Duke University  
Political Science 330  
Research Design & Qualitative Methods  
Spring 2012  
Tuesdays, 1:15 - 3:45, Social Sciences Building, Room 105  
course website at: https://sakai.duke.edu/portal/site/ps330s2012  
Prof. Tim Büthe  
Dept. of Political Science  
303 Perkins Library  
(919) 660-4365 (office); (919) 493-0304 (home); buthe@duke.edu  
office hours: Wednesdays 1:15 - 2:30pm

Objectives
PS330 is a course in methods in the broadest sense. The first part of the course deals with fundamental issues that are essential for almost any social science research: concepts and measurement, ontology and epistemology, causation and inference. The second part of the course deals with issues of research design, focusing on problems of case selection in non-statistical research, and introduces students to specific methodological tools and techniques for empirical research. I allow for some flexibility in the topics covered in the second part to meet students’ specific needs, but I intend to cover archival research and the critical use of sources, field research, qualitative interviewing, surveys and questionnaire design, as well as content and discourse analysis.

The purpose of the course is to learn specific new skills with awareness of their potential and their limitations. The course should put you in a stronger position to constructively critique research from a methodological point of view, which is an important skill both for assessing work that employs the specific techniques that we discuss in this course and for work that "only" uses data generated through such techniques—often without awareness of the implications. The course also aims to make you more aware of your own and others' epistemological assumptions, assumptions about causality, and standards for judging empirical research in political science, as well as allow you to design better research projects yourself. We may also look at some of the issues involved in conveying our work to others, which entails almost always some kind of "narrative": What is it, beyond the research design, that makes the stories we tell about politics more or less compelling?

Requirements
Active and thoughtful participation in class discussion (based on having done the readings in advance) are an essential part of this course and will count for 20% of the grade. To ensure that everyone has a fair chance to contribute, I may call on students at times. I also would urge you to post questions that you would like us to discuss and potentially continue our conversation via the "Discussion Board" on the course website where we will have separate fora for each topic/week.

The remainder of the grade will be based on short assignments throughout the semester. For weeks 1-4, I will team up students in pairs, taking into account your substantive interests as much as possible. The two students within each pair will alternate as paper writers and commentators. Each paper writer must write a paper of 3-5 double-spaced pages on the assigned question and must share the paper by posting it on Sakai (each paper as a separate "thread") by the end of the on Sunday before the seminar for which it is written. The commentators must then write a short response memo (1 single-spaced page, max.) on the paper with which they are paired, drawing on the readings as appropriate. Those memos must be posted by the end of the day on Monday, linked to the corresponding paper. The response memos should begin by commenting on the strength of the paper (1/3 of the memo, max.), then provide a constructive criticism
of the paper.\textsuperscript{1} In week 5, everyone will write a paper on causal inference. In the second part of the semester, you will do several skills exercises—ranging from a research proposal focused on case selection to questionnaire design and content analysis exercises, as well as actual interviews. Some of these exercises will be done in class, some \textit{after} we have dealt with the particular method/technique in class. Some may be done in small groups (as indicated).

\section*{Readings}
Many of the required readings are articles from journals that are available to you online via Duke's electronic journal holdings or bibliographic databases; some other readings are on electronic reserves; a few are unpublished manuscripts, which are made available via the course website. All books from which we read any chapters have been placed on reserve at Perkins library. In addition, you might consider ordering any subset of the following books, from which we read multiple chapters over the course of the semester:

\begin{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\textit{Caveat lector:} While I am trying to expose students to a variety of ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives and draw on work from all of the empirical subfields of political (I thank numerous colleagues for sharing syllabi and suggestions to make this possible),\textsuperscript{*} assigned readings surely still reflect my own biases, or at least the limits of my own familiarity. For this reason (and others) this syllabus—just as Weberian science—is a work in progress, and suggestions for improvements and additions are most welcome.

\textsuperscript{1} Please use "author date:page" format of in-text citation, using the syllabus as your list of references. When referencing works not contained on the syllabus, be sure to include a single-spaced list of works cited at the end of the paper/memo. References do not count against the length limit for papers.

\textsuperscript{*} For sharing syllabi or suggesting specific readings, I thank Andrew Bennett, Scott de Marchi, Chris Gelpi, Peter Hall, Patrick Jackson, Christopher Johnston, Robert Keohane, Andrew Nathan, Dan Nexon, Paul Pierson, Guillermo Trejo, Jeremy Weinstein, and Steven Wilkinson.
PART I: FUNDAMENTALS

1. Promise and Limits of Social Science (Jan. 24)

Social Science?


There is no such thing as a logical method of having new ideas ....
— Karl Popper

Choosing Questions


Recommended


Assignment, Social Science: Write a short essay about one of the following two (sets of) questions: (1) What is the role of norms or values in political/social science research? What should it be? (2) What is at stake in the debate over parsimony in social science research? Should scholars privilege it as a goal?
You may draw on additional material beyond the assigned readings—as warranted and in such a way that your discussion partner will find it accessible—but not as a substitute for engaging all of the pertinent readings from this week.

2. Concepts, Measurement, and Descriptive Inference (Jan.31)


**Applications in Political Science I:** Democracy


[+ choose one of:]


**Applications in Political Science II:** Power


**Recommended**


Assignment, Concepts & Measurements: Select a concept that is very important to a line of research in which both you and your commentator are particularly interested. Discuss the concept and its measurement in that line of research (with reference to specific, published work) in light of our readings. Have scholars in the literature that you have chosen addressed issues of validity and reliability more or less successfully than in the literature on democracy or power (choose one)?

PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

3. Positivistic "Growth of Knowledge" Approaches to Epistemology (Feb. 7)


Recommended


Assignment, Positivistic Epistemology: Identify a Lakatosian research program in political science. Carefully specify its "hard core" and its "protective belt" of auxiliary hypotheses. To what extent has scholarship in this line of research followed the trajectory suggested by Lakatos? Does Popper or Kuhn better capture actual political science scholarship? (If you decide to write your paper on the Democratic Peace, neorealism, rational choice, or another line of research discussed as a "research program" in the existing literature, you must assess the progress of this research program beyond the works discussed in published work; you might want to attach a note to point out to what extent this is the case.)

NB: Those writing memos this week, in addition to providing constructive criticism of the paper to which they are responding, should address the normative question which epistemological stipulations (of the set Popper, Kuhn, and Lakatos) political science should follow.

4. Critiques and Non-Positivist Approaches (Feb. 14)


Recommended


**Assignment, Non-Positivist Epistemology:** Select a non-positivist approach from among those about which we read or beyond. Identify and define it, clarify its central tenets, and make a case for how existing empirical scholarship on a specific issue in political science could have been improved or fruitfully complemented through adopting this approach. What criteria should be used to judge work in this tradition?
5. Causality, Counterfactuals, and Causal Inference (Feb. 28, 1:15 - 3:30pm)
* Note that Feb. 28 is a double session, of which the first is a make-up class for Feb. 21


Recommended

Counterfactuals

Recommended

Causal Inference and Hypothesis Testing


**Recommended**


**Assignment, Causality and Causal Inference:** Select a published article that advances a causal argument. (Please try to select a piece that is likely to be familiar to others in the course, such as an article you have read in one of the core courses for 1st-year Political Science PhD students or in one of the field seminars.) Drawing on this week's readings as appropriate, identify clearly the central causal argument, the implicit or explicit counterfactual, and the hypothesized causal mechanism(s). Do so in a way that does not require your reader to be familiar with the article already (as you would have to do, for instance, if you were writing a book review), and please state the argument in your own words, improving (if possible) on the clarity of the author's exposition. Discuss what notion of causality is implicit in the theoretical argument of the author. Then, provide a constructive criticism of the research design, focusing on issues of causal inference (everyone, 4-6 pages).

**PART II:**

**PRACTICAL ISSUES IN RESEARCH DESIGN; APPLIED METHODS & TOOLS**

6 & 7. Case Studies and Case Selection (Feb.28, 4 - 6pm & Mar.13, 1:15 - 3:45pm*)

* Note that we have a double session on Feb. 28, of which the second part will be the first part of our two meetings to discuss case studies and case selection. On February 28, we will discuss general issues of case studies research design and case selection, based on the assigned readings. (There is no meeting on Mar.6 due to spring break.) On March 13, we work through Gerring's techniques for choosing cases *and* we will discuss your case study research proposals (see assignment below).


Highly Recommended:


Recommended:


Exemplary Empirical Work (certainly not a comprehensive list!):


Assignment, Case Studies and Case Selection (due by 10pm on 11 March 2012): Write a research proposal of no more than 5 pages, for a research project that aims to contribute to causal explanation through case studies. The causal explanation should be (in some part) your own, though you are free to develop an idea on which you will be writing a paper for another course or draw on work you have already done in another course. Be very clear about the causal hypothesis and provide at least a brief statement of the causal logic and hypothesized mechanism(s). In the remainder of your research proposal pay special attention to issues of case selection (be sure to discuss your case selection in light of this week's readings), but also be sure to specify how you will carry out the research for (each of) the cases. While the project may be hypothetical, it should be feasible for you as an individual PhD student, given your resources (incl. language and other skills you have or can reasonably acquire within no more than 2 years).

8. Sampling, Surveys & Questionnaires (March 20, 1:15 - 3:45pm*, at SSRI Computer Lab)

* Note that March 20 is a double session

Sampling


Survey Questionnaires


[Background for Lab Exercise:]

Recommended: Sampling

Recommended: Surveys/Questionnaires

Assignment, Sampling & Surveys: See below Experiments section

9. Experimental Methods in Political Science (March 20, 4:30 - 6:00pm*)
(Prof. Christopher Johnston will co-teach)
* Note that March 20 is a double session


**Recommended: Experimental Methods**


**Natural Experiments:**


**Assignment, Survey Design and Experiments:** The assignment for this week has three parts. (1) By 5 pm on Monday (19 March 2012), post 1-2 paragraphs on the Sakai PS330 Forum, identifying a political science research question that might be addressed through an experiment (possibly but not necessarily a survey experiment). Elaborate in a few sentences about how you imagine such an experiment might be implemented, what the key insights are that you would expect to gain from that experiment, and what the key concerns are that you might have about this research strategy. You are welcome to put forth an experimental research proposal that's related to your actual research interests, but you are also free to come up with a completely unrelated research question.

(2) By 9 am on Tuesday (20 March 2012), write a memo of no more than 3 pages in which you suggest three revised or additional questions for a business survey among financial standards experts (or two questions and one suggestion for a change in research design) that offer an additional test of Büthe and Mattli's theoretical argument and/or would allow you to differentiate better between their argument and alternative explanations (specify the alternatives if they are not noted in the selections we read). One of your questions may be a variant of one of the questions used by them (as mentioned in the selection from chapter 5), i.e., may involve no more than a change in question wording, response options, etc.; the other two questions should be new. The questions might be based on what you identify as a weakness of their survey/questions or might simply aim for additional observable implications. Each question should be accompanied by a brief discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of your choice of question type, wording, etc, based on the methods readings for this week.
(3) We will spend part of the class learning Qualtrics, the online survey software provided and supported by OIT and SSRI. After the class (by Friday, 3/23), encode your three questions and additional ones as needed such that you will have encoded at least one radio button question, on checkbox question, one likert question, and one free-text question (you will learn in class what these types of questions are). Put up the resulting survey as a non-password-protected survey, and post the URL link for the survey as a follow-up to your memo.

10. Qualitative Interviews (Mar.27)
Interviewee Guest: Rt. Honorable James A. Wynn, Jr., U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th District


Berry, Jeffrey M. "Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing." PS: Political Science and Politics vol.35 no.4 (December 2002): 679-682.


Recommended on Interviewing Methods


Recommended Interview-Based Research in Political Science

Recommended on Courts and Judicial Politics


Assignment, Interviewing: We will be joined for this class by the Rt. Honorable James A. Wynn, currently a Judge on U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th District. Judge Wynn has kindly agreed to be interviewed by students in this class. He has also served as a judge on the NC Court of Appeals and NC Supreme Court—at times as the only African-American on those courts—as well as in several judicial capacities for the U.S. Navy. And since NC judges are elected, he has also run for elected office. In preparation for his visit, find out more about his career and background through preliminary research.

Team up in groups of two (for a total of 5 groups). Select a topic about which you want to interview Judge Wynn; the assigned chapters from H. W. Perry's book suggest some possible topics about the judicial case selection of appellate courts, but you may also interview the judge about other issues about which he will be able to speak based on his professional experience. Prepare well for this interview, as you would for an interview for your dissertation or a major research project (except that you will be working as a team here, which is otherwise rarely the case in social science interview research). By 10pm on Monday, March 26, each team must post 1 page (single-spaced) outlining the topic(s) about which you intend to interview the judge, what choices you have made with respect to format, recording responses, etc. You may diverge from your plan in the actual interview, but be prepared to discuss your reasons (in light of the assigned literature!) during the post-interview analysis, when Judge Wynn (and I) will provide feedback on the interviews. Each team gets to interview him for 15 minutes.

11. In the Archives and In the Field (April 10, 1:15 - 3:45pm*)

* Note that April 10 is a double session

"History will not be kind to Neville Chamberlain. ... I know because I am going to write it. — Winston Churchill as quoted by David Cannadine (FT 19 Nov 2005).

Historiography: Archival Research & Critical Use of Sources


Recommended, Historiography/Archival Research:


Field research can be likened to a giant shopping expedition … exposure to a wider selection of items when one arrives at the store, or the discovery that certain items are no longer in stock or are over-priced can force a complete rethinking of the week's menu. — Evan Lieberman 2004:4.

Field Research


Recommended, Field Research:


Use of Sources and Academic Norms


Moravcsik, Andrew. "Active Citation: A Precondition for Replicable Qualitative Research." *PS: Political Science & Politics* vol.43 no.1 (January 2010): 29-35.

Assignment, Archival & Field Research: This week's assignment has two parts:

PART I: Do the exercises Set A in the "Evidence" chapter from Furay and Salevouris (pp.145-160)—You may either print those pages separately from the PDF and submit them on paper, with your responses written in, or you may type your responses into a Word document. If you do the latter, please set off each response and be sure to be very clear which question you are answering in any given paragraph. Please bring this to class.

PART II: Imagine a fieldwork situation in which you are trying to conduct research (be sure to specify the location and your research objective). Identify three problems that you are likely to encounter in this field research and how you might deal with them (based on the readings *and* your own imaginative (or maybe already experienced) engagement with the local culture and the needs of your research project). The total write-up for Part II should not exceed 3 pages and may (but need not) be based on your research proposal from weeks 6&7. Please submit Part II as a Word document via the Discussion Board on the course website. Part II is due by the end of the day on Sunday, April 8.
12. Content Analysis, Discourse Analysis, and Quantitative Narrative Analysis
(April 10, 4 - 6 pm*)
* Note that April 10 is a double session


Background Reading for Assignment:


After the introduction, please focus on the third possible explanation of private aid (bottom of p.6 through middle of p.9), the initial set-up of the empirical analysis (pp. 10f), and the empirical test for H3 (top of p.17 through top of p.19).

Highly Recommended:


Recommended:


Assignment, Content Analysis/Quantitative Narrative Analysis: This assignment has again two parts. Some of it you may, if you wish, carry out in groups of two or three: (1) Develop specific instructions/coding rules for a content analysis for the research project specified below (see also background reading). (2) Carry out the content analysis, as specified below, based upon those coding rules. The coding instructions should be posted on the course website by 5pm on Monday (4/9); bring a memo with the results of your content analysis to class, so we can discuss and compare them (you will need to hand in your results at the end of class). Also, come to class ready to discuss alternative (maybe better) ways to achieve the research objective (specified below).

Project and Instructions/Coding Rules: As part of a research project, you want to assess to what extent U.S. media coverage of various developing countries in 2001 created an image of need for development assistance (specifically: a perception of "need" that would make it easier, for development NGOs, to solicit donations from private citizens). To get at this issue, conduct a content or quantitative narrative analysis of the country's coverage in the New York Times. For the larger project, you need to gather this information on a monthly basis for all of 2001 (1/1 - 12/31/2001) and for all countries classified by the World Bank as low or lower-middle income countries, but for purposes of this assignment, you will focus solely on the months of January and February 2001 and the country of Egypt. If you do the content analysis "manually," you will only be able to analyze a maximum of 300 news stories per country over the course of the entire year, so your coding instructions may have to reflect this limitation of the overall project. There is a fair chance that not all NYT stories about Egypt will be relevant, but you need to develop explicit coding rules for determining whether any given story is relevant. For this reason, you will probably want to look at some (but not all!) stories before finalizing your coding rules.

Content Analysis: Your record of the actual analysis should contain one entry for each NYT story that you find for the country between Jan.1 and Feb.28, 2001. Be sure that you clearly identify each story such that replication and cross-coder comparison is possible, and most importantly, of course, record what score you have assigned to the story, given your coding scheme. You also must report the numerical score(s) for Egypt for January 2001 as a whole and February 2001 as a whole (which must be derived such that they will be comparable across countries). You may carry out the analysis "manually" by reading the selected NY Times stories (e.g. in LexisNexis) or you may use a computer program for the analysis, such as the programs discussed in Franzosi's book, in the reading by Hopkins and King, or the (free) demo version of "MAXQDA", the Verbi software for Qualitative Data Analysis.

[Hint for those not familiar with searches in LexisNexis Academic: Appendix 2, "Using NEXIS for Text Acquisition for Content Analysis" in Kimberly Neuenendorf's The Content Analysis Guidebook (Sage, 2002; on reserve at Perkins) provides an introduction to LexisNexis, though probably in more detail than you need for this assignment.]

13. Crisp and Fuzzy Set Analysis (April 17, at the SSRI Lab)


**Recommended, Field Research:**
Ragin, Charles C. *Fuzzy-Set Social Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000: all, but esp. chs. 1, 2, 4, 6-10

**Assignment, Fuzzy Set Analysis:** By 9am on Tuesday morning, please post a brief (1 single-spaced page max.) description of a real research scenario (including possibly a brief description of an actual dataset of your own) that would be particularly suitable for fuzzy set analysis. Come to class prepared to discuss that research scenario—and ready to talk about the drawbacks and limitations of such an analysis. In class, we will learn how to use Ragin's fsQCA software for crisp and fuzzy set analyses (fsQCA stands for fuzzy set/Qualitative Comparative Analysis). There will be a brief analytical exercise based on data selected in class (using data you provide, if possible) to be done (and written up) after class; details TBA.

**14.1. Developing and Testing Hypotheses with a Temporal Dimension** (April 24*)
(at Prof. Büthe's house; details to be arranged)
* April 24 is a two-part but single-length session


**Recommended:**


14.2. Telling Stories? Narratives in Political Science  (April 24)


The translation by W. Rhys Roberts (Oxford UP, 1924; no longer in copyright) is available in full online, e.g. from http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.html (search for "Aristotle and Rhetoric" for other public domain translations). Selections from the 1984 revised Oxford translation are on e-reserve.


Recommended:


Allison, Graham T. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *American Political Science Review* vol.63 no.3 (September 1969): 689-718


Assignment, Temporality & Narratives: There is no assignment for today's final session, except to come well-prepared for discussion of the readings.