

POLS 206

Political Science Research Methods

Spring 2022

Zeynep Kadirbeyoglu - zeynep.kadirbeyoglu@boun.edu.tr

Office: IB 502

Office Hours: Fridays 10.00-11.00 or by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to give you an overview of different empirical research methods in political science. The goal is to equip you with the tools of conducting your own research and enable you to become a critical reader of diverse types of political science research papers, articles and books.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is a serious problem and refers to dishonestly representing someone else's ideas as your own. Plagiarism is punished by disciplinary committee and usually results in an F as course grade and sometimes heavier penalties. All students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences

(<http://www.buowl.boun.edu.tr/students/favoidingplagiarism.htm>).

The Department of Political Science and International Relations has the following rules and regulations regarding academic honesty.

1. Copying work from others or giving and receiving answers/information during exams either in written or oral form constitutes cheating.
2. Submitting take-home exams and papers of others as your own, using sentences or paragraphs from another author without the proper acknowledgement of the original author, insufficient acknowledgement of the consulted works in the bibliography, all constitute plagiarism. For further guidelines, you can consult: <http://library.citytech.cuny.edu/instruction/plagiarism/index.php>
3. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and will result in:
 - an automatic F in the assignment or the exam,
 - an oral explanation before the Departmental Ethics Committee,
 - losing the opportunity to request and receive any references from the entire faculty,
 - losing the opportunity to apply in exchange programs,
 - losing the prospects of becoming a student assistant or a graduate assistant in the department.

The students may further be sent to the University Ethics committee or be subject to disciplinary action.

Evaluation

Midterm Exam 25% - you are responsible from both class notes and readings.

Participation 5%

Research Project – your project group should choose the qualitative or the quantitative track.

I) Formulation of a research question (2.5%) DUE 26 March

Write down in a paragraph the research question which you would like to write your research paper on.

II) Finding appropriate sources from the literature (2.5%) DUE 3 April

You should improve your research question based on my suggestions and in the meantime conduct a thorough research in the library and web based databases for articles and books relevant to your research question. You should compile a list for the bibliography for your research paper. At this point it is not necessary that you read all the articles and books in this list but you should at least have skimmed through in order to know whether they will be relevant to your research.

III) Writing the literature review and making your research question more specific (15%)

DUE April 30

Provide a brief literature review that justifies your study and sets the theoretical framework for your research paper. Do not forget to include the bibliography at the end.

Qualitative track:

IV) Research (15%) Due May 15

Formulate your hypotheses
Conduct interviews
Transcribe
Write field notes

V) Analysis (25%) Due June 5

Analysis of data:
Write an appendix about how you analyzed your data.
Write your findings and your conclusion and put together the research report.

Quantitative track:

IV) Research (15%) Due May 15

Formulate your hypotheses
Discuss conceptualization and measurement
Find an appropriate database

V) Analysis (25%) Due June 5

Analysis of data using SPSS
Tables and charts
Write an appendix about the process of data analysis
Interpretation of results and conclusion; put together the research report

VI) Presentation (10%) Due June 5

Details on Moodle.

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Workload correction: The instructor reserves the right to ask for workload evaluations from each group member for the other group members and modify the grades for each assignment according to the effort each group member put in to the realization of each assignment.

Late papers/reviews/assignments: there will be 3 percent penalty per day for late papers and reviews.

Course Schedule

(yellow highlight means it is compulsory to read that piece before coming to class)

1. Introduction and course overview

Why do we study research methods? Why is it necessary?

What should we know after the course is over?

- Sheldon Wolin – *Politics and Vision* Chapter 1 - Political Philosophy and Philosophy

2. Philosophy of social sciences

What is science? Scientific method. Paradigms. Social science research? What is distinctive about it? What is scientific about political science?

- Gabriel A. Almond; Stephen J. Genco. "Clouds, Clocks, and the Study of Politics" *World Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 4. (Jul., 1977), pp. 489-522
- OPTIONAL Rogers M. Smith 1997. Still Blowing in the Wind: The American Quest for a Democratic, Scientific Political Science. *Daedalus*, Vol. 126, No. 1, pp. 253-287.
- OPTIONAL Hirschman, A. O., 1970 (April). "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding," *World Politics*, 22 (3): 329
- OPTIONAL Hall, PA. 2003. Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. (James Mahoney, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Eds.) Ch.11., Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press.

3. Positivist versus Interpretivist Traditions

- Lin, A. C. 1998. "Bridging Positivist and Interpretive Approaches to Qualitative Methods" *Policy Studies Journal*. 26(1): 162-180.
- Wedeen, L. Ethnography as Interpretive Enterprise in Edward Schatz, ed., *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power* (Chicago, 2009)

4. Research process in political science: Research questions, theories, concepts and hypotheses

Research Design

Large N studies, case studies etc.

How to formulate research questions? What are theories, concepts and hypotheses?

Conceptualization, operationalization, measurement.

Index and scale.

Validity and reliability.

Ethics

Writing in social sciences

- The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium. *World Politics*.
- Manheim et al. 2008. Chapter 2. Theory Building: Concepts, and hypotheses in political research
- Nachmias and Nachmias Chapter 3 Basic Elements of Research
- Munck and Verkuilen. 2002. Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices. *Comparative Political Studies*. Vol 35. No.1.
- Nachmias and Nachmias Chapter 4 - Ethics in Social Science Research.
- OPTIONAL Becker, H.S. 1986. *Writing for social scientists*. The University of Chicago Press.

5. Proposal writing

- Sample proposal in the reading pack.
- Miriam Golden. 2001. "Why Do Trade Unions Call Strikes That Seem Sure to Fail?" in *Political Science as Puzzle Solving*, ed. Bernard Grofman. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

6. Conducting Literature Reviews and the Issue of Plagiarism

- Bottholph and Johnson Chapter 5 - Conducting a Literature Review.
- Avoiding and Detecting Plagiarism - The City University of New York.

7. Fieldwork

- Wood, E.J. 2009. "Field Research" in Boix and Stokes eds. *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*.

8. Sampling

- Nachmias and Nachmias Chapter 8 - Sampling and Sample Designs.
- Finifter, A.W. and E. Mickiewicz. 1992. "Redefining the Political System of the USSR: Mass Support for Political Change" *American Political Science Review*, 86(4):857-874.
Focus on sampling and methods section and skim through the rest.

9. Experimental Method

- Hyde, S.D. 2007. The Observer Effect in International Politics: Evidence from a Natural Experiment. *World Politics*. 60.
- Hainmueller, Jens and Michael J. Hiscox. 2010. Attitudes toward Highly Skilled and Low-skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment". *American Political Science Review*, 104 (1): 61-84.

10. Content and Discourse Analysis

- Senem Aydın Düzgit & Bahar Rumelili, "Discourse Analysis: Strengths and Shortcomings," *All Azimuth* (2018): 1-21.
- Berg, B.L. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 338-377 (An Introduction to Content Analysis)

11. Game Theory and Formal Models

- Kalyvas, S. 1998. From Pulpit to Party: Party Formation and the Christian Democratic Phenomenon. *Comparative Politics* 30:3, 293-312

12. Collecting quantitative data

- Mannheim Chapters on survey research and scaling techniques. pp. 137-179.
- Data sources and access

13. Collecting data through qualitative methods: interviews, participant observation, focus groups, political ethnography

- Leech, Beth L. ed. Symposium on "Interview Methods in Political Science" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 23:3 (December 2002), 663-688.
- OPTIONAL Michael Burawoy. Appendix. Teaching participant observation in Burawoy ed. *Ethnography unbound: power and resistance in the modern metropolis*.
- OPTIONAL Bratton, Michael and Liatto-Katundu, Beatrice. "A Focus Group Assessment of Political Attitudes in Zambia." *African Affairs* 93: 373 (October 1994), 535-63.

- OPTIONAL Williams, Christine L. and Heikes, E. Joel. "The Importance of Researcher's Gender in the In-Depth Interview: Evidence from Two Case Studies of Male Nurses." *Gender & Society* 7:2 (June 1993), 280-91.

14. Archival research

- Berg, B.L. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 271-287 (Archival Strategies)

15. Research in the field of International Relations and Process Tracing

- Collier, D. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 44(4): 823-30.

16. Analysis of qualitative data

- Berg, B.L. *Qualitative Research Methods*, p. 146-153 (Analyzing data obtained from interviews)
- H. Paker, F. Adaman, Z. Kadirbeyoglu ve B. Özkaynak. 2013. "Environmental Organisations in Turkey: Engaging the State and Capital" *Environmental Politics*, 22(5). pp.760-778.

17. Analysis of quantitative data: Statistical Inference, Bivariate and Multivariate Regression Models

- Faruk Ekmekci. 2011. Understanding Kurdish ethno-nationalism in Turkey: socio-economy, religion, and politics" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34(9): 1609-17.

18. Mixed Methods

- Z. Kadirbeyoglu and Gökhan Özertan. 2015. "Power in the Governance of Common-pool Resources: A Comparative Analysis of Irrigation Management Decentralization in Turkey" *Environmental Policy and Governance*. 25(3), pp. 157-171..

19. Disseminating your findings and conclusion

- Belcher, W. L. 2009. Reflections on ten years of teaching writing for publication to graduate students and junior faculty. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*.
- Mannheim. Chapter 22 - Writing (and reading) the research report.
- Mannheim Chapter 23 - overview of research process.