

S2.1 - Theory and Methodology

Fall 2024

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Course Overview

This course will help you become familiar with the general approaches to research methods in political science. This course is a research methods survey course where you will learn to identify the general approaches that are utilized in political science, as well as identify the core concepts related to these methods. The goal will be achieved if, by the end of the course, you are able to read, analyze, understand, and critique the research that is done in political science, as well as identify methodological approaches.

We will cover a wide variety of topics in this course including concepts related to the scientific method, qualitative, quantitative, and experimental research approaches. You will be assessed on your understanding of the stages of the scientific methods. In addition, you will be assessed on your knowledge of the concepts related to the major methodological approaches utilized in political science.

Course Objectives

Broadly speaking, the major task of this course is the ability to critically evaluate research conducted in the field of political science, as well as having a broad knowledge about different methodological approaches used in political science studies. Therefore, it is expected that at the end of the semester that you will be able to evaluate the appropriateness of a researcher's particular methodological choice based on the research questions and hypotheses that are being explored.

Measure 1: Is able to formulate research questions and hypotheses.

Measure 1: Can identify and critique the different methodological approaches in political science.

Measure 3: Is able to select, based on the research question and hypothesis, the most appropriate methodology..

Additional Learning Objectives

- Ability to critically evaluate scholarly peer-reviewed research.

- Explain the distinctions between conceptualization and operationalization.
- Identify the dependent and independent variables in research studies.
- Identify the unique traits of the different methodological approaches.

Course Requirements

Study Evaluations = 3

At the end of each of the three substantive methodological weeks, there is a study evaluation assignment due. For each of these three assignments, you will be provided two studies based on the research method that the readings and lectures covered. For each of these two studies, you must identify and discuss several components of the studies and provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each component.

What components you must discuss?

- The observation about an interesting phenomena.
- The puzzle that exists unanswered.
- A research question that lends to empirical analysis.
- The dependent variable(s) of interest, including measurement.
- The independent variable(s) of interest, including measurement.
- The data used to answer the question.
- The method utilized to investigate the phenomena.
- The important findings of the study.
- The limitations of the study.

Class Schedule

Part I - Political Science Research, Subfields & Scientific Method

Week 1: Mon 02.09.24 12:00-15:00 PUB209

Syllabus

Student introductions

Topic: *Course Introduction; Political Science Research and Political Science Subfields*

Read: Keman and Woldendorp (2016), Ch. 1 & 2

Topic: *The Scientific Method - Empirical Approach & Stages*

Read: Barakso et al. (2014), Intro - Ch. 1-3; Johnson et al. (2015), Ch. 1-4

Part II - Qualitative Research

Week 1: Wed 04.09.24 12:00-14:00 PUB209

Topic: *Analyzing Qualitative Research; Small-N Observational Research*

Read: Galvin and Galvin (2017), Ch. 7; Keman and Woldendorp (2016), Ch. 21; Barakso et al. (2014), Ch. 7; Przeworski and Teune (1970); Collier (2011)

Week 1: Thu 05.09.24 12:00-14:00 PUB209

Topic: *Interview Research & Content Analysis; Qualitative Research Examples & Guidelines*

Read: Johnson et al. (2015), Ch. 10; Mosley (2013), Intro - Ch. 4; Fenno (1977); Folke et al. (2015); Hansen and Olsen 2024, Ch. 8

Study Evaluations 1 - 08.09.2024 at 22.00

Part III - Quantitative Research

Week 2: Mon 9.09.2024 12:00-14:00 PUB209

Topic: *Analyzing Quantitative Research & Examples*

Read: Galvin and Galvin (2017), Ch. 6; Keman and Woldendorp (2016), Ch. 19; Johnson et al. (2015), Ch. 11; Johansson and Hansen (2024); Kraft and Dolan (2022)

Week 2: Tue 10.09.2024 12:00-14:00 PUB209

Topic: *Types of Statistical Models & Examples*

Read: Keman and Woldendorp (2016), Ch. 20; Johnson et al. (2015), Ch. 12 & 14; Barakso et al. (2014), Ch. 6; Dolan and Hansen (2018); Hansen and Dolan (2020); Hansen et al. (2021)

Study Evaluations 2 - 15.09.2024 at 22.00

Part IV - Experimental Research

Week 3: Mon 16.09.2024 12:00-14:00 PUB209

Topic: *Foundations of Experimental Research*

Read: Barakso et al. (2014), Ch. 5; Broockman (2013)

Week 3: Tue 17.09.2024 12:00-14:00 PUB209

Topic: *Experimental Research Examples*

Read: Gerber and Green (2000); Gerber et al. (2011); Shaw and Gimpel (2012)

Study Evaluations 3 - 22.09.2024 at 22.00