Research Methodology in Political Economy

Course Number: U171400
Course Meetings: Wednesday, 9-12 a.m., U10C
Statistical Lab Meetings: Friday, 1-3 p.m., Computer and Network Center Rm. #75309
Instructor: Dr. Chih-Cheng Meng
Office: Northern Building of Social Sciences, 6th Floor, 06-2757575 ext. 50253
Office Hours: T 2:30-4 p.m., Th 8:30-10 a.m.
E-mail: cmeng@mail.ncku.edu.tw

Course Description

This seminar offers a broad and intensive introduction to the field of methodology for first year students to equip with fundamental understandings and techniques to political-economic studies. In addition to surveying methodological debates across various research approaches, the emphasis of this course is on substantive practices of how to conduct an empirical research project. Therefore, the readings for this course are not prone to specific approach and substantive subfield in political economy. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be taught, in order to extend students’ knowledge of research methods. There are two general objects for students after leaving this one semester’s seminar: One, this course expects students being able to follow a particular research approach with correct methodological positions; Two, this course aims to train students being able to apply appropriate and feasible analytical methods to their research and dissertation projects.

The readings are organized into four parts: (1) Introduction: Disciplinary Foundation and Debates; (2) Conceptualization and Measurement; (3) Contending Approaches of Political Economy; and (4) Empirical Inquiry of Political Economic Research. The reading and assignment loads are heavy. I strongly suggest ALL first-year Ph.D. students to take this class, in order to build solid foundation for your later-on doctoral study and research. Moreover, I strongly remind students who finally decide to take this class should be prepared to devote considerable time to accomplish all course requirements.

Requirements

(1) Seminar Participation (20%): Students are expected to attend class, keep up with the assigned readings for each seminar meeting and to come prepared to discuss them. Each student will be assigned to lead weekly seminar discussion one to two times. The discussion
leader must prepare a 15-20 minutes summary of weekly readings and raise substantive
questions for seminar participants. Students are also encouraged to utilize NCKU’s moodle
system (at <http://moodle.ncku.edu.tw/>); to receive frequently messages of class
announcements, course materials and proceedings, and Q&A from professor and other class
cohorts. Your participation on the moodle’s discussion board will also be partially credited
into your final grade.

(2) Weekly Reaction Papers and Assignments (40%): This course deigns two types of
weekly assignments. First, an essay of TWO-pages in which students analyze a concept or a
position of arguments in assigned readings. The essay should be critical, evaluating the
strengths and weaknesses of this literature. More important, students are always encouraged
to have their own positions to challenge others’ arguments from various literature. Students
are required to circulate this weekly essay to the professor and classmates by the noon of the
date before each class meeting. Students should read others’ papers before class begins. The
professor will ask students to present their responses toward selected readings and comment
the other students’ positions. Second, a statistical and computing practice in which students
answer the assigned questions by utilizing the statistics and computing programs (STATA or
R) lectured in class. Students are encouraged to seek for team-works and advices from
outside resources while they undertake this statistical assignment. The due date of this
statistical assignment will be announced in class. Last but not the least, due to we have
technological assistance from the e-learning system (NCKU moodle), ALL your weekly
papers, assignments, and comments on others should be submitted by it.

(3) Final Research Proposal (40%): An essay of 15-20 pages in which students develop a
research design for carrying out a project using either qualitative or quantitative (or both)
methods. This research proposal must be composed of clear research question(s), well
defined dependent variable, brief literature review, research framework, adequate research
design and expected results. All citations and references in this proposal must be drafted by
APSR style. The instructions and samples for APSR style can be referred at
<http://acme.highpoint.edu/~msetzler/generalissues/APSRcitation.htm>. You will be
assigned an in-class prelim before you submit the final research proposal on week 9 (Nov.
10). My grading will pay much attention on the section of research design over the final draft.
Specifically, I will examine whether you demonstrate adequate and feasible research design
to test your research questions and theoretical hypotheses from the literature review. This
proposal will be due by 5 p.m. on January 19. Please turn in the hard copy of your final paper
to my office. I will not accept e-mail attachment or delayed paper for this final assignment.

Recommended Books to Purchase

Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Co.

Brady, Henry, and David Collier, eds. 2004. Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared
Reading Assignments and Schedule

Part I: Disciplinary Foundations and Debates

Week 1: September 15
COURSE OVERVIEW & SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATIONS
(No assignment but previewing readings before class if you have them.)


4. Kuhn. (Skim the book. You may like to read the book’s outline at <http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/Kuhn.html>.)


### Week 2: September 22

**MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL**

(You are assigned to turn in the reaction paper for Week 1 by the noon of 9/21.)

No class, but you are required to read:

1. Van Evera’s “What is a Political Science Dissertation?”, “Helpful Hints on Writing a Political Science Dissertation”, “The Dissertation Proposal”, “Profession Ethics” and “How to Write a Paper”. (Chaps. 3-6 and Appendix, pp. 89-128)

### Week 3: September 29

**POLITICAL ECONOMY, POLITICAL SCIENCE AND METHODOLOGY IN PERSPECTIVE**

(Reaction paper for Week 3 is due by the noon of 9/28.)


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Week 4: October 6
APPROACH AND DEBATE: QUALITATIVE AND/OR QUANTITATIVE I
(Reaction paper for Week 4 is due by the noon of 10/5.)


Week 5: October 13
APPROACH AND DEBATE: QUALITATIVE AND/OR QUANTITATIVE II
(Reaction paper for Week 5 is due by the noon of 10/12.)


Part II: Conceptualization and Measurement

Week 6: October 20
QUALITATIVE APPROACH
(Reaction paper for Week 6 is due by the noon of 10/19.)

2. Ragin, whole book (Emphasize on chaps. 1-2, 4-8, skim the rest)

Week 7: October 27
QUANTITATIVE APPROACH
(Reaction paper for Week 7 is due by the noon of 10/26.)


Week 8: November 3
RETHINKING QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE APPROACHES
(Reaction paper for Week 8 is due by the noon of 11/2)


Part III: Contending Approaches of Political Economy
Week 9: November 10

**PRELIM OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL**
(Turn-in the outline of your final research proposal by the noon of 11/9, in which includes the title, research questions, theoretical hypotheses, a general research method and approach (if possible) that you will use in your final draft. This outline should be composed no more than 8 pages.)

Students deliver their in-class presentations regarding the outline of their research proposal. Each student needs to prepare slides for 15 mins briefing and to respond to the professor and other classmates’ questions for this weekly seminar.

Week 10: November 17

**HISTORICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH**
(Reaction paper for Week 10 is due by the noon of 11/16)

1. North, Chaps. 1-6.

Week 11: November 24

**POSITIVE APPROACH: RATIONAL CHOICE AND GAME THEORY**
(Reaction paper for Week 11 is due by the noon of 11/23)

163-181)


Part IV: Empirical Inquiry of Political Economic Research

Week 12: December 1
QUANTITATIVE TOOLS I: INTRODUCTION OF APPLIED REGRESSION AND THE RELATED
(Turn-in the modification of your research proposal’s outline and homework assignment for Week 11, due by noon of 11/30)


Week 13: December 8
QUANTITATIVE TOOLS II-1: LAB PRACTICE
(Assignment for Week 12 is due by the noon of 12/7. Two hours lecture on 12/8 and two hours lab practice on 12/10.)

TBA

Week 14: December 15
QUANTITATIVE TOOLS II-2: LAB PRACTICE
(Assignment for Week 13 is due by the noon of 12/14. Two hours lecture on 12/15 and two hours lab practice on 12/17.)

TBA

Week 15: December 22
QUANTITATIVE TOOLS II-3: LAB PRACTICE
(Assignment for Week 14 is due by the noon of 12/21. Two hours lecture on 12/22 and two hours lab practice on 12/24.)

TBA

Week 16: December 29
QUALITATIVE TOOLS I: FIELD RESEARCH
(Assignment for Week 15 is due by the noon of 12/28)

Professor Chin-shou Wang (the 2009 Youth Scholar of Dr. Wu Ta-Yu Award) will deliver a talk about his theories and practices on field research. (1.5 to 2 hours, title TBA)


Recommended Readings

QUALITATIVE TOOLS II: CASE AND COMPARATIVE METHODS
(Reaction paper for Week 17 is due by the noon of 1/4.)


7. Van Evera’s “What are Case Studies? How Should They Be Performed?” (Chap. 2, pp. 49-88)

Week 18: January 12
Writing Final Paper

No Class

**FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL IS DUE BY 5 p.m. ON JANUARY 19.**

Remarks:

All your works in this class are prohibited to violate the plagiarism code which is explicitly stated on the NCKU’s Graduate Program Regulations (see http://www.ncku.edu.tw/~register/english/a2_new.doc). You will take serious risks to ask withdrawal from NCKU, if I report you are suspect to violation of plagiarism code. The mostly important rules regarding your standing in the university are cited as the following:

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<tr>
<th>Chapter 5: Withdrawal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Part 16: Graduate Students under these circumstances are to be withdrawal from college/ university:</td>
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<td>Subpart 1: Students who did not successfully complete their required academic course/ courses and/ or unit/ units within the designated academic program year.</td>
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<td>Subpart 2: Students who did not complete the required number of Preliminary Qualification Examination of Doctoral Degree Candidate given by their major department/ college department within the designated year</td>
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<td>Subpart 3: Students who did not successfully obtain a passing grade from the Graduation Examination of first attempt and second attempt.</td>
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<td>Subpart 4: Students who have yet register and reapply after they have placed on suspension before the deadline.</td>
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<td>Subpart 5: Students who did not obtain a passing grade on their student of conduct.</td>
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<td>Subpart 6: Students who did not meet the minimum requirement for admission.</td>
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<td><strong>Subpart 7:</strong> Students who found to be plagiarized or embezzled in any thesis paper, creative work, presentation, written report, or technical report.</td>
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As per the Rules and Regulations of Student Reward and Penalty, graduate students who violated the University Policies or other criminal laws are order for dismissal or disciplinary action.