

POP 88041 MSc Research Design A

Michaelmas Term 2022

Wednesdays 9-11am

Lloyd Institute LB08

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Office hours: Wednesdays 2-4 pm or by appointment

Description and Learning Objectives

This graduate seminar introduces students to the scientific inquiry of the political world. Students will learn how to identify compelling research questions and how to structure a study that contributes to an existing body of research. Moreover, we will discuss the problems of causal inference and multiple methodological approaches (statistical analysis, process tracing, case studies) to the empirical study of politics. The emphasis of the module will be on the development of novel, falsifiable, and empirically testable explanations of political phenomena.

At the end of the course, students are expected to gain a greater understanding of the research process, problems associated with conducting social research, become familiar with different research methods, learn how to formulate research questions, hypotheses, and selecting appropriate research design and data sources to test their hypotheses. Students will gain first-hand experience by writing article reviews and putting together a full research proposal, thus helping them to build the skills essential to conduct high quality research in the field of international relations and comparative politics.

Covid-19 Procedures

All participants must follow government and College Covid-19 guidelines. Currently, the College requires that students should not attend class if they test for or are suspected to have Covid-19. It is sufficient for students to let me know via email that they have Covid-19 or Covid-related symptoms. Please do not come to the classes if you have symptoms even if you test negative for Covid-19. You will be offered access to the learning resources and opportunities necessary to fulfil the learning outcomes (in the form of additional notes or handouts or recorded lectures where possible.) You will also be excused for the participation component for that week (see below.)

We will continue to follow any future Government or College guidelines concerning Covid-19 protocols. I will update you if there are any changes to the rules and procedures.

Office Hours and Contact with Students

I will respond to your e-mails within 48 hours on weekdays during the teaching weeks. If you send an email during the weekend, do not expect to receive an immediate reply.

In case you have any questions about course content, readings, or class discussions, you can raise them during office hours.

Please note that I will not be able to answer substantive questions concerning course content via e-mail. In case you have such questions, please set up an appointment for office hours or raise them

during class meetings. Please bear in mind that I will not cover the lecture material for you during office hours, as office hours are not intended to replace lectures.

Office hours for this term are going to be Wednesdays, 2-4pm (online or in-person). Please email at least 24 hours in advance to make up an appointment for office hours.

In case the office hours clash with your other modules or responsibilities, please let me know and we can try to make an appointment for a different day and time.

Module Requirements and Grading

10% Participation

20% Article review

10% Presentation and peer feedback

60% Research proposal

Participation. Student participation in class discussion and debate on the readings is a central element of the seminar. Students are expected to have done all required readings and to have acquired detailed knowledge and developed informed critiques of the readings *prior to the class meeting*. This means active engagement in class discussion: listening to your peers' views and constructively engaging with them, while also demonstrating a clear understanding of the weekly readings. Students will be evaluated on the quality of their input in class discussions and debate. Merely attending class or making uninformed comments are not sufficient for achieving a passing participation mark.

Seminar attendance is mandatory, and absence may result in a lowered overall module grade (except for the week/s in which the student cannot attend as a result of Covid-19 or the student has a medical certificate detailing the reason for absence.)

The best learning environment is the one in which all members feel respected while being productively challenged. The course is dedicated to fostering an inclusive atmosphere, in which all participants can contribute, explore, and challenge their own ideas as well as those of others. All interactions in class will be civil, respectful, and supportive of an inclusive learning environment for all students. These rules are reciprocal, i.e, students are also expected to interact with instructors in a civil and respectful manner. Students are encouraged to speak to the instructor about any concerns they may have about classroom participation and classroom dynamics. Every participant has an active responsibility to foster a climate of intellectual stimulation, openness, and respect for diverse perspectives, questions, personal backgrounds, abilities, and experiences.

Article review, due 14 November 5pm via Blackboard

For a scientific study to be published in a peer-reviewed journal, it must pass the scrutiny of anonymous expert reviewers. These reviewers are tasked with closely reading the paper, providing a thorough assessment of the quality and impact of the research, and offering to the journal editor a recommendation on publication (1. accept; 2. revise & resubmit; 3. reject).

Students will be required to submit a peer-review report of a recent political science working paper. You will be able to choose between a few alternatives. Detailed information and guidelines about writing effective peer review reports will be given in class discussions and posted on Blackboard.

The required length of the peer-review report is between 1,000 (minimum)-1,500 (maximum) words (including reference list, footnotes, and title page).

Late submissions will not be accepted unless the student has a documented medical excuse.

Presentations and Peer Feedback

Students will submit a draft of their final research proposals. These drafts should include a causal, explanatory research question, a discussion of the background/context of this question and the variation to be explained, proposed causal explanation along with the discussion of the relevant literature, and a discussion of the observable implications of the key causal variable.

The recommended length for the draft research proposal is 1,000 (minimum) -1,500 words, and the draft should be no longer than 1,750 words (including reference list, footnotes, and title page). A handout with guidelines for the draft research proposal will be provided.

Submission of draft proposals are due 21 November 5pm via Blackboard

After you submit your draft research proposal you will be required a peer evaluation of one of the proposals (to be randomly assigned to you via Blackboard). Recommended length is 300 (minimum) – 700 (maximum) words. You will be asked to provide detailed comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal along with additional suggestions that you may have for further developing the research project. Detailed information about the expectations for this assignment will be provided later.

Peer review of proposals are due 28 November 5pm via Blackboard

The final step of the process is a short presentation of your draft proposal in class. (We might consider a poster presentations for this session.)

Presentation of research proposal drafts in class on 30 November

Research Proposal, due 14 December 5pm via Blackboard

The main course objective is to submit a research proposal at the end of the term based on principles of empirical research design as discussed in the weekly seminars. The focus should be on emphasizing the issues of research design rather than the substantive importance of the research project. That is, the focus of the proposal is not on providing a lengthy literature review (although some knowledge of academic work in the area should be demonstrated), but rather on writing a research proposal that specifies a well-defined research question which is grounded in theory and methodologically feasible.

Although you may use this paper as a first attempt for your M.Sc. dissertation project, there is no need to do so, and you are not at all required to write your M.Sc. dissertation on the topic you choose to pursue for this particular module. However, you ***should not*** submit a proposal that overlaps with material submitted to another M.Sc. module.

Detailed information on the expectations and grading criteria for final research proposals will be posted. We will also do a lot of in-class exercises and discussions where you will get a chance to receive feedback on your proposal plans.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception. Academic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating on an exam or assignment, plagiarizing, representing someone else's work as your own, submitting work previously used without the informing and taking the consent of the instructor, fabricating of information or citations, etc. will not be tolerated. Plagiarism will lead to automatic failure and the matter will be reported to the

student's tutor and the dean of the faculty; severe penalties are likely to ensue, including possible exclusion from the exam or even the College, in accordance with College policy.

- Please read pp. 45-47 of the [College Calendar](#) for University's plagiarism policy.
- General guidelines for students on avoiding plagiarism could be found in the [Library's online tutorial](#).
- The Library also has a [web page](#) with extensive resources about avoiding plagiarism and best practices about citations and referencing.

Disability Policy

Students with a disability are encouraged to register with the [Disability Service](#) to seek supports where the disability could affect their ability to participate fully in all aspects of the course.

Mental Health

If you have any concerns or are experiencing personal and interpersonal difficulties, you can contact the Student Counselling Services and get some support and resources to help you: https://www.tcd.ie/Student_Counselling/

Required Readings

The main texts for this module are:

- Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. [**Geddes**]
- Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Second Edition. [**Gerring**]
- Johnson, Janet Buttolph, Reynolds, H.T., and Mycoff, Jason D. 2015. *Political Science Research Methods*. CQ Press. [**JRM**]
- King, G., Keohane, R.O., Verba, S. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press. [**KKV**]

We will also read a selection of articles and chapters as detailed in the module schedule below. Most readings and other relevant materials will be posted on Blackboard.

For those with a limited social science methods background, it might be helpful to start by reading chapters from an introductory text, such as **JRM** or

Manheim, J.B., Rich, R.C., Willnat, L., Brians, C.L. and Babb, J., 2012. *Empirical political analysis*. Pearson Higher Ed.

These textbooks are available from the Library.

Syllabus Modification Rights

I reserve the right to reasonably alter the elements of the syllabus at any time. More often than not this will mean adjusting the reading list to keep pace with the course schedule, although I may add reading assignments as well.

Module and Reading Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction. The scientific study of politics

Gerring, pp. 1-11

KKV, Chapter 1

Optional:

JRM, Chapter 2

Yanow, D., 2003. "Interpretive empirical political science: What makes this not a subfield of qualitative methods." *Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), pp.9-13.

Popper, K., (1963). "[Science as falsification.](#)" In: *Conjectures and Refutation*, 33-39.

Feynman, Richard (1964) "On the Scientific Method." [9:59], available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYPapE-3FRw>

Week 2 – Research questions, theories and hypotheses

Geddes, Chapter 2.

Firebaugh, G., 2008. "[The first rule: There should be the possibility of surprise in social research.](#)" In: *Seven Rules for Social Research*. Princeton University Press, Chapter 1.

KKV, pp. 100-114

Hoffman, Michael and Amaney Jamal. 2014. "Religion in the Arab Spring: Between two competing claims." *The Journal of Politics*, 76(3): 593-606.

Optional:

JRM, Chapters 3-4

Zinnes, Dina A. 1980. Three Puzzles in Search of a Researcher. *International Studies Quarterly* 24(3): 315-42

Week 3 – Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement

Gerring, pp. 112-140

JRM, Chapter 5

Paxton, Pamela. 2000. "Women's suffrage in the measurement of democracy: Problems of operationalization." *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 35(3): 92-111.

Hooghe, Marc, and Sofie Marien. 2013. A Comparative Analysis of the Relation between Political Trust and Forms of Political Participation in Europe. *European Societies* 15(1): 131-152.

Optional:

Adcock, R. and Collier, D. 2001. "Measurement validity: A shared standard for qualitative and quantitative research." *American Political Science Association*, 95(3): 529-546.

Munck, Gerardo L. and Jay Verkuilen. 2002. Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices. *Comparative Political Studies* 35(1): 5-34.

Lasswell, Harold. 1946. "Despotism." [9:56] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tIwXdOvEPXE>

Week 4 – Causal inference and natural experiments

Ionica Smeets. 2012. “The danger of mixing up causality and correlation.” [5:56] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8B271L3NtAw>

KKV, pp. 75-91.

Masten, Matt. 2015. “Counterfactuals.” [4:52], available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9j_HWkrSxzI&t=64s

Bhavnani, Rikhil R. 2009. “Do electoral quotas work after they are withdrawn? Evidence from a natural experiment in India. *American Political Science Review*, 103(1): 23-35.

Galiani, Sebastian, and Ernesto Schargrodsky. 2004. “Effects of land titling on child health.” *Economics and Human Biology* 2(3): 353-372.

Optional:

JRM, Chapter 6

Gerring, Chapters 8, 10

Stephen Dubner and Steven Levitt. 2011. “Correlation vs. Causality” [3:22] Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t8ADnyw5ou8>

Erikson, Robert, and Laura Stoker. 2011. “Caught in the draft: The effects of Vietnam draft lottery status on political attitudes.” *American Political Science Review*, 105(2): 221-237.

Sekhon, Jasjeet S. and Rocio Titiunik. 2012. “When natural experiments are neither natural nor experiments.” *American Political Science Review*, 106(1): 35-57.

Week 5 – Lab and field experiments

McDermott, R., 2002. “Experimental methods in political science.” *Annual Review of Political Science*, 5(1): 31-61.

Bauer, Nichole M. 2017. “The effects of counter-stereotypic gender strategies on candidate evaluations.” *Political Psychology*, 38(2): 279-295.

Adida, Claire L., Laitin, David D., and Valfort, Marie-Anne. 2010. “Identifying barriers to Muslim integration in France.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 107(52): 22384-22390.

Bond, Robert M., Christopher J. Fariss, Jason J. Jones, Adam DI Kramer, Cameron Marlow, Jaime E. Settle, and James H. Fowler. 2012. “A 61-million-person experiment in social influence and political mobilization.” *Nature*, 489(7415): 295-298.

Optional:

McDermott, Rose. 2011. “New directions for experimental work in international relations.” *International Studies Quarterly*, 55(2): 503-20.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., Brad L. LeVeck, David G. Victor and James H. Fowler. 2014. “Decision maker preferences for international legal cooperation.” *International Organization*, 68: 845-876.

Imai, Kosuke, Luke Keele, Dustin Tingley, and Teppei Yamamoto. 2011. Unpacking the Box of Causality: Learning about Causal Mechanisms from Experimental and Observational Studies. *American Political Science Review* 105(4): 765-789.

Week 6 - Non-experimental methods: Small-n research designs

Collier, David. 1993. The Comparative Method. In Ada W. Finifter (ed.), *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*, Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, pp. 105-119.

Geddes, Chapters 3-4

KKV, Chapter 4

Blaydes, Lisa. 2014. "How does Islamist local governance affect the lives of women?" *Governance*, 27(3): 489-509.

Samii, Cyrus, 2013. "Perils or promise of ethnic integration? Evidence from a hard case in Burundi." *American Political Science Review*, 107(3): 558-573.

Optional:

Seawright, Jason, and Gerring, John. 2008. "Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options." *Political Research Quarterly*, 61(2): 294-308.

Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2004. The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research. *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 653-69.

Week 7 – Reading week, no class.

Week 8 – Causal mechanisms and process tracing

Hall, Peter A. (2008). Systematic process analysis: when and how to use it. *European Political Science*, 7(3), 304-317.

Ricks, Jacob and Amy Liu. 2018. "Process-Tracing Research Designs: A Practical Guide." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(4): 842-846.

Miguel, E., 2004. "Tribe or nation? Nation building and public goods in Kenya versus Tanzania." *World Politics*, 56(03): 328-362.

Owen, John M., 1994. "How liberalism produces democratic peace." *International Security*, 19(2): 87-125.

Optional:

Collier, David, 2011. "Understanding process tracing." *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 44(04): 823-830.

Mahoney, James. 2015. "Process tracing and historical explanation." *Security Studies*, 24(2): 200-218.

Littoz-Monnet, Annabelle. 2017. "Expert knowledge as a strategic resource: International bureaucrats and the shaping of bioethical standards." *International Studies Quarterly* 61(3): 584-595.

Week 9 - Non-Experimental Methods: Large-n and Mixed Method Research Designs

Coppedge, Michael. 2007. Theory Building and Hypothesis Testing: Large- vs. Small-N Research on Democratization. In Gerardo Munck (ed.), *Regimes and Democracy in Latin America: Theories and Methods*, Oxford University Press, pp. 163-77.

Tarrow, Sidney. 1995. Bridging the quantitative-qualitative divide in political science. *American Political Science Review*, 89(2): 471-474.

Tezcür, Gunes Murat. 2016. "Ordinary people, extraordinary risks: Participation in an ethnic rebellion." *American Political Science Review*, 110(2): 247-264.

Carpenter, Daniel and Moore, Colin D., 2014. "When canvassers became activists: Antislavery petitioning and the political mobilization of American women." *American Political Science Review*, 108(3): 479-498.

Optional

Reese, Michael J., Keven G. Ruby, and Robert A. Pape. 2017. "Days of action or restraint? How the Islamic calendar impacts violence." *American Political Science Review*, 111(3): 439-459.

Article reviews due on 14 November 5pm via Blackboard

Week 10 – Data collection: Surveys and interviews

JRM Chapters 8, 10

Nathan P. Kalmoe & Lilliana Mason. 2022. *Radical American Partisanship: Mapping Violent Hostility, Its Causes, & Consequences for Democracy*. University of Chicago Press, Chapter 1.

Westwood, Sean J., Justin Grimmer, Matthew Tyler, and Clayton Nall. 2021. "American support for political violence is low." *PNAS*. Available at: <https://reason.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/low-support-for-political-violence.pdf>

Dornschneider, Stephanie. 2021. Exit, Voice, Loyalty... or Deliberate Obstruction? Non-Collective Everyday Resistance under Oppression. *Perspectives on Politics*, pp.1-16.

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2008. "The power of local ties: Popular participation in the Rwandan genocide." *Security Studies*, 17(3): 568-597.

Optional

Zaller, John and Stanley Feldman. 1992. A Simple Theory of the Survey Response: Answering Questions versus Revealing Preferences. *American Journal of Political Science* 36(3): 579-616.

Bakker, Ryan, Catherine De Vries, Erica Edwards, Liesbet Hooghe, Seth Jolly, Gary Marks, Jonathan Polk, Jan Rovny, Marco Steenbergen, and Milada Anna Vachudova. 2015. "Measuring party positions in Europe: The Chapel Hill expert survey trend file, 1999–2010." *Party Politics* 21(1): 143-152.

Berry, Jeffrey M. 2002. Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing. *Political Science and Politics* 35(4): 679-682.

Tansey, Oisín. 2007. "Process tracing and elite interviewing: a case for non-probability sampling." *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 40(4): 765 - 772

Draft research proposals are due 21 November 5pm via Blackboard

Week 11 – Data collection: Content Analysis and Text as Data

JRM, Chapter 9

Benoit, Ken. 2019. "Text as data: An overview." *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*. Available at: <https://kenbenoit.net/pdfs/28%20Benoit%20Text%20as%20Data%20draft%202.pdf>

Benoit, Kenneth and Michael Laver. 2007. Estimating Party Policy Positions: Comparing Expert Surveys and Hand-coded Content Analysis. *Electoral Studies* 26(1): 90-107.

Optional

Grimmer Justin and Brandon M. Stewart. 2013. Text as Data: The Promise and Pitfalls of Automatic Content Analysis Methods for Political Texts. *Political Analysis* 21(3):267-297.

Rohrer, Samuel R. 2014. "What makes a prime minister great?: A leadership trait analysis of the effectiveness of British prime ministers from 1902 to 2004." *Research & Politics* 1(3): 2053168014558970.

Hanna, Alexander. 2013. Computer-Aided Content Analysis of Digitally Enabled Movements. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 18(4):367-388.

Schrodt, Philip and Jay Yonamine. 2012. Automated Coding of Very Large Scale Political Event Data. New Directions in Text as Data Workshop, Harvard, October. Available at http://eventdata.parusanalytics.com/papers.dir/Schrodt_Yonamine_NewDirectionsInText.pdf

Peer review of proposals are due 28 November 5pm via Blackboard

Week 12: Presentation of research proposal drafts in class

Research proposals are due 14 December 5pm via Blackboard