Methods in the Social Sciences Syllabus

YSS3231: Methods in the Social Sciences

Semester 2, AY 2020 – 2021

Lecture: Monday 10:30 – 11:30 – Blackbox Seminar (A): Monday 16:00 – 18:00 – TCTLT

Seminar (B): Thursday 16:00 – 18:00 – Kchanrai Room

Instructor:

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Office Hours: 13:00 - 15:00, Tuesdays and Fridays, Elm RC2-M-04.

Please sign up at Calendly: https://calendly.com/yncsmonroe/monroe-office-

hours

Overview and Learning Goals

This module introduces students to quantitative and qualitative research methods in the social sciences. The module consists of three components: 1) Foundations in Social Science Research, 2) Quantitative Methods, and 3) Qualitative Methods. Students will learn, critique and apply a range of social science methods. These methods include: comparative case studies, in-depth interviews, participant observation and regression analysis.

This module has three learning objectives:

- 1) Strengthen students' ability to formulate social science research questions and strategize how to answer them most effectively.
- 2) Equip students with research design foundations for their senior capstone.
- 3) Expand students' awareness of different social science research methods, as well as these methods' strengths and limitations.

This module is a requirement for Global Affairs and Urban Studies majors. It is cross-listed with Anthropology and PPE.

About the Course:

Social scientists are increasingly expected to be conversant in multiple methodologies and be able to assess the appropriate research method to answer a given research question. Even when they choose to specialize in a particular method, social scientists are still expected to be able to understand and critique relevant research findings that rely on a range of methods.

To that end, this module allows students to fulfil the research methods requirement for several social science majors at Yale-NUS College by equipping them with basic skills in both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This module is a requirement for Global Affairs and Urban Studies majors. It also counts towards the Anthropology major though it does not automatically fulfil the methods requirement for Anthropology. This course can also be counted towards the PPE (unless Econometrics is taken) and Environmental Studies majors, but only at the discretion of the Head of Studies.

This module introduces students to a variety of methods in the social sciences. It focuses on five primary techniques: Survey methodology, case studies, quantitative data analysis, participant observation and in-depth interviewing. We will discuss the pros and cons of each method. We will also discuss best practices in formulating research questions. This module gives students a solid foundation to build their capstones, and to enrol in more advanced methodological courses in subsequent semesters.

Course Structure and Format:

This module is organized around three sub-units – Research Foundations, Quantitative Methods, and Qualitative Methods – which mirrors the structure of the main course textbook, Social Research Methods by Alan Bryman.

The module format consists of two meetings per week. The first meeting is a one-hour lecture. The second meeting is a two-hour seminar. During the quantitative and qualitative methods' units, the seminar will be run as a "lab" with students engaging in hands-on exercises to learn particular skills (e.g. how to run a linear regression) or they will be asked to bring in their assignment work for feedback.

Expectations and Assessment:

- Attendance and Participation (10%)
- Lead Seminar Discussion of Case Study (10%)

- Assignments (x4) (50%)
- Research Proposal (30%)

Attendance and Participation (10%):

Students are expected to be engaged, attentive and respectful in lecture and seminar. This requires completing all of the assigned readings and preparing questions / comments.

Students will not get points for simply attending lecture or seminar. However, they will have point deductions for missing seminar or lecture without first getting permission. An AD note, medical certificate, or prior permission from the course instructor is required for absences to be excused. Students will also be given one free pass which they can use to excuse one absence from class or grant them a 24-hour extension on an assignment deadline (no questions asked). Each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a grade point penalty in their final participation grade (e.g. from a B to a B-, etc.). More than three unexcused absences will result in a grade point penalty in their final course grade. I will grade absences from lecture and seminar equally.

I expect every student to attend at least one office hours session during the semester. If you cannot make office hours (13:00 - 15:00, Tuesdays and Thursdays), please let me know and we can find an alternative time to meet. Students must sign up and book a slot for office hours on <u>Calendly</u> before we meet.

Etiquette for Seminar

We will value a step-up and step-back approach to participation in class. Listening and being attentive to one's peers is just as valuable as contributing to class discussion. We will also recognize that there are gender, class, race and other factors that make some voices louder than others. Please give credit when credit is due, and be mindful that we all benefit from a more inclusive learning environment. Finally, students will use gender inclusive language in class and in writing assignments.

Lead Seminar Discussion of Case Study (10%):

Each student will (co)lead one seminar discussion on a Case Study. The responsibilities of the discussion leaders include introducing the author(s) of the case study, providing a short summary of the readings and the methods applied. Discussion leaders are expected to comment on the reading's methods and then

lead a seminar discussion on the pros and cons of these methods in answering the author's argument. The summary and critique of the readings should not take more than 10 minutes (maximum) with the rest of the time allocated to the facilitated class discussion or any activities the discussion leaders have planned. The Case Study overview and seminar discussion will take no longer than forty minutes.

The discussion questions should have some deep-dive questions that interrogate the case study's methods and connect the case study to others as well as topics discussed in lecture. Two central themes must be discussed: 1) Are the methods proposed effective in answering / sustaining the author's argument? 2) How applicable would such methods be for a capstone project? A template is provided at the end of this syllabus for the key points that need to be covered. A rubric will be provided for how discussion leadership will be assessed. Students will be expected to upload their slides onto Canvas after the presentation.

Assignments (50%):

- 1) Research Question and Lit. Review (10%)
- 2) Sampling and Survey Design (10%)
- 3) Quantitative Group Project (15%)
- 4) Ethnography / Interviewing (15%)

Research Proposal (30%):

Students must submit a 3,000-word research proposal that outlines a research question, motivates it with a literature review, proposes a particular research method to answer said question, identifies a possible alternative research method and explains why this alternative method was not chosen. In explaining their research design, students need to discuss how the concept will be operationalized, outline the hypotheses, and explain how the data will be collected and analyzed. Any potential ethical issues should be flagged in the proposal.

Assignment Submissions and Deadlines:

Assignments	Max Word Count*	Deadline

1. Research Question and Lit. Review (10%)	1,500 words	Week 3, Sun, Jan 31, 11:59 pm
2. Survey Design (10%)	No word limit	Week 6, Sun, Feb 21, 11:59 pm
3. Group Quantitative Analysis (15%)	2,000 words	Week 9, Sun, Mar 21, 11:59 pm
4. Ethnography & Interview (15%)	1,000 words	Week 12, Sun, Apr 11, 11:59 pm
5. Research Proposal (30%)	3,000 words	Fri, Apr. 23rd, 11:59 pm

^{*}Word count does not include appendices that contain tables, lists of survey questions, etc.

All assignments should be posted onto Canvas by the stipulated deadline. Your assignment will be considered late if it misses the deadlines set above. You have one free pass which allows you to submit an assignment within 24 hours after the deadline without any penalty. This pass is non-transferable. For every other late assignment, you will pay a penalty: Your grade for the assignment will go down by one grade point (e.g. from A to A-, A- to B+) if you do not submit by the deadline, and then continue to fall by an additional grade point per 24 hours after the deadline.

Required Books:

The following books are required for the course and can be purchased through Bookhaven or Amazon.com:

- 1. Bryman, Alan. 2012. Social Research Methods. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2. Emerson, Robert M., Fretz, Rachel I. and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- 3. DeVeaux, Richard, Velleman, Paul F. and David E. Bock. Intro Stats: International Edition. Pearson. (Used in Quantitative Reasoning)
 4.
- 5. Kvale, Steinar, and Svend Brinkmann, Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2015).

Other Readings:

All additional chapter/article readings will be available in .pdf format through the course module on Canvass or in e-format through the NUS library.

Required Software:

For the statistical analysis portion of the course, students will be (re)introduced to the software package R Studio. We will download the package together in seminar and go over basic statistical analysis and how to make captivating plots.

Citations:

Students must cite using the Chicago Manual of Style in each of their written assignments.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is a very serious offence that goes against the ethos of academic honesty within Yale-NUS College.

We provide below a list of resources that explain what constitutes plagiarism. You are also reminded of the serious consequences in case you are caught plagiarizing. All student papers will be submitted to turnitin.com for a plagiarism check. Any suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Committee.

In this regard, we reproduce here a passage on Academic Integrity from the College Website:

"Yale-NUS College expects its students to abide by the highest standards of academic integrity as a matter of personal honesty and communal responsibility. Acting with academic integrity requires that (a) students do their own work, (b) students not interfere with the work of others, (c) students accurately and honestly represent the content of their work, and (d) students properly attribute others' work.

Violations of the College's academic integrity standards undermine both the community and the individual growth of students. Accordingly, they will be addressed with the utmost seriousness and sanctions ranging from grade penalties to expulsion. Examples of violations of academic integrity include plagiarism, copying or sharing homework answers, submitting work completed

for one course as 'new' work for another course, or fabricating or falsifying research data.

Professors are obligated to refer suspected lapses in academic integrity to the College's Committee on Integrity and Discipline (CID), which follows a set of policies and procedures approved by the faculty when investigating and adjudicating cases. To learn more about these policies and expectations, visit the Student Life – Academic Integrity website."

Yale NUS College Library, "Yale-NUS Policies on Academic Integrity." (2014). In Avoiding Plagiarism. Retrieved from https://library.yale-nus.edu.sg/avoiding-plagiarism/

Learning and Disability:

Students with learning disabilities should contact their Vice Rector's office for support and guidance.

Computer Policy:

I strongly encourage students to put their laptops away in lecture and seminar, and take notes in notebooks and print the readings if possible. For students who absolutely need their laptops, I request you leave the computer on airplane mode. This will help you (and students peering at your screen behind you) stay engaged in lecture and seminar.

Please note that the assigned readings may change throughout the term. I will let you know if they do. The readings and Social Research Methods are on e-reserves. The other required books are not. Links will guide you to websites or provide book / article call numbers.

Week I: Research Questions and Methods (Jan 11 – 15)

Lecture: Welcome and Getting Started

- Duckworth, Angela and Stephen Dubner. "How Can You Stop Comparing Yourself To Others (NSQ: Episode 13)." Freakonomics Podcast. 2020.
 Link.
 - Listen to Question #2: Why are we so inclined to force causal narratives? (Start at min 17, lasts 16 minutes 50 seconds)
 - Strongly Recommended (but not required): Question #1 How can you avoid the emotional pain of social comparisons? (16 minutes)
- Social Research Methods, Chapter 3: "Research Designs" (35 pages) (skim)

Seminar: Introductions, Seminar Expectations and How to come up with a research question?

- <u>Institute for Qualitative and Multi-Methods Research (IQMR) lecture by</u> Andrew Bennett:
 - Research Design I: Developing a Great Research Question (21 minutes)
 - Note: Don't do the exercise at the end of the video.
- Social Research Methods, Chapter 4, "Planning A Research Project and Formulating Research Questions," (15 pages).
- Massengil, Rebekah. Writing Sociology: A Guide for Junior Papers and Senior Theses, Chapter 1: The Research Question, 5 11 (6 pages).

Assignment #1 Research Question and Literature Review (Due Jan. 31st)

- Outline a research question you wish to pursue and write a literature review that cites at least five journal articles/books to motivate your particular question.

Week 2: The Lit Review (Jan 18 - 22)

Lecture: How to write and research a Lit Review

- Guest lecture from Social Sciences Librarian Chris Tang
- Social Research Methods, Chapter 5, "Getting started: reviewing the literature," (27 pages).
- See How to write a lit review (5 minutes 37 seconds). Link.

Seminar: Asking Questions and Writing Lit Reviews

Seminar Activity: Workshop students' research questions. Students are expected to bring a first draft of their research question.

- Udry, Christopher. 2003. "Fieldwork, Economic Theory, and Research on Institutions in Developing Countries." *American Economic Review*, 93(2): 107-111 (4 pages). <u>Link</u>.
- Case Study 1: Layna Mosley Lit Review Overview

Week 3: Operationalization and Causation (Jan 25 -29)

Lecture: Intro to Research Design

- Spector, Paul. *Research Designs*. Sections 1.0 and 2.0: Introduction and "Basic Concepts", 1981. 1-18 (18 pages). Link.
- Davis, James. *The Logic of Causal Order*. 1985. Introduction. 2 24 (22 pages). <u>Link</u>.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry*. 1994. Chapter 3: Causality and Causal Inference. 75-114 (39 pages).
- Krippner, Greta. *How To Read a (Quantitative) Journal Article*. 2010. Prepared for Sociology 101 (5 pages).

Seminar: Mapping Causality

Seminar Activity: Causality Mapping Exercise of ``Earned Income and Women's Segmented Empowerment: Experimental Evidence from Jordan (Barnett, Jamal and Monroe, 2020).''

- Barnett, Carolyn, Amaney A. Jamal, and Steve L. Monroe. "Earned Income and Women's Segmented Empowerment: Experimental Evidence from Jordan." *American Journal of Political Science* (2020). (17 pages).
- Case Study 2: Wedeen, Lisa. *Ambiguities of domination: Politics, rhetoric, and symbols in contemporary Syria*. University of Chicago Press, 2015. Introduction, 1 31 (31 pages).

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE JAN 31 AT 11:59 PM

Week 4: Ethics (Feb.1 -5)

Lecture: Ethnics and Research

- Social Research Methods, Chapter 6: "Ethics and Politics in Social Research," (25 pages). Link.
- Undergraduate Research Ethics: Read Steps 1 to 4. Link.

Seminar: Researcher Meets (Ethics) Critic and Goffman Discussion

Seminar Activity: Researcher Meets (Ethics) Critic. Discussion of Bhatia and Monroe's Research Proposal: Does Insecurity Undermine Preferences for Female Leadership? Survey Evidence from Afghanistan.

Note: Students will read Bhatia and Monroe's Research Proposal in Seminar. We will then discuss best practices and ethical considerations for the first half of seminar.

- Goffman, Alice. 2014. *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Chapter 1 and Appendix A, 9-22 and 211-262 (64 pages). <u>Link</u>.
- Complete CITI Human Subjects Research Training module. Link.

Week V: Sampling and Small-N Studies (Feb.8 − 12)

Lecture: Case Studies

- Social Research Methods, Chapter 8: "Sampling," Chapter 18 "Sampling in Qualitative Research" (38 pages). Link.
- Gerring, John. "What is a case study and what is it good for?." *American Political Science Review* (2004): 341-354 (13 pages). Link.
- Seawright, Jason and John Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options." *Political Research Quarterly* 61(2):294-308 (14 pages). Link.

Seminar: Comparative Case Methods in Latin America

- Case Study 3: Holland, Alisha. Forbearance as Redistribution: The politics of informal welfare in Latin America. Cambridge University Press, 2017. Introduction, 1 – 12 (12 pages). Link.

Assignment #2: Survey Design

Based on your stated research question, design a survey comprising 10 questions.

- Your questions should operationalize at least one independent variable and at least one dependent variable. (You might have multiple ways to operationalize any given variable.)
- All but one of your questions must be closed-ended.
- Practice your survey on two respondents. Then interview them to determine how they interpreted each question, and how they thought they should respond to each question.
- Write about their feedback. After taking their feedback into account, revise your survey questionnaire, taking into account the phrasing and order of questions.
- Write a cover letter/participant information sheet that explains the objective of the survey and contains appropriate statements regarding research ethics, anonymity, etc.
- Write out your research protocol including a description of the kind of survey you will be conducting and your sampling frame and design.

Lecture: Survey Questions

- Fowler, Jr., Floyd J. 1995. Improving Survey Questions: Design and Evaluation. Chapter 4 – "Some General Rules for Designing Good Survey Instruments." 78-103 (25 pages). <u>Link</u>
- Small, Mario Luis. "How many cases do I need?' On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research." *Ethnography* 10.1 (2009): 5-38.
- Clip from Yes Prime Minister. "Leading Questions"

Seminar: Workshopping Survey Questions

Seminar Activity: Students will workshop their survey questions

- Case Study 5:
 - Schuldt JP, Konrath SH, Schwarz N. 2011. "Global Warming" or "Climate Change." Public Opinion Quarterly. 75 (1): 115 – 124 (9 pages). <u>Link.</u>
 - Streb Matthew, Frederic B and Genovese, M. A. "Social Desirability Effects and Support for a Female American President." Public Opinion Quarterly, 72 (1): 76 – 89 (13 pages). <u>Link.</u>

CONSIDER ADDING: CHARMAZ GROUNDED THEORY (2014) ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE FEB 21 AT 11:59 PM

Enjoy the Mid-Semester Break!

Week 7: Why Quantitative Analysis? (Mar. 1-5)

Lecture: Intro to Quantitative Analysis

- Kieran Healy
- Pearson

- Making Data Meaningful. *United Nations Economic Commission for Europe* (2009). 1 – 21 (21 pages).

Seminar: LAB – "R" efresher (Part I)

- Intro to R

Week 8: Distributions and Correlations (Mar. 8 - 12)

Lecture: How to present quantitative data

Prof Monroe will present best tips for presenting quantitative data based off of Kieran Healy's Visualization : a practical introduction <u>Overview</u>

Seminar: "R"efresher (Part II)

- Intro to Stats: International Edition. Chapter 7: Scatterplots, Association, and Correlation. 167 - 181 (14 pages).

Assignment #3: Group Quantitative Data Analysis

Using the assigned dataset, write a report exploring the (causal?) link between two variables of interest.

- State the research question
- Provide a brief literature review (no more than five academic citations)
- Present Hypotheses
- Plot the relevant distributions (histograms, bar charts, etc.). Use the plots to identify potential outliers and decide whether to drop them or not.

 Prepare scatterplots of correlations between the variables of interest.
- Run univariate regressions
- Identify additional independent variables and control for them in the regression. Explain whether/how your main results are affected.
- Discuss potential threats to a causal interpretation of your findings. Suggest ways a researcher might be able to establish causality in this case.

Week 9: Establishing Causality? (Mar.15 - 19)

Lecture: Causal Methods (Part I)

- Intro to Stats: International Edition. Chapter 8: Linear Regressions. 199 236 (37 pages): Stop at page 221.
- Angrist, J.D. and Pischke, J-R. 2015. "Randomized Trials" Chapter 1 in "Mastering Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect", Princeton University Press. (32 pages).

Seminar: Causal Methods (Part II)

- May, Maria A. "RCTs: Not All that Glitters is Gold," Stanford Social Innovation Review. 2012. Link.
- Case Study 6: Finan, Frederico and Laura Schechter (2012) "Votebuying and Reciprocity." Econometrica, Vol. 80(2) 863-881 (18 pages).
- Case Study 7: Banerjee, Abhijit, Esther Duflo, Rachel Glennerster, and Cynthia Kinnan. 2015. "The Miracle of Microfinance? Evidence from a Randomized Evaluation." American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 7(1): 22-53 (31 pages).

ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE MAR 21 AT 11:59 PM

Week 10: Participation Observation (Mar. 22 - 26) Timothy Loh!

Lecture:

- Social Research Methods, Chapter 17: "The Nature of Qualitative Research," and Chapter 19, "Ethnography and Participant Observation" (72 pages).
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Ch. 2 "In the Field: Participating, Observing, and Jotting Notes." P. 17 38 (17 pages).

Seminar: This is What Inequality Looks Like

- Case Study: Step 1: Disrupt the Narrative (24 – 44); A Methodological appendix for all readers: This is what data looks like (281 – 289).

Week 11: Interviews (Mar. 29 – Apr. 2)

Guest Speakers: Yale-NUS College Alumni Panel – Secrets for Successful Interviews for a Capstone

Lecture:

- Seidman, Irving. "Technique Isn't Everything, But it is a Lot,"

 Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in

 Education and the Social Sciences (New York: Teachers College Press
 of Columbia University 2006), 78-94. (16 pages).
- Kvale, Steinar, and Svend Brinkmann, Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2015),
 Chapter 5 "The Qualitative Research Interview As Context," 81-96,
 Chapter 6 "Thematizing and Designing an Interview Study," 125-148,
 Chapter 7 "Conducting an Interview," 149-166 (55 pages.).

Seminar: Challenges of Interviewing Vulnerable Populations

- Introduction to Otter for transcribing interviews (in Seminar)
- Walling, Joan. 2009. "The Challenges of In-Depth Interviewing with Disadvantaged Respondents." In *Research Confidential: Solutions to Problems Most Social Scientists Pretend They Never Have*. 78-100 (22 pages).
- Case Study 10: Edin, Kathryn and Maria Kefalas. 2005. *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women put Motherhood before Marriage*. Introduction, Appendices A and B. 1-26 and 225-248 (48 pages).

Assignment #4: Ethnography and Interviews

- Conduct an ethnography at Yale-NUS to answer the question: "How do Yale-NUS students experience and/or understand inequality and privilege in their daily lives?" Customize the question to suit your particular interests.
- After choosing your research site/event, visit the site at least twice and write up fieldnotes based on your experiences.
- Develop an interview guide to answer your research question, tailoring the interview guide depending on your customized research question and chosen sub-population of Yale-NUS students.

- Conduct one interview based on the guide and transcribe the recorded audio file.
- Submit a 1,000-word research memo outlining your findings from the interview ethnography experience. Attach your interview transcript and fieldnotes to your memo.

Week 12: From Jotting to Field Notes (Apr. 5 – Apr. 9)

Lecture:

Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Ch. 3 "Writing up Fieldnotes I – From Field to Desk," P. 17 – 38, Ch. 4 "Writing up Fieldnotes II – Multiple Purposes and Stylistic Options," 89 – 127, (55 pages).

Seminar: THICK DESCRIPTION

- Case Study 11: Parreñas, Rhacel S. 2011. *Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo*. Introduction. 1-24 (24 pages).

ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE APR 11 AT 11:59 PM

Week 13: From Jotting to Field Notes (Part II) (Apr.12 – 16)

Lecture: Coding Qualitative Data

- Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Ch. 6 "Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Memoing," 142 – 168, (26 pages).

Guest Lecture: Rabiat and Kalyani

Seminar: Analysing Qualitative Data

- Case Study 12: Margaret K. Nelson and Rebecca Schutz. 2007. "Day Care Differences and the Reproduction of Social Class." Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 36(3):281-317 (38 pages).

- Pachirat, Timothy. *Among the Wolves: Ethnography and the Immersive Study of Power*. Routledge 2018. Act Six: The Trial (132 – 159) (28 pages).

Assignment #5: Research Proposal

Students must submit a 3,000-word research proposal that outlines a research question, motivates it with a literature review, proposes a particular research method to answer said question, identifies a possible alternative research method and explains why this alternative method was not chosen. In explaining their research design, students need to discuss how the concept will be operationalized, outline the hypotheses, and explain how the data will be collected and analyzed. Any potential ethical issues should be flagged in the proposal.

ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE APR 23 AT 11:59 PM

Outline for Case Study Discussion

Author(s) and Case Study	Who are the Authors? What is the Case Study (book, academic article)? Who is the audience?
Research Question and Argument	What are the authors' asking? What are they arguing? What is their key finding?
Research Method	How do the authors' answer their question? What data are they using? What population are they studying?
Methods Analysis and Critique	Why did the authors choose this method? What are some strengths of this method? What are some weaknesses? How does this method answer the author's question? What alternative methods could have answered this question?

Connections	How does this case study and its
	methods relate to readings discussed
	in lecture and other case studies?
Capstone Suitability	How suitable is this method for a
	capstone project? How could this
	method be used to answer a capstone?