

Multidisciplinary Research Design in Social Sciences (Seminar)

Spring 2022/2023

Department of Social Sciences

Universidad Carlos III de Madrid

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Office: 18.2.E.14

Office Hours: Wed 2-4 PM

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

The goal of this practicum is to prepare you to undertake a social science inquiry. The seminars will encourage you to identify your research topic of interest and guide you in formulating research questions and theories, as well as choosing appropriate data and methods to enable the systematic study of your chosen social phenomenon. We aim to demonstrate how new or improved evidence shapes theories and how theories guide inquiry into the social world.

The seminar consists of two parts. In the first half of the course, we will discuss the philosophy of social science, the main components of each research project—the research question, the theory, concepts, and measurement—as well as one of the aims of social scientific work, inference. In the second half of the course, we will discuss data and its usage by exposing you to chosen qualitative and quantitative research designs and their inspiring applications. All along the seminar, you will be pursuing your own (group) research in dialogue with the class. In this way, we hope to yoke the course to your BA theses.

SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

The seminars account for 50 percent of your final course grade.

Participation in class discussion is crucial for a successful seminar. You are expected to have carefully done all the required reading and to be prepared to discuss them in detail. As a way of preparation for the discussion in class, you will be asked to complete weekly quiz assignments on Aula Global. Participation will account for 20 percent of your final grade.

You are also expected to plan a group research project that will be the basis of the remaining 30 percent of your final grade. We expect you to choose a research topic and pursue it over the course of the semester. You will write it up and present it in one of the two last seminars. The paper should be 10 pages-long (12 pt Times New Roman, double-spaced, paginated, 2.5-cm margin). The presentation should be 10 minutes-long.

ELECTRONIC ETIQUETTE

If you have questions regarding this seminar, post them on our common Aula Global forum, unless your question/comment is sensitive. I encourage you to also take advantage of the office hours.

You are requested not to use your cell phones in class. This will allow more focused discussion and intellectual exchange. Laptops/ipads should only be used if this will facilitate actively engaging with readings in class.

SCHEDULE DETAILS

SEMINAR PART 1: OVERVIEW OF MAIN RESEARCH COMPONENTS AND AIMS.

Week 1. Jan 31/Feb 1. Seminar Overview.

No readings.

Week 2. Feb 7/8. An Inspiring Research Example.

Required readings:

1. Snow, John. [1855] 1965. *On the Mode of Communication of Cholera*. (SKIM ONLY – take 20 minutes)
2. Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences*. (Pages 12-15)
3. Tufte, Edward R. 1997. *Visual and statistical thinking: Displays of evidence for making decisions*. (Pages 5-16)
4. Freedman, David. 1991. “Statistical Models and Shoe Leather.” *Sociological Methodology*. (Pages 294-300)

Week 3. Feb 14/15. Description and Inference, Correlation and Causation.

Required readings

1. (Theory) King, Gary, Keohane, Robert O., & Verba, Sidney. 1994. *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton University Press. (Pages 3-9)
2. (Theory) de Mesquita, Ethan Bueno, and Anthony Fowler. 2021. *Thinking clearly with data: A guide to quantitative reasoning and analysis*. Princeton University Press. (Pages 13-24)
3. (Application) Desmond, Matthew. 2012 “Eviction and the reproduction of urban poverty.” *American Journal of Sociology* 118.1.

Supplementary readings

- (Podcast) Hobbes, Michael and Peter Shamshiri. 10 Nov 2022. “Malcolm Gladwell’s ‘Outliers’.” *If Books Could Kill*. <https://podcasts.apple.com/si/podcast/if-books-could-kill/id1651876897>

- de Mesquita, Ethan Bueno, and Anthony Fowler. 2021. *Thinking clearly with data: A guide to quantitative reasoning and analysis*. Princeton University Press. (Pages 37-49)
- Altenburger, Kristen M., and Daniel E. Ho. 2018. "When algorithms import private bias into public enforcement: The promise and limitations of statistical debiasing solutions." *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* 175.1.

Week 4. Feb 21/22. Research Question and Theory.

Required readings:

1. (Theory) Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory building and research design in comparative politics*. (pages 27-35)
2. (Theory) King, Gary, Keohane, Robert O., & Verba, Sidney. 1994. *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. (Pages 14-23)
3. (Application) Abdelgadir, Aala, and Vasiliki Fouka. 2020. "Political secularism and Muslim integration in the West: Assessing the effects of the French headscarf ban." *American Political Science Review* 114.3.

Supplementary readings

- Geddes, Barbara. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory building and research design in comparative politics*. (pages 37-47)

Week 5. Feb 28/Mar 1. Concepts and Measurement.

Required readings

1. (Theory) King, Gary, Keohane, Robert O., & Verba, Sidney. 1994. *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. (Pages 151-155)
2. (Application) Galtung, Johan. 1969. "Violence, peace, and peace research." *Journal of peace research* 6.3.
3. (Application) Kalyvas, Stathis. 2006. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press. (Pages 19-20 & 48-51)
4. (Application) Kalyvas, Stathis, and Scott Straus. 2020. "Stathis Kalyvas on 20 years of studying political violence." *Violence: An International Journal* 1.2.

Supplementary readings

- Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. 2018. *The fundamentals of political science research*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 5)
- Shively, W. Phillips. 2017. *The craft of political research*. Routledge. (Chapters 4, 5)

Week 6. Mar 7/8. Forget everything I have taught you, or ontology and epistemology.

Required readings

1. (Theory) Della Porta, Donatella, and Michael Keating, eds. 2008. *Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences: A pluralist perspective*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 2)
2. (Application) Johnson, James. 2006 "Consequences of positivism: A pragmatist assessment." *Comparative Political Studies* 39.2.

Supplementary readings

- Hall, Peter A. 2003. "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Politics". In Mahoney, J. and Rueschemeyer, D. (eds) *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press. 373-401.

Week 7. Mar 14/15. Group Working Session.

You choose your readings.

In this session we will form 6 groups in which you will continue working until the end of the semester. As a preparation for the class, you are asked to prepare and complete the quiz on Aula Global. Here are the quiz questions:

Quiz:

1. What is your ontological approach to research? Will you want to pursue a positivist study, like most of the work that we are discussing? If not, flag here the philosophy of science that you would like to pursue.
2. What is the topic you would like to investigate?
3. What is the research question you would like to investigate?
4. What articles and books are relevant to your question?
5. What are the existing theories related to your question? (Briefly mention names and relevant authors)
6. What are the key concepts of your study? Are their definitions controversial? Which definition do you want to adopt?
7. How will you operationalize and measure your concepts?
8. Will you want to use qualitative or quantitative data and research methods?

SEMINAR PART 2: SPECIFIC RESEARCH DESIGNS.

Week 8. Mar 21/22. Process Tracing Within Case Studies.

Required readings

1. (Theory) Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel. 2015. "Process tracing: From philosophical roots to best practices" in Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel. eds. *Process tracing*. Cambridge University Press.
2. (Application) Tannenwald, Nina. 1999. "The nuclear taboo: The United States and the normative basis of nuclear non-use." *International organization* 53.3.

Supplementary readings

- (Formal rendering of the theory) Bennett, Andrew. 2015. "Appendix" in Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel. eds. *Process tracing*. Cambridge University Press.
- (Theory) Mahoney, J. (2012). The logic of process tracing tests in the social sciences. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 41(4), 570-597.
- (Theory/Application) Lyall, J. (2015). "Process tracing, causal inference, and civil war" in Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel. eds. *Process tracing*. Cambridge University Press.

- (Application) Schwartz, Rachel A., and Scott Straus. 2018. "What drives violence against civilians in civil war? Evidence from Guatemala's conflict archives." *Journal of Peace Research* 55.2.

Week 9. Mar 28/29. Ethnographic Research.

Required readings

1. (Theory) Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. MacLean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field research in political science: Practices and principles*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 7)
2. (Application) English, Jasmine, and Bernardo Zacka. 2021. "The Politics of Sight: Revisiting Timothy Pachirat's Every Twelve Seconds." *American Political Science Review* 116.3.

Supplementary readings

- Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. Crown.
- Fujii, Lee Ann. "Five stories of accidental ethnography: Turning unplanned moments in the field into data." *Qualitative Research* 15.4 (2015): 525-539.
- Schatz, Edward. "Introduction: Ethnographic Immersion and the Study of Politics." *Political ethnography*. University of Chicago Press, 2021. 1-22.

Week 10. Apr 11/12. Experimental Designs.

Required readings

1. (Theory) Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2012. *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*. WW Norton. (Pages 5-15)
2. (Application) Kalla, Joshua L., and David E. Broockman. 2020. "Reducing exclusionary attitudes through interpersonal conversation: Evidence from three field experiments." *American Political Science Review* 114.2.

Supplementary readings

- Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. 2012. "Suggested Field Experiments for Class Projects" in Gerber, Alan S., and Donald P. Green. *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*. WW Norton. (Pages 453-460)

Week 11. Apr 18/19. Natural Experiments.

Required readings

1. (Theory) Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural experiments in the social sciences: a design-based approach*. Cambridge University Press. (Pages 15-34)
2. (Application) Eggers, Andrew C. 2015. "Proportionality and turnout: Evidence from French municipalities." *Comparative Political Studies* 48.2. (example of a natural experiment)

Supplementary readings

- Dunning, Thad. 2012. *Natural experiments in the social sciences: a design-based approach*. Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 7: The Central Role of Qualitative Evidence, pages 208-228)

Week 12. Apr 25/26. Mixed-method designs.

Required readings:

1. (Theory) Lieberman, Evan S. 2005. "Nested analysis as a mixed-method strategy for comparative research." *American political science review* 99.3.
2. (Theory) Ahmed, Amel, and Rudra Sil. 2012. "When multi-method research subverts methodological pluralism—or, why we still need single-method research." *Perspectives on Politics* 10.4.
3. (Application) Magaloni, Beatriz, Edgar Franco-Vivanco, and Vanessa Melo. 2020. "Killing in the slums: Social order, criminal governance, and police violence in Rio de Janeiro." *American Political Science Review* 114.2.

Week 13. May 3. Final Presentations.

Week 14. May 9/10. Final Presentations.