

Field Research Methods
POLITSC 7888, Fall 2019
Thurs. 11am-1:45pm
<https://osu.instructure.com/courses/62552>

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar introduces students to various field methods for developing and testing theories in the social sciences. The course is best suited for PhD students who are currently developing a dissertation prospectus, applying for research grants, or preparing for dissertation field research, but the course will also be helpful for those planning more preliminary field research. The course is focused on readings and discussions on different types of field research methods, as well as the development of a detailed field research plan.

REQUIREMENTS

Active participation in the seminar is essential, and students are expected to read all of the assigned articles and chapters before the start of class each week. You are also expected to actively engage in the research projects of your classmates. Thus, in addition to the assigned readings each week, students are expected to have read the circulated memo of their assigned partner (partners will change each week). Your final research plan should reflect the feedback that you receive from your classmates throughout the semester.

A major goal of this course is for students to leave with a realistic field research plan. Towards that end, there will be seven written assignments over the course of the semester. For each assignment, you must submit your memo by **12 noon on Tuesday** following the class in which it was assigned. You must also submit written feedback on your assigned partner's memo by the start of class on Thursday.

The final paper for this course will be an NSF DDIG grant application to fund field research. The final paper is due by 5pm on **Thursday, December 5**.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

1. **Participation – 20%**

Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion will constitute 20% of your final grade.

2. **Memos – 30%**

The memos resulting from assignments 1-7 will constitute 30% of your final grade. These memos must be submitted on time to receive full credit.

3. **Peer Feedback – 15%**

You must provide thoughtful feedback, based on the class readings and discussions, to your assigned peer by the start of class. Peer review and feedback will be facilitated through the course Carmen page.

4. Field Research Grant Proposal – 35%

Your final field research proposal, written as an NSF DDRO grant proposal, will constitute 35% of your final grade.

Letter grades correspond to the following percentages:

A: 93-100	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	D: 60-66
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	E: <60
B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D+: 67-69	

COURSE POLICIES

Academic and Personal Integrity: Suspected academic misconduct will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct, as required by Faculty Rule 3335-5-487. It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>).

Accessible Learning: The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, please register with Student Life Disability Services (SLDS). After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. SLDS contact information: slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Mental Health: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student’s ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life’s Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614- 292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273- TALK or at www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

COURSE MATERIALS

We will read large portions of the following books, so you may want to purchase a copy. The Barrett & Cason book is available electronically through OSU library.

Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason. 2010. *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Additional readings include book chapters, published articles, and working papers. The latter two types of readings will be readily available online, and book chapters will be provided at least 2 weeks in advance.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION, 8/22

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1–14, 46–81.

Loeza, Soledad, Randy Stevenson, and Devra C. Moehler. 2005. “Symposium: Should Everyone Do Fieldwork?” *APSA-CP* 16(2): 8-18.

Wood, Elizabeth. 2007. “Field Methods” in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford; Oxford University Press. pp. 123-146.

WEEK 2: THEORY AND FIELD RESEARCH, 8/29

Bates, Robert H., Chalmers Johnson, and Ian S. Lustick. 1997. “Controversy in the Discipline: Area Studies and Comparative Politics.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30(2):166- 179.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. “Research Design and the Accumulation of Knowledge,” in *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. pp. 1-26.

OBrien, Kevin J. 2006. “Discovery, Research (Re)design, and Theory Building.” In *Doing Fieldwork in China*, eds. Maria Heimer and Stig Thgersen. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 27-41.

Assignment 1: Research Question

Choose a puzzle or problem that you believe is: (a) important; (b) poorly explained by existing theories; and (c) amenable to empirical analysis using data gathered in the field. Identify at least one hypothesis/observable implication that you think might resolve this puzzle/problem/question, and state the proposition in a clear, testable, and falsifiable form. Describe the ‘ideal data’ that would allow you to most convincingly test your hypothesis (at this point, you do not have to be realistic – think big!).

A one page memo outlining the puzzle or problem that motivates your thinking, the theory you wish to test, its observable implication(s), and your ‘ideal data’ should be submitted by noon on Tuesday.

WEEK 3: CASE SELECTION, 9/5

Geddes, Barbara. 1990. “How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics.” *Political Analysis* 2: 131-150.

Collier, David and James Mahoney. 1996. “Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research.” *World Politics* 49(1):56-91.

Gerring, John. 2007. “Techniques for Choosing Cases,” in *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 86-150.

Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason. 2010. *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 6-19.

Assignment 2: Case Selection

Identify the case(s) that you will use to test the observable implications of your theory. Write a three-page memo describing your rationale for selecting the case(s) and provide a brief narrative about how you believe your theory applies (or does not apply) to the cases you have selected. The final section of your memo should describe the data you will need specific to these cases, and the potential sources of information you have been able to identify. Circulate by noon on Tuesday.

WEEK 4: ETHNOGRAPHY & PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION, 9/12

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 234–265.

Wedeen, Lisa. 2010. “Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 13: 255–272.

Brodkin, Evelyn Z. 2017. “The Ethnographic Turn in Political Science: Reflections on the State of the Art.” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50 (1): 131–134.

Schwartz, Stephanie. Forthcoming. “Fleeing Again: Return migration and local conflict after civil war.” *International Security*.

Simmons, Erica S. 2016. “Market Reforms and Water Wars.” *World Politics* 68 (1): 37–73.

Walsh, Katherine Cramer. 2012. “Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective.” *American Political Science Review* 106 (3): 517–532 **and methodological appendices**.

Watkins, Susan C. and Anne Swindler. 2009. “Hearsay Ethnography: Conventional Journals as a Method for Studying Culture in Action.” *Poetics (Amst.)* 37(2): 162-184.

WEEK 5: INTERVIEWS & FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS, 9/19

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 190-233.

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2017. *Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach*. New York: Routledge. pp. 35–72.

Kruks-Wisner, Gabrielle. 2018. “The Pursuit of Social Welfare: Citizen Claim-Making in Rural India.” *World Politics* 70 (1): 122-163.

Lidow, Nicholai Hart. 2016. *Violent Order: Understanding Rebel Governance through Liberia’s Civil War*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 3-31, 114-130, 241-247.

Schon, Justin. 2018. “Motivation and opportunity for conflict-induced migration: An analysis of Syrian migration timing.” *Journal of Peace Research* <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343318806044>

Lindsey, Summer E. 2018. “Group dynamics and preferences for punishing crimes in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.” Working paper.

Assignment 3: Qualitative Methods

Choose one of the case or cases identified in Assignment 2. For that case, develop a three-page research strategy employing ethnography, participant observation, interviews, or focus group discussions to gather data to test the implications of your theory. This written research strategy should include three components: (1) a list of the “types” of individuals (and if possible, the specific respondents) you will need to observe or speak with; (2) a list of questions that you will need to have answered, either from behavioral observation or to be gathered through face-to-face interviews and; (3) a discussion of how this data will help you to accept or reject competing theories. Circulate by noon on Tuesday.

WEEK 6: ARCHIVAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, & MEDIA DATA, 9/26

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 151-189.

Charnysh, Volha. 2019. “Diversity, Institutions, and Economic Outcomes: Post-WWII Displacement in Poland.” *American Political Science Review* 113 (2): 423-441.

Ferwerda, Jeremy and Nicholas L. Miller. 2014. “Political Devolution and Resistance to Foreign Rule: A Natural Experiment.” *American Political Science Review* 108 (3): 642-660.

Harding, Robin. 2015. “Attribution And Accountability: Voting for Roads in Ghana.” *World Politics* 67 (4): 656-689.

Holland, Alisha. 2015. “The Distributive Politics of Enforcement.” *American Journal of Political Science* 59 (2): 357–371, and SI pp. 1–6.

Holmes, Carolyn E. 2015. “Marikana in Translation: Print nationalism in South Africa’s multilingual press.” *African Affairs* 114 (455): 271–294.

WEEK 7 & 8: NO CLASS, 10/3 AND 10/10

Assignment 4: Archival and/or Administrative Dataset

In a three page memo, describe a dataset based on pre-existing data (archival, administrative, media, etc.) that would allow you to test a specific observable implication of your theory. Outline a strategy to collect the relevant pre-existing data in the field. Describe the specific observable implication or hypothesis to be tested and explain how the dataset you collect will allow you to assess it. Circulate your memo by 12pm on Tuesday.

WEEK 9: DESIGNING AND FIELDING SURVEYS, 10/17

Keeter, Scott. 2005. “Survey Research.” In Daniel Druckman (ed.) *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. pp. 123-162.

Krosnick, Jon A. and Stanley Presser. 2010. “Question and Questionnaire Design” in Peter V. Marsden and James D. Wright (eds.), *Handbook of Survey Research*. Bingley, UK: Emerald. pp. 263-314.

Add: Khoury, Rana. 2019. “Hard-to-Survey Populations and Respondent-Driven Sampling: Expanding the Political Science Toolbox.” *Perspectives on Politics*

- Posner, Daniel. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545.
- Zeira, Yael. 2019. *The Revolution Within: Institutions and Unarmed Resistance in Palestine*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 35–43, 82–128, 196–203.
- Berinsky, Adam, Kai Quek, and Michael Sances. 2012. "Conducting Online Experiments on Mechanical Turk." *Newsletter of the APSA Experimental Section* 3 (1): 2-6.
- Chauchard, Simon. 2013. "Using MP3 Players in Surveys: The Impact of a Low-tech Self-Administration Mode on Misreporting and Bystanders' Influence." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77 (S1): 220-231.

Assignment 5: Original Survey

In a three page memo, outline a 'large-n' dataset that would produce some statistical test of your theory and develop a research strategy for building this dataset using original survey data. Describe the hypotheses amenable to quantitative tests and how the data gathered would allow you to assess those hypotheses. Outline a strategy to collect those data in the field. Circulate by noon on Tuesday.

WEEK 10: SURVEY EXPERIMENTS, 10/24

- Gaines, Brian J. and James H. Kuklinski. 2007. "The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined." *Political Analysis* 15(1): 1-20.
- Glynn, Adam N. 2013. "What Can We Learn with Statistical Truth Serum? Design and Analysis of the List Experiment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77:159-172.
- Blair, Graeme, Kosuke Imai and Jason Lyall. 2012. "Comparing and Combining List and Endorsement Experiments: Evidence from Afghanistan." *American Journal of Political Science* 58 (4): 1043-1063.
- Incerti, Trevor. 2019. "Corruption information and vote share: A meta-analysis and lessons for survey experiments." Working paper.
- McClendon, Gwenyth and Rachel Beatty Riedl. 2015. "Religion As a Stimulant of Political Participation: Evidence from an Experiment in Nairobi, Kenya." *Journal of Politics* 77(4): 1045–1057.
- Blaydes, Lisa and Rachel M. Gillum. 2013. "Religiosity-of-Interviewer Effects: Assessing the Impact of Veiled Enumerators on Survey Response in Egypt." *Politics and Religion* 6 (3): 459-482.

WEEK 11: FIELD AND LAB-IN-THE-FIELD EXPERIMENTS, 10/31

- Grossman, Guy. 2011. "Lab-in-the-field Experiments." *Newsletter of the APSA Experimental Section* 2 (2): 13-19.
- Martin, Lucy. 2016. "Taxation, Loss Aversion, and Accountability: Theory and Experimental Evidence for Taxation's Effect on Citizen Behavior." Working paper.
- Loewen, Peter John, Daniel Rubenson, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2010. "Help Me Help You: Conducting Field Experiments with Political Elites." *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628(1):165-175.
- Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin." *World Politics* 55 (3): 399-422.
- Oforu, George Kwaku. 2019. "Do Fairer Elections Increase the Responsiveness of Politicians?" *American Political Science Review*. (Forthcoming).

Robinson, Amanda Lea and Brigitte Seim. 2018. Who is Targeted in Corruption? Disentangling the Effects of Wealth and Power on Exposure to Bribery. 2018. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 13 (3): 313-331.

Assignment 6: Experiment

Write a three-page research memo describing a survey experiment, field experiment, or lab-in-the-field experiment that could be used to put some aspect of your theory, or the mechanisms underlying it, to an empirical test. Be sure to specify your sampling procedure, how you will randomize, what you will manipulate, and how you will address external validity. Circulate by noon on Tuesday.

WEEK 12: COMBINING METHODS, BUILDING A DESIGN, AND FUNDING IT, 11/7

Combining Methods

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 82-109.

Palluck, Elizabeth Levy. 2010. "The Promising Integration of Qualitative Methods and Field Experiments." *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628(1): 59-71.

Auerbach, Adam Michael and Tariq Thachil. 2018. "How Clients Select Brokers: Competition and Choice in India's Slums." *American Political Science Review* 112 (4): 775-791.

Funding Field Research

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 400-403.

Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason. 2010. *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 21-26.

Agarwala, Rina and Emmanuel Teitelbaum. 2010. "Trends in Funding for Dissertation Field Research: Why Do Political Science and Sociology Students Win So Few Awards?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43(2): 283-293.

Assignment 7: Funding Proposal

Prepare a short research grant proposal with a comprehensive budget (1,000 words or less, excluding budget and references). Proposals should briefly outline the basic rationale of the research, the question under study, and the methods and analytic approach to be employed. In addition, list five sources of field research funding for which you qualify. Circulate by noon on Tuesday.

WEEK 13: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, 11/14

Professional Ethics

Humphreys, Macartan, Raul Sanchez de la Sierra, and Peter van der Windt. 2013. "Fishing, Commitment, and Communication: A Proposal for Comprehensive Nonbinding Research Registration." *Political Analysis* 21(1): 1-20.

Anderson, Richard G. 2013. "Registration and Replication: A Comment." *Political Analysis* 21(1): 38-39.

Laitin, David. 2013. "Fisheries Management." *Political Analysis* 21(1): 42-47.

Aili Mari Tripp. 2016. "DA-RT and Publishing Research from Authoritarian and Conflict Settings." African Politics Conference Group Newsletter, August 2016.

Community Engagement and Protecting Human Subjects

MacLean, Lauren Morris. 2006. "The Power of Human Subjects and the Politics of Informed Consent" *Qualitative Methods* 4(2): 13-15.

Thachil, Tariq and Milan Vaishnav. 2018. "The Strategic and Moral Imperatives of Local Engagement: Reflections on India." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 51 (3): 546-549.

Bleck, Jamie, Chipe Dendere, Boukary Sangare. 2018. "Making North-South Research Collaborations Work." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 51 (3): 554-558.

Cronin-Furman, Kate and Milli Lake. 2018. "Ethics Abroad: Fieldwork in fragile and violent contexts."

Masterson, Daniel and Lama Mourad. 2019. "The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in the Syrian Refugee Crisis." *MENA: Politics Newsletter* 2 (1): 1-5.

McClendon, Gwyneth. 2012. "Ethics of Using Public officials as field experiment subjects." *Newsletter of the APSA Experimental Section* 3 (1): 13-20.

WEEK 14: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS, 11/21

Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason. 2010. *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 27-89.

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 332-367.

Lieberman, Evan S., Marc Morje Howard, and Julia Lynch. 2004. "Symposium: Field Research." *Qualitative Methods* 2(1): 2-15.

Thomson, Susan M. 2009. "'That is not what we authorized you to do...': Access and government interference in highly politicized research environments." in Chandra Lekha Sriram, John C. King, Julie A. Mertus, Olga Martin-Ortega, and Johanna Herman (eds.), *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations*. New York: Routledge. pp. 108-123.

Brown, Stephen. 2009. "Dilemmas of self-representation and conduct in the field." in Chandra Lekha Sriram, John C. King, Julie A. Mertus, Olga Martin-Ortega, and Johanna Herman (eds.), *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations*. New York: Routledge. pp. 213-226.

FINAL PROJECT: FIELD RESEARCH FUNDING PROPOSAL

Research Proposal

Write an NSF DDIG research grant proposal to fund field research. The proposal should build on the assignments throughout the semester, but improve upon them based on feedback and integrate them into a coherent research proposal. Follow the guidelines outlined by NSF (format, length, etc.) as they pertain to the Project Description and Project Budget. Be sure to include a statement of your research question, a brief review of the literature, preliminary findings (if any), field research plan, and an itemized budget up to \$14,000.

Due December 5 by 5pm