? How does the author define and limit the unit for study, and how might these decisions affect the results?

- Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review*, 65(3): 682-93.
- della Porta, Donatella. 2008. "Comparative Analysis: Case-oriented versus Variable-oriented Research. Ch. 11 in Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, pp 198-222.
- Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. "What Are Case Studies? How Should They Be Performed?" In *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (ATL)
- Levy, Jack S. 2008. "Case Studies: Types, Designs and Logics of Inference." *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 25: 1-18.
- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. "Case Studies and Theory Development." Ch. 1 in *Case Studies and Theoretical Development*. Boston: MIT Press, pp 3-36. (ATL)
- Varshney, Ashutosh. 2001. "Ethnic Conflict and Civil Society: India and Beyond." *World Politics*, 53: 362-398.

Week 9 (Oct 30) Experimental methods

Topic: Defining characteristics and pitfalls of experimental methods. Lab, survey, field and natural experiments.

The experimental method is often referred to as the gold standard for causal inference. In this memo, consider the Ontario Basic Income Pilot Project that was cancelled last year by the PC government. Based on what you can find out about that study, were its design elements up to the gold standard? What are some of the key challenges for ensuring that such an experiment produces valid results, which can in turn be translated into good public policy?

- Gerring, John. 2012. "Causal Strategies: X and Y." In *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press, pp 256-273. (ATL)
- John, Peter. 2017. "Field Experimentation: Opportunities and Constraints." *Field Experiments in Political Science and Public Policy: Practical Lessons in Design and Delivery*. New York: Routledge, ch. 1. (ATL)
- Dunning, Thad. 2012. "Introduction: Why Natural Experiments?" *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. New York: Cambridge University Press, ch. 1. (ATL)
- Hyde, Susan D. 2015. "Experiments in International Relations: Lab, Survey, and Field." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 18: 403–24.
- Stoker, Gerry. 2010. "Translating Experiments into Policy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 628(1): 47-58.
- Broockman, David E. 2013. "Black Politicians are More Intrinsically Motivated to Advance Blacks' Interests: A Field Experiment Manipulating Political Incentives." *American Journal of Political Science*, 57(3): 521-36.

Week 10 - 11 (Nov 6, 13) Qualitative methods workshop

Week 12 (Nov 20) Ethics and relevance

Topic: Conduct of ethical and responsible research. Research ethics policy and governance in Canada. Ethical conduct of research involving Indigenous peoples.

What are the major ethical challenges for political scientists today? Are universities (or other institutions) addressing these effectively, or perhaps even contributing to the problem? How is the research ethics landscape changing in an era of truth and reconciliation? Are the challenges greater for graduate students? Are they different for qualitative versus quantitative research? What specific ethics issues will you need to confront in undertaking your research? How do you propose to resolve them?

- Nilan, Pamela. 2002. 'Dangerous Fieldwork' Re-examined: The Question of Researcher Subject Position." *Qualitative Research*, 2, 3: 363-86.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1992. "Moral relativism and the primacy of the ethical" in Introduction, pp 21-30, *Death without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. (ATL)
- Siplon, Patricia. 1999. "Scholar, Witness, or Activist? The Lessons and Dilemmas of an AIDS Research Agenda," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 32, 3: 576-78.
- [McMaster Research Ethics](#)
- Porter, Tony. 2008. "Research Ethics Governance and Political Science in Canada," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, (July): 495-99.
- Fujii, Lee Ann. 2012. "Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities" *PS Political Science and Politics* 45(4): 717-723.
- Humphrey, Macartan. 2014. "[How to Make Field Experiments More Ethical](#)," *Monkey Cage / Washington Post*, 2 Nov.
- Aschwandene, Christie. 2015. "Science Isn't Broken. It's just a hell of a lot harder than we give it credit for." *Five-thirty-eight*, 19 Aug., <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/science-isnt-broken/#part1>

Week 13 (Nov 27) Methods and resources @ Mac

Topic: Guest speakers and discussion of concrete resources and tools for social science research.

This week, you will get some hands-on exposure and first-person accounts of particular resources and research tools and techniques. For your weekly memo, you are to write up your assessment of what you learned, what surprised you, and how you might use one or more of these tools and techniques in your own research. Readings may change, depending on the final schedule of guest speakers. **This memo is due via ATL on the Friday following class.**

Member Checking

- Carlson, Julie A. 2010. "Avoiding Traps in Member Checking." *The Qualitative Report* 15 (5): 11102–13.
- Turner, Sarah, and Stephanie E Coen. 2008. "Member Checking in Human Geography: Interpreting Divergent Understandings of Performativity in a Student Space." *Area* 40 (2).

FoI requests

- Video: The story behind how The [Globe's Unfounded series](#) was reported
- Video: [How to get your police report through a Freedom of Information request with Robyn Doolittle](#)
- Walby, Kevin & M. Larsen. 2012. "Access to Information and Freedom of Information Requests: Neglected Areas of Data Production in the Social Sciences" *Qualitative Inquiry* 18(1): 31-42.

Using the archives

- Scott A. Frisch, Douglas B. Harris, Sean Q Kelly, and David C. W. Parker. 2012. "Introduction: Taking the Road Less Traveled" in [Doing Archival Research in Political Science](#).
- Fraser, Crystal & Zoe Todd. 2016 (Feb. 15). "[Decolonial Sensibilities: Indigenous Research and Engaging with Archives in Contemporary Colonial Canada](#)".

Week 14 (Dec 4) Research proposal presentations

The final class will be an opportunity to present your research proposal, and receive peer feedback. Please prepare a 1-2 page single-spaced summary of your research proposal, and upload this to ATL by end of day Monday. On Wednesday's class meeting, a total of 20 minutes will be devoted to each proposal: each student will make a 10-minute presentation of their proposed research, which will be followed by a peer-review (5 minutes), and open questions and comments from the class. Each student will be assigned as peer reviewer for one paper, however everyone is expected to read the proposal summaries and come to class prepared to offer constructive comments to their classmates. **Final paper due December 13th**

Course Policies

Submission of Assignments

Weekly memos, and article/book reviews are to be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of seminar. The 1-2 page summary of your research proposal, and your final research proposal paper are to be submitted via A2L.

Grades

Grades will be based on the McMaster University grading scale:

MARK	GRADE
90-100	A+
85-90	A
80-84	A-
77-79	B+
73-76	B
70-72	B-
69-0	F

Late Assignments

Memos will not be accepted after the due date.

With respect to the final paper, I will apply the following rule strictly in the interest of fairness to all students: 5% per day deduction (i.e., 1.25 points/day on a 25-point assignment), including weekend days.

Absences, Missed Work, Illness

Regular attendance is expected of all graduate students. In cases of illness, students may post their memos to ATL. No 'make-up' assignments will be provided in the event of missed classes and participation opportunities; rather students should double their effort in subsequent classes. Finally, I reserve the right to use my judgement in calculating the final grade. If you choose especially challenging assignments for yourself, or tend to go the easy route, I will take that into account

Avenue to Learn

In this course we will be using [Avenue to Learn](#). Students should be aware that, when they access the electronic components of this course, private information such as first and last names, user names for the McMaster e-mail accounts, and program affiliation may become apparent to all other students in the same course. The available information is dependent on the technology used. Continuation in this course will be deemed consent to this disclosure. If you have any questions or concerns about such disclosure please discuss this with the course instructor.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Statement

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behavior in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behavior can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic

accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for [Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities](#).

Faculty of Social Sciences E-mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Course Modification

The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

Appendix I: Supplementary Readings

What/where/who are we as a discipline?

- APSA has a [collection of articles](#) that examine gender differences in the profession of Political Science from a variety of perspectives, including career progression, citation levels, authorship claims, article submission and peer review processes, and publication outcomes.
- Anonymous. 2014. "No Shortcuts to Gender Equality: The Structures of Women's Exclusion in Political Science." *Politics & Gender* 10(3): 437-447.
- Albaugh, Quinn M. 2017. "The Americanization of Canadian Political Science? The Doctoral Training of Canadian Political Science Faculty." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 50(1): 243-262.
- Cairns, Alan C. 1975. "Political Science in Canada and the Americanization Issue." *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 8(2): 191-234.
- Trent, John E. 1987. "Factors Influencing the Development of Political Science in Canada: A Case and a Model." *International Political Science Review*, 8(1): 9-24.
- Nossal, Kim Richard. 2000. "Home Grown IR: The Canadianization of International Relations." *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 35, 1 (Spring): 95-114.
- Cairns, Alan C. 2008. "Conclusion: Are We on the Right Track?" Pp 238-51 in Linda White et. al (eds.) *The Comparative Turn in Canadian Political Science*. Vancouver/Toronto: UBC Press.

- Grant, J. Tobin. 2005. "What Divides Us? The Image and Organization of Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 38, 3 (July): 379-86.
- Various. 2002. Symposium on Perestroika movement. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35, 2: 177-205.
- Hawkesworth, Mary. 2006. "Contending Conceptions of Science and Politics." Ch. 2 in Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds.), *Interpretation and Method" Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Schwatz-Shea, Peregrine. 2003. "Is This the Curriculum We Want? Doctoral Requirements and Offerings in Methods and Methodology." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 36, 3 (July): 379-86.
- Tuhiwai Smith, Linda. 1999. "The Indigenous Peoples' Project: Setting a new Agenda." Ch. 5 in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.
- Fox Piven, Frances. 2010. "Reflections on Scholarship and Activism." *Antipode*, 42, 4: 806-10.

What is science?

- Grofman, Bernard. 2007. "Toward a Science of Politics?" *European Political Science*, 6: 143-155.
- Yanow, Dvora. 2006. "Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences." Pp 5-26 in Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds.), *Interpretation and Method" Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe.
- Riker, William H. 1982. "The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science." *American Political Science Review*, 76(4): 753-766.
- Walker, Thomas C. 2010. "The Perils of Paradigm Mentalities: Revisiting Kuhn, Lakatos, and Popper." *Perspectives on Politics*, 8(2): 433-451.
- Fay, Brian. 1975. "Positivist Social Science and Technological Politics." Pp 18-48, in *Social Theory and Political Practice*. London: Unwin Hyman.
- Sil, Rudra. 2004. "Problems Chasing Methods or Methods Chasing Problems? Research Communities, Constrained Pluralism, and the Role of Eclecticism." Pp 307-331 in Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek Masoud (eds.), *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Delanty, Gerard. 1997. *Social Science: Beyond Constructivism and Realism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ball, Terence. 1976. "From Paradigms to Research Programs: Toward a Post-Kuhnian Political Science." *American Journal of Political Science*, 20: 151-77.
- Ball, Terence. 1987. "Is There Progress in Political Science?" Pp 13-35 in Ball (ed.) *Idioms of Inquiry: Critique and Renewal in Political Science*. Albany: SUNY Press.

Developing research questions

- Mills, C. Wright. 1959. "Appendix: On Intellectual Craftsmanship." *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (pp 195-226).

- Wildavsky, Aaron. 1989. "Reading with a Purpose." Ch. 3 in *Craftways: On the Organization of Scholarly Work*. New York: Transaction Press.
- Most, Benjamin A. 1990. "Getting Started on Political Research." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 23, 4: (December): 592-6.
- Useem, Bert. 1997. "Choosing a Dissertation Topic." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 30, 2 (June): 213-6.
- Various. 2001. [Symposium](#) on Advisors and the Dissertation Proposal. *PSOnline* (December).
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. "Major Components of Research Design." Pp 7-28 in *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Concepts, operationalization & measurement

- Adcock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review*, 95 (September): 529-546.
- Bittner, Amanda, and Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant. 2017. "Sex isn't Gender: Reforming Concepts and Measurements in the Study of Public Opinion." *Political Behavior*, 39:1019–1041.
- Brady, Henry and Cynthia Kaplan. 2000. "Categorically Wrong? Nominal Versus Graded Measures of Ethnic Identity." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35(3): 56-91
- Elkins, Zachary. 2000. "Gradations of Democracy? Empirical Tests of Alternative Conceptualizations." *American Journal of Political Science* 44(2): 293-300.
- Treier, Shawn and Simon Jackman. 2008. "Democracy as a Latent Variable." *American Journal of Political Science* 52(1): 201-217.
- Paxton, Pamela. 2000. "Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35(3): 92-111.
- Collier, David and Steven Levitsky. 1997. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49(3): 430-451.
- Munck, Gerardo L. and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies*. 35(1): 15-34.
- Putnam, Robert D. 1993. "Measuring Performance." Ch. 3 in *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wedeen, Lisa. 2004. "Concepts and commitments in the study of democracy." In Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek Masoud (eds.), *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp 274-306).
- Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 64(4):1033-1053.
- McIntyre, Alisdair. 1975. "The Essential Contestability of Some Social Concepts." *Ethics*, 83: 1-9.
- Carmines, Edward G. and Richard A. Zeller. 1979. *Reliability and Validity Assessment*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage (pp 9-27).

- Collier, David, Jody LaPorte, and Jason Seawright. 2012. "Putting typologies to work concept formation, measurement, and analytic rigor." *Political Research Quarterly*, 65(1): 217-232.
- Collier, David and James E. Mahon. 1993. "Conceptual 'Stretching' Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis," *American Political Science Review*, 87, 4: 845-855.
- Mair, Peter. 2009. "Getting Concepts Right." *APSA-CP Newsletter*, 20, 2: 1-4.
- Mazur, Amy G. and Gary Goertz. 2008. *Politics, Gender, and Concepts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Causation and explanation

- Elster, Jon. 1988. "A Plea for Mechanisms." In Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg (eds.), *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. "Process-Tracing and Historical Explanation." Ch. 10 in *Case Studies and Theoretical Development*. Boston: MIT Press.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. "Causality and Causal Inference." Ch. 3 in *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chandra, Kanchan. 2006. "Mechanisms v/s Outcomes." Essay for Symposium on David Laitin's Work, Newsletter of APSA Section on Qualitative Methods.
- Tilly, Charles. 1995. "To Explain Political Processes." *American Journal of Sociology*, 100, 6 (May): 1594-1610.
- Tilly, Charles. 2001. "Mechanisms in Political Processes." *Annual Review of Political Research*, 4: 21-41.
- Lieberman, Evan S. 2001. "Causal inference in historical institutional analysis." *Comparative Political Studies*, 34(9): 1011-35.
- Mahoney, James. 2003. "Strategies of Causal Assessment in Comparative Historical Analysis" Ch. 10 in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fenno, Richard F. 1986. "Observation, Context, and Sequence in the Study of Politics". *The American Political Science Review* 80(1): 3–15.
- Petersen, Roger D. 2006. *Resistance and Rebellions: Lessons from Eastern Europe*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, ch. 1, 2 and 6.
- Klemmensen, Robert, *et al.* 2012. "The Genetics of Political Participation, Civic Duty, and Political Efficacy across Cultures: Denmark and the United States." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 24(3): 409–427.

Comparative & case study methods

- Ragin, Charles C. 2004. "Turning the Tables: How Case-oriented Research Challenges Variable-oriented Research." Ch. 8 in Henry E. Brady and David Collier (eds.) *Rethinking Social Inquiry*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

- Ragin, Charles C. 1987. "The Distinctiveness of Comparative Social Science." *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Hall, Peter. 2006. "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Politics." In James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp 373-405).
- McIntyre, Alisdair. 1978. "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?" Ch. 22 in *Against the Self-Images of the Age*. University of Notre Dame Press.
- Various. 1998. Symposium: Comparative Method in the 1990s. *APSA-CP Newsletter*, 9-1 (Winter): 1-31.
- Collier, David. 1991. "The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change." Pp 7-31 in Dankwart A. Rustow and Kenneth Paul Erickson (eds.) *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives*. New York: Harper Collins.
- Mill, John Stuart. 1970. "Two Methods of Comparison." Pp 205-13 in Amitai Etzioni and F. Dubow (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives: Theories and Methods*. Boston: Little Brown.
- Snyder, Richard. 2001. "Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method." *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 36, 1 (Spring): 93-110.
- Gerring, John. 2004. "What is a Case Study and What is it Good for?" *American Political Science Review*, 98: 341-54.
- Geddes, Barbara. 2003. "How the Cases you Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias and Related Issues." Ch . 3 in *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Rueschemeyer, Dietrich. 2003. "Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?" Ch. 9 in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bennett, Andrew and Colin Elman. 2007. "Case Study Methods in International Relations Subfield." *Comparative Political Studies*, 40, 2 (February): 170-95.

Experimental methods

- Gerber, Alan and Donald Green. 2012. *Field Experiment: Design, Analysis, and Interpretation* (W.W. Norton & Company)
- McDermott, Rose. 2002. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science*, 5:31–61.
- Campbell, Donald T., and H. Laurence Ross. 1968. "The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time-Series Data in Quasi-Experimental Analysis." *Law & Society Review*, 3(1): 33-54.

Qualitative methods & techniques

- This is an overview of general readings and resources. A detailed handout of selected methods and associated readings to guide your presentation will be available on ATL

- [Qualitative & Multi-Method Research Newsletter](#) is a semi-annual publication of the organized QMMR section of APSA, and is devoted to the study, development, and practice of qualitative and multi-method research techniques.
- Hammersley, Martyn, and Paul Atkinson. 2007. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London, UK: Routledge, ch. 1 and 2. (ATL)
- Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. 2013. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research* (4th edition). London: Sage.
- Silverman, David. 2001. *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analyzing Talk, Text and Interaction* (2nd edition). London: Sage.
- Taylor, Steven J. and Robert Bogdan. 1984. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: The Search for Meanings*. New York: John Wiley & Sons
- Dick, Hobbs, and Richard, Wright, eds. 2006. *The SAGE Handbook of Fieldwork*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Martin, W. B., and George, G. (eds.). 2000. *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. London: SAGE Publications.

Research ethics and relevance

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. 2010. *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*, December. Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 9, and 10.
- CPSA. 2010. "[CPSA Response to December 2009 Draft of the 2nd edition of the TCPS.](#)"
- Van Noorden, Richard. 2015. "[Political Science's Problem with Research Ethics.](#)" *Nature*, June 29, doi:10.1038/nature.2015.17866.
- Konnikova, Maria. 2015. "[How a Gay-Marriage Study Went Wrong.](#)" *The New Yorker* (May 22).
- Woliver, L. R. 2002. "Ethical Dilemmas in Personal Interviewing," *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 35, 4: 677-8.
- Jacoby, Tami. 2006. "From the Trenches: Dilemmas of Feminist IR Fieldwork." Pp 153-73 in B. A. Ackerly, M. Stern and J. True (eds.), *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Flyvbjerg, Bent, Todd Landman, and Sanford Schram. 2012. *Real Social Science: Applied Phronesis*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Schram, Sanford F., and Brian Caterino (eds). 2006. *Making Political Science Matter*. New York: NYU Press.
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- Stark, Andrew. 2002. "Why Political Scientists Aren't Public Intellectuals." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, (September): 577-9.
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