**ISW Lesson Plan**

January 18, 2023

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| **Duration** | **Block** | **Content** |
| 10 mins | Logistics | Any questions or issues (related to the handbook, the overall module organization, and Moodle)?  **Student-staff communication**  Emails  Office hours  Student representative (we may need a quick election)  **Assignments**: I will be responsible for the first assignment and more details will be provided in Weeks 4/5.  You will apply what you have learned to write a critical response paper.  You will be asked to answer three questions and your response to each of these questions can only be up to 500 words max. The key is to be succinct.  You will not need any external research or citations.  You will have to choose from one of the articles -- I will upload these articles, along with the questions, during Reading Week.  It is NOT a test (so there is no rubric for your answers). Feel free to surprise me. And feel free to get in touch if you have any questions or if you'd like to discuss your answers with you.  Do not plagiarize (you do not want to be asked to attend an assessment offense panel). Be careful when you help each other.  The deadline is **xxx**. |
| 20 mins | Icebreaking | **Recap**: Continue the discussion on knowledge production from last week.  What do you think about the readings? Do you like them? Why? Should we continue to use them next time? (To Kaelynn: I will ask this every time to start the class)  What is your subject area? Have you taken any module with "theory" in its title?  What is the most important/famous theory in your subject area? And why is it important/famous? What makes a "good" theory?  Let's talk about the TED Talk. What is your main takeaway? Has anyone learned game theory before? |
| 30-40 mins | Lecture 1 | **Lecture 1: What is theory and why theory matters**  We use theory to "make sense of" the (social) world.  Different forms/strategies of presentation/formulation?    Verbal  Formal/mathematical (e.g., social physics)  Combined: The "Analytical Narratives" project  What is theory?  Paradigms v approaches (or framework)  Why the “Sand Castle” metaphor?  Different objectives  Description  Interpretation  Explanation  Prediction (?) |
| 20-25 mins | Group exercise 1 | **Group exercise 1: Using theory in social research**  Share the article you have with each other.  Is there a "theory" in the article? If yes, what is it?  What purpose does it serve? |
| 15 mins | Break |  |
| 30-40 mins | Lecture 2 | **Lecture 2: Use empirics to evaluate a theory**  Induction  Deduction  Abduction (Iddo Tavory and Stefan Timmermans)  End with some general discussion – tradeoff? |
| 20-25 mins | Group exercise 2 | **Group exercise 2: (Re)thinking rational choice theory (?)**  What does rational choice theory say?  Why Barbara Geddes says rational choice theory is not a theory?  What are the issues with rational choice theory?  Should we abandon rational choice theory or try to make it better?  Can you come up with an empirical strategy to "test" rational choice theory?  End with the Barbara's comments (verdicts) on rational choice theory. |
| 10 mins | Conclusion | **Key lessons**  "Cultural competency" for social researchers: Know there can be different theory-building attempts and learn to appreciate the difference.  Be conscious of your choices/decisions and explain them (do not apologize for your choices/decisions).  The key is to find your voice (and place).  **Looking ahead**  *How to establish the theory-empirics alignment?* This is the focus of the coming two weeks: (1) the use of different quant and qualitative evidence and (2) why causality is important.  KKV: Read the first two chapters if you can (and if you want). Not a big deal if you want to skip them. Three quant scholars write about quali social research (and this is funny).  *How to generalize your theoretical claims based on a “case?”* This is the focus of the week on comparative and international analysis -- we need to overcome methodological essentialism and nationalism. |