Course Description and Objectives

This seminar is designed to improve graduate-level skills in creating and criticizing methodologically sophisticated research work. You are supposed to gain better competence to 1) refresh your knowledge towards the evolution of social scientific methodology and main approaches and theories in the discipline, 2) enhance your skills to interpret qualitative evidence and empirical data of political economical life, 4) critically evaluate theoretical framework, research techniques, and main research themes, and 5) proceed research design by adopting theories and techniques in social sciences. The research examples used to illustrate methodological issues will be mainly drawn from political science. However, the methodological content of the seminar is applicable to the study of economics, sociology, and area studies.

Required Textbook


   i) All readings can be found on 成大電子期刊 (NCKU E-Journal) - JSTOR - Arts & Sciences I Collection
   http://140.116.210.3/cgi-bin/ ej/browse.cgi?q=iJSTOR+-+Arts+%26+Sciences+I+Collection.pub&ccd=mudO_x&sentry=1&o=select
   ii) Some readings you might find on this course’s webpage (go onto http://iteach.ncku.edu.tw/, find the title of this course, then log in. Please also register in one of the students in this course, all lecture notes and information will be posted on the webpage.)
Suggested Textbooks (for refreshing knowledge you’ve got)

1. 吳翠松 譯 (Mark J. Smith 著)。「社會科學概說：方法論的探索」。台北：韋伯文化，2004。
2. 冷則剛、任文姍 譯 (Jarol B. Manheim and Richard C. Rich 著)「政治學方法論」。台北：五南圖書出版公司，1998。
3. 易君博。「政治理論與研究方法」。台北：三民書局，1990。
4. 周志杰 譯 (Todd Landman 著)。「最新比較政治的議題與途徑」。台北：韋伯文化國際出版有限公司，2006。

Useful Websites

1. The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/
4. Political Methodology, American Political Science Association http://polmeth.wustl.edu/
6. Comparative and Research Method, American Political Science Association http://www.nd.edu/~apsacp/

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

1. **Weights**: Three Leading Discussion 30% (10% for each), One Research Design Written Assignments & Oral Presentation 50%, Participation/Contribution 20%.

2. Three Leading Discussion of the assigned readings (Seminar Leader and Written Critique)
1) You will be assigned to **lead three seminars in this course**. Principally, some students will be selected as leaders in one session. **Each leader focuses on one reading required for the given week, and leads the rest of participants to summarize and comment the reading and answer relevant questions raised by participants and I.**

2) Each leader will be required to write **one 3000 word critique of that assigned reading**, and submit it at the beginning of the seminar of that given week.

3) The other participants are also required to do best to address all readings for the week, and show your active participation and contribution in the readings and relevant question/theme.

3. One Research Design Paper (Draft Presentation & Revised Paper Submission)

1) **Decide Your Paper Topic.** Select two of the eight main research themes (Theme 1 to Theme 8, listed below) as the general direction/orientation of your research topic. **One theme can be allowed five persons to take, and you cannot select the same theme for two research design papers.** You have to get my permission before you decided your topic.

Theme 1: State/Institution Studies and Comparative Research  
Theme 2: International Relation Theory & International Studies  
Theme 3: Global Political Economy and International Economic Relations  
Theme 4: Political Economy of Development  
Theme 5: Political Change and Democratic Performance  
Theme 6: Global Issues  
Theme 7: Public Policy and Analysis of Political Economy  
Theme 8: Human Security

2) **Research Design Draft Presentation.** You will be required to submit a copy of your research design draft to me **one week in advance of presenting this design** in the seminar. Each student will present their design in the seminar for 10 minutes, including: a short introduction of your research question and its significance, hypothesis/proposition, variables setting/operationalization, data source, method(s) to inference, and estimation/expectation of the result.
3) **Research Design Paper Submission.** You are expected to revise the paper fully after presentation, and submit it in two weeks. Research designs should address all of the following tasks elements: (1) specification of your research question and research objectives, in relation to the current stage of development and research needs of the relevant research program, related literatures, and alternative explanations; (2) specification of the hypotheses/propositions, and independent and dependent variables (or plus intervening variables); (3) selection of a theoretical approach/model/method that are appropriate in light of the first two tasks, and justification of why this framework were selected and how it can build causality and proceed inference from your research question; and (4) consideration of how variance in the variables can best be described for testing and/or refining existing theories. There is no minimum length limit, though most designs will probably be *around 6,000 words and should be shorter than 9,000 words.*

4. **Participation in class discussions is required. It is a graduate-level seminar!!**

Discussions will be conducted under the following rules:

- **BE PREPARED.** Intelligent participation requires that you have read and thought about the assignment.
- **BACK UP STATEMENTS WITH EVIDENCE.** Evidence can consist of facts or statistics from the literature and/or specific observations or experiences.
- **CONTRIBUTE.** Your perspective is unique. It is your responsibility to give the class the benefit of your point of view, even if you believe that others may disagree. Practice demonstrates the courage of your convictions. We may be able to discover some new ideas/puzzles in the atmosphere of the class that is full of brain-storming conversations.

**Scholastic Dishonesty**

Scholastic dishonesty is any act that violates the rights of another student with respect to academic work or that involves misrepresentation of a student's own work. Scholastic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to) cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarizing (misrepresenting as one’s own anything done by another), submitting the same or substantially similar papers (or creative work) for more than one course without consent of all instructors concerned, depriving another of necessary course materials, and sabotaging another’s work.
Discussion Topics and Assigned Readings

Week 1: Overview Syllabus & Introduction of Coming Attractions
Week 2: Readings Distribution & How to Write Your Thesis Proposal/Research Design (Preface)

Part I – Basic Lecturing

Week 3: How to Write Your Thesis Proposal/Research Design (Criticism)
Required readings (you have to read):
* Thesis Proposal Writing Samples *(To be passed)*

Week 4: Refresh the Methodology for Social Sciences
Recommended reading (you might read):
吳翠松譯 (Mark J. Smith著)。「社會科學概說：方法論的探索」。台北：韋伯文化，2004。

Part II – Review Methodology: Bridge the Qualitative & Quantitative Approach

Week 5: (Leading Discussions)
1. **Review the Fundamentals of Methodology**
   *Facts, impressions, and concepts in society.*

   Required:
   *King, Keohane, and Verba, ch1;*

   Recommended:
2. **Divergent Ideas of Social Science**  
   *Alternative ways for social science inquiry.*

**Required:**

(Historical Approach)


(Critical Approach)


(New Social Science)


**Recommended:**


**Week 6: (Leading Discussions)**

1. **Theories and Hypotheses: Descriptive Inference and Causal Inference**

   *What’s all this about falsification and the null hypothesis?*

**Required:**

*King, Keohane, and Verba, ch2.


747-65.

Recommended:


2. Concept Building, Operationalization, and Measurement

Trying to get a handle on stylized facts, factoids, and indicators.

Required:
*King, Keohane, and Verba, ch5.

Recommended:

Week 7: (Leading Discussions)

1. Causality, Inference, and Interpretation

Every time A-Bian comes here it rains. A-Bian causes rain!

Required:
*King, Keohane, and Verba, ch 3


Recommended:

2. **Comparison as Method and Comparative Methods**

   *They’re all Taiwanese, what’s the problem?*

Required:


Recommended:


**Week 8: (Leading Discussions)**

1. **Case Studies and Case Selection**

   *How could you compare an Apple and an Orange?*

Required:
*King, Keohane, and Verba, ch 4


2. **Quasi-Experimental and Survey Designs**

   *What do people think in Tainan City? Well I asked this cab driver and….*

   Required:

   * King, Keohane, and Verba, Chap. 6.


   Comment a Master’s Thesis Proposal (To be passed)

   Recommended:


**Week 9: An Invited Speech (學者演講)**

**Part III – Proceed Research: Themes that Link the Politics and the Economy**

1. **Inter-State Level**

**Week 10: Theme 1: State as an Object to Compare (Leading Discussions + Presentations)**

   Required:


**Recommended:**


**Week 11: Theme 2: International Relation Theory & International Studies (Leading Discussions + Presentations)**

**Required:**


**Recommended:**


Week 12: Theme 3: International Political Economy  
(Leading Discussions + Presentations)  
Required:


2. National & Sub-national Level

Week 13: Theme 4: Political Economy of Development  
(Leading Discussions + Presentations)  
Required:


Week 14: Theme 5: Public Policy and Analysis
(Leading Discussions + Presentations)

Required:


Recommended:


3. Geographic & Global Level

Week 15: Theme 6: Global Issues
(Leading Discussions + Presentations)

Required:
Recommended:

**Week 16: Theme 7: Human Security and Development**
*(Leading Discussions + Presentations)*

**Required:**

Recommended:

Week 17: Presentation
Week 18: Term Paper Due in 01/12
Student Data

Please take a few minutes and fill in the following to help me locate you, if necessary, and have a better sense of your background.

Name: ______________________

How to contact you (E-mail Address or Phone Number)?
___________________________________

Class Year: 碩一 ____ 碩二 ____ 碩三 ____ 博士生 ____ 其他 ____

Major and/or Minor in your undergraduate program (大學之主、副修或輔系):

Major: ____________________________, Minor: ____________________________

Please comment on any backgrounds and interests you have regarding political/social scientific methodology or any of the themes and issues identified in the syllabus.

- End -