

POP88041 MSc Research Design A

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Module description

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.

Learning Outcomes

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.

Key readings

- Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Second Edition.
- Johnson, Janet Buttolph, Reynolds, H.T., and Mycoff, Jason D. 2015. *Political Science Research Methods*. CQ Press.
- King, G., Keohane, R.O., Verba, S. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press.

Assessment

Participation 10%

Research Question 5%

Literature review 10%

Empirical strategy 15%

Final proposal 60%