

Research Methodologies I: International Relations

Monsoon 2024

Dipin Kaur

Class Meeting:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:50 am – 1:20 pm
AC04-410 (LR)

Office Hours:

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 5- 6 pm, AC04-710

Sign up at: <https://calendly.com/dipin-kaur/officehours>

Teaching Assistants:

Sahil Garud

Course Description

The Research Methodologies course seeks to equip students interested in research (specifically, through the IR ASP Program) with the skills to conduct, write, read, and appropriately critique research.

Before the start of the course, students will have submitted proposal to their assigned ASP supervisors to get their input on required reading and research materials. The course begins once this first cycle ends — we will take these proposals as our starting point and from there, we will combine your research interests with elements of good research writing. Through the course, you will learn how to identify a research question, state your motivation for conducting this research (grounded in a well-surveyed literature review that identifies an apparent lacuna), develop testable hypotheses, and specify a methodological action plan for Spring 2024. As part of this plan, you will (a) briefly survey the various methods of data collection and analysis prevalent in IR research (historical and archival analysis, conducting interviews, discourse analysis, reading regression tables) and (b) interface with faculty experts on the subject/ and your supervisors on the dissertation.

The final output of the course is a Research Prospectus of about 5,000 words, which will ultimately constitute a chapter of your overall dissertation. This Prospectus will be graded for the course and will be presented by you to the Department as a whole at the end of the Monsoon Semester. The overall grade for the course will be based on a midterm assignment, periodical pop quizzes, final prospectus, and participation in in-class discussions.

The overall class grade will be based on student performance in the following assignments:

- **In-Class Reading Presentation and In-Class Exercises (10%)** [in class exercises noted on Syllabus + each student will pick any one week of readings and present the main ideas from them in the first 5-7 minutes of class]
- **In-class attendance and participation (15%)** [2 excused absences allowed during the semester, please speak to me after class/ to TA for any others]
- **2 in-class presentations about your progress (before midterm and final) (15%):** On Oct 5 and Nov 30 [5-7 min to present: (a) your lit review, (b) your prospectus]
- **Take home mid semester research question and lit review (20%):** Due Oct 8
- **Final submission: i.e., 5,000-word prospectus that will form a chapter/ part of your final ASP thesis (40%):** Due Dec 9

Note: For Monsoon Semester 2024, this course is oriented towards ASP students in the department. However, enrolment into the course is NOT restricted only to students who wish to submit a dissertation in IR.

Course Structure, Schedule, and Readings:

Week 1 – Tue, Aug 27 and Thu, Aug 29: Course Introduction: The Big Picture

- (Aug 29) Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. The Fundamentals of Political Science Research. Cambridge University Press, 2013, Chapter 1: “The Scientific Study of Politics.” pp. 1-21
- (Aug 29) Short handout on “How to Read in Political Science (relevant for IR)”
<https://www.ameliahoovergreen.com/uploads/9/3/0/9/93091546/howtoread.pdf>
- (Aug 29) Short Handout on Summary vs Description vs Analysis https://deanramser.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/1summaryvsanalysis_anthro.pdf

- IN CLASS EXERCISE on Thu, Aug 29: Set your writing goals for the semester.

Week 2 – Tue, Sep 3 and Thu, Sep 5: Research Question and Inductive vs Deductive Reasoning:

- (Sep 3) Norman, Ludvig. "Rethinking causal explanation in interpretive international studies." European Journal of International Relations 27.3 (2021): 936-959.
- (Sep 3) Clark, William Roberts. 2020. “Asking Interesting Questions” and “From Questions and Puzzles to Research Project.” in Luigi Curini and Robert Franzese, eds., The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations. (Chapter 1, pp. 7-25; Chapter 2, pp 26-43).

• (Sep 5) Blagden, David. "Induction and deduction in international relations: Squaring the circle between theory and evidence." International studies review 18.2 (2016): 195-213.

- IN-CLASS EXERCISE on Thursday, Sep 5: Students will present a 2-minute version of their already-submitted proposal in class, but with an updated question that clearly states the puzzle and the DV/ IV or Explanandum/ Explananda.

Optional Reading:

- Tracy, Sarah J. "The toxic and mythical combination of a deductive writing logic for inductive qualitative research." Qualitative Communication Research 1.1 (2012): 109-141.
- Ian Shapiro (2002), “Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or What’s Wrong with Political Science and What to Do about It”, Political Theory, Vol. 30, No. 4, pp. 596-619.

Week 3 – Tue Sep 10, Thu Sep 12: Literature Review

- (Sep 10) Luker, Kristin. Salsa dancing into the social sciences. Harvard University Press, 2009. Chapter 5: “Reviewing the Literature.”
- (Sep 10) Examples of bad, better, best lit reviews with comments:
<https://learninglink.oup.com/access/content/brymansrp1e-student-resources/brymansrp1e-bad-better-best-examples-of-literature-review>
- (Sep 12) Birkenstein, Cathy, and Gerald Graff. ~~They say/I say: The moves that matter in academic writing.~~ WW Norton & Company, 2018. Part 1 (They Say) and Part 2 (I Say)
- (Sep 12) 2 short and practical handouts, Read BOTH: Knopf, Jeffrey W. "Doing a literature review." PS: Political Science & Politics 39.1 (2006): 127-132. And McMenamin, Iain. "Process and text: Teaching students to review the literature." PS: Political Science & Politics 39.1 (2006): 133-135.

- IN-CLASS EXERCISE on Thu, Sep 21: Prepare a short list of questions/ concerns you are facing with your literature review, we will discuss in class. We will also discuss practical guidelines on how to find well-cited sources from top-ranked journals, how to conduct forward searches etc.

Week 4 – Tue Sep 17, Thu Sep 19: Sampling, Case Selection

- (Sep 17) Bennett, Andrew, and Colin Elman. "Case study methods in the international relations subfield." *Comparative political studies* 40.2 (2007): 170-195.
- (Sep 17) Klotz, Audie (2008): 'Case Selection,' in: Klotz, Audie and Deepa Prakash (eds.): *Qualitative Methods in International Relations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (pp. 43-58)
- (Sep 19) Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. "Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options." *Political research quarterly* 61.2 (2008): 294-308.
- (Sep 19) Amat, Consuelo. "State Repression and Opposition Survival in Pinochet's Chile." *Comparative Political Studies* (2023): 00104140231169032.

IN-CLASS EXERCISE on Thu, Sep 19: Come prepared to talk about your case(s), what type of case it is an example of, what a most-similar case would be, what a most-different case would be to your chosen one.

Week 5 – Tue Sep 24, Thu Sep 26: Theory Building and Measuring Concepts of Interest

- (Sep 24) Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten (2013): *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 2: "The Art of Theory Building"
- (Sep 24) Staniland, Paul. "Between a rock and a hard place: Insurgent fratricide, ethnic defection, and the rise of pro-state paramilitaries." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 56.1 (2012): 16-40.
- (Sep 26) Kellstedt, Paul M. and Guy D. Whitten (2013): *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 5: "Measuring Concepts of Interest"
- (Sep 26) Kaur, Dipin. "The Counterinsurgent's Dilemma: Explaining Variation in Coethnic Recruitment for Counterinsurgency."

Week 6 – Tue Oct 1, and Thu Oct 3: Overview of Methods of Inquiry

- (Oct 1) Kellstedt, Paul M., and Guy D. Whitten. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Cambridge University Press, 2013, Chapter 4 "Research Design" (Chapter 3 "Evaluating Causal Relationships" is not mandatory but super helpful)

- IN-CLASS ON OCT 3: PRESENTATION ON RESEARCH QUESTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Tuesday, Oct 8: Midterm Assignment Due

Restate your research question/ central puzzle and write a 3000-word (approx.) literature review, consisting of at least six articles in academic journals/ books that directly relate to your research topic. The review should compare and contrast sources and highlight the key arguments presented as well as areas of disagreements among authors. More importantly, the literature review should propose how your research question relates to one or more debates within the academic literature. Finally, it should point to the gap(s)/ unanswered questions from these studies, and how your study seeks to address them.

Oct 8 and Oct 10: Midterm Break

Week 7 – Tue Oct 15, and Thu Oct 17: Empirical Methods of Inquiry I

- (Oct 15) Lamont, Christopher. "Research methods in international relations." *Research Methods in International Relations* (2021): Chapter 5.
- (Oct 15) Secrets from Belfast: <https://www.chronicle.com/article/secrets-from-belfast/>
- (Oct 17) Grant, Aimee. *Doing excellent social research with documents: Practical examples and guidance for qualitative researchers*. Routledge, 2018. Chapter 4. "Historical and Official Documents: Moving Beyond Simple Interpretations." Pp 58-72.

- (Oct 17) Anthony Badger (2012) "Historians, a legacy of suspicion and the migrated archives," *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 23:4-5, 799-807.

Recommended Readings:

- Elman, Colin, Diana Kapiszewski and Lorena Vinueza. 2010. "Qualitative Data Archiving: Rewards and Challenges." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43(1): 22-27.
- Kapiszewski, Diana. 2015. "Interviews, Focus Groups, and Oral Histories" in *Field Research in Political Science*, eds Kapiszewski and MacLean. Cambridge University Press, 190-233.
- Wood, Elisabeth J. 2008. "Field Research" in *The Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan Stokes.

Week 8 – Tue Oct 22, and Thu Oct 24: Empirical Methods of Inquiry II

- (Oct 22) Lamont, Christopher. "Research methods in international relations." *Research Methods in International Relations* (2021): Chapter 6.
- (Oct 22) Lyall, Jason, Graeme Blair, and Kosuke Imai. 2013. "Explaining Support for Combatants during Wartime: A Survey Experiment in Afghanistan." *American Political Science Review*. 107 (04): 679- 705.
- (Oct 24) Short Guide on How to Read Regression Tables:
<http://svmiller.com/blog/2014/08/reading-a-regression-table-a-guide-for-students/>
- (Oct 24) Fearon, James D., and David D. Laitin. "Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war." *American political science review* 97.1 (2003): 75-90.

IN CLASS EXERCISE ON THU, Oct 24: Submit a short note containing your methodological plan of action by Wednesday night. Bullet points are ok, but specify your sources, your data collection and data analysis strategy. On Thursday, we will pair up, pick the other student's plan of action to read and critique in class.

Suggested Readings (Important for Mixed Methods Research)

- Lamont, Christopher. "Research methods in international relations." *Research Methods in International Relations* (2021): Chapter 7. Mixed-Methods Research.
- Brooks, Marissa, ed. 2017. "Symposium: The Road Less Traveled: An Agenda for Mixed Methods Research." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50(4): 1015-1018.
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/B9780080970868440572>
- Benjamin, Lauren MacLean, and Melani Cammett. "Symposium: Field Research: How Rich? How Thick? How Participatory?." *Qualitative Methods* 4.2 (2006): 9-18.

Week 9 – Tue Oct 29, and Thu Oct 31: The Question of Ethics in Empirical Methods of Inquiry

- (Oct 29) Fujii, Lee Ann. Research Ethics 101: Dilemmas and Responsibilities. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 45(4): 717-23.
- (Oct 29) Mazzei, Julie, and Erin E. O'Brien. "You got it, so when do you flaunt it? Building rapport, intersectionality, and the strategic deployment of gender in the field." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 38.3 (2009): 358-383.
- (Oct 29) Gani, Jasmine K., and Rabea M. Khan. "Positionality statements as a function of coloniality: Interrogating reflexive methodologies." *International Studies Quarterly* 68.2 (2024).

Suggested Readings:

- Lincoln, Yvonna S., and William G. Tierney. "Qualitative research and institutional review boards." *Qualitative inquiry* 10.2 (2004): 219-234.
- Blee, Kathleen M., and Ashley Currier. "Ethics beyond the IRB: An introductory essay." *Qualitative Sociology* 34 (2011): 401-413.

Oct 31 – Diwali Holiday, Classes Do Not Meet

Week 10 – Tue Nov 5, and Thu Nov 7: Coding and Analyzing Data

- (Nov 5) Fujii, Lee Ann. 2017. Chapter 5, "I Have My Data, Now What?" In Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach. 1 edition. New York: Routledge.
- (Nov 5) Wolfinger, Nicholas H. "On writing fieldnotes: collection strategies and background expectancies." Qualitative research 2.1 (2002): 85-93.
- (Nov 7) Lareau, Annette. 2021. Listening to People. A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing It All Up. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 8.
- (Nov 7) Vila-Henninger, Luis, et al. "Abductive coding: Theory building and qualitative (re) analysis." Sociological Methods & Research 53.2 (2024): 968-1001.

IN-CLASS EXERCISE on Nov 7: Bring a transcript of an interview/ oral history that you have either conducted, or that you have encountered online (of relevance to your topic). We will work on coming up with codes for the various themes you see.

Week 11 – Tue Nov 12, and Thu Nov 14: Data Analysis Contd. + Writing Up Your Research

- (Nov 12) Neumann, Iver B. "Discourse analysis." Qualitative methods in international relations: A pluralist guide. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2008. 61-77.
- (Nov 12) Collier, David. "Understanding process tracing." PS: Political Science & Politics 44.4 (2011): 823-830.
- (Nov 14) Lareau, Annette. 2021. Listening to People. A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing It All Up. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 9.
- (Nov 14) The Elements of a Scientific Research Paper: Ecarnot, F., Seronde, M.-F., Chopard, R., Schiele, F., & Meneveau, N. (2015). Writing a scientific article: A step-by-step guide for beginners. European Geriatric Medicine, 6(6), 573–579.

IN-CLASS EXERCISE: Bring about 500 words of writing (related to your thesis) that you are proud of to class. I will pair you up with someone who will give you feedback on what they liked/ what could be better.

Week 12 – Tue Nov 19, and Thu Nov 21: Presenting Your Research

[In this week, I am trying to organize a guest lecture on tips and tricks to prepare effective slideshows/ presentations. If students would prefer, we can also schedule one round of practice presentations for Nov 21]

(Nov 19) These two PPTs might not relate directly to thesis presentations, but pertain to research in general and are useful for you to understand how to highlight the most important parts of your research in a limited time span:

- <https://www.cis.upenn.edu/~sweirich/talks/plmw15-giving-a-talk.pdf>
- <https://tompepinsky.files.wordpress.com/2017/09/jobtalktalk2017.pdf>

Week 13 – Tue Nov 26, and Thu Nov 28: Final Presentations and Course Conclusion

Thu, Nov 26: In-Class Practice Presentation Day 1

Thu, Nov 28: In-Class Practice Presentation Day 2

Each Student will be given 10 minutes to present their prospectus in front of the class, and we will leave 10 mins for Q&A + feedback each. This session is intended to help you prepare for the departmental presentation at the end of the semester.

Nov 29 – Department-Wide Presentations of Prospectus/ First Part of Thesis [Hybrid]

Dec 9 – Final Research Prospectus due at 12 pm.

While the sections of this paper will depend on your research journey, this submission should be about 6,000-7,500 words and should include a considerable number of the following elements: an **Introduction***, **Literature Review***, **Proposed Theory**, **Hypotheses and Observable Implications**, **Methodological Approach***, and an **Empirical Plan of Action*/ initial findings**.

(* indicates mandatory sections for the prospectus)