

Political Science Research Design Workshop

Class: Wednesdays, 12:30-3:30, CHL 221

Professor: Jack Reilly

jreilly@ncf.edu

Office: SSC 205

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 10-11 & by appointment (jackreilly.youcanbook.me)

Assignment Submission: Canvas (ncf.instructure.com)

Syllabus Revision: April 5, 2018

Summary Description: This workshop will introduce students to basic methodological issues involved in studying politics and policy. Students will become familiar with the logic of inference and various techniques for taking advantage of it, and learn how to construct arguments about social science topics. A major goal of this course will be for each student to design a major research project including a specification of the theories, models, methods, data, and logistics involved in completing the project.

The class is intended for students planning to complete a concentration in Political Science, International Studies, Environmental Studies, and Public Policy studies. Students who will be working with a Political Science thesis sponsor are also welcome. The course meets the requirements for Craft and Rhetoric in Political Science and Research Methods in Environmental Studies.

Prerequisites: Some work beyond the introductory level in political science or the students' interdisciplinary field of study. Priority will go to third-year students preparing their thesis projects and fourth-year students who need the course for graduation. Second-year Political Science students who will be studying abroad in Spring 2015 will have the next priority, followed by other second-year students with probable Political Science thesis sponsors. Enrollment is limited to 18 and by permission of the instructor.

This class is not a typical lecture or seminar. Class is divided into three segments - **research design, project strategies, and your project**. Each class period will have time devoted to each segment.

The **research design** component of class is designed to introduce you to the process of creating - rather than merely consuming - research in political science. We begin by focusing on broad questions (what is science?), continue into the logic of inference (how can I be sure of my conclusions? how sure can I ever be?), and finish with a survey of common research designs in political science (experiments, surveys, case studies). Along the way, we will discuss the difference between qualitative and quantitative work in the social sciences, issues of measurement and operationalization, and how to best critically analyze the work of yourself and others.

The **project strategies** component of the class covers the practical aspects of the process of conducting research, from the very beginning (how do I identify an interesting question?) to the end (how do I revise my work most effectively?) We will cover how to approach literature reviews, how to go about identifying and managing data sources, how to schedule your time most effectively for your project, and how to pick a research strategy that best suits the question you have chosen.

The last component of the class is **your project**. As a workshop class, the goal is to produce a fully fleshed out research design proposal (or prospectus) that you, should you wish to, can immediately start implementing for your thesis. Ideally, the process of creating this project will help illuminate your own research interests, help you identify a thesis topic (whether or not you write on the exact topic you chose to do in the workshop), and give you a broader understanding of the world of political science and academic inquiry in general.

In terms of the specific structure of daily class periods, we'll largely devote time equally to each of these three components, with slightly more time devoted to the scientific method early on and more time devoted to your projects at the end of the class.

This class is a significant undertaking, and represents a lot of work on your and my part, but I'm excited to teach it and excited to have all of you in it. Its focus on the process of creating an academic paper, from start to finish, allows it to be one of the more unique courses you will take at New College. I hope that, in addition to being one of the most unique classes you take, it will also turn out to be one of the best.

Required Books

- King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton. ISBN: 0691034710
- Becker, 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago. ISBN: 9780226041322
- Baglioni, 2016. *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science*. CQ Press. ISBN: 1483376168

Secondary and Optional Books and Resources

- Brady and Collier, 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, 2nd ed. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Geddes, 2003. *Paradigms and Sandcastles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*.
- George and Bennett, 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*.
- Kellstedt and Whitten, *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*.
- Creswell, John. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*
- Lave and March, 1993. *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*.
- Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, *Research Methods in the Social Sciences* [many editions]
- Marshall and Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* [many editions]
- Miller and Page, *Complex Adaptive Systems*.
- Druckman, Green, Kuklinski, Lupia, *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*.
- Creswell, John W. *30 Essential Skills for the Qualitative Researcher*.
- Leopold, David and Mark Stears. *Political Theory: Methods and Approaches*.
- Writing in Political Theory: <http://govthesis.site.wesleyan.edu/political-theory/>

Course Requirements

1. Daily Preparation

1. Participation
2. Discussion Questions
3. Assigned Reading

2. Minor Assignments

1. Bacc Attendance (2)
2. Group Modeling Assignments (2)
3. Article Presentations
4. Revising & Editing Checkpoints

3. Core Exam

4. Research Project Assignments

1. Four Research "Stage" Assignments
2. Prospectus Draft
3. Peer Review

5. Research Design Prospectus

1. Presentation
2. Paper
3. Discussant duties

Participation and Readings: Successful participation requires both attendance and familiarity with the readings. By class each day, you should have completed the readings for that day. Students are not expected to have mastered the reading by class, but students are expected to be familiar enough that they may ask and answer questions about the material during presentations and discuss the material during seminar. It is difficult to make up a missed class, as much of class is conducted as a seminar and we only meet once each week. If you must miss a class, make sure to complete the reading for the class and review the material with your fellow classmates or with the professor.

Google Drive: All course materials can be found on the class Google drive, including readings from sources other than required books, assignments, study guides, etc.

Discussion Questions: Submit discussion questions or points (broadly construed) to the class by 9 AM on the day of class. Please respond to the first e-mail sent out, so all responses appear in a thread, and if you are the first questioner, title your e-mail "[RDW] Questions: Week X."

Core Exam: There is one exam in this class, focusing on the core concepts of research design. It will take place **March 14, 2018**. If you cannot make this time, you must tell me now.

Conditions for Satisfactory Evaluation

To satisfactorily complete the course, you must satisfactorily complete all five course requirements: daily preparation, minor assignments, research project assignments, the exam, and the prospectus. Specifically:

1. Students with more than one unexcused class absence may not receive a satisfactory course evaluation.
2. Students who fail to submit more than two day's worth of discussion questions may not receive a satisfactory course evaluation.
3. Students must complete four research assignments, the prospectus draft, and a peer review, as well as smaller group projects and intermediary assignments.
4. Students must turn in a final prospectus and complete a presentation on their project proposal.
5. Students must satisfactorily complete the core exam.

Course Expectations

Etiquette: Course participants must be courteous to the professor and fellow students. Attend class on time, listen to fellow students when they talk, disagree (or agree) with others' arguments professionally. Cell phones should be silent and kept out of sight.

Laptops: Aside from particular times in class when allowed, laptops are required to be closed and left out of sight. Alternate accommodations, if necessary, can be made in the case of documented necessity through New College's Student Disability Services office (SDS).¹

Office Hours, etc: I encourage you to stop by my office hours at any point if you have questions about the course, the readings, school, etc. In addition to formal office hours, I have an open- door policy: if the door is open, you are welcome to come in. If you want to be sure you can speak with me, setting up an appointment beforehand at jacklreilly.youcanbook.me is always a good idea.

Email: Students can generally expect a response to all e-mails within 24 hours, excepting weekends. I'm happy to answer any questions over e-mail that require less than a paragraph in response. Questions that require more than a short paragraph in response should be addressed in person.

A Note on Writing: Clear writing and argumentation is a critical element to success in this class. I strongly recommend exploring the options for writing (and revising!) assistance at the Writing Resource Center. You can schedule an appointment through the writing center here: <https://ncf.mywconline.com>

¹ Tablets are acceptable to use to reference readings so long as they will not distract you from seminar discussion. Generally, this means that, at minimum, any network connectivity is turned off, notifications are muted/silenced/ paused, and you remain solely apps dedicated to reading

Course Overview

Week	Research Design	Project Development	Your Project Stage	Work Due
1	What is Science?	Political Science as a Discipline	Overview	Assignment 0: Exploratory Interests
2	Social Science Theories & Models	Finding Interesting Topics	Topic & Question	-
3	Descriptive Inference	Library Research*	Literature Investigation	Assignment #1: Preliminary Question
4	Causal Inference	Analyzing and Interpreting Articles	Theory	-
5	Observation	Writing I: The Process	Conceptual Hypotheses	-
6	Measurement	Identifying and Managing Data*	Annotated Bibliography	Assignment #2: Annotated Bibliography
7	Research Methodologies	Writing II: The Literature Review*	Operational Hypotheses	CORE EXAM
B	BREAK			
8	Experiments	Human Subjects Research	Literature Review	<i>College PAOC and/or Thesis Prospectus forms due this week!</i>
9	Small-N Studies	The IRB (Institutional Review Board)*	Data Identification	Assignment #3: Literature Review
10	Large-N Studies	Writing III: Revising*	Research Design	-
11	Formal Modeling	Presentation & Peer Review	Revising & Editing	-
12	BACC WEEK		Peer Review	Assignment 4: Research Design
13	Presentations	Where to go from here?	Presentation	PRESENTATIONS Peer Review
14				
F	FINALS WEEK		Final Paper	PROSPECTUS

Readings (January 31, 2018 Revision)

Week 1: Assignment Due!

Lecture: Political "Science"

RD: What is Science?

PD: Political Science as a Discipline

- Baglioni, chapter 1

Week 2

RD: Social Science Theories & Models

- KKV, chapter 1
- Fowler, James. 2008. "The Colbert Bump in Campaign Donations: More Truthful than Truthy." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 41: 533-539.
- *Optional:* Kellstedt & Whitten, chapter 2 [drive]

PD: Finding Interesting Research Topics

- Lave & March, "An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences," chapter 2&3 [drive]
- Baglioni, chapter 2

Week 3: Assignment Due!

RD: Descriptive Inference

- KKV, chapter 2
- Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture."
- Mulligan, Kenneth. 2008. "The 'Myth' of Moral Values Voting in the 2004 Presidential Election." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 41: 109-114.

PD: Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Articles

- Baglioni, chapter 3

Week 4

Lecture: How do I know I've found what I think I've found?

RD: Causal Inference

- KKV, chapter 3
- Ross, Michael L. 2008. "Oil, Islam, and Women." *The American Political Science Review* 102(1): 107-23.
- *Optional:* Mycoff, Jason, Michel Wagner, and David Wilson. 2009. "The Empirical Effects of Voter ID Laws: Absent or Present?" *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 42: 121-126.
- *Optional:* Kellstedt & Whitten, chapter 3 [drive]

PD: Library Research

- *Get started on Becker chapters for next week*

Week 5

RD: Observation

- KKV, chapter 4
- Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis*, 2(1): 131-150.

PD: Writing I: The Process

- Becker, chapters 1-3

Week 6: Assignment Due!

Lecture: How do I measure something?

RD: Measurement

- KKV, chapter 5
- Niemi, Richard G., Stephen C. Craig, and Franco Mattei. "Measuring Internal Political Efficacy in the 1988 National Election Study." *American Political Science Review*, 85(4): 1407-1413.
- Paxton, Pamela. 2000. "Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization." *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 35: 92-111.

PD: Writing II: The Literature Review

- Baglioni, chapter 4
- Becker, chapter 8

Week 7: Core Exam

RD: Research Methodologies

- KKV, chapter 6
- *Recommended:* Laitin, Collier, Rogowski, Tarrow, King, Keohane, and Verba. 1995. "Review Symposium: The Qualitative-Quantitative Disputation: Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba's *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*." *American Political Science*, 89(2): 454-481.

PD: Managing & Identifying Data

- Baglioni, chapter 7
- KKV, pp 23-28 (review)
- *Optional:* Long, "The Workflow of Data Analysis", chapter 1.
- *Optional:* Elman and Kapiszewski, "Sharing Qualitative Data: the launch of the Qualitative Data Repository"
- *Optional:* Browse <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/index.jsp> and <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/datamanagement/dmp/index.html>

Week 8

Lecture: *Experimentation and Human Subjects*

RD: Experiments

- Druckman, James et al. 2011. "Experiments: An Introduction to Core Concepts." *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. [drive]
- Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a field experiment in Benin." *World Politics*, 55: 399-422.
- Milgram, Stanley. 1963. "The Behavioral Study of Obedience." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. 67(4): 371-378.

- Cover, Albert, and Bruce Brumberg. 1982. "Baby Books and Ballots: the Impact of Congressional Mail on Constituent Opinion." *The American Political Science Review* 76(2): 347–59.

PD: Ethics and Human Subjects Research

- Browse <http://www.prisonexp.org>
- Browning, Lynnley. "Professors Offer a Reality Check For Politicians" <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/31/arts/professors-offer-a-reality-check-for-politicians.html>

Week 9: Assignment Due!

Lecture: Small-N Studies

RD: Case Studies & Archival Work

- George & Bennett, "Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences," chapter 1. [drive]
- Spruyt, Hendrik. 1994. "Institutional Selection in International Relations: State Anarchy as Order." *International Organization* 48(4): 527–57.
- Barrett, David M, 1991. "Doing "Tuesday Lunch" at Lyndon Johnson's White House: New Archival Evidence on Vietnam Decision-making." *PS: Political Science and Politics*.
- Fenno, Richard. 1977. "US House Members in their Constituencies: An Exploration." *American Journal of Political Science* 71(3): 883-917.
- Falletti, Tulia G. 2010. *Decentralization and Subnational Politics in Latin America*. Cambridge University Press.
- Review KKV chapter 2
- *Optional secondary readings may be found in the google drive on process tracing, qualitative vs. quantitative work, and case studies*

PD: IRB

- Watch IRB information video [drive]

Week 10

Lecture: Large-N Studies

RD: Surveys & Large-N Observational Studies

- Krosnick, Jon A. 1999. "Survey Research." *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50: 537-67.
- Gabel, Matthew. 1998. "Public Support for European Integration: An Empirical Test of Five Theories."
- Lowry, William R. 1998. "Public Provision of Intergenerational Goods: The Case of Preserved Lands." *American Journal of Political Science*, 42(4): 1082-1107.
- Mann, Thomas, and Raymond Wolfinger. 1980. "Candidates and Parties in Congressional Elections." *The American Political Science Review* 74(3): 617–32.
- Boydston, Amber E., Anne Hardy, and Stefaan Walgrave. 2014. "Two Faces of Media Attention: Media Storm Versus Non-Storm Coverage." *Political Communication* 31(4): 509–31.
- *Optional:* Johnston, Richard. 2008. "Survey Methodology." *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*.

PD: Revising & Reviewing Work

- Becker, chapter 4
- Baglioni, chapter 6

Week 11

Lecture: Game Theory

RD: Formal & Complex Systems Modeling

- Lave & March, "An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences," chapter 4. [drive]
- McCain, "Game Theory: A Non-Technical Introduction to the Analysis of Strategy," chapter 1. [drive]
- Miller & Page, "Complex Adaptive Systems," chapters 1-2. [drive]

PD: Presenting Your Work and Peer Review

- Patterson, David. "How to Give a Bad Talk." [in class]

Week 12: Assignment Due!

Week 13: Presentations

Week 14: Presentations

NCF Course Policy Statements

Students with Disabilities: Any student who, because of a documented disability, may require special arrangements and/or accommodations, should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are NOT permitted to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please visit Student Disability Services in HCL 3 and/or email disabilityservices@ncf.edu

Religious Observance: No student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time when s/he would normally be engaged in religious observance or on a day or time prohibited by his or her religious belief. Students are expected to notify their instructors if they intend to be absent for a class or announced examination, in accordance with the policy, prior to the scheduled meeting.

Academic Integrity: Any suspected instance of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the College's policy on academic dishonesty.