

“I can calculate the motions of heavenly bodies, but not the madness of men.”
- *attributed to Isaac Newton (disputed)*

“Test everything; hold fast to what is good”
- *Saint Paul*

The Logic of Political Inquiry
PSC 691.001
Fall 2016
Tolley 204, 9:30-12:15, Mondays

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:30 – 12:30

Course Summary

This seminar introduces students to the principles of research design in mainstream political science. Its main goals are to help students understand the role of quantitative and qualitative methods in conducting political science research, to develop skills in using these methods, and to improve writing and presentational skills associated with these methods.

We begin with some questions in the philosophy of science as they apply to the social sciences. Then we review the purpose of theories, as well as different approaches to generating and evaluating them. Next, we discuss the purpose and form of hypotheses, focusing on how to derive hypotheses from theories; how to develop and implement hypothesis tests; how to treat competing explanations for observed phenomena of interest; how to measure theoretical constructs; and what to do (and not to do) with data. Finally, we explore how different research designs (including the construction of counterfactuals, comparative case studies, quasi-experiments, and experiments) may be used to help researchers make valid causal inferences. The course will introduce students to elementary methods of data analysis, but no knowledge of advanced statistics or econometrics is presupposed.

Readings

All required readings for the class are available at either the SU Bookstore, on library reserve, or in a shared G-drive folder (G:\max-filer\collab\PSC 691-macleary-F16). When possible I have made the reserve readings available electronically. Students are advised to obtain copies of the following books:

Achen, Christopher. 1982. *Interpreting and Using Regression*.
Brady, Henry, and David Collier, eds. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*. *2nd Edition*

Elster, Jon. 2007. *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. (Original 1st edition, 1989, titled *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*, is also fine).

Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A United Framework*. *2nd Edition*

Hempel, Carl. 1966. *Philosophy of Natural Science*.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*.

Lewis-Beck, Michael S. 1995. *Data Analysis: An Introduction*.

Shively, W. Phillips. 2010. *The Craft of Political Research*, *8th Ed* (9th should be ok)

Grading and Assignments

Each student will complete several assignments, which are designed to help students master the course material and to think about issues of research design in their own work. I will distribute detailed information on the assignments throughout the semester. In addition to the written assignments, students are expected to be prepared for class discussions each week and to *participate actively*. Course readings should be read *before* the class for which they are listed below. Active class participation is essential for this course to be a success. The final assignment will include a short in-class presentation during the final two weeks of the semester,

Final course grades will be calculated according to the following formula.

Class Participation	20%	
Assignment 1	10	(due 10/3)
Assignment 2	20	(due 10/24)
Assignment 3a	5	(due 10/31)
Assignment 3b	15	(due 11/7)
Assignment 4	30	(due 12/14)
TOTAL	100%	

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

There is no room for academic dishonesty in this class. I do submit formal reports to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences when I suspect academic dishonesty or plagiarism. I encourage all students to update their understanding of what counts as academic dishonesty by visiting this website: <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/>.

At the same time, I encourage cooperative work among students during the semester. You should engage in as much discussion with each other as possible, and you should feel free to trade drafts of papers for comments and criticism. You should NOT work collaboratively on Assignment 2.

Disability-Related Accommodations

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website, Office of Disability Services <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>

Religious Observances

SU's religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through MySlice/Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.

*** Please feel free to discuss any of the issues ***
mentioned on this page with me at any time.

Weekly Schedule

I. Approaching Political Inquiry

August 29

Topics: the scientific method; causal analysis (vs. descriptive, conceptual, interpretive, or critical social science); social science as puzzle solving and research as a craft

Read: Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science*, Ch. 2
Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Chs. 1-3
Brady & Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, Glossary
Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Glossary
(obviously, just flip through the glossaries and become familiar with them)

September 5 -- NO CLASS – LABOR DAY

September 12

Topics: Causality and constitution; prediction and explanation; falsifiability; rational choice

Read: Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science*, Chs. 5-6.
King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry*, Ch 3.
Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Chs. 8-9.
Wendt, Alexander. 1998. "On constitution and causation in international relations," *Review of International Studies* 24:5, pp.101-118.
Friedman, Milton. 1953. "The Methodology of Positive Economics" in *Essays in Positive Economics*, pp.3-43.
Becker, Gary S. 1976. "The Economic Approach to Human Behavior," in *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*, pp.3-14.
Hindmoor, Andrew. 2011. "'Major Combat Operations Have Ended'? Arguing about Rational Choice." *British Journal of Political Science* 41, pp.191-210.

II. Theories and Hypotheses

September 19

Topics: What are theories and how are they generated? Alternatives to rational choice

Read: Elster, *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Read chapters 1-2, then select a few more that interest you. Select from different sections of the book.
Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*, pp.3-18.
Verba, Brady, and Scholzman. 1995. *Voice and Equality*, ch. 9.
Sears, David O. 1993. "Symbolic Politics: A Socio-Psychological Theory" in Shanto Iyengar and William J. McGuire, eds., *Explorations in Political Psychology*, pp.113-149.
Adams, Merrill and Grofman. 2005. *A Unified Theory of Party Competition*, pp.1-4.

September 26

Topics: How to generate hypotheses; the characteristics of good hypotheses; auxiliary hypotheses; hypotheses and test implications

Read: Hempel, *The Philosophy of Natural Science*, Chs. 3-4

Singleton, Royce A. and Bruce Straits. 2005. *Approaches to Social Research*, 4th Ed., pp.43-69.

Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century*, pp.31-40.

Assignment 1 given

III. Testing Hypotheses: General Principles

October 3

Topics: logic of causal inference; logical fallacies; spuriousness; conditional probabilities; null hypotheses; alternative hypotheses; supporting vs “confirming” and disconfirmation

Read: Ragin, Charles C. 1987. *The Comparative Method*, Ch 2.

Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Chs. 6, 10

Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Chs. 10-11.

Assignment 1 due today

Assignment 4 given

October 10

Topics: Cases, case selection, identifying the universe of cases, selection bias; model specification in quantitative analysis

Read: King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry*, Chs. 1, 4, 6.

Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Ch. 7.

Achen, Christopher. 1982. *Interpreting and Using Regression*, pp.17-30.

Lewis-Beck, Michael S. 1995. *Data Analysis: an Introduction*, pp.1-40

Instructions for ICPSR dataset to be handed out

October 17

Topics: Measurement; types of empirical evidence; constructs and indicators; measurement validity; bias and inefficiency; collecting and coding data

Read: Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Chs. 4-5.

King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry*, Ch. 5.

Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Ch.7.

Fink, Arlene. 1995. *The Survey Handbook*, pp.41-53.

Adcock and Collier. 2001. “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research” *American Political Science Review* 95, pp. 529-546.

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Review the measurement strategy for 3 common measures of democracy (just skim):
<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world-2016/methodology>
<http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscr/p4manualv2015.pdf>
<https://www.v-dem.net/en/data/data-version-6-2/> (download codebook)
ICPSR dataset and codebook – this reading is not on reserve; instructions to be handed out in class.

Assignment 2 given

IV. Styles of Hypothesis Testing

October 24

Topics: General introduction; Experimentation; natural experiments

Read: Green, Donald P. and Alan S. Gerber. 2003. “Reclaiming the Experimental Tradition in Political Science,” in *Political Science: the State of the Discipline*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner, pp.805-832.

McDermott, Rose. 2002. “Experimental Methods in Political Science,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 5, pp.31-61.

Dunning, Thad. 2007. “Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments,” *Political Research Quarterly*.

Stokes, Susan. 2014. “A defense of observational research,” in *Field Experiments and their Critics*, ed. Teele.

[Read at least one of the following 3 examples]

Moehler, Devra. 2010. “Democracy, Governance, and Randomized Development Assistance,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628, pp.30-46.

Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare*, Ch 4 (pp.80-102).

Gadarian, Shana Kushner. 2010. “The Politics of Threat: How Terrorism News Shapes Foreign Policy Attitudes” *Journal of Politics*

[Read at least one of the following 2 examples]

Hyde, Susan D. 2007. “The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment” *World Politics* 60:1, pp. 37-63.

Dreyer Lassen, David. 2005. “The Effect of Information on Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Natural Experiment,” *American Journal of Political Science* 49:1, pp.103-118.

Assignment 2 due today

Assignment 3 given

October 31

Topics: Quasi-experiments; statistical analysis; large-N analysis; surveys

Read: Lewis-Beck, *Data Analysis*, pp.41-74

Achen, *Interpreting and Using Regression*, pp.46-51.

Fink, Arlene. 1995. *The Survey Handbook*, pp.1-39.

Hayes, Danny. 2005. "Candidate Qualities through a Partisan Lens: A Theory of Trait Ownership." *American Journal of Political Science* 49:4, pp.908-923.

Fish, M. Steven. 2002. "Islam and Authoritarianism." *World Politics* 55:1, pp.4-37.

Piazza, James. 2006. "Rooted in Poverty? Terrorism, Poor Economic Development, and Social Cleavages." in *Terrorism and Political Violence* 18, pp.159-177.

Review Gilens and Gadarian readings from last week.

Assignment 3a due today

November 7

Topics: Comparative Case Studies – small-N but N>1

Read: Mill, John Stuart. 1868. *A System of Logic*, pp.425-448.

Seawright and Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," in *Political Research Quarterly*, pp.294-308.

Sekhon, Jasjeet S. 2004. "Quality meets quantity: Case Studies, Conditional Probabilities and Counterfactuals" *Perspectives on Politics*, June: 281-293.

Fearon, James. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science" *World Politics* 43: 169-195.

Mahoney, James. 2000. "Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis," *Sociological Methods & Research* 28, 387-424.

Ekeirt, Grzegorz and Jan Kubik. 1998. "Contentious Politics in New Democracies: East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, 1989-93" *World Politics* 50, pp.547-581.

Assignment 3b due today

November 14

Topics: Single-Case Studies: N=1; process tracing; qualitative versus quantitative approaches

Read: Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, Ch. 1 (just pp.15-26), and Chs. 4 (by Bartels), 8 & 9 (by Collier/Brady/Seawright), and 10 (By Bennett, on process tracing).

Bennett and Checkel. 2014. *Process Tracing*, Ch. 1.

Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz . 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research" *Political Analysis*, 14, pp.227-49.

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Keck, Thomas. 2007. "Party, Policy, or Duty: Why Does the Supreme Court Invalidate Federal Statutes?" *American Political Science Review* 101:2, pp.321-338.

Elman, Colin. 2005. "Explanatory Typologies in Qualitative Studies of International Politics," *International Organization* 59:2, pp.293-326.

November 21

NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

V. Concluding Sessions

November 28

Topics: Grant proposals; visual presentation of evidence; student presentations

Read: Przeworski, Adam, and Frank Salomon. 1995. "On the Art of Writing Proposals," SSRC.

"Worth a Thousand Words" *The Economist* 385:8560 (December 22, 2007), pp.74-77.

Kastellec, Jonathan, and Eduardo Leoni. 2007. "Using Graphs Instead of Tables in Political Science" *Perspectives on Politics* 5(4), pp.755-771.

December 5

Topics: Data transparency, replicability, and the profession; student presentations

Read: Lupia and Elman, eds. 2014. "Openness in Political Science"

Symposium. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 47:1, pp.18-83.

Tom Bartlett, "Dartmouth and Stanford Apologize After a Political-Science Experiment Gone Wrong," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 29, 2014

Jesse Singal, "The Case of the Amazing Gay-Marriage Data: How a Graduate Student Reluctantly Uncovered a Huge Scientific Fraud," *New York Magazine*, May 29, 2015

Perestroika Glastnost. 2000. "On the irrelevance of APSA and APSR to the study of Political Science!"

Eakin, Emily. "Political Scientists Leading a Revolt, Not Studying One" *New York Times* Nov. 4, 2000.

December 14 (Wednesday; no class)

Assignment 4 final due by 5:00PM