612 Qualitative Research Design

Course Location and Time: VKC 104, Fridays 2-4pm

Professor Jonathan Markowitz

Office Hours: Friday’s 1-2.

Description of the Course and Goals:

The goal of this course is to teach scholars how to design convincing research using qualitative evidence and assumes that you have taken POIR 610 Research Design. Although qualitative research can be used to develop and illustrate theory and concepts, most of our time together will focus on how to design research that utilizes qualitative evidence to evaluate the observable implications of theory. Students will learn how to evaluate and design research using five different types of validity, each with its own dedicated segment of the course (Fariss 2015). The first section begins by developing the tools to evaluate the deductive validity of a theory. The second section focuses on construct validity and the relationship between theories of measurement and qualitative evidence in building valid theoretical constructs. The third section hones in on internal validity and how to use evidence and design to best tackle the challenges associated with causal inference. The fourth section centers on external validity and tools to deal with the limitations of generalizing from cases. The fifth and final section closes with a discussion of conclusion validity: What are the author’s conclusions and based on the validity of their research how strong are they? Conclusion validity is based on the combined strength of the other four types of validity (deductive, construct, internal and external). Given that few individual pieces of research are able to guard against all threats to validity, the final two weeks of the course focus on using multiple designs in research. The goal of this section is simple and practical: to offer scholars a template for selecting multiple research designs that collectively enhance the conclusion validity of the project (i.e. a dissertation).

Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. The phone number for DSP is 213-740-0776. If you need assistance with the process, please contact me at the phone number or e-mail address above.

Academic Dishonesty

I take academic dishonesty EXTREMELY seriously. Any student violating USC’s Academic Dishonesty or Student Conduct policies will earn an ‘F’ in the course and will be reported to the appropriate administrators for investigation. You are responsible for reviewing the Trojan Integrity Guide: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tio.pdf and the guide for avoiding plagiarism: http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/forms/tig.pdf

Assignments


**Homework, Presentations and Participation-50%**

I will assign various homework assignment and presentations. Assignments will consist mainly of summarizing, illustrating and critiquing existing research designs. Students will also be responsible for presenting their own research designs and discussing the design of their peers. Each week we will discuss several designs: Each design will have a presenter that that is in charge of summarizing and critiquing the theory and design from the assigned readings. Homework will be assigned in class and will be due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late homework is not accepted.

**Final Paper and Presentation -50%**

The final paper is due on the last day of the class. Students may either submit a research design prospectus or paper that demonstrates command of the methods and designs taught in the class. Papers should be no longer than 20 pages, including tables, graphs, references, and appendices. I will discuss more details about the paper as the semester progresses. These papers are not designed to be full-blown papers that are ready for submission, but are rather an opportunity for you to develop the research design for a research project. You are also required to give a short conference length presentation (12 minutes or less) of your proposed project. The goal of this presentation is to hone your skills at presenting your question and design in a conference-like setting.

**Class Schedule**

**January 11: Introduction**

Lecture:
Class Organization and Overview
The 5 Types of Validity

**SECTION 1: Deductive Validity**

**January 18: Theory and Concepts, Theory Building**


**Discussion Readings:**

5) Fearon, Jim 2017 Cooperation, Conflict and Costs of Anarchy Forthcoming International Organization


**SECTION 2: Construct Validity**

**January 25- Units, Concepts and Constructs**


3) Coe, Andrew Containing Rouges: A Theory of Asymmetric Arming. Forthcoming JOP


**February 1: Indicators and Measurement Strategies**


**Discussion Readings:**


**February 8: Using Primary, Secondary and Archival Sources**


**Discussion Readings:**

3) Thomas Piketty *Capital in the Twenty First Century*- Chapter 3


Additional Reading


Trachtenberg, Marc. “Identifying the Scholarly Literature” and “Working with Primary Sources.” Available on line at:

http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/methbk/AppendixI.html
http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/methbk/AppendixII.html

Further Empirical Examples


February 15: Causal Inference and the Problem of Selecting Case Studies


Discussion Readings:


SECTION 3: Internal Validity

February 22: Quasi, Natural and Field Experiments and Qualitative Evidence

1) 10 Strategies for Figuring out if X Caused Y-Macartan Humphreys (see link) [http://egap.org/methods-guides/10-strategies-figuring-out-if-x-caused-y](http://egap.org/methods-guides/10-strategies-figuring-out-if-x-caused-y)

2) Dunning, Thad. *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*: Cambridge University Press, 2012 (Chapter 1 pg 1-38 and Chapter 7)


Discussion Readings:


March 1: Case study Research Design—Comparing Across Units


Discussion Readings:

3) Weeks, Jessica LP. *Dictators at War and Peace*: Cornell University Press, 2014. Read Chapters 1, 4, 5, 6 and conclusion


March 8: NO CLASS MAKE UP TBA

March 16: Spring Break

March 22nd Counter-Factuals, Critical Junctures and Single Case Designs


Discussion Readings:


SECTION 4: External Validity The Problem of Generalizing

March 29: Counter-Factuals, Critical Junctures and Single Case Designs


April 5: NO CLASS MPSA

SECTION 5: Conclusion Validity

April 12 Mixed Methods and Medium-N Designs

Discussion Readings:


2) McDonald, Patrick J. The Invisible Hand of Peace: Capitalism, the War Machine, and International Relations Theory. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009. (Skim Ch 1, Chapter 3, skim 4 +5, read 6 and Conclusion


**April 19: Class Presentations**

**April 26: Class Presentations**

**Make-Up Class (TBA): Alternative Criteria for Selecting Cases**

*Exogenous Shocks as a measurement strategy*
1) Frieden, Jeffry A. "Actors and Preferences in International Relations." In *Strategic Choice and International Relations*, edited by David A. Lake and Bob Powell, 39-76, 1999


*Probing the Causal Mechanism: Deviant Cases*


*Illustrating Theory*

*Analytic Narratives*