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1111 Tydings

GVPT 700:
Scope and Methods of Political Science

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A political scientist without tools is no political scientist. This course therefore surveys the scope of methods employed in contemporary political science. We begin by discussing professionalism, or what you need to become a political scientist.

I. Professionalism

Graduate school in political science teaches students how to enter a research tradition and scholarly community. Students are instructed how to identify a tradition's important questions, propose answers that interest the community, and design strategies that its members believe contribute significant normative and empirical answers. Students are also taught how to communicate their ideas to the community in the form of a professional essay. Most graduate courses cover these issues informally; in this course we are explicit.

This course therefore trains graduate students to produce and then convey knowledge to political scientists, including those who labor in traditions and communities doing interdisciplinary work. While many of the issues we discuss are unique to particular fields of political science, other issues are common to the entire discipline, and indeed all of the social sciences.

We thus discuss the choices – the diverse kinds of political science – available to scholars. In discussing the basics of all social inquiry, we take a broad view of the human sciences: case-centered approaches, for example interpretive theory and hermeneutics, and theory-centered approaches, for example statistical and mathematical modeling, are explored. We also take a broad view of evidence: quantitative and qualitative, contemporary and historical, statistical and ethnographic, and behaviors and texts are discussed. Specific methodologies that we study include survey research, experiments, quasi-experiments, case studies, comparative case studies, aggregate data analyses, archival work, and ethnographic observation.

II. Becoming a Political Scientist

To become a political scientist, you need to learn the conceptual language, theoretical ideas, and research methodologies that support two basic research skills. The first is *critique*. Unlike novels, short stories, plays, and poems, social scientific writing is expository. To grasp an article or book in political science, you will not need detective work to decode its symbolism. Nevertheless, hard work is required. Social scientific reading is strategic reading involving prereading. To find the main arguments or central concerns of a book, scan its title, preface, table of contents, publisher's blurb, abstract, introduction, and conclusion. Also examine each chapter's opening and closing paragraphs, as well as the section headings. After discovering the important questions or problems, you can begin to anticipate what will happen in the text and to appreciate how the whole is put together from its parts. Young scholars should therefore begin by reading books outside-in, by moving from the origins (first chapter) and implications (last

chapter) to the empirics (the middle chapters). As their skills develop in methods courses, many come to see the virtues of reading books from the inside-out: from case, comparative, and statistical findings (tables and figures) to the motivational glosses authors provide. After studying the text in this manner, you can move to context: the problem situation or origins of the work. Finally, you arrive at a serious discussion that compares texts. Understanding the construction of social science writing allows you to become an active reader, analyzing and questioning the material, challenging and criticizing the author.

Reading carefully and deeply is the foundation of political science. So here is your first tip for graduate school: Spend some time thinking about how you will read books and articles in political science. Know that faculty complain that students do not read the assigned materials, let alone grasp it. Since students complain that the materials are “too much,” in other words, that they are overwhelmed, time spent thinking about the skill of reading will be time well spent.

The second skill you need to become a political scientist is *creativity*. After a while, it is all-too-easy to be the critical gadfly, approaching literature in the discipline with condescension and looking at hard-working political scientists with scorn. Graduate students need to be able to appreciate good social science as well as to criticize bad social science. Andrew Abbott’s *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences* teaches you how to read social science literature without defeating yourself. You will learn how to tackle a classic, like Barrington Moore’s *Social Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship*, or an important recent book, like Frances Lee’s *Beyond Ideology: Politics, Principles and Partisanship in the U.S.*, by asking the basic question that motivates practicing political scientists: Can I do better? You will learn how to use “the literature” as a jumping-off point to identify a new research frontier, recognize a core problem, formulate an important argument, and design a study to evaluate causal claims. In other words, you will learn how to TTTT – Think Things Through Thoroughly.

As your skills of critique grow into skills of creativity, you will be able to read books and articles, so that you can talk about books and articles, and then write your own books and articles, for those who like to read books and articles. Becoming part of the flow of the discipline allows you to take pleasure in what you are doing. You will be able to see political science as a fascinating intellectual domain that poses challenges that you can engage with depth and holds problems that you can address with complexity. Classic work in political science inspires and excites, elevates and perfects. You can take away from this course the tools required for bibliotherapy: knowledge of the research methods we teach allows you to profit from reading great social-scientific literature.

Speaking more practically, this course aims to teach graduate students the business of political science, or how to publish scholarly articles and write academic dissertations. It teaches, in other words, budding academicians and young scholars how to motivate a literature review, propose an interesting and important argument, develop a compelling research proposal, and ultimately produce a publishable essay that can be

submitted as a journal article and/or used as a chapter in a dissertation. In a word, our goal is professionalization.

III. Graduate Education at Maryland

Since statistical methodology is the basic method in all of the social sciences, the scope and methods of political science also includes statistics. This course, GVPT 700, is therefore taught in tandem with an introductory statistics course, GVPT 622. Unless you enter graduate school with a strong background in statistics, the two courses should be taken together. I therefore assume that you are currently taking GVPT 622, or that you have already had the equivalent background in statistics.

IV. Course Structure

The course begins with a foil and a model. Our foil is Standard Causal Analysis (SCA) or Undergraduate Political Science (UPS). Unless you are comfortable with the basics of Spreadsheet Social Science (SSS), you will be unable to communicate with other political scientists and hence you will be unable to succeed in our discipline. GVPT 622 elaborates GVPT 700's elementary discussion of measureable variables and regression equations (sometimes called Ordinary Least Squares Political Science or OLSPS). Our model is the more challenging Exemplary Political Science or Political Science for Graduate Students. This course will use examples from American Politics, Comparative Politics, and International Relations to illustrate good work, albeit always flawed work that could stand improvement. In parallel fashion, GVPT 622 will show you how to interpret and use regression analysis so that you can conduct more sophisticated research and thereby produce better theories of politics.

The remainder of this course elaborates the three components of Exemplary Political Science that will be emphasized in your subsequent coursework. We discuss problem situations, and offer students heuristics for discovery while they think and work in the midst of things. We then turn to causal methodologies. Since a political scientist without tools is no political scientist, we discuss what could be called the Five C's of Causality: Causal Counterfactuals, Causal Choice, Causal Constructivism, Causal Capacity, and Causal Complexity. Using this rubric, a dozen current methodologies are surveyed. Finally, we discuss the types of evidence used by political scientists. Data collection methods include aggregate data, archival records, event data, discourse analysis, survey research, and ethnographic fieldwork. We conclude the course by looking at the causal pragmatism, or the multitheory and multimethod research, that currently characterizes a discipline moving beyond SCA, UPS, and OLSPS.

Each week's reading assignments comprise, firstly, a scholarly example of the theme or method covered and, secondly, core readings. These books and articles will be discussed in class. The syllabus also includes suggested readings that you might find

useful in preparing for comps. The entire set of readings is designed to allow graduate students to appreciate how our discipline operates.

The syllabus compiles additional material that graduate students should find useful. I have included hand-outs on critical and creative literature evaluations, academic writing, research papers, journal submissions, graduate careers, and job talks.

Finally, the syllabus summarizes the course and its meetings. Please note that I wrote this syllabus as I would write an academic paper: I said what I was going to do, I did it, and then I said what I had done.

V. Course Requirements

Students who take this course must satisfy four basic requirements.

1. Classroom participation (20%)

Graduate students are expected to complete each week's readings and participate in class discussions. Everyone will be called upon to speak at least once each week, and seminar members will be asked to reflect on specific readings. *This is an important requirement.* Students who repeatedly come to class unprepared to enter into scholarly discussions do not belong in graduate school. Since they will be discussed, *bring the readings to class* and be prepared to ask and answer questions about the literature at hand. Think of the ritual of the seminar as involving its members challenging each other's ideas and offering reasons for disagreements. Respectful discourse allows everyone to learn something new. Graduate students will turn out to be your toughest critics and therefore your best friends.

2. Classroom presentations (20%)

Students will form "working groups" that make class presentations examining the week's readings. They will lead class discussions, asking and answering questions, and employing hand-outs that critically and creatively evaluate the literature. I will listen carefully, sometimes trying to move things along, and at other times raising important points that were missed. I will conclude the meeting by connecting the week's material to the grand themes of the course.

3. Literature Summaries (20%)

You're a busy person. What's the most important thing that you learned from this week's readings? Each week students will compose summaries indicating what they believe to be the most interesting or significant ideas – those worth pondering critically and engaging creatively – that they encountered. For each chapter or article, write a couple of paragraphs describing the core argument (assumptions/concepts and conclusions/findings). In other words, indicate what you have learned from the readings.

If there is something that you do not understand, or something that you do not like, indicate that too. By 12 noon of the day before class, post your talking points on the class's on-line discussion BLACKBOARD. You are expected to share your ideas with your classmates: *Late posts will be penalized*. Check our website daily, look for announcements, and follow the discussion threads. As you prepare for comps, these summaries will turn out to be quite valuable.

4. Final Design (40%)

Students will write a research proposal for a publishable paper. Guidelines appear toward the end of the syllabus. Preliminary designs will be discussed with me during at least two private meetings. In addition, at various times during the course, students will be asked to make brief presentations of their research proposals. Final designs, which are limited to ten pages, will be presented the last two days of class. I will read and comment on as many preliminary versions as you like: my goal is to help you, not to grade you. Since this assignment is based on what you can accomplish *during* the course, extensions will *not* be granted.

Based on these four requirements, I assign grades as follows:

A = excellent potential as a political scientist

B = good graduate student

C = you need to find another line of work

VI. Informal Requirement

The workshops, which meet again this semester, are forums for the discussion of theories and methods, topics and issues, in political science.

One week before the meeting, paper presenters typically submit a work in progress. Assigned critics begin the discussion by offering specific and detailed comments. A general discussion ensues. Participants in our ritual include guest speakers, resident faculty, and graduate students. Graduate students are always given the first couple of questions.

Since the workshops are pluralist in methodology and epistemology, we encourage work from a wide range of perspectives and approaches. All students, faculty, and scholars interested in the topic are encouraged to join. Since everyone is welcome, please forward workshop information to your friends and colleagues, especially to other graduate students, who might be interested.

Since entering graduate students often switch fields, you should join various list serves and attend different workshops. These diverse experiences will help you decide the sort of political scientist you want to become.

You can find information about the workshops on the department's web site:

<http://www.bsos.umd.edu/gvpt/>

Most announcements are made via the list serve. Papers will usually be available on the list serve shortly before the talks.

Members of this class are expected to attend the workshops. You must attend at least one workshop a week. If you are not interested in the topic or methodology in your field's workshop, you are expected to find another workshop that does interest you and to attend its meeting. Why? You just might learn something. It could happen. And I'll be asking about the workshops in class.

VII. Books To Acquire

The following books are required reading:

Andrew Abbott. 2004. *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Henry E. Brady and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. 2nd Ed. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Brians, Craig Leonard, Lars Willnat, Jarol B. Manheim, and Richard C. Rich. 2011. *Empirical Political Analysis*. 8th Ed. Boston: Longman.

They are available for purchase in the University Book Center.

VIII. Course Organization

Class meets Tuesdays 9:30-12:15 in Tydings 1111. You can also speak to me in my office, 1140B Tydings Hall. I will hold regular office hours one hour before class. If these times are inconvenient, call me at 301.405.4147 and make an appointment, or drop by and see if I'm available. It is important for graduate students to get to know faculty and for faculty to get to know graduate students. I am eager to meet you, so stop by for a chat.

Schedule of Meetings

Professionalism: Reading, Writing, and Talking Political Science

Week 1 (September 2)

In this first session, I will discuss the syllabus in the context of analyzing the nuts and bolts of graduate school.

Introduction: A Foil and A Model

Week 2 (September 9)

1. Foil: Standard Causal Analysis or Undergraduate Political Science

We begin with what you should have learned as an undergraduate major in political science. As indicated in the chart on page 29, Standard Causal Analysis (SCA) or Spreadsheet Social Science (SSS) involves thinking in terms of measureable variables entered into a regression equation (Ordinary Least Squares Political Science).

Thinking probabilistically is the essential starting point for contemporary research in political science. Unless you are able to think and work in the statistical world of variables and regressions, you will not be able to write a research paper, a dissertation prospectus, and eventually a dissertation. I cannot stress this point enough. Many third- and fourth-year graduate students are unable to answer the most basic questions about their research: What is your dependent variable? What is your independent variable? What are your cases? We therefore begin the course with a two week summary of the basics of political science research.

1.1. Principles

Week 2 discusses some elementary principles of research: science, literature reviews, and research reports. We study these principles in light of three of the most cited articles in the history of the *American Political Science Review*. The exemplars come from American politics, comparative politics, and international relations.

Exemplars:

Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes. 1963. "Constituency Influence in Congress." *American Political Science Review* 57 (March): 45-56.

Seymour Martin Lipset. 1959. "Some Social Requisites of democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy." *American Political Science Review* 53 (March): 69-105

Michael W. Doyle. 1986. "Liberalism and World Politics." *American Political Science Review* 80 (December): 1151-1169.

Core Readings:

Brians et al.
Chapter 1. Research as a Process
Chapter 3. Developing Your Literature Review: What Others Say About Your Topic
Chapter 22. The Research Report: Diagramming A Sample Article
Chapter 23. Summary: Overview of a Research Report

Suggested Readings:

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Hempel, Carl G. (1966). *Philosophy of Natural Science*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
Platt, John Rader (1966). "Strong Inference." In John Rader Platt, *The Step to Man*. New York: Wiley.

Week 3 (September 16)

1.2. Description: Concepts, Variables, Measurements

Description involves a basic triad of concepts-variables-measurements. Other useful descriptive heuristics include conceptual frameworks, variable checklists, and typologies or classifications. After we code data, measurements are evaluated by their validity and reliability.

Core Readings:

Brians et al.
Chapter 5. From Abstract to Concrete Operationalization and Measurement
Chapter 14. Coding Data: Preparing Observations for Analysis

Suggested Readings:

- Goertz, Gary. 2008. "Concepts, Theories, and Numbers: A Checklist for Constructing, Evaluating, and Using Concepts or Quantitative Measures." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 97-118.
- Collier, David, Jody LaPorte and Jason Seawright. 2008. "Typologies: Forming Concepts and Creating Categorical Variables." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 152-173.
- Abdelal, Rawi, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott, Eds. 2009. *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1.3. Explanation: Theories, Laws, Hypotheses

Most social scientists aim to be theorists. Given the diversity of social science, what could "theory" then possibly mean? We discuss the differences between several types of theory: general and middle range (or islands of theory); laws and hypotheses; universal, relativistic, and contextual; formal and informal; deductive and inductive; causal and functional; and deterministic and probabilistic.

Core Readings:

- Brians et al.
Chapter 2: Explaining the Political World: Building Theories and Hypotheses

Suggested Readings:

- Brady, Henry. 2008. "Causation and Explanation in Social Science." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 217-270.

1.4. Design: Sampling, Regression, Goodness-of-Fit

Basic research design involves sampling or choosing cases. Some version of regression analysis then fits theory to data. Hoping to learn from the data, one then assesses the goodness-of-fit of the model. Error analysis is the key to falsifying ideas and revising arguments.

Core Readings:

Brians et al.

Chapter 4. Designing Your Research and Choosing Your Qualitative and Quantitative Methods

Chapter 7. Who, What, Where, When: The Problem of Sampling

Chapter 15. Tables and Charts: Visually Describing the Data

Suggested Readings:

Stinchcombe, Arthur L. 2005. *The Logic of Social Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 4 (September 23)

2. Model: Exemplary Political Science

With the basics down, we can develop a more sophisticated political science. As you go through this week's readings, think about three evaluative criteria: truth, or whether the world is adequately comprehended; beauty, or whether the explanation is aesthetically appealing; and justice, or whether the analysis contributes to a better world. Thinking about the performance standards of truth, beauty, and justice sharpen your critical skills. Thinking about the tradeoffs stimulate creative moves that turn existing literature into your own unique contribution to the field.

Core Readings:

American Politics:

Bartles, Larry M. 2000. "Partisanship and Voting Behavior, 1952-1996." *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (January): 35-50.

Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green 2001. "Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout? A Field Experiment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65: 75-85.

Comparative Politics:

Ross, Michael L. 2001. "Does Oil Hinder Democracy." *World Politics* 53 (April): 325-61.

Valentino, Benjamin, Paul Huth, and Dylan Balch-Lindsay. 2004. "'Draining the Sea': Mass Killing and Guerrilla Warfare." *International Organization* 58 (Spring): 375-407.

International Relations:

Caprioli, Mary and Peter Trumbore. 2005. "Rhetoric versus Reality: Rogue States in International Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49 (October): 770-791.

Chapman, Terrence L. and Dan Reiter. 2004. "The United Nations Security Council and the Rally 'Round the Flag Effect." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48 (December): 886-909.

Suggested Readings:

Achen, Christopher. 1982. *Interpreting and Using Regression*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

I. Discovery: Problem Situations

Week 5 (September 30)

The best political scientists don't write literature reviews: they discover and explore problem situations. The heuristics to help you here are useful ways of thinking and working on research questions in the midst of things.

1. Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences

Core Readings:

Andrew Abbott. 2004. *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. New York: W. W. Norton.

Suggested Readings:

Lakatos, Imre (1970). "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs." In Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, Eds. *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kuhn, Thomas S. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Second Ed., Enlarged. Chicago, Il.: University of Chicago Press.

Feyerabend, Paul (1988). *Against Method*. Rev. Ed. London: Verso.

2. Thinking and Working in the Midst of Things

Core Readings:

Lichbach, Mark. 2009. "Thinking and Working in the Midst of Things: Discovery, Explanation, and Evidence in Comparative Politics." In Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman, Eds. 2009. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Suggested Readings:

- Mills, C. Wright (1959). *The Sociological Imagination*. London: Oxford University Press, chap. 1 (reread).
- Weber, Max (1946). "Politics as a Vocation." *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Eds. New York: Oxford.
- Weber, Max (1946). "Science as a Vocation." *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, Eds. New York: Oxford.
- Popper, Karl (1965). *Conjectures and Refutations: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.
- Popper, Karl (1968). *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

II. Causal Methodologies

A political scientist without tools is no political scientist. To address the challenging problem situations they face, political scientists pull out their toolbox. To operate pragmatically on research questions, they turn to a cookbook of practical recipes. And to creatively work in the midst of things, they grab their toy box and play with their toys.

Nowadays, these general research strategies are viewed as causal methods. Different types of causal problems, challenges, situations, or theories entail different causal methodologies. We will consider what could be called the Five C's of causality: Causal Counterfactuals, Causal Choice, Causal Constructivism, Causal Capacity, and Causal Complexity. Using this rubric, the course surveys a dozen different methodologies.

Week 6 (October 7)

1. Counterfactual Causality

If X happens, then Y occurs. If X does not happen, then Y does not occur. Just as a good political scientist must learn to think in terms of SCA, SSS, and OLSPS, he or she must also learn to think in terms of the counterfactuals involved in variable-based causality. We will discuss various research designs: experiments, quasi-experiments, natural experiments, and nonexperimental case and comparative case studies. We will also talk about selection effects.

1.1. Experimental Design

Exemplars:

Gerber, Alan S. and Donald P. Green 2001. "Do Phone Calls Increase Voter Turnout? A Field Experiment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 65: 75-85.

Core Readings:

Brians et al.

Chapter 6. Experimental Research: Attributing Causation Through Control.

Seawright, Jason. "Regression-Based Inference: A Case Study in Failed Causal Assessment." In Brady and Collier.

Dunning, Thad, "Design-Based Inference: Beyond the Pitfalls of Regression Analysis?" In Brady and Collier.

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2: 131-50

Suggested Readings:

Spector, Paul E. (1981). *Research Designs*. Sage University Paper Series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, 23-001. Newbury Park, Ca.: Sage.

Shadish, William R., Thomas D. Cook, and Donald T. Campbell. 2002. *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Tetlock, Philip and Aaron Belkin (1996). *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Morton, Rebecca B. and Kenneth C. Williams. 2010. *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality: From Nature to the Lab*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Morgan, Stephen L. and Christopher Winship. 2007. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia. 2011. *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Diamond, Jared and James A. Robinson, Eds. 2010. *Natural Experiments of History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Week 7 (October 14) No Class

Please schedule private meetings with me to discuss your research proposals.

Week 8 (October 21)

1.2. Case Study

Exemplars:

Mettler, Suzanne. 2005. "‘The Only Good Thing Was the G.I. Bill’; Effects of the Education and Training Provisions on African-American Veterans’ Political Participation." *Studies in American Political Development* 19 (Spring): 31-52.

Core Readings:

Levy, Jack S. 2008. "Counterfactuals and Case Studies." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 627-644.

Gerring, John. 2008. "Case Selection For Case-Study Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Techniques." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 645-684.

Suggested Readings:

Eckstein, Harry (1975). "Case Study and Theory in Political Science." In Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, Eds. *Handbook of Political Science. Volume 7: Strategies of Inquiry*. Reading, Ma.: Addison-Wesley.

Campbell, Donald T. (1975). "‘Degrees of Freedom’ and the Case Study." *Comparative Political Studies* 8 (July): 178-93.

George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Gerring, John. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1.3. Comparative Case Study

Exemplars:

Galvin, Daniel J. 2012. "Presidential Partisanship Reconsidered: Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford, and the Rise of Polarized Politics." *Political Research Quarterly*

Core Readings:

Mahoney, James and P. Larkin Terrie. 2008. "Comparative Historical Analysis in Contemporary Political Science." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 737-755.

Fearon, James D. and David D. Laitin. 2008. "Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 756-776.

Suggested Readings:

- Lijphart, Arend (1975). "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research." *Comparative Political Studies* 8 (July): 158-77.
- Lijphart, Arend (1971). "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65 (September): 682-93.
- Charles C. Ragin (1987). *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press.
- Lieberson, Stanley (1991). "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases." *Social Forces* 70 (No. 2): 307-20.

Week 9 (October 28)

2. Causal Choice

2.1. Models

Social science is about people. One assumption is that humans are goal oriented and situation interpreting: desires and beliefs cause action. Rational actor and social choice theorists use this micro assumption about individuals to derive macro conclusions about social outcomes. Put otherwise, rational choice theorists develop mathematical models and employ comparative-statics to derive observable implications.

Exemplars:

Lave, Charles A. and March, James G. (1975). *An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences*. New York: Harper & Row, chap. 1-3.

Core Readings:

- Zinnes, Dina A. (1980). "Three Puzzles in Search of a Researcher." *International Studies Quarterly* 24 (September): 315-42.
- Riker, William H. (1977). "The Future of a Science of Politics." *American Behavioral Scientist* 21 (September/October): 11-38.

Suggested Readings:

Clarke, Kevin A. and David M. Primo. 2012. *A Model Discipline: Political Science and the Logic of Representations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2.2. Comparative-Statics

Exemplars:

Denzau, Arthur T. and Michael C. Munger. 1986. "Legislators and Interest Groups: How Unorganized Interests Get Represented." *American Political Science Review* 80 (March): 89-106.

Core Readings:

Lichbach, Mark. 2003. *Is Rational Choice Theory All of Social Science?* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, chs. 3, 4.

Suggested Readings:

Olson, Mancur, Jr. (1971). *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Bates, Robert H. (1989). *Beyond the Miracle of the Market: The Political Economy of Development in Kenya*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Riker, William H. (1982). *Liberalism Against Populism: A Confrontation Between the Theory of Democracy and The Theory of Social Choice*. San Francisco, Ca.: Freeman.

Downs, Anthony (1957). *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper and Row.

North, Douglass C. (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Coleman, James S. (1987). "Microfoundations and Macrosocial Behavior." In Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, Richard Münch and Neil J. Smelser, Eds. *The Micro-Macro Link*. Berkeley, Ca.: University of California Press.

Ostrom, Elinor. 1990. *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 10 (November 4)

3. Causal Constructivism

One may adopt a different assumption about people: we are cultural beings caused by values, norms, and rules. While hermeneutic perspectives on identity and

consciousness have always been important in the social sciences, in recent years they have experienced a considerable revival. The study of interpretive theories raises several important controversies in the philosophy of the social sciences: explanation and understanding, idealism and materialism, subject and object (the insider/outsider problem), and nature and nurture. We will discuss interpretive and social-constructivist strategies.

3.1. Interpretation

Exemplars:

Scott, James C. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven: Yale University Press, ch. 1.

Core Readings:

Geertz, Clifford (1973). "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." In Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Suggested Readings:

Elster, Jon. 2007. *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 52-66.

3.2. Social Construction

Exemplars:

Wedeen, Lisa. 2008. *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, ch. 1.

Core Readings:

Wedeen, Lisa. 2002. "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science." *American Political Science Review* 96 (December): 713-28.

4. Causal Capacity

Structuralists take a macro or holistic view of social life. The social relations embodied in social kinds, networks, and institutions contain the causal capacities that cause social outcomes.

4.1. Social Kinds

Exemplars:

Kohli, Atul, 2004. *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press., pp. 1-24

Core Readings:

Lichbach, Mark. 2003. *Is Rational Choice Theory All of Social Science?* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, chs. 6.

Lichbach, Mark. Forthcoming. *Democratic Theory and Causal Methodology in Comparative Politics*. Cambridge University Press, ch. 5.

Suggested Readings:

Kalberg, Stephen (1994). *Max Weber's Comparative Historical Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Shapiro, Ian and Alexander Wendt. 1992. "The Difference that Realism Makes: Social Science and the Politics of Consent." *Politics and Society* 20 (June): 197-223.

4.2. Networks

Exemplars:

McClurg, Scott D. and Joseph K. Young. 2011. "Political Networks: Symposium." *PS* (January): 39-75.

Core Readings:

Brians et al.
Chapter 13. *Social Network Analysis: Finding Structure in a Complex World*.

Suggested Readings:

Diani, Mario and Doug McAdam. 2003. *Social Movements and Networks: Relational Approaches to Collective Action*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

4.3. Institutions

Exemplars:

Rogowski, Ronald. 1999. "Institutions as Constraints on Strategic Choice." In David A. Lake and Robert Powell, Eds. 1999. *Strategic Choice and International Relations*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 115-36.

Core Readings:

Katznelson, Ira and Barry R. Weingast. 2005. "Intersections Between Historical and Rational Choice Institutionalism." In Ira Katznelson and Barry R. Weingast, Eds. *Preferences and Situations: Points of Intersection Between Historical and Rational Choice Institutionalism*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 1-24.

Suggested Readings:

Greif, Avner. 2006. *Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy: Lessons from Medieval Trade*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lake, David A. 2009. *Hierarchy in International Relations*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Jonathan Rodden. 2009. "Back to the Future: Endogenous Institutions and Comparative Politics." Mark Irving Lichbach and Alan Zuckerman, Eds. 2009. *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Przeworski, Adam. 2004. "Institutions Matter?" *Government and Opposition*. 39 (4): 527-540.

Riker, William H. (1982). *Liberalism Against Populism: A Confrontation Between the Theory of Democracy and The Theory of Social Choice*. San Francisco, Ca.: Freeman.

Week 11 (November 11)

5. Causal Complexity

Nowadays, the many social scientists who have moved beyond variable-based and regression-situated thinking embrace more complex forms of causality. They like to think and work in terms of causal mechanisms and narrative historical processes. Multilevel agent-based models are mathematical representations of both mechanisms and processes.

5.1. Mechanisms

Exemplars:

- Freedman, David A., "On Types of Scientific Inquiry: The Role of Qualitative Reasoning." In Brady and Collier.
- Brady, Henry. "Data-Set Observations versus Causal-Process Observations: The 2000 U.S. Presidential Election." In Brady and Collier.

Core Readings:

- Lichbach, Mark. 2008. "Modeling Mechanisms of Contention: McTT's Positivist Constructivism." *Qualitative Sociology* 31 (December): 345-54.
- Hedström, Peter. 2008. "Studying Mechanisms to Strengthen Causal Inferences in Quantitative Research." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 319-335.

Suggested Readings:

- Hedström, Peter and Richard Swedberg. 1998. *Social Mechanisms: Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Elster, Jon. 2007. *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-51.

5.2. Processes

Exemplars:

- McAdam, Doug, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 7.

Core Readings:

- Bennett, Andrew, "Process Tracing and Causal Inference." In Brady and Collier.
- Collier, David. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44 (October): 823-30.
- Collier, David. 2010. "Process Tracing: Introduction and Exercises; To Accompany *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, 2nd Edition."

Suggested Readings:

- Pierson, Paul. 2004. *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Abbott, Andrew. 2001. *Time Matters: On Theory and Method*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bates, Robert H., Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry R. Weingast. 1998. *Analytic Narratives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

5.3. Multilevel Agent Based Models (ABM)

Exemplars:

Axelrod, Robert. 1997. *The Complexity of Cooperation: Agent-Based Models of Competition and Collaboration*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, ch. 7.

Core Readings:

De Marchi, Scott and Scott E. Page. 2008. "Agent-Based Modeling." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 71-94.

Suggested Readings:

Miller, John H. and Scott E. Page. 2007. *Complex Adaptive Systems: An Introduction to Computational Models of Social Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

III. Evidence

Week 12 (November 18)

While applying their causal methodologies to problem situations, political scientists are also searching for evidence to evaluate their arguments. We discuss six types of data collections: aggregate data, archival work, event data, discourse analysis, survey research, and ethnographic fieldwork.

1. Aggregate Data

Core Readings:

Brians et al.
Chapter 11. Aggregate Data: Studying Groups
Chapter 12. Comparative Research: Identifying Characteristics across Populations

2. Archival Work

Core Readings:

Lustick, Ian S. (1996). "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review* 90 (September): 605-18.

3. Event Data

Core Readings:

Koopmans, Ruud and Dieter Rucht. 2002. "Protest Event Analysis." In Bert Klandermans and Suzanne Staggenborg, Eds. *Methods of Social Movement Research*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 231-59.

Suggested Readings:

Mayhew, David R. 2007. "Events as Causes: The Case of American Politics." In Ian Shapiro and Sonu Bedi, Eds. 2007. *Political Contingency: Studying the Unexpected, the Accidental, and the Unforeseen*. New York: New York University Press, pp 99-137.

4. Discourse Analysis

Core Readings:

Brian et al.
Chapter 10. Content Analysis: Researching Textual Material

Suggested Readings:

Franzosi, Roberto. 2004. *From Words to Numbers: Narrative, Data, and Social Science*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. Survey Research

Core Readings:

Brians et al.

Chapter 8. Survey Research: Characterizing a Broader Population

Suggested Readings:

Rea, Louis M. and Richard A. Parker. 2005. *Designing and Conducting Survey Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. 3rd ed. San Francisco, Ca.: Jossey-Bass.

6. Ethnographic Fieldwork

Core Readings:

Brians et al.

Chapter 19. Direct Observation: Systematically Watching Behavior.

Chapter 20. Focus Group Research: Guided Conversations

Chapter 21. Elite and Specialized Interviewing: Discussing to Garner Knowledge

Suggested Readings:

Schatz, Edward. 2009. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2007. "Field Research." In Carles Boix and Susan C. Stokes, Eds. 2007. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Conclusion

Week 13 (November 25)

1. Causal Pragmatism

The discipline has moved beyond the OLSPS discussed during weeks two and three. Nowadays political scientists engage in multitheory and multimethod research, pluralistically mixing-and-matching different ideas and various methods.

Core Readings:

Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. "Political Science Methodology." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3-31.

- Freedman, David A. 2008. "On Types of Scientific Enquiry: The Role of Qualitative Reasoning." In Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, Eds. 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 300-318.
- Collier, David, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright. 2010. "Introduction to the Second Edition: A Sea Change in Political Methodology." In Brady and Collier.
- Brady, Henry E., David Collier, and Jason Seawright. 2010. "Refocusing the Discussion of Methodology." In Brady and Collier.
- Collier, David, Jason Seawright, and Gerardo L. Munck. 2010. "The Quest for Standards: King, Keohane, and Verba's Designing Social Inquiry." In Brady and Collier.
- Tarrow, Sidney. "Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide." 2010. In Brady and Collier.
- King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 2010. "The Importance of Research Design." In Brady and Collier.
- Collier, David, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright. 2010. "Critiques, Responses, and Trade-Offs: Drawing Together the Debate." In Brady and Collier.
- Collier, David, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright. 2010. "Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference: Toward an Alternative View of Methodology." In Brady and Collier.

Suggested Readings:

- Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mayhew, David R. 2005. *Divided We Govern*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Schattschneider, E.E. 1988. *The Semi-Sovereign People*. Australia: Wadsworth Thomson Learning

Weeks 14-15 (December 2, December 9)

2. Student Presentations of Research Designs

HOW TO CRITICALLY AND CREATIVELY EVALUATE THE LITERATURE

The rule is: Don't summarize, critically and creatively evaluate. In other words, rather than recapitulate what you read, talk about its importance and significance. You should assume that the class knows what is contained in the readings and hence you should restate only those parts of the authors' arguments which motivate your discussion. Do not lose perspective on the goal of critique: To discuss what the study attempted and to show how it could have been improved. Constructive criticism is expected rather than demonstrations of the author's incompetence or stupidity. More specifically, you need to think about four important issues.

Begin with **description**. Discuss the specific research domain that the author investigates. What is the empirical context - the central empirical problem, puzzle, or question - that the author tries to address?

Consider the author's **explanation**. What general research tradition, community, or theory does the author draw upon to address the empirical problem he or she finds interesting? Does the author provide an adequate theoretical context for the work? Does he or she draw upon the best literatures?

Explore the **deduction** of pivotal ideas. Is the theoretical statement of assumptions, things, and mechanisms precise enough to allow the deduction of interesting and testable hypotheses? In other words, does the author support his or her principal assertions and do his or her hypotheses follow from the theory? Make sure to discuss the specific causal statements, empirical hypotheses, or statistical models that the author derives from his or her theory. Are they central to the theory (i.e., their refutation would disconfirm the theory) or peripheral? Do these propositions have policy relevance, or are they politically trivial and unimportant? Think about whether the author sees all the crucial implications of his or her ideas. Are there other important conclusions which the author does not state?

Finally, think about the **evaluation** of the key ideas. Address the research design issue: How does the author examine his or her argument? Are the core hypotheses disconfirmed by empirical tests? There are several sub-issues to consider. The first is the operationalization of key variables. Are the important concepts operationally defined? Are the measurements valid and reliable? The second is the sampling of cases. Are the observations drawn from an appropriate spatial-temporal domain? The third is statistical methods. What specifically was done to examine the evidence? Are the methods and tests used appropriate for the hypotheses being tested? Are the methods correctly applied? Are the inferences drawn warranted? After you consider these three sub-issues, think about what an alternative research design – different measurements, samples, or statistical procedures – would show. Would future work along these lines have greater theoretical or policy relevance?

**INTRODUCTORY HANDOUT:
ASSESSING THE STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES OF BASIC RESEARCH
(Paul Huth)**

WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF STRONG THEORETICAL WORK?

1. Clear statement/description of any assumptions or basic concepts
2. Logical consistency in development of argument
3. Parsimonious causal explanation of decisions by political actors
4. Broad scope of generalization across time and space
5. Robustness of theoretical conclusions to small changes in assumptions

WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES OF COMPELLING EMPIRICAL TESTS OF HYPOTHESES?

1. Close fit between theoretical concepts and variables in a hypothesis and the operational measurement of variables with actual data.
2. Case selection is representative of population of cases and therefore one has confidence in generalizability of empirical findings (high external validity of results).
3. Consideration of alternative explanations.
4. Empirical findings are robust despite some changes in the measurement of variables or the selection of cases analyzed.
5. Demonstration that decisions and actions of individuals or groups were shaped by variables in hypothesis (high internal validity of results).

HEURISTICS FOR CRITICISM AND CREATIVITY

Abbott on Philosophy of Social Science

Methodological Debates

Positivism/Interpretivism

Debates about Social Ontology

Behaviorism/Culturalism

Individualism/Emergentism

Realism/Constructivism

Contextualism/Noncontextualism

Debates about Problematics

Choice/Constraint

Conflict/Consensus

Debates about Types of Knowledge

Transcendent Knowledge/Situated Knowledge

Lichbach on Social Theories

Rationality

Culture

Structure

Lichbach on Philosophy of Science

Discovery

Big Problems

Thorny Puzzles

Core Difficulty

Explanation

Big Concepts

Mechanisms

Institutions

Middle Range Causal Arguments

Evidence

Stylized Facts

Designs for Establishing Causality

Analytic Narratives

Spreadsheet Social Science

Ordinary Least Squares Political Science (Spreadsheet Social Science)	Causal Social-Scientific Thinking (Exemplary Social Science)
1. dependent variable	1. distance or difference
2. independent variable	2. mechanism
3. control variable	3. context: boundaries and scope
4. hypothesis	4. causal statement/explanatory sketch
5. cases	5. unit of analysis
6. regression equation	6. observable implications of research and null hypotheses
7. fix error term	7. learn from error

HOW TO WRITE A RESEARCH PAPER

If you look closely at articles that appear in scholarly journals in the social sciences you will discover that most of the articles follow a similar style. There are six parts to the typical research paper.

Part No. 1: Introduction

The first part of a research paper typically explores what you are studying and why. Here are some questions that you should try to address.

1. What is your general goal?
 - a. What subject do you wish to explore?
 - b. What problem do you wish to investigate?
 - c. What topic do you wish to study?

2. What is your specific purpose?
 - a. What puzzle is to be resolved?
 - b. What issue is to be confronted?
 - c. What is your particular point of view?
 - i. The theme of this paper is ...
 - ii. The argument to be investigated is ...
 - iii. I aim to ...
 - iv. I would like to demonstrate the point that ...
 - v. My solution to the problem of ... is ...

3. Why are there issues worthy of investigation?
 - a. What motivates your analysis?
 - c. What justifies your interest?
 - d. What makes the subject important?
 - e. What contributions will your study make?

Your introduction, in short, should contain a clear motivation and a well-defined thesis statement.

Part No. 2: Literature Review

The second part of a research paper typically discusses what is known and unknown, settled and debated, about the subject under study. Here are some questions that you should try to address.

1. What is the current state of our knowledge?
 - a. How does your problem relate to existing scholarship?
 - b. What does the research record on your problem look like?

- c. What do existing studies on your topic tell us?
2. What does the journal literature look like? (You must track down journal articles as well as books. Much of the good empirical work in our discipline occurs in the journals and not in books.)
 3. What do we know about your
 - a. Research program?
 - b. Theories?
 - c. Hypotheses?
 - d. Methodologies?
 - c. Evidence?
 4. What are the literature's major limitations?
 - a. Is there progress or stagnation in this field?
 - b. What are the shortcomings in theory and method?
 - c. What are the major roadblocks to progress?
 - d. What are scholars fighting about (i.e., what don't we know)?
 - e. What do scholars agree upon (i.e., what do we think we know)?
 5. What are the literature's major themes?
 - a. What are the Big Questions that scholars are asking?
 - b. What are the key issues scholars are debating?

Your literature review, in short, should be based on a carefully compiled sample of the professional literature. You then need to reflect upon that literature. Summarize thematically and avoid summarizing article by article. If you refer to theories, methods, or data, you must cite specific sources.

Part No. 3: The Theory To Be Tested

The third part of a research paper typically states the theoretical arguments to be explored. Here are some questions that you should try to address.

1. What is the research program under which you are working?
 - a. What are its core assumptions?
 - b. What are its operating rules?
2. For each hypothesis that you derive from that research program:
 - a. What is the bivariate linkage among the variables?
 - i. Can you offer a verbal statement of the causal argument?
 - ii. Can you offer a formal statement, an if-then hypothesis?
 - b. What do you want to explain?
 - i. What is your dependent variable?
 - ii. How do you define it?

- c. What is your explanation?
 - i. What is your independent variable?
 - ii. How do you define it?
- d. Under what conditions is the hypothesis true?
 - i. What are your control variables?
 - ii. What is the context under which the relationship holds?
 - iii. Where and when are the independent and dependent variables related?
- e. Why do you believe that the hypothesis is true?
 - i. What assumptions lead you to propose the hypothesis?
 - ii. Why is the hypothesis plausible?
 - iii. What is the reasoning behind the hypothesized relationship?

Your theory section, in short, should contain clearly stated ideas. You may or may not choose to put your ideas in terms of hypotheses, independent variables, dependent variables, etc. However, you must be precise about what you are trying to explain and how you are trying to explain it.

Part No. 4: The Research Design

The fourth part of a research paper typically proposes a research design to probe the theoretical arguments you have advanced. Here are some questions that you should try to address.

1. What methodological guidelines will you follow?
 - a. What is your study design or research plan?
 - i. How will you confront the issues you raised?
 - ii. How will you answer the questions you posed?
 - b. How does your research design address the problem?
 - i. Why have you chosen your approach to the problem?
 - ii. How would you justify your research choices and decisions?
2. How will you choose cases to examine?
 - a. Why were your cases selected?
 - b. Why were other cases not selected?
 - c. What type of sample are you drawing?
 - i. Individual level data or aggregate data?
 - ii. Cross-sectional or time series data?
3. How will you choose your indicators?
 - a. What is your measurement strategy?
 - b. Will you use nominal, ordinal, or interval variables?
 - c. What sources of evidence will you use?
 - i. Survey research - questionnaires, interviews
 - ii. Fieldwork - participant and non-participant observation
 - iii. Secondary analysis of statistical sources

iv. Content analysis of archives and historical records

4. How will you eliminate plausible rival hypotheses?
 - a. What test implications lend support to your hypotheses?
 - b. What test implications lead to the rejection of your hypotheses?
 - c. What challenges to falsification exist?

Your research design, in short, should contain clear procedures. You should state how you will evaluate your ideas.

Part No. 5: Findings

The fifth part of a research paper typically discusses and interprets findings. Here are some questions that you should try to address.

1. What was your purpose in analyzing the data?
 - a. Why present the data?
 - b. Why conduct the analysis?
2. What speculations follow from the data?
 - a. Where do the results lead us?
 - b. What do the results tell us about the hypotheses?
 - b. What indirect implications can be drawn?
 - c. What is the larger importance of your findings?

This part of your paper is the punch line. You must demonstrate that all your careful preparation paid off. Explore your evidence. Think about what you have found.

Part No. 6: Conclusions

The final part of a research paper typically evaluates the research. Here are some questions that you should try to address.

1. What is a succinct summary of your paper?
 - a. Purposes?
 - b. Arguments?
 - c. Methods?
 - d. Findings?
 - e. Implications?
2. What has your research accomplished?
 - a. So what?
 - b. How would you assess your work?
 - c. Did you satisfy your original motives and purposes?

- d. What was the significance of your investigation?
3. What are the limitations of your analysis?
 - a. How adequate was your work?
 - b. What self-criticisms would you raise?
 - c. How firm were your conclusions?
 - d. What shortcomings exist?
 - e. What problems remain?
 4. What does your research imply about future work?
 - a. What new theoretical speculations should be investigated?
 - b. What new policy recommendations should be developed?
 - c. What new research strategies should be explored?

In sum, the final section of your paper allows you to move beyond the data. You can offer a mini-research agenda for your upcoming honors thesis.

The Specific Requirements

Your papers must be done professionally. They must be written as if you were going to submit them to a professional journal in political science, such as the *American Political Science Review*. More specifically, your papers must meet the following requirements:

1. Typed (presumably on a word processor)
2. Stapled (no clips)
3. Double-spaced
4. Cover sheet (no plastic research covers)
5. Title page contains
 - name
 - date
 - title
 - who the paper is submitted to
 - course name and number
6. 8-1/2" x 11" paper
7. 1.5" margins on top and bottom, left and right
8. Pages numbered
9. APSA (American Political Science Association) referencing style

On Writing

You must do more than get the form right. You must write clearly and effectively. Social scientists who write well get their ideas across. Social scientists who write poorly tend to have their ideas ignored.

I can offer two suggestions for improving your writing skills. First, take a few days off and read a couple of books on writing and composition.

1. Some References on How to Write a Research Paper:

University of Chicago Press (1969). *A Manual of Style*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Mullins, Carolyn J. (1983). *A Guide to Writing and Publishing in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 3rd. Ed. New York: Wiley.

2. Some References on How to Compose Readable Prose:

Strunk, William Jr. and White, E. B. (1972). *The Elements of Style*. 2nd Ed. New York: Macmillan.

Flesch, Rudolf (1949). *The Art of Readable Writing*. New York: Collier

Barrass, Robert (1978). *Scientists Must Write: A Guide to Better Writing for Scientists, Engineers and Students*. London: Chapman and Hall.

Tichy, H. J. (1966). *Effective Writing For Engineers, Managers, Scientists*. New York: Wiley.

Van Leunen, Mary-Claire (1992). *A Handbook for Scholars*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Second, try using a grammar checker. Many are available as an auxiliary “tool” that supplements your word processor. You should know, however, that some people like grammar checkers and others hate them. My view is that grammar checkers are not perfect but do assist the novice writer by forcing him or her think about sentence structure and paragraph construction. As your writing improves, grammar checkers tend to slow you down and generally become a hindrance.

One final note. If you use a word processor, you should think about using its related tools: a speller, thesaurus, and bibliographic compiler. You should at least run a spell check on your papers. A paper with numerous typos and other spelling errors is unprofessional.

**STRUCTURING YOUR PAPERS
(CALTECH RULES)***

Barry R. Weingast
Stanford University

April 1995
Revised, April 2010

These notes provide a framework for organizing your papers. For most of you, the following format will work for most of your papers over the next few years. Although different contexts require alterations in the framework, I suggest that deviate only after you have thought through why you should deviate; that is, when you have good reason to do so. Alter or leave out some component only when you are convinced it is necessary. As with all rules of thumb, the following guidelines have useful purposes, but they should not be treated as iron laws.

Part of the point of these rules is to get you to think about the design and structure of your papers wholly apart from the arguments in them. With rare exceptions, papers do not write themselves. Transforming a good idea into a good paper is a difficult process. A clear understanding of what each part of your paper must accomplish is essential to this process.

The format that follows is appropriate for a paper that applies a theoretical idea to a particular question. Other types of papers (e.g., pure theory) require some adjustments.

The philosophy underlying this format is that papers are often their own worst enemies. Their structure and content often impede rather than aid the reader's understanding of the main point. This is especially true in circumstances where most readers (such as a referee) may not read the paper carefully.¹ Most Ph.D. students have the wrong model for writing their papers. In my experience, they typically want to imitate a great paper they have read, and often reread. Great papers typically have the quality that they are clear in the contribution; more importantly, as you read and reread them, you get more out of them each time. And yet, imitating this last point is a big mistake.

* I call these Caltech rules because I learned them while a graduate student at Caltech from the remarkable group of young professors: Bob Bates, John Ferejohn, Mo Fiorina, and especially Roger Noll. As they learned to articulate principles of good writing, they taught them to their graduate students. These notes represent a modest continuation of that tradition.

¹ Put another way: Thinking of your reader as a graduate student who will pore over and over your paper is a mistake. In order for your paper to get onto reading lists in courses, it must first be read by your professional peers who rarely read a paper in this manner, especially if it is from someone they have never heard. And referees for professional journals never read papers in this manner.

The reason is that your own experience in reading them is a bad model of a reader of your own paper. Most paper in this category have already been acclaimed as great. When a reader gets yours (e.g., as a referee, a senior person in your field to whom you have sent the paper), you will be unknown. Most these readers will therefore read it quickly. A complex, intricate, or discursive argument will confuse such a reader. She is therefore likely to misunderstand your paper, lowering the chances of acceptance at a journal.

This view of the reader sets the stage for the first rule of thumb. You must design your paper so that such a reader will not be confused or lose their way or otherwise be misled. The clearer your vision of your own work and its contribution to the field, more likely your reader is to be convinced of your point. What follows represents an attempt to provide guidelines and signposts to such a reader so that she will not make basic errors in understanding what you have to say.

The first rule of all papers is therefore:

Papers must focus on one main point. Do not attempt to enrich your paper with many asides. Avoid comments that suggest implications not essential for the development of the central point. It is far better to have a narrow, focused, and useful paper than a rich one that readers find confusing and therefore ignore.

This point has two corollaries: First, every paper should be organized around a single question; and further, the paper should state that question clearly for the reader. Second, you should be able to summarize your paper in a one paragraph abstract. If you cannot do so, you are probably not clear yourself about the argument. Perhaps you think, “but my argument is too complex...” If so, you run the danger of failing to communicate to your reader.

The Structure

Part I: Introduction. From a design point of view, the introduction to a paper is one of its most important parts of a paper. A reader who is confused by the introduction (or who fails to see that the paper deals with an important or interesting issue) is not likely to read further. And, if she does read on, she is less likely to get the main point. As a consequence, every introduction should consist of four parts:

- (a) State the problem to be solved.
- (b) Discuss the state of the art (i.e., previous work) and explain why, despite/because of this literature, there remains: (i) confusion; (ii) misunderstanding; (iii) errors; or (iv) some unresolved problem. Alternatively, present an empirical puzzle that the existing literature fails to explain.

(c) State the essence of your contribution, that is, your solution to the problem or puzzle. Give the reader a sense of how you will solve the problem; provide some confidence that if she reads the rest of your paper, she has a chance of learning something.

(d) The last paragraph of your introduction should always be a “road map” paragraph; for example: “This paper proceeds as follows. In section 1 ...”

Part II. Theory. Express the basic logic of your approach. This need not have any reference to the problem that motivated your study. Often short examples or illustrations are useful.

Applied papers should not develop a theory for its own sake. Rather, the purpose is to develop just as much as needed to solve the problem posed in the introduction (the actual solving takes place in the next section). As a consequence, this section should not contain all the implications of the approach you’ve derived; provide only those needed to make the main point of the paper. Even if your theory is very rich, be sparse with your asides and additional implications.

Part III. Application. This is the heart of an applied paper. Here you must show why your theory is relevant to the problem and demonstrate its analytical leverage. Put simply, this section resolves the problem stated in the introduction.

Part IV. Conclusions. State the main point of the paper. This can be in question/answer form or simply a short discussion of the problem and your answer. “In this paper, we have shown that...” Summarize for the reader what your main insight is and why you were able to do something that no one else has. You may also wish to point out some of the limitations of your argument or some of its additional implications. Of course, make sure your summary of the argument differs from that in the introduction!

Further Notes

(1) A good test of whether you're sufficiently focused on one main point is to see whether you can summarize the paper's main argument in one paragraph. If you fail, you are probably not ready to write a cogent paper. If you succeed, not only are you ready to write the paper, but you’ve finished a first draft of your abstract.

(2) Because papers that contain an “omnibus” of ideas are more complex to write, you should attempt them only with extreme caution. If you handle several themes poorly, the reader will lose the main thread of the argument. Too many points or asides knock the reader off the track of the essential purpose of your paper. Thus, if your theory has many implications and potential applications, write several papers.

(3) All introductions and conclusions should be self-contained. Like a several-page abstract, these should cogently present your problem, argument, and insights to the reader.

(4) Every student should own and master Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*. This is the single best "short course" in writing. From the standpoint of a busy graduate student, one of its principal strengths is that it does not attempt a comprehensive approach to writing. Instead, it presents a relatively small number of principles of style and a philosophy of writing that greatly facilitates learning to write.

Learn what rules you violate most frequently, and then learn how to look for these mistakes in your drafts.

(5) Here are two related rules of thumb about writing.

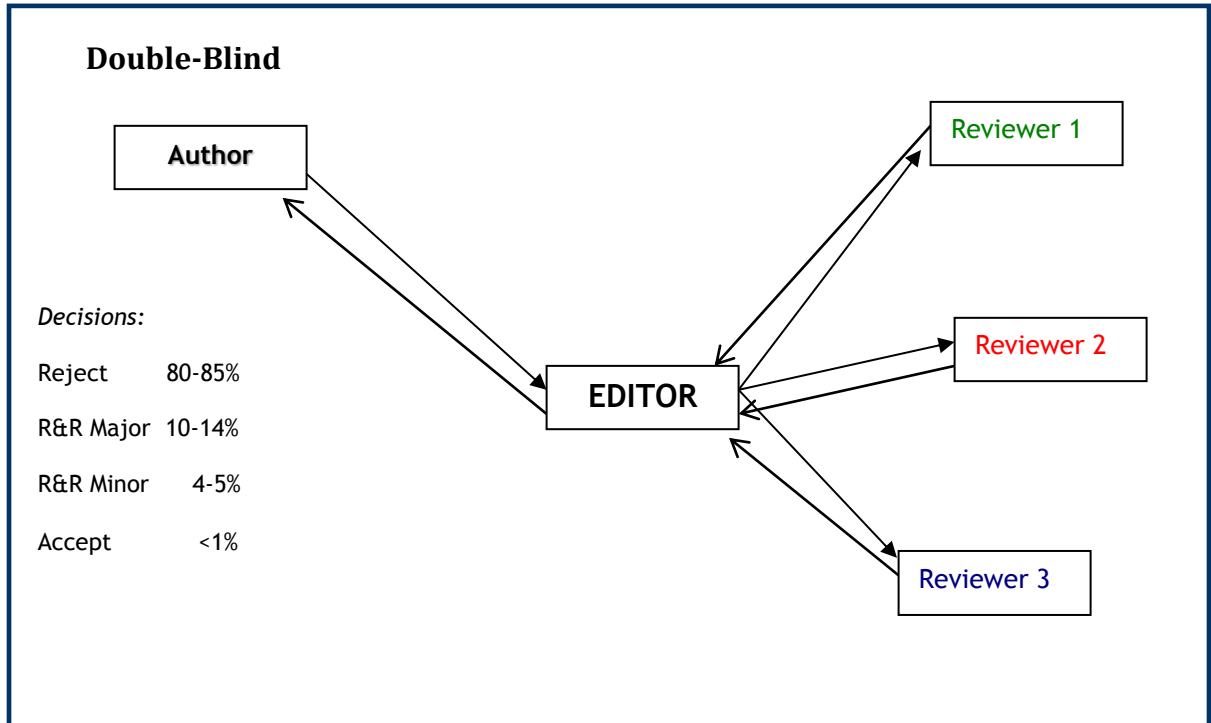
(A) Jim Alt has always said to write with "clarity and conviction." If you fail to be clear, you will confuse the reader. If you fail to write with conviction — e.g., using "woulds," "coulds," "mights," and "maybes" — you will sound like you're not sure of your argument. And most readers will not waste their time reading such an argument.

(B) Dierdre McCloskey, in her *Writing of Economics* 2nd ed. MacMillan (1999,12), provides a useful aphorism you should remember: "write not merely so that the reader can understand but so that he cannot possibly mis-understand." Incidentally, this is an excellent book about social science writing, though as the title suggests, all the examples come from economics.

(6) A final rule of thumb is to write and rewrite. And then rewrite again. Every argument can be improved, and as you argue your points with your colleagues, you should revise your papers with what you've learned. George Lucas, creator of "Star Wars," once said that great films are never finished, they're just abandoned. The same point is clearly true of writing great papers. You must go over them again and again.

Exercise: Suppose your purpose was to develop a new theoretical argument, and then apply it for illustrative purposes. Unlike the emphasis in the paper described above, the purpose here is to display a new theory and convince the reader of its importance and or usefulness. How would you adjust the rules of thumb above to handle this task?

The Review Process at Refereed Journals
Professor Jim Gimpel, Editor *APR*



The review process is “**double-blind**”: editors know who the reviewers are, and the identity of the author, but the authors and the reviewers do not know each other’s identities.

It is not a perfect system, but it probably produces better work, on average, than any other system in place.

Reviewer Selection Criteria:

1. Scholars the author cites in the bibliography.
2. Scholars not in the bibliography but who know the subject area well.
3. Scholars who are willing to do reviews for the journal.
4. Scholars who represent the readership/audience for the journal.

Timeliness of Reviews:

1. Simultaneous submissions to more than one journal are not allowed.
2. The first-round review process can take from two-months to eight months, depending primarily on the editor's management style. *Most* journal editors are responsible enough not to leave you hanging for longer than that.
3. You have the right to withdraw your submission if reviews have not been returned in a timely manner.

Editorial Decisions

The editor will render a judgment on the basis of two, three, or more, reviews. The decisions are usually as follows:

1. Reject – The **modal** response. 80-95% depending on the journal
2. Revise and Resubmit, with major revisions.
3. Revise and Resubmit, with minor revisions.
4. Accept without revisions, or technical formatting changes.

Editors are not strictly bound by the reviewer reports, but they find it difficult to go against uniformly positive reviews, or uniformly negative reviews. The editor is not to blame for your negative reviews.

Editors do wield discretion and power. In marginal cases, they will be the deciding factor.

Revising and Resubmitting

1. Follow any editorial instructions, and attempt to please the reviewers to the letter.
2. The editor will request a memo be attached to your resubmission that will detail the changes you have made in response to the referee reports. In this memo, you can explain how you dealt with conflicting advice, or any other difficulties.
3. You are not required to accept the invitation to revise-and-resubmit. Some R&Rs are just too difficult, or not worth the additional time and effort.
4. Editors and reviewers are not required to positively review, much less accept your revised manuscript. At the most highly selective journals, only 25-35 percent of resubmissions are actually accepted for publication.

Ten Common Reasons Papers are Rejected (by Reviewers)

Reviewer patience and tolerance is a finite resource. You are only allowed to make a certain number (though variable across journals) of mistakes before the reviewer recommends rejection.

1. The paper doesn't add sufficiently to the existing body of knowledge. You have failed to move our understanding, or sell your results to the reviewers.

1a. Simple replications are seldom published.

1b. Unexciting findings, or null findings, are seldom published.

1c. Dull writing about exciting findings is a common problem of bad salesmanship.

1d. Overselling weak results is also a problem, but less often than 1c.

2. The empirical work (the data analysis part) is undertheorized.

2a. The scholar found an intriguing collection of data, typically a survey, but has no theory to underpin the results.

3. The theory and data analysis do not mesh well.

3a. The theory sets up hypotheses that your data cannot test.

3b. The data and hypothesis tests tell a story, but not the one your theory suggests.

3c. Your data analysis does not answer the question you pose up front.

3d. Your data analysis is framed by the wrong literature and theory.

These are *exceedingly common problems* and ones that I struggle with in my own work even after 17 years in the business. You must ensure that your theory and your data fit well together.

4. You have omitted important elements of the literature pertaining to your topic.

5. Your methods are inappropriate, incorrect, or not up-to-date.

- 5a. Often authors have a technique in search of a topic, rather than the other way around.
- 5b. Sometimes authors do not correctly use methodological techniques.
- 5c. Sometimes a better technique exists than the one employed in the analysis.
- 6. Poor writing and bad organization of the paper. Reviewers easily lose patience with bad writing.
- 7. Too much data – data overkill. This can be distracting to readers. Think of theory and data as a ratio that must be kept in appropriate balance.
- 8. Data analysis decisions and coding of variables are poorly described, unclear, or confusing.
- 9. Measures of key constructs (independent and dependent variables) are inappropriate, unconvincing, or just wrong.
- 10. Topic of study is too narrow, not interesting to specific journal readership.

General Organization of the Journal Article

Like it or not, there are pretty standard conventions that govern the structure and writing of journal articles. You might want to do it differently, but experience has shown that going against the grain only makes it difficult to get your work into print.

Here are some general guidelines for standard, empirically oriented papers (not methods papers). Page length for each section is approximate, but not far from what is commonly expected.

1. Statement of the question of the research and 2-3 paragraphs on why it's important. Page 1.
2. Previous literature and theory that guides expectations and hypothesis formation for your study; pages 2-9.
3. Data used in your research; pages 10-11.
4. Methods used in your research; pages 11-13.
5. Presentation and description of research findings; pages 13-16.
6. Discussion of research findings, implications, and what they tell us that's new; pages 17-21.
7. Concluding summary; pages 21-22.
8. Sources (Bibliography); pages 22-23.
9. Tables; Figures, other back matter; pages 23-29.

Additional Reminders and Rules-of-Thumb from Editorial Experience

1. Avoid going over 40 pages. Some journal editors will return work without review if it exceeds 40 pages.
2. Don't present your data before page 6, or after page 16. If you begin presenting data before page 6, you probably don't have a theory. If you present the data after page 16, you've droned on too long.
3. Reviewers have a variable but finite amount of patience for detail. Stick to the big picture, and emphasize the parts of your analysis that highlight *your contribution*.
4. Avoid presenting more than 4 tables. Reviewer fatigue sets in after 4 tables of results. If you have more than 4 tables, you might have more than one paper!
5. If you have figures, maps or graphs, don't go overboard. They take up space, and they are also subject to fatigue and impatience on the part of reviewers.
6. Probably better to err on the side of overselling your results rather than under-selling them. Far more papers are rejected because reviewers cannot see your contribution than are rejected because the contribution has been overstated or exaggerated.
7. Having mentioned 6, do remember the limitations of your research, and be honest about them at the conclusion of the paper in a few sentences.
8. Shorter is commonly better. Don't resent editors/reviewers who ask you to cut length. They are often doing you a favor.

Graduate School: Planning Ahead

THEN: BE EXCITED, YOUR FIRST JOB IS IN A GOOD DEPARTMENT!!

Teach first class as a tenure-track Assistant Professor

Complete dissertation

Choose a school

Receive job offers

Make job talk

Go to job interviews (along with others)

Send out job applications

 Faculty letters

 Faculty phone calls

 Dissertation chapters

 Publications

 Undergraduate teaching portfolio

Write prospectus

Submit papers to journals

Make paper presentations at conventions

Take comprehensive exams

TA courses

Find mentors

Consult APSA jobs Website

Attend workshops

Take courses

Meet faculty advisors

Attend orientation meeting

NOW: BE EXCITED, YOU'RE IN A GOOD GRADUATE PROGRAM!!

Tips for the Job Talk by Axelrod

Robert Axelrod, "Tips for an Academic Job Talk," in *PS Politic Science and Politics* 18:3 (1985): 612-3.

Before the Talk

1. Ask about the format of the talk so that you will know how much time you will have.
2. If possible, schedule the talk early in the visit. This will make the individual meetings more productive.
3. Practice your talk, even if it is in front of just a few friends. This will help you be realistic about the timing, get the phrasing down, and learn what parts are unclear.
4. Try to get a half-hour to yourself just before the talk to review your notes.

During the Talk

5. Start by giving the title.
6. Next, ask people to hold their questions until the end (except for brief questions of clarification). Otherwise you are likely to get interrupted and never finish the talk. If you are interrupted, and you can't give a very short answer in a single phrase, ask the person to save the question until the end.
7. Be sure to explain near the beginning why a nonspecialist might be interested in your work.
8. Be realistic about the time it will take to give your talk. Be ruthless with yourself in planning what you will be able to say, and what you'll have to leave out. If you are running short of time during the talk, it is better to cut a pre-planned optional section in the middle than to be prevented from giving the conclusion.
9. Near the end, be sure to explain why your substantive conclusions are of importance beyond the immediate topic of the work.
10. A good talk, like a good musical, has a theme that people can whistle to themselves on the way out.
11. For most speakers, it is better to use a detailed outline than a script. If you do read talk, be sure that you do not read too fast, that you don't use a monotone, and that you maintain eye contact.
12. Use a blackboard to help focus attention and to have a common reference point with the audience. Use handouts if the material is too detailed to put on the blackboard. Be sure the handouts are not too complex and are well labeled. Have plenty of copies of the handouts with the pages stapled together.

After the Talk

13. The hardest task is to appreciate what a questioner is getting at. Ask for clarification if you are not sure, for example, by restating the question in your own words and if that is what was meant.

14. It is not a crime to pause before you reply. It might even make you look thoughtful.
15. It is not a crime to take notes on the remarks from the audience, especially on an interesting point tht you hadn't thought of. It might even make you look like you care.
16. It is not a crime to say "I don't know" or "my data aren't decisive about that but I'll be glad to speculate."
17. If a few people are dominating the questioning (which often happens), say "I'd like to call on the person in the back of the room now who hasn't had a chance to ask a question yet."

**Summary of the Course:
The Top Ten Things to Remember When You Do Social Science**

Center: Five Aspects

1. Simmelweis
 - logical positivist baseline of inquiry
 - description-explanation-deduction-evaluation
2. Description
 - substance
 - problem situation
 - stylized facts
 - theoretically embedded observations
3. Explanation
 - Theory
4. Deduction
 - observable implications of one's theory
5. Evaluation
 - a fool can ask more questions than nine wise men or women can answer
 - research design
 - falsification: what evidence would lead you to reject your theory

Periphery: Five Aspects

1. Value Relevance
 - parse reality
 - interpretation and evaluation
 - important and unimportant
 - good and evil
2. Big Questions
 - theoretical
 - substantive: world-historical significance
3. Models and Foils
 - competing research communities
 - good and bad
4. Rationality, Culture, Structure
5. Anything Goes
 - forget rules 1 to 9
 - creativity
 - multiple ways/lots of
 - philosophies of science
 - research methods
 - types of social science theories

Summary of Meetings

Week Topic

1(9/2) Professionalism: Reading, Writing, and Talking Political Science

Introduction: A Foil and A Model

1. Foil: Standard Causal Analysis or Undergraduate Political Science

2(9/9) 1.1. Principles: Science, Literature Reviews, Research Reports

3(9/16) 1.2. Description: Concepts, Variables, Measurements

1.3. Explanation: Theories, Laws, Hypotheses

1.4. Design: Sampling, Regression, Goodness-of-Fit

4(9/23) 2. Model: Exemplary Political Science or Political Science for Graduate Students

5(9/30) **I. Discovery: Problem Situations**

1. Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences

2. Thinking and Working in the Midst of Things

II. Explanation: Causal Methodologies

1. Causal Counterfactuals

6(10/7) 1.1. Experimental Design

7(10/14) No Class

8(10/21) 1.2. Case Study

1.3. Comparative Case Study

9(10/28) 2. Causal Choice

2.1. Formal Models

2.2. Rationalist Comparative-Statics

10(11/4) 3. Causal Constructivism

3.1. Interpretation

3.2. Social Construction

4. Causal Capacity

4.1. Social Kinds

4.2. Networks

4.3. Institutions

11(11/11) 5. Causal Complexity

5.1. Mechanisms

5.2. Processes

5.3. Multilevel Agent Based Models

III. Evidence: Data Collection

12(11/18) 1. Aggregate Data

2. Archival Work

3. Event Data

4. Discourse Analysis

5. Survey Research

6. Ethnographic Fieldwork

Conclusion

13(11/25) 1. Causal Pragmatism

14-15(12/2-12/4) 2. Student Presentations of Research Designs