

**Advanced Research Design**  
**PS 9502a**  
**University of Western Ontario**  
**Fall 2020**



**Class Information:**

Tuesday 9:00am-11:30am  
SSC 4103 or SSC 7251

**Note: you will be invited by email to join a MTeams site to make file sharing and communication easier**

**Instructor Information:**

Dr. Laura Stephenson  
Office: SSC 4228  
Office Hours: Tuesday 1-3pm or by appointment

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**Course Description:**

The objective of this course is to provide PhD students with an understanding of the fundamental principles that underlie research in political science. By the end of the course students will be able to recognize the value of different approaches, and will be able to critically evaluate the theories, empirical strategies, causal claims and validity of other research. They will also have an appreciation for the wide variety of political science research that exists and the many ways to approach a research question. By the end of the course each student will be a better reader of research and will also have a better understanding of how to conduct an original research project for their dissertation.

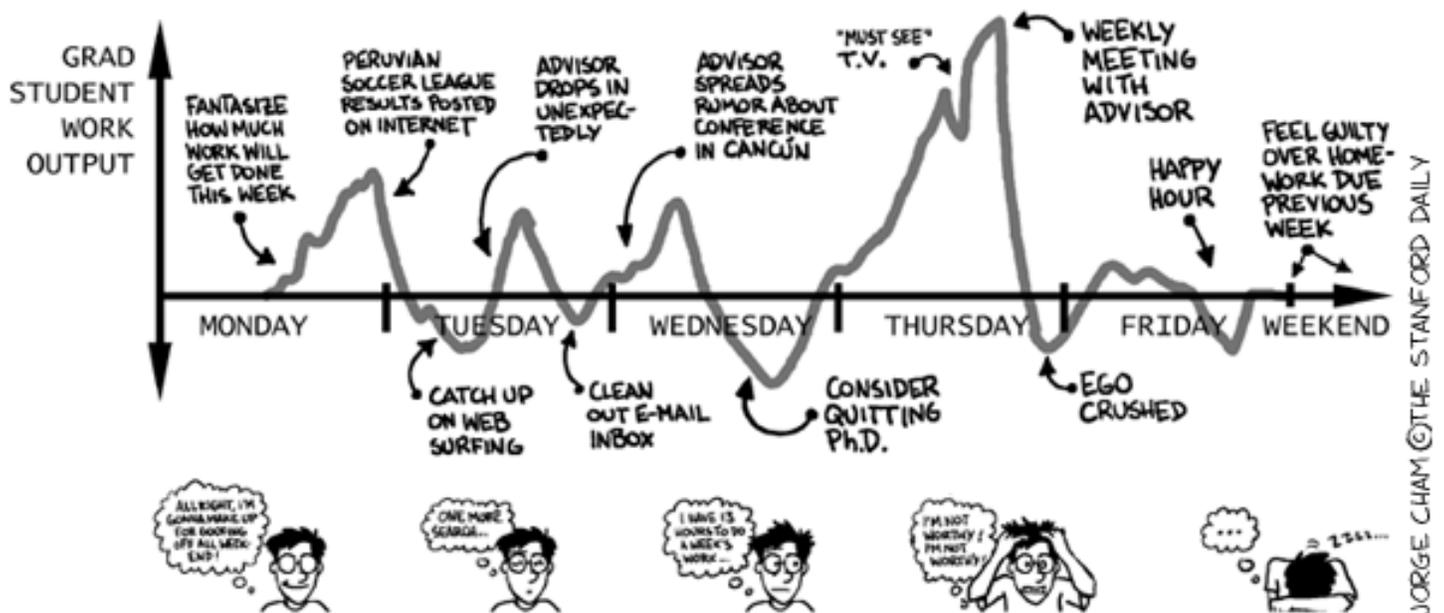
**Learning Objectives:**

- This course will help you to understand how the scientific method can be applied to political science and also why many political scientists object to that characterization.
- By the end of this course, you should be able to identify and assess the positive and negative qualities of major approaches to the study of political problems.
- Through the topics covered, you will gain an appreciation of major issues related to research design.
- You will be able to navigate major issues of research design with your own research questions.
- You will gain experience critically analyzing readings and preparing materials to teach a topic.

## Health and Well-being

Grad school is hard. Period. It can be a time of amazing experiences and mind-blowing insights but also soul-crushing imposter syndrome and an overwhelming workload. Plus, we're in a pandemic. So my goal for this course is to be your guide, coach, instructor and cheerleader. There is a lot to learn – there is always a lot to learn, no matter what stage you are at – and it will take time. We need to be patient with ourselves and others during the process. A great tool is keeping the lines of communication open. I am available for chats on any topic, about the course or grad school or life. Just email me. And don't be afraid to ask for help or accommodation. If you're going through something that is compromising your focus let me know and we can come up with a reasonable plan forward.

Most importantly – I will be following all the health and safety regulations on campus, as well as those that make me feel personally comfortable. I have been vaccinated, as has my family, and I am cautious in public and wear a mask. I expect/hope that you will do the same. My goal is to weather this pandemic safely and still move forward with your education. I am open to any creative solution to make this happen. I am happy to meet with you (virtually if necessary or preferred) any time.



## Course Materials:

Required Books [both are available electronically, so only purchase if you really want a hard copy]

- John Gerring, 2012, *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*, (New York: Cambridge University Press). [referred to as Gerring below] ISBN: 9780521132770
- Gary King, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba, 1994, *Designing Social Inquiry*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press). [referred to as KKV below] ISBN: 9780691034713

Readings not included in these books will be available electronically, either on the course OWL site or through one of the library's databases. A search for the journal title on the main library site will usually turn up the electronic site.

## Assignments:

Participation – 10%

Class Preparation – 15%

Methodology Comment Papers – 15%

Book Review – 20%

1/ Overview – 10%

2/ Critique of Methodology – 10%

Research Proposal – 40%

1/ Outline – 5%

2/ Peer Critique – 5%

3/ Proposal – 30%

### *Participation (10%)*

All students are expected to be active participants in the class. This means being prepared by finishing the assigned readings, **preparing two discussion questions for the week (to be posted online through MSTeams by 8am before class)**, and engaging in discussion. The course is planned to take place in-person, but we will pivot to Zoom as necessary. If you are ill or caring for someone such that you cannot make it to campus for class, please let me know. We can accommodate your participation electronically. *Please do not stress about this.*

As this course is also an introduction to the discipline, I expect that you will take part in the life of the department. This means attending departmental speaker series, job talks, etc. These are advertised by email, and I will mention them in class as well. Observing other people's work is the best way to expose yourself to political science and learn more about what to do (and what not to do).

### *Class Preparation (15%)*

This course has been designed to engage students directly in the material that will be covered. In several of the weeks (October 19-November 23) a student will be responsible for choosing 2 additional readings (to be provided one week in advance through MSTeams) and leading the class discussion. The readings chosen should complement the ones already assigned and introduce complementary angles of discussion. This might include contradictory views to the recommendations from Gerring or KKV, or examples of literature that showcase that element of research. Students will be evaluated on their choice of readings as well as how they conduct the class discussion (including how they incorporate all the reading materials).

Students are also required to write a two-page reflection that evaluates their choice of articles, how the articles did or did not add to the discussion and whether they engaged their fellow students, and the positive and negative aspects of their experience. The article reflections are meant to be written soon after class concludes and are due by Friday of that week at noon.

### *Methodology Comment Papers (15% total - 5% each)*

Due Dates: October 19, 26 and November 9

For specific methodology topics that we cover (October 12, 19, 26), students are required to hand in a comment paper that addresses how the issues raised in the readings apply to their own research project *the following week*. These comment papers will help students work through aspects of methodology as they relate to their own projects and will form the basis of their research design paper. Papers should be 3–5 pages in length, double-spaced.

### *Book Review:*

Students will choose a book from the list below (or one agreed upon by the instructor) and prepare a book review in two parts. The first part, due **September 28**, should provide an overview of the book in which the author's approach, research design, methodology and major findings/conclusions are identified. It should be at least 3 and no more than 5 pages (double-spaced) in length. The second part is due **November 16** and will be a critique of the author's methodology. Students should consider the appropriateness of the methodology for the research question, how the methodology and evidence used did or did not influence the conclusions reached, and whether an alternative approach may be used with reason. This part of the assignment should also be at least 3 and no more than 5 pages (double-spaced). EACH STUDENT MUST CHOOSE A UNIQUE BOOK, so that these book reviews can be shared with other members of the class to help build a personal "library" of information about different research projects.

- Marshall Sahlins, *How "Natives" Think*, University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions*, Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*, Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*, Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- André Blais, *To Vote or Not To Vote*, Pittsburgh University Press, 2000.
- Neil Nevitte, *The Decline of Deference*, Broadview Press, 1996.
- Michael Lewis-Beck, *Economics and Elections*, University of Michigan Press, 1988.
- Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State*, Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Peter Hall, *Governing the Economy*, Oxford University Press, 1986.
- Ronald Rogowski, *Commerce and Coalitions*, Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Gosta Esping-Andersen, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Miriam Golden, *Heroic Defeats*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, Yale University Press, 1985.
- Jared M. Diamond, *Collapse*, Viking Press, 2005.
- Thomas Scheffer, *Adversarial Case-Making: An Ethnography of English Crown Court Procedure*, Brill, 2010.

### *Research Design Paper (40%)*

Outline – 5% – Due November 9

Draft Paper – Due November 30

Peer critique – 5% – Due December 7

Final submission – 30% – Due December 14

This is the major assignment of the course. Students are expected to prepare a research proposal applying the knowledge they gained throughout the course to a research topic (hopefully, a tentative dissertation idea or draft grant proposal). *There is no expectation that this will be your final dissertation topic - the experience of working through an idea can be valuable in and of itself.*

The proposal should:

- Identify the research question that you want to answer.
- Provide a review of relevant literature on the topic. This means explaining how your question is derived from and is situated in the existing understanding of the issue. Consider established findings, debates, and approaches, as well as the limitations to these that makes your research question unique.

- State the claims or hypotheses that you wish to examine. This includes specifying the independent and dependent variables, as well as any key moderating variables you wish to test. In so doing, pay attention to conceptualization.
- Outline how you will operationalize and measure your concepts for empirical testing.
- Explain how you could gather the evidence/data you need to complete your study. Which cases or populations will you focus on? Why?
- What are the limitations of your research design?

Explicit details about data gathering techniques (i.e., archival work, experiments, interviews, or surveys) are not expected, but you should provide enough information that I understand what your evidence would look like and where it would come from.

Students are expected to reference readings from class to justify their methodological choices. Papers should be at least 10 and no more than 15 pages, be double-spaced with 12-pt font and one-inch margins, use Chicago style for referencing (<https://www.lib.uwo.ca/files/styleguides/ChicagoStyleAuthorDate.pdf>), have footnotes instead of endnotes (a personal preference for reading ease), and include a reference list. (Note: I put these guidelines here not because I am a stickler for details like these but because if you have the chance start good habits, I would start with figuring out a standard formatting routine.)

An outline of the research design is due on **November 9** (to be submitted through MStTeams). It should contain, at the least, the research question and tentative claims/hypotheses. This will be an opportunity for feedback and a check against any major issues that would make the proposal less successful. The first draft of this research design is due on **November 30**. Drafts will be distributed to designated discussants (other students) so that peer critiques can be prepared for the Proposal Workshop on **December 7**. The peer critiques should be submitted to the instructor through MStTeams for grading as well as provided to the author at the Proposal Workshop. At the Proposal Workshop, each student will present his/her research proposal (8-10 minutes). Discussants will then present their critiques (5 minutes). Time will also be set aside for general discussion and comments from the audience. Students will have the opportunity to revise their papers in light of the comments and discussion at the Proposal Workshop. The final paper is due to the instructor on **December 14** (to be submitted through MStTeams).



## Topics and Readings

### September 14

#### Is Political Science a science? / The Hidden Curriculum

- A. F. Chalmers, 1999, *What is this thing called science?* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company) Only chapters 1, 5-9 are required. [https://fenix.ciencias.ulisboa.pt/downloadFile/563087392374786/\[Alan\\_Chalmers\]\\_What\\_Is\\_This\\_Thing\\_Called\\_Science.pdf](https://fenix.ciencias.ulisboa.pt/downloadFile/563087392374786/[Alan_Chalmers]_What_Is_This_Thing_Called_Science.pdf)
- William H. Riker, 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.
- Mark Blyth, 2006, "Great Punctuations: Prediction, Randomness, and the Evolution of Comparative Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 100(4): 493-498.
- Martin A. Schwartz, 2008, "The importance of stupidity in scientific research," *Journal of Cell Science* 121: 1771.
- Emma D. Cohen and Will R. McConnell, 2019, "Fear of Fraudulence: Graduate School Program Environments and the Impostor Phenomenon", *The Sociological Quarterly* 60(3): 457-478, DOI: 10.1080/00380253.2019.1580552.
- Stephen J. Aguilar, 2015, "We Are Not Impostors." *Inside Higher Ed*. <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2015/04/13/essay-how-graduate-students-can-fight-impostor-syndrome>.

### September 21

#### Approaches

Students should choose one of Hug, Yanow, Mahoney and Goertz, Lipson et al., Lin, and Jung to present and critique in class.

Be prepared to identify the main argument; any biases; flaws in logic, if any; counterpoints; and empirical examples, if possible.

- Gerring, ch. 1
- David Marsh and Paul Furlong, 2002, "A Skin not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science," in *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 2nd edition, ed. David Marsh and Gerry Stoker (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Simon Hug, 2014, "Further Twenty Years of Pathologies? Is Rational Choice better than it used to be?" *Swiss Political Science Review* 20(3): 486-497.
- Dvora Yanow, 2003, "Interpretive empirical political science: What makes this not a subfield of qualitative methods," *Qualitative Methods* Fall: 9-13.
- James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, 2006, "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research," *Political Analysis* 14: 227-249.
- Michael Lipson, Daniel Maliniak, Amy Oakes, Susan Peterson, and Michael J. Tierney, 2007, "Divided Discipline," *International Journal* 62, Spring: 327-343.
- Ann Chih Lin, 1996, "Bridging Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches to Qualitative Methods," *Policy Studies Journal* 26(1): 162-180.
- Hoyoon Jung, 2019, "The Evolution of Social Constructivism in Political Science: Past to Present," *Sage Open* 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019832703>

### September 28

#### Research Questions and Theories

Book Review Part 1 Due

- Gerring, ch. 2-3
- KKV, ch. 1.
- Gary King, 2020, "So You're a Grad Student Now? Maybe You Should Do This." In *Sage Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*, ed. Luigi Curini and Robert J. Franzese, Jr. (Sage Publications).
- Karl Gustafson 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.

- Morris. P. Fiorina, 1975, "Formal Models in Political Science," *American Journal of Political Science* 19(1): 133-159. <https://doi-org.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/10.2307/2110698>
- Robert H. Bates, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal and Barry R. Weingast, 1998, *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), chapter 1 (Introduction).
- Bernard Grofman and Peter Selb, 2011, "Turnout and the (effective) number of parties at the national and district levels: A puzzle-solving approach," *Party Politics* 17(1): 93-117.

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### October 5

#### Literature Reviews / Publishing in PS

- Jeffrey W. Knopf, 2006, "Doing a Literature Review," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 127-132.
- Justus Randolph, 2009, "A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review," *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation* 14, Article 13. Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/pare/vol14/iss1/13>
- Andreas Jungherr, 2016, "Twitter use in election campaigns: A systematic literature review," *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 13(1): 72-91, DOI:10.1080/19331681.2015.1132401
- Dawn L. Teele and Kathleen Thelen, 2017, "Gender in the Journals: Publication Patterns in Political Science," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50(2): 433-447.
- Maxime Héroux-Legault, 2017, "The Evolution of Methodological Techniques in the Canadian Journal of Political Science," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 50(1): 121-142.
- Justin Esarey and Ahra Wu, 2016, "Measuring the Effects of Publication Bias in Political Science," *Research & Politics* 3(3, July): 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168016665856>.
- Éric Montpetit, André Blais and Martial Foucault, 2008, "What Does it Take for a Canadian Political Scientist to be Published?" *Social Science Quarterly* 89(3, September): 802-816.

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### October 12

#### Description and Conceptualization

- Gerring, chs. 5 and 6.
- KKV, ch. 2
- Kevin Munger, 2020, "In Favour of Quantitative Description," <https://kevinmunger.substack.com/p/in-favor-of-quantitative-description>
- David Collier and Steven Levitsky, 1997, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," 49(3): 430-451.
- Siddhartha Baviskar and Mary Frane T. Malone, 2004, "What Democracy Means to Citizens – and Why It Matters," *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* 76: 3-23.
- Lisa Wedeen, 2002, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 96(4): 713-728.

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### October 19

#### Measurement Methodology Comment Paper #1 Due

- Gerring, ch. 7.
- Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, 2012, "Concepts and measurement: Ontology and epistemology," *Social Science Information* 51(2): 205-216.

- Amanda Bittner and Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant. 2017. "Sex Isn't Gender: Reforming Concepts and Measurements in the Study of Public Opinion." *Political Behavior* 39(4): 1019–41.
- Alexander Wuttke, Christian Schimpf and Harald Schoen, 2020, "When the Whole Is Greater than the Sum of Its Parts," *American Political Science Review* 114(2): 356-374.

### **October 26**

#### **Causality**

*Methodology Comment*  
*Paper #2 Due*

- Gerring, ch. 8, 12 (chapters 10 and 11 are not required but will be useful for your Research Design paper)
- KKV, ch. 3
- Tulia G. Falleti and Julia F. Lynch, 2009, "Context and Causal Mechanisms in Political Analysis." *Comparative Political Studies* 42(9): 1143-66.
- James N. Druckman, Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski and Arthur Lupia, 2011, "Experiments: an introduction to core concepts," in *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), chapter 2.

### **November 2**

**FALL BREAK – NO CLASS**

### **November 9**

#### **Comparative Method**

*Methodology Comment*  
*Paper #3 Due*

*Research Design Outline*  
*Due*

- Daniele Caramani, 2009, *Introduction to the Comparative Method with Boolean Algebra* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).
- James D. Fearson, 2011, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (1991): 169–95. doi:10.2307/2010470.
- Stanley Lieberson, 1991, "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases," *Social Forces* 70(2): 307-320.
- James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, 2004, "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 653-70.

### **November 16**

#### **Choosing Cases**

*Book Review Part 2 Due*

- John Gerring, 2004, "What is a Case Study and What is it Good for?" *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 341-354.
- KKV, chs. 4 and 6
- Jason Seawright and John Gerring, 2008, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Studies: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2): 294-308.
- Andrew Bennett, 2008, "Process Tracing: a Bayesian Perspective," In Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199286546.003.0030.

### **November 23**

#### **Mixing Methods**

- Gerring, chs. 13 and 14
- Tariq Thachil, 2018, "Improving Surveys Through Ethnography: Insights from India's Urban Periphery," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 53: 281-299.
- Ingo Rohlfing, 2008, "What You See and What You Get: Pitfalls and Principles of Nested Analysis in Comparative Research." *Comparative Political Studies* 41(11): 1492-1514.

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**November 30**

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**Ethics**

*Research Design Draft  
Due for Peer Comment*

- Take the TCPS2: Core Tutorial: <https://tcps2core.ca/register>
- Review NMREB process at Western: [http://www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics/nonmedical\\_reb/submission.html](http://www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics/nonmedical_reb/submission.html)
- Christie Aschwanden and Maggie Koerth-Baker, 2016, "How Two Grad Students Uncovered An Apparent Fraud - And A Way To Change Opinions On Transgender Rights." <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/how-two-grad-students-uncovered-michael-lacour-fraud-and-a-way-to-change-opinions-on-transgender-rights/>
- Arthur Lupia and Colin Elman, 2014, "Openness in Political Science: Data Access and Research Transparency." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47(1): 19-42.
- Genevieve Fuji Johnson, Mark Pickup, Eline A. de Rooij and Remi Léger, 2017, "Research Openness in Canadian Political Science: Toward an Inclusive and Differentiated Discussion," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 50(1), 311–328.
- Laura R. Woliver, 2002, "Ethical Dilemmas in Personal Interviewing," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35(4): 677-678.

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**December 7**

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**Proposal Workshop**

*Research Design Critique  
Due*

- PhD students will present their research proposals and receive prepared feedback from their discussant. I will invite MA students and faculty members to be the audience. Time for open discussion will be set aside for each paper.

**RESEARCH DESIGN PAPERS ARE DUE DECEMBER 15**

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