

“I can calculate the motions of heavenly bodies, but not the madness of men.”
- attributed to Isaac Newton (*disputed*)

“Test everything; hold fast to what is good”
- Saint Paul

The Logic of Political Inquiry
PSC 691.001
Fall 2014
Maxwell 315, 3:45-6:30, Wednesdays

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Course Summary

This seminar introduces students to the principles of research design in mainstream political science. We begin with some questions in the philosophy of science as they apply to the social sciences. Then we review the purpose of theories, as well as different approaches to generating and evaluating them. Next, we discuss the purpose and form of hypotheses, focusing on how to derive hypotheses from theories; how to develop and implement hypothesis tests; how to treat competing explanations for observed phenomena of interest; how to measure theoretical constructs; and what to do (and not to do) with data. Finally, we explore how different research designs (including the construction of counterfactuals, comparative case studies, quasi-experiments, and experiments) may be used to help researchers make valid causal inferences. The course will introduce students to elementary methods of data analysis, but no knowledge of advanced statistics or econometrics is presupposed.

Readings

All required readings for the class are available at either the SU Bookstore (in the Schine Student Center), on library reserve, or electronically through Blackboard. When possible I have made the reserve readings available electronically. Students are advised to obtain copies of the following books, which are available for purchase at the SU Bookstore:

Achen, Christopher. 1982. *Interpreting and Using Regression*.
Brady, Henry, and David Collier, eds. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*. *2nd Edition*
Elster, Jon. 1989. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*.
Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A United Framework*. *2nd Edition*
Green, Donald, and Ian Shapiro. 1994. *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*.
Hempel, Carl. 1966. *Philosophy of Natural Science*.
King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*.
Lewis-Beck, Michael S. 1995. *Data Analysis: An Introduction*.
Shively, W. Phillips. 2010. *The Craft of Political Research*, *8th Ed* (9th should be ok)

Grading and Assignments

Each student will complete several assignments, which are designed to help students master the course material and to think about issues of research design in their own work. I will distribute detailed information on the assignments throughout the semester. In addition to the written assignments, students are expected to be prepared for class discussions each week and to *participate actively*. Course readings should be read *before* the class for which they are listed below. Active class participation is essential for this course to be a success.

Final course grades will be calculated according to the following formula.

Class Participation	20%	
Assignment 1	10	(given 9/24, due 10/1)
Assignment 2	20	(given 10/8, due 10/22)
Assignment 3a	5	(given 10/22, due 10/29)
Assignment 3b	15	(--- due 11/5)
Assignment 4 draft	0	(given 10/1, due 11/21)
Assignment 4 final	30	(--- due 12/12)
TOTAL	100%	

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

There is no room for academic dishonesty in this class. I do submit formal reports to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences when I suspect academic dishonesty or plagiarism. I encourage all students to update their understanding of what counts as academic dishonesty by visiting this website: <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/>.

At the same time, I encourage cooperative work among students during the semester. You should engage in as much discussion with each other as possible, and you should feel free to trade drafts of papers for comments and criticism. You should NOT work collaboratively on Assignment 2.

Disability-Related Accommodations

Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 804 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website, Office of Disability Services <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>

Religious Observances

SU's religious observances policy, found at http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm, recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holy days according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to a religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through MySlice/Student Services/Enrollment/My Religious Observances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.

*** All students should feel free to discuss any of the issues ***
mentioned on this page with me at any time.

Weekly Schedule

I. Philosophy of Social Science

August 27

Topics: the scientific method; causal analysis (vs. descriptive, conceptual, interpretive, or critical social science); social science as puzzle solving and research as a craft

Read: Hempel, *Philisophy of Natural Science*, Ch. 2
Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Chs. 1-3
Brady & Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, Glossary
Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Glossary
(obviously, just flip through the glossaries and become familiar with them)

September 3

Topics: Causality and causal analysis; prediction and explanation; falsifiability; inductive and deductive theorizing

Read: Hempel, *Philisophy of Natural Science*, Chs. 5-6.
King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry*, Ch 3.
Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Chs. 8-9.
Friedman, Milton. 1953. "The Methodology of Positive Economics" in *Essays in Positive Economics*, pp.3-43.

II. Theories

September 10

Topics: What are theories and how are they generated?

Read: Elster, *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Read chapters 1-2, then select a few more that interest you. Select from different sections of the book.
Skocpol, Theda. 1979. *States and Social Revolutions*, pp.3-18.
Verba, Brady, and Schlozman. 1995. *Voice and Equality*, ch. 9.
Sears, David O. 1993. "Symbolic Politics: A Socio-Psychological Theory" in Shanto Iyengar and William J. McGuire, eds., *Explorations in Political Psychology*, pp.113-149.

September 17

Topics: rational choice as method of theory generation

Read: Becker, Gary S. 1976. "The Economic Approach to Human Behavior," in *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior*, pp.3-14.
Green and Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory*, Chs 1-3, 7, 8
Hindmoor, Andrew. 2011. 'Major Combat Operations Have Ended'? Arguing about Rational Choice. *British Journal of Political Science* 41, pp.191-210.
Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, Chapters 1 and 8.

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- Adams, Merrill and Grofman. 2005. *A Unified Theory of Party Competition*, pp.1-4.
- Grofman, Bernard. 2004. "Downs and two-party convergence," *Annual Review of Political Science* 7, pp.25-46.

III. From Theories to Hypotheses

September 24

- Topics: How to generate hypotheses; the characteristics of good hypotheses; auxiliary hypotheses; hypotheses and test implications
- Read: Hempel, *The Philosophy of Natural Science*, Chs. 3-4
- Singleton, Royce A. and Bruce Straits. 2005. *Approaches to Social Research*, 4th Ed., pp.43-69.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1991. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century*, pp.31-40.
- Assignment 1 given*

IV. Testing Hypotheses: General Principles

October 1

- Topics: logic of causal inference; logical fallacies; spuriousness; conditional probabilities; null hypotheses; alternative hypotheses; supporting vs "confirming" and disconfirmation
- Read: Ragin, Charles C. 1987. *The Comparative Method*, Ch 2.
- Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Ch 10
- Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Chs. 10-11.
- Assignment 1 due today*
- Assignment 4 given*

October 8

- Topics: Cases, case selection, identifying the universe of cases, selection bias; model specification in quantitative analysis
- Read: King et al., *Designing Social Inquiry*, Chs. 4-5.
- Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Ch. 7.
- Achen, Christopher. 1982. *Interpreting and Using Regression*, pp.17-30.
- Lewis-Beck, Michael S. 1995. *Data Analysis: an Introduction*, pp.1-40
- Assignment 2 given*
- Instructions for ICPSR dataset to be handed out*

October 15

- Topics: Measurement; types of empirical evidence; constructs and indicators; measurement validity; bias and inefficiency; collecting and coding data
- Read: Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Chs. 4-5.
- Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Ch.7.
- Fink, Arlene. 1995. *The Survey Handbook*, pp.41-53.
- [continued on next page]

Adcock and Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research" *American Political Science Review* 95, pp. 529-546.

Burkhart, Ross E., and Michael S. Lewis-Beck. 1994. "Comparative Democracy: The Economic Development Thesis." *American Political Science Review* 88 (4): 903-10.

ICPSR dataset and codebook – this reading is not on reserve; instructions to be handed out in class.

Second half of class will be in Eggers 030

V. Styles of Hypothesis Testing

October 22

Topics: General introduction; Experimentation; natural experiments

Read: Green, Donald P. and Alan S. Gerber. 2003. "Reclaiming the Experimental Tradition in Political Science," in *Political Science: the State of the Discipline*, ed. Ira Katznelson and Helen Milner, pp.805-832.

McDermott, Rose. 2002. "Experimental Methods in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 5, pp.31-61.

Dunning, Thad. 2007. "Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments," *Political Research Quarterly*.

[Read at least one of the following 3 examples]

Moehler, Devra. 2010. "Democracy, Governance, and Randomized Development Assistance," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628, pp.30-46.

Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare*, Ch 4 (pp.80-102).

Gadarian, Shana Kushner. 2010. "The Politics of Threat: How Terrorism News Shapes Foreign Policy Attitudes" *Journal of Politics*

[Read at least one of the following 2 examples]

Hyde, Susan D. 2007. "The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment" *World Politics* 60:1, pp. 37-63.

Dreyer Lassen, David. 2005. "The Effect of Information on Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Natural Experiment," *American Journal of Political Science* 49:1, pp.103-118.

Assignment 2 due today

Assignment 3 given

October 29

Topics: Quasi-experiments; statistical analysis; large-N analysis; surveys

Read: Shively, *The Craft of Political Research*, Ch 6.

Lewis-Beck, *Data Analysis*, pp.41-74

Achen, *Interpreting and Using Regression*, pp.46-51.

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- Fink, Arlene. 1995. *The Survey Handbook*, pp.1-39.
- Almond, Gabriel, and Sidney Verba. 1963. *The Civic Culture*, pp.35-44, Ch. 3, and Ch. 5.
- Hayes, Danny. 2005. "Candidate Qualities through a Partisan Lens: A Theory of Trait Ownership" *American Journal of Political Science* 49:4, pp.908-923.
- Fish, M. Steven. 2002. "Islam and Authoritarianism" *World Politics* 55:1, pp.4-37.
- Review Gilens and Gadarian readings from last week.

Assignment 3a due today

November 5

- Topics: Comparative Case Studies – small-N but N>1
- Read: Mill, John Stuart. 1868. *A System of Logic*, pp.425-448.
- King et al, *Designing Social Inquiry*, Chs, 1, 6.
- Sekhon, Jasjeet S. 2004. "Quality meets quantity: Case Studies, Conditional Probabilities and Counterfactuals" *Perspectives on Politics*, June: 281-293.
- Fearon, James. 1991. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science" *World Politics* 43: 169-195.
- Mahoney, James. 2000. "Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis," *Sociological Methods & Research* 28, 387-424.
- Ekeirt, Grzegorz and Jan Kubik. 1998. "Contentious Politics in New Democracies: East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia, 1989-93" *World Politics* 50, pp.547-581.

Assignment 3b due today

November 12

- Topics: Single-Case Studies: N=1; process tracing; qualitative versus quantitative approaches
- Read: Collier, David. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 44:4, pp.823-30. (presupposes familiarity with the Sherlock Holmes story of Silver Blaze).
- Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, Ch. 1 (just pp.15-26), and Chs. 4 (by Bartels), 8 & 9 (by Collier/Brady/Seawright), and 10 (By Bennett, on process tracing).
- Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz . 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research" *Political Analysis*, 14, pp.227-49.
- Keck, Thomas. 2007. "Party, Policy, or Duty: Why Does the Supreme Court Invalidate Federal Statutes" *American Political Science Review* 101:2, pp.321-338.
- Elman, Colin. 2005. "Explanatory Typologies in Qualitative Studies of International Politics," *International Organization* 59:2, pp.293-326.

VI. Concluding Sessions

November 19

Topics: Philosophy of social science; paradigms and research programs

Read: Losee, John. 2001. *A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Science, Fourth Edition*, Chapters 14, 16, 17.

Elman, Colin, and Miriam Elman. 2002. "How Not to Be Lakatos Intolerant: Appraising Progress in IR Research." *International Studies Quarterly*. 46:2, pp.231-62.

Lustick, Ian. 1997. "Lijphart, Lakatos, and Consociationalism," *World Politics* 50 (October 1997), pp.88-117.

[after reading Lustick, read as much of the next three articles as you feel you need to]

Lijphart, Arend. 1969. "Consociational Democracy" *World Politics* 21:2, pp.207-225.

Lijphart, Arend. 1996. "The Puzzle of Indian Democracy: A Consociational Interpretation" *American Political Science Review* 90:2, pp.258-268.

Lakatos, Imre. 1970. "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Lakatos and Musgrave, pp.91-138

Assignment 4 draft due Friday 11/21

November 26 NO CLASS -- THANKSGIVING BREAK

December 3

Topics: Grants, writing, visual presentation of evidence, the profession

Read: Przeworski, Adam, and Frank Salomon. 1995. "On the Art of Writing Proposals," SSRC.

"Worth a Thousand Words" *The Economist* 385:8560 (December 22, 2007), pp.74-77.

Kastellec, Jonathan, and Eduardo Leoni. 2007. "Using Graphs Instead of Tables in Political Science" *Perspectives on Politics* 5(4), pp.755-771.

Perestroika Glastnost. 2000. "On the irrelevance of APSA and APSR to the study of Political Science!"

Eakin, Emily. "Political Scientists Leading a Revolt, Not Studying One" *New York Times* Nov. 4, 2000.

"Voices" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 33:4 (Dec. 2000), pp.735-741.

"Forum" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34:3 (Sept. 2001), pp.597-600.

"Forum" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35:2 (June 2002), pp.177-179.

"Forum" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35:4 (Dec. 2002), pp.660-662.

"Symposium" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 36:3 (Jul. 2003), pp.371-399.

December 12 (Friday; no class)

Assignment 4 final due by 5:00PM