

International Relations and Political Science (IRPS)

Academic year 2022-2023

Practicing Research

RI-SP139 - Spring - 12 ECTS

Course Description

> PROFESSORS

James Hollway
Office hours: Wednesdays 14-16

Annabelle Littoz-Monnet
Office hours: Tuesdays 12-2 or
by appointment

> ASSISTANT

Hayley Umayam
Office hours: Tuesdays 10-12

Syllabus

Course Format

Classes will include teaching, in class discussions, and practical exercises. It is crucial, for discussions to be fruitful and interesting, that you arrive to class having read all the suggested articles. Some sessions might also include small exercises aimed at putting into practice some of the questions covered.

Course Evaluation

1. Practical exercises (40%)

Throughout the course, students will complete 6 (out of 8 available) practical exercises that relate to the weekly topics. The assignment topics will be announced at the beginning of the semester. The expected length will be approximately 2-4 pages, unless otherwise specified. Three of these assignments will just be for completion, while the other three will be for credit. Those for completion will be assessed on a coarse rubric (e.g. fail, pass, excellent). Those for grade may require an

additional task or more in-depth treatment. The assignments for grade will be evaluated in greater detail and feedback will be provided. All assignments are designed to help you progress towards the writing of your research proposal at the end of the semester.

2. Research Proposal/Posters (40% and 10%)

The end goal of the course is the production of a proposal that outlines and explains your research design (40% of final grade). Further details will be given about the expected format later in the course. It is not expected that the research design proposal will be the final version for your research project. It should however demonstrate an in depth consideration of some of the issues covered in class and consist of a well justified outline of your whole research design.

You will also be asked to hold poster presentations in the final course session (10% of final grade). This will give you an opportunity to outline the main aspects of your research design and share the tenets of your research with others. This will also be an opportunity to discuss with the rest of the class possible issues you are encountering, gaps to be filled or justifications to be honed before submission.

3. Seminar participation

You are expected to attend each session, including the TA-led sessions, and regularly participate in discussions. Having read the suggested material is essential to your good participation to seminar discussions. We will use our evaluations of your participation at the end of the course to round up or round down your final grade.

Though not a substitute for participation throughout the course, an additional chance to improve your participation grade will be offered in the final class when you will be assigned to discuss one of your colleagues' posters.

Course Structure

As a 12 ECTS doctoral-level course, the expected workload is significant but also quite self-directed. There will be up to two sessions per week, one with the course instructors and sometimes another with the course TA or a second session with one of the course instructors.

General readings for the course:

- Alvesson, Mats, and Kaj Sköldbberg. 2000. *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Law, John. 2004. *After Method, Mess in Social Science Research*. London: Routledge.
- George, Alexander, and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Ackerly, Brooke, and Jacqui True. 2010. *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science*. Basingstoke: Red Globe Press.
- Brady, Henry and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry* 2nd ed. Rowman and Littlefield
- Halperin, Sandra and Heath, Oliver. 2012. *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Dvora Yanow. 2013. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. London: Routledge.
- Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds., 2nd edition, *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, London: Routledge.
- Saldaña, Johnny. 2013. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel. 2015. *Process-tracing. From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*.
- Klotz, A., Prakash, D. (eds) *Qualitative Methods in International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Goertz, Gary. 2017. *Multimethod Research, Causal Mechanisms, and Case Studies*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Imai, Kosuke. 2018. *Quantitative Social Science: An Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Page, Scott E. 2018. *The Model Thinker: What You Need to Know to Make Data Work for You*. Basic Books.
- Healy, Kieran. 2018. *Data Visualization: A Practical Introduction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lury, Celia. 2020. *Problem Spaces: How and Why Methodology Matters*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Alvesson, Mats, and Jorgen Sandberg. 2021. *Re-Imagining the Research Process: Conventional and Alternative Metaphors*. Sage.
- Tavory, Iddo, and Stefan Timmermans. 2014. *Abductive analysis: Theorizing qualitative research*. Chicago: University of Chicago

Class sessions

Epistemology, Ontology and Methodology

Week 1: Introduction: Research Traditions and Designs

Week 2: Interpretation, Reflexivity, and Methods

Readings:

- Geertz, Clifford. 2010. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture". In Torrance, H. (ed), *Qualitative, Research Methods in Education*, vol. 1. XX: Sage, pp. 3-26
- Hansen, Lene. 2015. Ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies. *Gender Matters in Global Politics: A feminist introduction to International Relations*. ed. / Laura J. Shepherd. 2. ed. London: Routledge. pp. 14-23.
- Hamati-Ataja, Inanna. 2014. Objectivism, subjectivism, and the knowledge in-between: The

subject in/of 'strong reflexivity, *Review of International Studies* , Volume 40 , Issue 1 , January 2014 , pp. 153 – 175.

Further reading:

- Ackerly, Brooke, and Jacqui True. 2008. '[Reflexivity in Practice: Power and Ethics in Feminist Research on International Relations](#)'. *International Studies Review* 10(4): 693–707.
- Kurki, Milja. 2009. "[The Politics of the Philosophy of Science](#)." *International Theory* 1(3):440–54.
- Bueger, Christian. 2012. "[From Epistemology to Practice: A Sociology of Science for International Relations](#)." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 15(1):97–109.
- Hawkesworth, Mary. 2014. Contending Conceptions of Science and Politics: Methodology and the Constitution of the Political. In Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds., 2nd edition, *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, 27-49. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe. 23

Week 3: Causes, Counterfactuals, and Mechanisms

Readings:

- Kurki, Milja. 2006. "[Causes of a Divided Discipline: Rethinking the Concept of Cause in International Relations Theory](#)." *Review of International Studies* 32(2):189–216.
- Hedström, Peter, and Petri Ylikoski. 2010. "[Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences](#)." *Annual Review of Sociology* 36(1):49–67.
- Norman, Ludvig. 2021. "[Rethinking Causal Explanation in Interpretive International Studies](#)." *European Journal of International Relations* 27(3):936–59.

Further reading:

- Mayntz, Renate. 2004. "[Mechanisms in the Analysis of Social Macro-Phenomena](#)." *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 34(2):237–59.
- Keele, Luke. 2015. "[The Statistics of Causal Inference: A View from Political Methodology](#)." *Political Analysis* 23(3):313–35.
- Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2017. "[Causal Claims and Causal Explanation in International Studies](#)." *Journal of International Relations and Development* 20(4):689–716.

This week will include a session from the TA drawing together the previous two sessions.

Week 4. No class.

Reading week.

Questions, Concepts, Theory

Week 5. Problematizing, Conceptualizing, Elucidating

Readings:

- Sandberg, Jörgen and Alvesson, Mats. 2011. Ways of constructing research questions: Gap-spotting or problematization? *Organization* 18/1: 23-44.
- Zirakzadeh, C. E. 2009. 'When nationalists are not separatists: Discarding and recovering academic theories while doing fieldwork in the Basque region of Spain', in: E. Schatz (ed) *Political ethnography: What immersion contributes to the study of politics*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 97-118
- Schaffer, F. C. (2016). *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide*. London & New York, Routledge. Introduction (chapter 1)

Further reading:

- Schaffer, F. C. (2016). *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide*. London & New York, Routledge. Chapters 3-6.
- Mary Hawkesworth, "Contending Conceptions of Science and Politics," in Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, eds., pp. 27-49
- [Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine and Dvora Yanow, "Interpretive..." \(newbooksnetwork.com\)](http://newbooksnetwork.com)

Week 6: Typologies, Puzzles, and Parsimony

Readings:

- Collier, David, Jody LaPorte, and Jason Seawright. 2012. "[Putting Typologies to Work: Concept Formation, Measurement, and Analytic Rigor](#)." *Political Research Quarterly* 65(1):217–32.
- Gustafsson, Karl, and Linus Hagström. 2018. "[What Is the Point? Teaching Graduate Students How to Construct Political Science Research Puzzles](#)." *European Political Science* 17(4):634–48.
- Gunitsky, Seva. 2019. "[Rival Visions of Parsimony](#)." *International Studies Quarterly* 63(3):707–16.

Further reading:

- Ahram, Ariel I. 2013. "[Concepts and Measurement in Multimethod Research](#)." *Political Research Quarterly* 66(2):280–91.
- Healy, Kieran. 2017. "[Fuck Nuance](#)." *Sociological Theory* 35(2):118–27.
- Besbris, Max, and Shamus Khan. 2017. "[Less Theory. More Description](#)." *Sociological Theory* 35(2):147–53.

This week will include a session from the TA drawing together the previous two sessions.

Design in Practice

Week 7. Exposure, Cases and Data

Readings:

- Soss, Joe. 2018. "[On Casing a Study versus Studying a Case.](#)" *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 16(1):21–27.
- Designing for Trustworthiness. 2011. In: Schwartz-Shea, P., & Yanow, D. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes* (1st ed.). Routledge. Chapter
- Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2006. "[Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research.](#)" *Qualitative Inquiry* 12(2):219–45.

Further reading:

- Nicolini, Davide. 2009. Zooming in and Zooming out: A Package of Method and Theory to Study Work Practices'. In *Organizational Ethnography: Studying the Complexity of Everyday Organizational Life*, ed by Sierk Ybema, Dvora Ynow, Harry Wels and Frans Kamsteeg, 120-38. London: Sage
- 'The Rhythms of Interpretive Research, Getting Going'. in: ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Method and the Interpretive Turn*, New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Schwartz-Shea Peregrine. 2014. Judging Quality: Evaluative Criteria and Epistemic Communities. In Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds., 2nd edition, *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, 120-46. A

Week 8. Cases, Comparison, and QCA

Readings:

- Bennett, Andrew, and Colin Elman. 2007. "[Case Study Methods in the International Relations Subfield.](#)" *Comparative Political Studies* 40(2):170–95.
- Robinson, Gregory, John E. McNulty, and Jonathan S. Krasno. 2009. "[Observing the Counterfactual? The Search for Political Experiments in Nature.](#)" *Political Analysis* 17(4):341–57.
- Thomann, Eva, and Martino Maggetti. 2020. "[Designing Research With Qualitative Comparative Analysis \(QCA\): Approaches, Challenges, and Tools.](#)" *Sociological Methods & Research* 49(2):356–86.

Further reading:

- Sekhon, Jasjeet S. 2004. "[Quality Meets Quantity: Case Studies, Conditional Probability, and Counterfactuals.](#)" *Perspectives on Politics* 2(02): 281–293.
- Bennett, Andrew, and Colin Elman. 2006. "[Complex Causal Relations and Case Study Methods: The Example of Path Dependence.](#)" *Political Analysis* 14(3):250–67.
- Nielsen, Richard A. 2016. "[Case Selection via Matching.](#)" *Sociological Methods & Research* 45(3):569–97.

This week will include a session from the TA drawing together the previous two sessions.

Methods

Week 9. Working with Text

Session 1. Interviews

Readings:

- Kvale, Steinar. 2007. *Doing Interviews*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications. Read 'Epistemological Issues of Interviewing' and 'Conducting and Interview'.
- Richards, D. 1996. 'Elite Interviewing: Approaches and Pitfalls', *Politics* 16(3): 199-204.
- Soss, Joe. 2006. "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations - A Practice Centered View of Interviewing for Interpretive Research", pp. 127-149 in: (ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea) *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Method and the Interpretive Turn*, New York: M.E. Sharpe.
- Littoz-Monnet, Annabelle. 'Interview Controversies', In Maertens, Lucile et al. (ed). *Research Methods for International Organizations*. University of Michigan Press

Further reading:

- Leech, B. 2002. '[Asking Questions: Techniques for Semi-structured Interviews](#)', *Political Science and Politics* 35(4): 665-668.
- Edward Schatz, ed. 2009. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mosley, Layna ed. 2013. *Interview Research in Political Science*. Chapter 1, pp. 1-30.
- Kvale, Steinar. 2007. *Doing Interviews*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage Publications. All other chapters.

Session 2. Discursive Analysis

Readings:

- Herrera, Y. M., & Braumoeller, B. F. (2004). Symposium: Discourse and content analysis. *Qualitative Methods*, 2(1), 15-19.
- Jennifer Milliken. 1999. The study of discourse in IR: a critique of research and methods, *European Journal of International Relations*. 5(2): 225-54
- Hansen, Lene. Discourse analysis, post-structuralism and foreign policy, *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*. ed. / Steve Smith; Amelia Hadfield; Tim Dunne. 2. ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. p. 94-109.

Further reading:

- Yanow, Dvora and Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine. 2014. Part III. Analyzing Data. In Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds., 2nd edition, *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, 255-66, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.
- Gill, Rosalind. 2000. "Discourse Analysis", in Bauer, M. and Gaskell, G., *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. London: Sage, pp. 172-190.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1993. "Critical discourse analysis and the marketization of public discourse: The universities." *Discourse and Society* 4 (2):133-168.
- Yanow, Dvora. 2014. I am not a camera: On visual politics and method—A reply to Roy Germano. *Perspectives on Politics* 12/3: 680-83.
- Hall, Tim. 2009. The camera never lies? Photographic research methods in human geography. *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 33/3: 453- 62

Week 10. Working with Numbers

Session 1. Events and Big Data

Readings:

- Ruggeri, Andrea, Theodora-Ismene Gizelis, and Han Dorussen. 2011. "[Events Data as Bismarck's Sausages? Intercoder Reliability, Coders' Selection, and Data Quality.](#)" *International Interactions* 37(3):340–61.
- Schrodtt, Philip A. 2012. "[Precedents, Progress, and Prospects in Political Event Data.](#)" *International Interactions* 38(4):546–69.

Further reading:

- Rothman, Steven B. 2007. "[Understanding Data Quality through Reliability: A Comparison of Data Reliability Assessment in Three International Relations Datasets.](#)" *International Studies Review* 9(3):437–56.
- Clark, William Roberts, and Matt Golder. 2015. "[Big Data, Causal Inference, and Formal Theory: Contradictory Trends in Political Science?](#)" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 48(01):65–70.
- Madsen, Anders Koed, Mikkel Flyverbom, Martin Hilbert, and Evelyn Ruppert. 2016. "[Big Data: Issues for an International Political Sociology of Data Practices.](#)" *International Political Sociology* 10 (3): 275-96.

Session 2. Computers and Models

Readings:

- Siegel, David A. 2018. "[Analyzing Computational Models.](#)" *American Journal of Political Science* 62(3):745–59.
- Johnson, James. 2021. "[Models-As-Fables: An Alternative to the Standard Rationale for Using Formal Models in Political Science.](#)" *Perspectives on Politics* 19(3):874–89.

Further reading:

- Schrodtt, Philip A. 2014. "[Seven Deadly Sins of Contemporary Quantitative Political Analysis](#)," *Journal of Peace Research* 51(2): 287-300.
- Bennett, Andrew. 2015. "[Found in Translation: Combining Discourse Analysis with Computer Assisted Content Analysis](#)." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43(3):984-97.

Research Concerns

Week 11. Interpretive Research, Ethics, and Relevance outside Academia

Readings:

- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Yanow, Dvora. 2016. Legitimizing Political Science or Splitting the Discipline? Reflections on DA-RT and the Policy-making Role of a Professional Association. *Politics & Gender* 12 (3), e11, 1-19.
- Schrag, Zachary M. 2011. "[The Case against Ethics Review in the Social Sciences](#)." *Research Ethics* 7(4):120-31.
- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2006. "[The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones](#)." *Qualitative Sociology* 29(3):373-86

Further reading:

- Baez, Benjamin. 2002. "[Confidentiality in Qualitative Research: Reflections on Secrets, Power and Agency](#)." *Qualitative Research* 2(1):35-58.
- Esseveld, Johanna and Esseveld, Ron. 1992. "Which Side Are You On? Reflections on Methodological Issues in the Study of 'Distasteful' Social Movements", in Diani, Mario and Eyerman, Ron (eds), *Studying Collective Action*. London: Sage, pp. 217-237.
- Strega, Susan, and Leslie Brown. 2015. *Research as Resistance: Revisiting Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-Oppressive Approaches*. (chapter on moodle). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press/Women's Press.
- Kara, Helen, and Lucy Pickering. 2017. "[New Directions in Qualitative Research Ethics](#)." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 20(3):239-41.

Week 12. Reporting, Reliability, and Replicability

Readings:

- Gelman, Andrew. 2018. "[Ethics in Statistical Practice and Communication: Five Recommendations](#)." *Significance* 15(5):40-43.
- Fairfield, Tasha, and Andrew Charman. 2019. "[A Dialogue with the Data: The Bayesian Foundations of Iterative Research in Qualitative Social Science](#)." *Perspectives on Politics* 17(1):154-67.
- Closa, Carlos. 2021. "[Planning, Implementing and Reporting: Increasing Transparency, Replicability and Credibility in Qualitative Political Science Research](#)." *European Political Science* 20(2):270-80.

Further reading:

- Moravcsik, Andrew. 2010. "[Active Citation: A Precondition for Replicable Qualitative Research](#)." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 43(1):29–35.
- Dafoe, Allan. 2014. "[Science Deserves Better: The Imperative to Share Complete Replication Files](#)." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 47(01):60–66.
- Lieberman, Evan. 2016. "[Can the Biomedical Research Cycle be a Model for Political Science?](#)" *Perspectives on Politics*, 14(4), 1054-1066.

This week will include a session from the TA drawing together the previous two sessions.

Week 13. Practicing research

General discussion: some readings may be recommended.

Week 14. Posters/presentations

~ This syllabus is provisional and subject to change ~