

**POLS 2000:  
Strategies of Inquiry and Research Design  
Spring 2019  
Tuesdays, 1:30pm-3:50pm**

Professor Rebecca Weitz-Shapiro

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Office: Watson 323

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11am-12pm and by appointment

**Learning goals and objectives**

This course provides an overview for graduate students to the methods that political scientists use to generate and answer questions about the political world. The course has two goals: to make you a better *consumer* of knowledge, and to help you make the transition from a consumer to a *producer* of knowledge. Much of graduate training is oriented towards teaching students how to identify flaws in the work of others. Though criticism is an important part of the scholarly process, excelling at this alone will not make you a good scholar. By the end of the class, you will have made substantial progress in developing skills necessary for carrying out research and applying them to a project that you can further develop over the rest of your graduate career.

**Course Materials**

You should purchase the following book:

-Dunning, Thad. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Optional:

-Angrist, J. and J-S. Pischke. 2015. *Mastering 'Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect* Princeton U Press.

-Brady, Henry E., and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

-King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. [Full text online]

All readings are available via the links below, a shared Google Drive, the Brown library page, and/or on reserve in physical form at the library or via OCRA (password: *reserves*).

**Expectations and Assignments**

1. Each student is expected to complete all the required reading each week and to contribute to the collective discussion. Because this is a reading and discussion course, active student participation is essential. Each week, you should prepare 2-4 questions or brief comments about the readings and post these on the relevant "Discussion" page on Canvas. Questions/comments should be posted by 8am on Tuesday mornings. These should be less than 200 words total (perhaps much less!) You can skip 1 week of your choosing during the semester.

You should be prepared to discuss each required reading on the syllabus for each week. Additional readings are optional, and I do not expect you will read them for this class. These are often excellent papers/monographs, but there is simply not enough time in each week to read everything.

You may use your laptop in class to follow the readings, take notes, and check quick facts relevant to the discussion. If your use of your computer becomes disruptive or you use it to check email, social media, etc., I will ask you to leave the classroom.

2. Each student will be assigned 1 week (in weeks 2-10) to produce a brief (up to 2 page single spaced) summary of the readings. These should be distributed (posted to the shared Google Drive) by 8am on Tuesdays. Depending on final enrollment, some of you may complete this assignment in pairs.

3. The major assignment in this class is to create a draft of a funding, fellowship, or workshop application that requires a detailed description of a planned research project. You'll complete 1 (ungraded) assignment to identify such venues (Assignment 0). The target of your application should be approved by the professor by March 19<sup>th</sup>. Assignment 1 serves as an initial think piece to help you hone your research topic. Assignment 2 is a complete rough draft of the proposal. The final proposal is due Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> to allow you time to incorporate comments and feedback.

### **Grading**

Class Participation (including 1 week summary): 25%

Assignment 1 (initial research topic): 15%

Assignment 2 (rough draft + comments for classmates): 20%

Final paper: 40%

### **Academic Honesty**

Learning proper citation and attribution are crucial parts of becoming a scholar. You are expected to follow Brown's academic code. According to the code, "Students who submit academic work that uses others' ideas, words, research, or images without proper attribution and documentation are in violation of the academic code. Infringement of the academic code entails penalties ranging from reprimand to suspension, dismissal, or expulsion from the University."

([http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Dean\\_of\\_the\\_College/curriculum/academic\\_code.php](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Dean_of_the_College/curriculum/academic_code.php) )

### **Students with Disabilities**

Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me as soon as possible if you have a disability or other condition that might require accommodations. You may speak with me after class or during office hours. For more information, contact Student and Employee Accessibility Services at 401-863-9588 or [SEAS@brown.edu](mailto:SEAS@brown.edu).

**Course time allocation:** Over 12 weeks, students will spend 2.5 hours per week in class (30 hours total). Required reading for the seminar meetings is expected to take approximately 10 hours per week (120 hours). In addition, writing weekly questions, completing the assignments, and writing the final paper is estimated at a total of approximately 30 hours over the course of the term.

### **Class Schedule**

#### **Week 1: Introduction; What's the point of political science?**

**(Jan 29)**

-King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba *Designing Social Inquiry*. Chapter 1, "The Science in Social Science."

-Brady, Collier, and Seawright, *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2. (pp1-64)

-Shapiro, Ian. "Problems, Methods and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What's Wrong with Political Science and What to Do About It." *Political Theory* 30, No. 4 (2002): 588-611.

-Gerring, John. "Mere Description." *British Journal of Political Science* 42, No. 4 (2012), 721-746.

*Optional:*

-Almond, Gabriel A. and Stephen J. Genco. "Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of Politics." *World Politics*, 29, No. 4 (1977): 489-522.

- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier. "Political Science Methodology." *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. Chapter 1.
- Hardin, Russell. "Normative Methodology." *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

**ASSIGNMENT 0:** Identify two to four possible fellowship, funding, or workshop opportunities for which you could apply at some point between now and your 3<sup>rd</sup> year. Post them with links to the appropriate "Discussion" page in Canvas. Identify sources that require a detailed description of a proposed research project or agenda. Some ideas: Ford and Mellon Foundations, Watson grants (from area studies and the program in development), Brown University global mobility fellowship, SSRC, NSF dissertation improvement grant. This is ungraded—the goal is twofold: first, to generate a list of funding sources all of you can use, and second, to identify a target application for your final assignment for this course.

## **Week 2: How to ask good questions, generate hypotheses, and communicate them to others (Feb 5)**

- Becker, Howard S. *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007. Chapter 1. *Drive, also full-text online.*
- Przeworski, Adam, and Frank Salomon. *On the Art of Writing Proposals: Some Candid Suggestions for Applicants to Social Science Research Council*. Brooklyn: Social Science Research Council, 1995. *Drive*
- Geddes, Barbara. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003. Chapter 2 and Chapter 5. *Full text online.*
- 4 sample dissertation prospectuses (all on Google Drive)
- Davis, Don. 2001. "PhD Research. Where do I start?" Manuscript. *Drive.*

*Optional (including lots of good resources on writing!)*

- Levi, Margaret. "An Analytic Narrative Approach to Puzzles and Problems." In *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, edited by Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, 201-226. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (2013). Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk. In *Handbook of the fundamentals of financial decision making: Part I* (pp. 99-127).
- Farrell, Henry. "Good Writing in Political Science." *George Washington University*, 2010. [http://www.henryfarrell.net/pol\\_sci\\_essay.html](http://www.henryfarrell.net/pol_sci_essay.html). *This is directed at undergraduates, but it has lots of good reminders*
- Raúl Pacheco's website on academic writing: <http://www.raulpacheco.org/resources/academic-writing-acwri/>
- Cohen, David. "Surviving the PhD: Hints for Navigating the Sometimes Stormy Seas of Graduate Education in Political Science." *Political Science and Politics* 35 No. 4, (2002): 585-588.
- Dixit, Avinash. "My System of Work (Not!)" In *Passion and Craft: How Economists Work*, edited by Michael Szenberg. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998. <http://www.princeton.edu/~dixitak/home/dixitwrk.pdf>

## **Week 3: Conceptualization and measurement; Assignment 1 due (Feb 12)**

- Sartori, Giovanni. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *The American Political Science Review* 64, No. 4 (1970): 1033-1053.
- Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *The American Political Science Review* 95, No. 3 (2001): 529-546.
- Gerring, John. "What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences." *Polity* 31, No. 3 (1999): 357-393.
- + Re-read Gerring's "Mere Description" from week 1

-Bussell, Jennifer. 2015. "Typologies of Corruption: A Pragmatic Approach," in S. Rose-Ackerman and P. Lagunes, Eds., *Greed, Corruption, and the Modern State: Essays in Political Economy*, Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar. *Drive*

*Optional:*

-Collier, David, and Steven Levitsky. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49, No. 3 (1997): 430-451.

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

-Cheibub, Jose, Jennifer Gandhi, and James Vreeland. "Democracy and Dictatorship Revisited." *Public Choice* 43, No. 2 (2010): 67-101.

**Assignment 1:** Write a 2-3 page, single-spaced (1000-1500 word) summary of a possible paper or dissertation topic. Please highlight: the question you are asking, its significance (scholarly, real world, or normative), the outcome you are trying to explain, and possible explanatory variables (for empirical work) and/or the nature of the argument you might develop (for political theory). Clarify key concepts you intend to use.

**No class Feb 19 due to the University holiday**

**Week 4: Introduction to Causality and the experimental method  
(Feb 26)**

-Dunning. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences*, Chapters 1 and 5.

-Angrist and Pischke. 2015. *Mastering 'Metrics*. Introduction and Chapter 1. *Drive*.

-Druckman, James, Donald Green, James Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia. "The Growth and Development of Experimental Research in Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 100, No. 4 (2006): 627-635.

-Gaines, Brian J., James H. Kuklinski, and Paul J. Quirk. "The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined." *Political Analysis* 15, No 1. (2007): 1-20.

*Optional and for future reference:*

-Barabas, Jason, and Jennifer Jerit. "Are Survey Experiments Externally Valid?" *American Political Science Review* 104, No. 2 (2010): 226-242. [http://jjerit.com/images/BarabasJerit\\_APSR\\_2010.pdf](http://jjerit.com/images/BarabasJerit_APSR_2010.pdf)

-McDermott, Rose. "Experimental Methods in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002): 31-61. <http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/people/knicolaidis/mcdermott.pdf>

-Green, D. and Gerber, A. 2002. "Reclaiming the Experimental Tradition in Political Science." In *Political Science: State of the Discipline (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*, edited by H. Milner & I. Katznelson, 805-832. New York: W. W. Norton, 2002.

**Week 5: Natural and quasi-experiments  
(March 5)**

-Dunning. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences*, Chapters 2, 3, and 4

-Caughey, Devin, and Jasjeet S. Sekhon. "Elections and the Regression Discontinuity Design: Lessons from Close U.S. House Races, 1942–2008." *Political Analysis*, (2011): 385-408.

-Eggers, Andrew C., Anthony Fowler, Jens Hainmueller, Andrew B. Hall, James M. Snyder Jr. "On the Validity of the Regression Discontinuity Design for Estimating Electoral Effects: New Evidence from Over 40,000 Close Races." *American Journal of Political Science* 59, No. 1 (2015): 259-274.

*Optional — some additional examples:*

-Posner, Daniel N. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98, No. 4 (2004): 529-545.

<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3vm7m0xm>

-Fujiwara, Thomas. "A Regression Discontinuity Test of Strategic Voting and Duverger's Law." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science* 6 (2011): 197-233.

### **Week 6: Methodology of political theory**

**(March 12)**

*Juliet Hooker and Alex Gourevitch will join this week's class.*

Readings TBA

### **Week 7: Cases and the Comparative Method**

**(March 19)**

\*\*Please ensure that you have approval from the professor for the outlet for your final paper by today\*\*

-Gerring, John. "What Is a Case Study and What Is It Good for?" *American Political Science Review* 98, No. 2 (2004): 341-354.

-Geddes, Barbara. "How the Cases You Choose Affects the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2, No.1 (1990): 131-150.

-Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options" *Political Research Quarterly* 61, No. 2 (2008): 294-308.

-Slater, Dan and Daniel Ziblatt. 2013. "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(10): 1301-1327. (Read first 14 pages; skim the rest.)

*Optional:*

-Przeworski, Adam, and Henry Teune. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley, 1970.

-Lijphart, Arend. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *The American Political Science Review* 65, No. 3 (1971): 682-693. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1955513>

-Fearon, James D. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43, No. 2 (1991): 169-195. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2010470>

-Collier, David, ed. "Symposium: Case Selection, Case Studies, and Causal Inference." *Newsletter of the APSA Organized Section for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 6, No. 2. (2008): 2-16.  
<http://polisci.berkeley.edu/people/faculty/CollierD/Symposium%20-%20Case%20Selection.pdf>

**No class March 26; Spring Break**

### **Week 8: Causality and the statistical method**

**(April 2)**

-Dunning. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences*, Chapter 9.

-Achen, Christopher. "Let's Put Garbage-Can Regressions and Garbage-Can Probits Where They Belong." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22, No. 4 (2005): 327-339.

-Gerber, Alan S., Donald P. Green, and Edward H. Kaplan, "The Illusion of Learning from Observational Research," in *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*, edited by Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Massoud. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

-P. Aronow and C. Samii, "Does Regression Produce Representative Estimates of Causal Effects?" *American Journal of Political Science*, 2016, pp. 250-267

*Optional:*

-King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, Chapter 4.

-King, Gary, Michael Tomz and Jason Wittenberg. "Making the Most of Statistical Analyses: Improving Interpretation and Presentation." *American Journal of Political Science* 44, No. 2 (2000): 347-361.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2669316>

### **Week 9: Process Tracing; Archival and Historical Methods**

**(April 9)**

- Lustick, Ian S. "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review* 90, No. 3 (1996).
- Thies, Cameron G. "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations." *International Studies Perspectives* 3, (2002): 351-72.
- Tannenwald, Nina. "Process Tracing and Security Studies." *Security Studies* 24, No. 2 (2015): 219-227.
- Zaks, Sherry. 2017. "Relationships Among Rivals (RAR): A Framework for Analyzing Contending Hypotheses in Process Tracing." *Political Analysis* 25, pp 344-362.

#### *Optional*

- Evangelista, Matthew. "Explaining the Cold War's End. Process Tracing all the Way Down?" In *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, edited by Andrew Bennett, and Jeffrey T. Checkel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. *This whole book is a good resource.*
- Trachtenberg, Marc. *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.
- Collier, David. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing," *PS*, October.

### **Week 10: Asking questions: interview-based data; qualitative data transparency**

#### **(April 16)**

*Veronica Herrera, from UConn, will join the class today.*

- Herzog, Lisa, and Bernardo Zacka. "Fieldwork in Political Theory: Five Arguments for an Ethnographic Sensibility." *British Journal of Political Science*, Forthcoming.
- Lynch, Julia. 2013. "Aligning Sampling Strategies with Analytic Goals" [Chapter 1] in Mosely, Layna, ed., *Interview Research in Political Science*. Cornell. *Full text online*
- Bleich, Erik, and Robert Pekkanen. 2013. "How to Report Interview Data" [Chapter 4] in Mosley, Layna, ed. *Interview Research in Political Science*. Cornell. *Full text online*
- Herrera, Veronica. 2017. "From Parochial to Principled: Principled-Issue Networks and the Construction of Environmental Rights in Latin American Cities" Presented at the American Political Science Association Conference. *Will be circulated*
- Gaikwad, Nikhar, Veronica Herrera, and Rob Mickey. 2019. "Qualitative Transparency Deliberations Working Group Report on Text-Based Sources" Perspective on Politics Symposium in progress *Will be circulated*

#### *Optional:*

- Schaffer, Nora Cate and Stanley Presser. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29, (2003): 65-88.
- Fowler, Floyd J. "Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation." *Applied Social Research Methods Series* 38, (1995): 1-103.
- Krosnick, Jon A. "Survey Research." *Annual Review of Psychology* 50, No. 1 (1999): 537-567.
- Wedeen, Lisa. "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13, No. 1 (June 2010).
- Hochschild, Jennifer L. *What's Fair?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981. Pp. 1-26; 292-308.
- Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. MacLean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science*; Cambridge.

### **Week 11: Work Exchange; Assignment 2 due**

#### **(April 23)**

In class this week, you will exchange rough drafts of your final papers within small (3-4 person) groups of your classmates. (Groups will be assigned beforehand.) Please distribute your draft to your group members and the professor by 5pm Sunday evening. Each student should read the other papers in his or her group and write 2-3 paragraphs (~250 words) of comments on each paper. These comments should be shared with your other group members and with the professor by 9am Tuesday morning.



**Assignment 2:** Rough draft of final paper due 5pm Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup>; comments on group member papers due by 9am Tuesday, April 23

**Week 12: The ethics of political science research and publishing; wrap-up  
(April 30)**

-Read, Ben, Lauren Morris MacLean, and Melani Cammett. "Symposium: Field Research: How Rich? How Thick? How Participatory?" *Qualitative Methods* 4, No. 2 (2006): 9-18.

-Humphreys, Macartan. 2011. "Ethical Challenges of Embedded Experimentation." Comparative Democratization Section Newsletter, 9(3). *Drive*

-Leeper, Thomas. "In Defense of the Montana Experiment." October 2014.

-Brooks, Sarah M. 2013. "The Ethical Treatment of Human Subjects and the Institutional Review Board Process," in Mosley, Layna, ed. *Interview Research in Political Science*.

-*An ongoing and important debate on data and research transparency in political science:*

\*DA-RT initiative: <http://www.dartstatement.org/>

\*Qualitative Transparency Deliberations (QTD): <https://www.qualtd.net/>

*Optional:*

-Statement on Ethics of the American Anthropological association:

<http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>

-Desposato, Scott. "Ethical Challenges and Some Solutions for Field Experiments." November 2014.

**Final assignment: Due Monday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m.**