

University of Hawaii at Manoa

## **POLS 390 Political Inquiry and Analysis (W)**

Instructor: Hye Won Um

Email: hyewonum@hawaii.edu

Office: Saunders Hall 607

Office Hour: By appointment

### **Course Overview**

This course is designed to introduce undergraduate students to the logic of inquiry and the methodology of empirical research in the social sciences generally and political science in particular. Students will examine basic elements of empirical research, explore a wide range of methodologies, and analyze how they are applied to actual cases. Readings, both theoretical and applied, are assigned in an effort to prepare students to evaluate existing research and to design their own research paper. By the end of the course, students are expected to have an expanded sense of research strategies available to them, a deeper understanding of research design (mostly in qualitative research), a stronger grasp of logic, and a capacity to read and evaluate the diverse scholarship produced in our discipline.

Readings, and writing assignments for this course emphasize three goals. First, students should understand the general issues related to the meaning, logic, and conduct of social science inquiry. To help students' understanding, this course will deal with questions beyond the technical aspects of method – interpretation, ethics, politics, development of concept and theory (history), validity, and so on. Second, students should have knowledge of alternative strategies for qualitative research design, data collection, and data analysis. Specific possibilities and problems that each method may have for particular projects should be considered throughout the semester. Third, students should pursue concrete steps to apply their chosen theory and execute their methodology well in their own research design. For this purpose, we will trace all steps of the research design – asking the research questions, defining concepts, choosing proper methods, collecting and analyzing data, and so on.

### **Course Requirements**

#### 1. 5 Analytical Papers (25%)

Since this is an on-line course, there is no attendance check and no in-class participation. Instead, 5 analytical papers will be submitted by their due dates. Students can choose one article from “example readings” and write a review of the article. Take the article apart into the basic components of a research paper described in “Research Paper Assignment,” and analyze it in those terms (research questions, arguments, definition of concepts, chosen methods, strengths and weaknesses of the research in terms of theory and methodology, possible alternatives you suggest to improve the weaknesses, and so on). Each analytical paper should be about 2–3 pages in length.

University of Hawaii at Manoa

2. Possible Research Questions (10%), Annotated Bibliography (10%), and Developing Operational Definitions and Research Strategies (10%)

Please check details in “Research Paper Assignment” (pages 9-11).

3. Final Research Paper (30%)

Please check details in “Research Paper Assignment” (pages 9-11).

4. Final Exam (15%)

The final exam is a take-home exam. Students will choose one question and write a 5-page essay for the final exam. Students will receive exam questions by e-mail on the day announced and must submit their answers on time. More details about the final exam will be announced later in the semester.

Note:

1. This is a writing intensive (W or WI) on-line course, which means you have to deal with more reading and writing assignments than in a regular class. Please keep this in mind, and understand that skipping readings and failing to turn in assignments on time will hurt your final grade. (You need to work at least 3-5 hours a week.)
2. Familiarity with statistics might be helpful to understand several concepts and theories, but not required.

### **Readings**

All readings will be available in electronic form on the course webpage. Students are expected to keep up with each week's readings.

### **Academic Integrity**

UHM website on academic dishonesty and related issues is available at:

<http://www.catalog.hawaii.edu/about-uh/campus-policies1.htm>

All such matters will be referred to the department chair.

University of Hawaii at Manoa

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1 Introduction: The Study of Politics as a Social Science**

No assigned readings.

### **Week 2 Positivism, Interpretivism, and Critical Approaches**

#### **Required Readings**

Yanow, Devoa. 2000. *Conducting Interpretive Policy Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Chap. 1 (1-25).

Lin, Ann Chih. "Bridging Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches to Qualitative Methods." *Policy Studies Journal* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 162-180.

#### **Example Readings**

Piven, Frances Fox, and Richard A. Cloward. 1979. *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail*. New York, NY: Vintage Books. Intro & Chap. 1 (xix-xxiv, 1-40).

Wedeen, Lisa. "Acting 'As if': Symbolic Politics and Social Control in Syria." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 3 (July 1998): 503-23.

### **Week 3 Concepts, Model, and Theory- Developing Research Question**

#### **Required Readings**

Jones, Charles O. "Doing Before Knowing: Concept Development in Political Science." *American Journal of Political Science* 18, no. 1 (February 1974): 215-228.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chap. 2 (34-74).

#### **Example Readings**

Cohen, Cathy J. 1999. *The Boundaries of Blackness: AIDS and the Breakdown of Black Politics*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. Chap. 1 & 10 (1-32, 339-47).

Allison, Graham T. "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis." *American Political Science Review*. 63, no.3 (September 1969): 689-718.

Hewitt, Joseph, and Gary Goertz. "Conceptualizing Interstate Conflict: How Do Concept-Building Strategies Relate to Selection Effects?" *International Interactions* 31, no. 2 (2005): 163-182.

University of Hawaii at Manoa

\*\*\*1<sup>st</sup> analytical paper due on Feb. 19 (Friday).

#### Week 4 **Construing Causation and Explanation**

##### Required Readings

Tilly, Charles. "To Explain Political Processes." *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 6 (May 1995): 1594-1610.

Gerring, John. "Causation: A Unified Framework for the Social Science." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 17, no. 2 (April 2005): 163-198.

##### Example Readings

Soss, Joe. "Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action." *American Political Science Review* 93, no. 2 (June 1999): 363-380.

Uk Heo and Alexander C. Tan. "Democracy and Economic Growth: A Causal Analysis" *Comparative Politics* 33, no. 4 (July 2001): 463-473.

Skocpol, Theda. 1995. "State Formation and Social Policy in the United States." In *Social Policy in the United States: Future Possibilities in Historical Perspective*, By Theda Skocpol, 11-36. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

\*\*\*Possible research questions due on Feb. 26 (Friday).

#### Week 5 **Measurement and Measurement issues**

##### Required Readings

Munck, Gerardo L., and Jay Verkuilen. "Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices." *Comparative Political Studies* 35, no. 1 (February 2002): 5-34.

Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 3 (September 2001): 529-546.

##### Example Readings

Diamond, Larry. "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes." *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (April 2002): 21-35.

Inglehart, Ronald. "How Solid Is Mass Support for Democracy: And How Can We Measure It?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 36, no. 1 (January 2003): 51-57.

\*\*\*2<sup>nd</sup> analytical paper due on Mar. 4 (Friday).

University of Hawaii at Manoa

## Week 6 **Observation and Units of Analysis**

### Required Readings

Brodbeck, May. "Methodological Individualism: Definition and Reduction." *Philosophy of Science* 25, no. 1 (January 1958): 1-22.

Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 2 (April 1980): 174-197.

## Week 7 **Issues of Case Selection**

### Required Readings

Geddes, Barbara. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2 (1990): 131-149.

Collier, David, and James Mahoney. 1996. "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." *World Politics* 49, no. 1 (October 1996): 56-91.

Lustick, Ian S. "History, Historiography and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 3 (September 1996): 605-618.

### Example Readings

Owen, John M. "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace." *International Security* 19, no. 2 (Fall 1994): 87-125.

Dunning, Thad. "Resource Dependence, Economic Performance, and Political Stability." *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 4 (August 2005): 451-482.

\*\*\*Annotated bibliography due on March 18 (Friday).

## Week 8 **Spring Recession**

## Week 9 **Comparing Cases I: Variables, Correlations, and Logics of Control**

### Required Readings

Przeworski, Adam. "Institutions Matter?" *Government and Opposition* 39, no. 4 (Autumn 2004):527-540.

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chap. 8 (151-179).

University of Hawaii at Manoa

### Example Readings

Varshney, Ashutosh. "Postmodernism, Civic Engagement, and Ethnic Conflict: A Passage to India." *Comparative Politics* 30, no. 1 (October 1997): 1-20.

Narinzy, Kevin. "Both Guns and Butter, or Neither: Class Interests in the Political Economy of Rearmament." *American Political Science Review* 97, no. 2 (May 2003): 203-220.

\*\*\*3<sup>rd</sup> analytical paper due on April 1(Friday).

## **Week 10 Comparing Cases II: Typologies and Logic of Conjunction**

### Required Readings

Ragin, Charles C. "Turning the Tables: How Case-Oriented Research Challenges Variable-Oriented Research." In *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, edited by Henry E. Brady and David Collier, 123-138. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. 2004.

Mahoney, James. "Comparative-Historical Methodology." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30 (2004): 81-101 (Read pages 81-88 only).

George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (233-262).

### Example Readings

Harding, David J., Cybelle Fox, and Jal D. Mehta. "Studying Rare Events Through Qualitative Case Studies; Lessons From a Study of Rampage School Shootings." *Sociological Methods & Research*. 31, no. 2 (November 2002): 174-217.

Hicks, Alexander, Joya Misra, and Tang Nah Ng. "The Programmatic Emergence of the Social Security State" *American Sociological Review* 60, no. 3 (June 1995): 329-349.

## **Week 11 Comparing Cases III: Time, Space, and Narrative in Comparative Historical Analysis**

### Required Readings

Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 2 (April 1980): 174-197.

Mahoney, James. 2003. "Strategies of Causal Assessment in Comparative Historical Analysis." In *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, edited by James Mahoney and D. Rueschemeyer, 337-372. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.

### Example Readings

University of Hawaii at Manoa

Somers, Margaret R., and Fred Block. "From Poverty to Perversity: Ideas, Markets, and Institutions over 200 Years of Welfare Debate." *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 2 (April 2005): 260-287.

Hacker, Jacob S. "The Historical Logic of National Health Insurance: Structure and Sequence in the Development of British, Canadian, and U.S. Medical Policy." *Studies in American Political Development* 12, no. 1 (April 1998): 57-130.

\*\*\*Developing operational definitions and research strategies due on April 15 (Friday).

## Week 12 **Qualitative Evidence and Process of Acquiring Them:**

### **Participant Observation & Interview**

#### Required Readings

Lorraine Bayard de Volvo and Edward Schatz. "From the Inside Out: Ethnographic Methods in Political Research." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 37, no. 2 (April 2004): 267-271.

Soss, Joe. "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations: A Practice-Centered Approach to In-Depth Interviews for Interpretive Research." In *Interpretation and Method*, edited by D. Yanow and P. Schwartz-Shea, 161-182. New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

#### Example Readings

Barnett, Michael N. "The UN Security Council, Indifference, and Genocide in Rwanda." *Cultural Anthropology* 12, no. 4 (November 1997): 551-578.

Conover, Pamela Johnston, Ivor Crewe, and Donald Searing. "The Nature of Citizenship in the United States and Great Britain: Empirical Comments on Theoretical Themes." *The Journal of Politics* 53, no. 3 (1991): 800-832.

\*\*\*4<sup>th</sup> analytical paper due on April 22 (Friday).

## Week 13 **Qualitative Evidence and Process of Acquiring Them:**

### **Documents and Other Social Artifacts**

#### Required Readings

Thies, Cameron G. "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations" *International Studies Perspectives* 3, no. 4 (November 2002): 351-372.

#### Example Readings

Carpenter, R. Charli. "Women and Children First: Gender, Norms, and Humanitarian Evacuation in the

University of Hawaii at Manoa

Balkans 1991-95." *International Organization* 57, no. 4 (Autumn 2003): 661-694.

Scott, James. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. Chap. 6 (136-182).

**Week 14 Data Analysis**

No assigned readings. (Lecture PPT will be provided.)

\*\*\*5<sup>th</sup> analytical paper due on May 6 (Friday).

**Week 15 Final Exam (Take-home)**

\*Research paper due on May 11 (Friday).



University of Hawaii at Manoa

## **Research Paper Assignment**

A principal requirement of this course is the design and execution of research paper focusing on a question of contemporary interest in political science. The writing assignments are intended to provide the opportunity for students to apply both abstract concepts and various methods to actual case. A substantial part of this course is devoted to seek answers about elements of good research paper, and course structure follows the steps of research design focusing on important aspects of the research process.

Although the specific elements of a research design vary with different topics and methods, there are two fundamental aspects to all designs. First, you must **clearly identify the question you want to answer and justify its importance**. Second, you must **explain your concepts and methods in detail and justify your chosen strategies**. To fulfill these two aspects, it is important to link your research to existing theory embedded in the relevant literature on the subject.

### **A statement of the research question:**

Good questions are grounded in the existing literature. They often reconcile a theory with an observation that doesn't seem to fit, or fill in a gap in existing theory. They frequently begin with a "WHY" question, and seek explanations for political actions or events.

### **Literature review:**

Good research questions often emerge from a literature review, too. You sometimes find that you are not convinced by an author's explanation in your readings. You may think the research methods are not appropriate to the subject, or there are other plausible explanations. You may find that changes of time and space also would affect the results.

Even though you will have a research question before you start a project, the first step of the research design is to review previous research on the topic. The review should summarize, synthesize, and critically evaluate the literature as a whole. (You should concentrate on the forest rather than being preoccupied with individual trees in the forest!!) Discussion of the literature should emphasize the strengths and weaknesses of existing work in terms of both theory and methodology. Your research will attempt to build on these strengths and improve those weaknesses.

### **A statement of theory and/or hypotheses:**

Your design needs to identify the specific propositions and research hypotheses to be examined or "tested" in your research. You also should discuss how these explicitly stated and logically related ideas about the relationships among the phenomena were derived.

### **A definition of concepts:**

You need to identify, define, and operationalize the central concepts in your paper. You should indicate as clearly as possible what your concepts mean and how you will recognize them when you observe them in your research (e.g. when you analyze the relationship between political participation and economic

University of Hawaii at Manoa

development, what do you mean by economic development? What would convince you that one country or group of people is more economically developed than another?)

**An observation and measurement strategy:**

You need to justify your methods of observing and collecting evidence or data as being appropriate and feasible.

**A testing strategy:**

You need to think about how to measure the relationships between the concepts in your hypotheses, and how to check if your hypotheses are right or wrong.

**Limitations of research strategies:**

No matter how careful and thorough you have been in developing your research design, there is no perfect yet feasible research design. All research strategies have inherent limitations. You need to discuss these limitations explicitly and consider their likely consequences. You will be able to try to identify alternatives through this effort.

1. Possible Research Questions, due on Feb. 26 (10%)

Think about three potential research topics based on your own interests and develop at least one research question per topic. Explain why you think the topic is important and how you plan to answer these questions. Since you are at the early stage of research design, it is acceptable to present very rough ideas about your research design. Each student should consult with the instructor about potential topics and relevant literature for this assignment. (All students must have consulted with the instructor and have their paper topic approved by March 7.) This assignment should be about 2–3 pages in length.

2. Annotated Bibliography, due on Mar. 18 (10%)

The annotated bibliography is a summary of an article, book chapter or book. It typically contains: (1) a description of the author's research question and/ or hypotheses; (b) the methodology employed in the author's work; (3) the main conclusions of the piece. You will write an annotated bibliography of five academic sources (around 300 words per source) in order to familiarize yourself with the key debates around one specific issue, which will allow you to better ground your research question in the existing literature on the topic you elect to study. Thus, you will have to conclude the annotated bibliography before writing the essay proposal, or the outline. The annotated bibliography should be about 4–6 pages in length.

3. Developing Operational Definitions and Research Strategies, due on April 15 (10%).

University of Hawaii at Manoa

Identify, define, and operationalize your major concepts, and explain how you intend to observe the concepts. After developing sets of operational definitions, how will you observe and collect evidence or data? This assignment should be about 3–5 pages in length.

#### 4. Final Research Paper, due on May 13 (Friday)

The final paper has to demonstrate that you have put serious effort into all the previous writing phases. It should have a clearly enunciated argument, cogently articulated intermediate units (where you develop your argument), and a final section. The research paper should be about 15–20 pages in length.

Before handing the paper in, please read it several times and ask yourself some questions. Is my argument clear? Do I provide enough evidence to support my main arguments or do I make unsubstantiated claims? Have I incorporated into the paper distinct points of view about the argument in question, pointing out their advantages and disadvantages? In making my main argument, am I showing that one can convincingly rule out alternative patterns of explanation? Last but not least, have I corrected any spelling or grammar mistakes?

At this point, much of this guideline may seem abstract and confusing. As the course progresses, the elements of the research design will become much clearer and more concrete. Don't panic! Contact your instructor anytime you have troubles to deal with your assignments.

#### Important Note:

All writing assignments should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins (top, bottom, left, and right), and in a font no smaller than Times New Roman 11. They should follow the general rules of academic writing including the rules of grammar and spelling. Students are expected to submit all assignments by the due dates. Unless accompanied by a legitimate and documented excuse, one full letter grade will be docked every 24 hours past the deadline. All paper assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade in the course. (There is no incomplete.) The instructor's comments on written assignments (including the final take-home exam) will be given within 2 weeks of their submission.