

POLI 612
Fall 2022
Mondays, 2:35-5:25pm
688 Sherbrooke, Rm 1399

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This course is meant to introduce graduate students to some of the methodological issues, debates and choices that structure the discipline of political science. The course draws on: a. canonical literatures on political methods (our methodological scripts), b. literatures in the philosophy and theory of science, and c. literatures in other disciplines that have influenced our methodological development, such as the identification problem's origins in economics, or political ethnography's relation to anthropology, or the relationship of the problem of induction to Humean philosophy.

Throughout the course, our goal is to identify some of the conceptual and theoretical issues ('the theory of method') that arise from the methodological choices we make in our research.

The sequence of methods courses in the department provides detailed, direct 'hands-on' treatment of quantitative and qualitative research designs and techniques. POLI 612 is designed to provide broader, largely non-technical background, through tracing the methodological development of the discipline of political science and identifying some of its most pressing methodological questions.

Course Readings

There is no text or coursepack. Readings will be put up and available on MyCourses.

Please note that we do not distinguish required from recommended readings in the syllabus. Instead we will assign required readings on a weekly basis.

Requirements for Course Grades

Written work in the course consists of three short analytical papers of 3,000 words each. We will provide more detail about how these papers should be structured, and paper topics chosen, early in the semester.

Papers are due by the last day of classes but can be handed in at any point in the semester. It is advisable not to wait until the end of the semester to complete all of the written work Value: 75%

One presentation on weekly readings during the semester. We will provide guidance on these presentations early in the seminar. We will be asking for your preferences when presentations are assigned. Value: 15%

Seminar participation, independent of presentations. Value: 10%. We will provide an informal rubric before the seminar begins as to how this part of the grade will be assigned.

Topics and Readings

Part I Methodological Scripts

1. Some Meta-Methodological Issues and Problems

Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences. Princeton: Princeton University Press (2013). Introduction.

Peter A. Hall, "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Politics", in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer (eds.) Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences (2003), Chapter 11.

Mark Bevir. "Meta-Methodology: Clearing the Underbrush." In The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology. Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2008). Chapter 3.

Hudson Meadwell, Faith and Heresy in the Social Sciences. CPSA Meetings 2011.

Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg (eds.), Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory (1998), Chapter 1

Paul Pierson. Politics in Time. (2004), Chapter 3.

Charles Ragin, "Turning the Tables: How Case-Oriented Research Challenges Variable-Oriented Research," *Comparative Social Research* 16 (1997), pp. 27-42.

Adam Przeworski, "Is the Science of Comparative Politics Possible?" in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes, (eds.) Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics (2007). Read this piece for the practical logic by which he identifies methodological problems linked to observational data.

Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is a Science of Comparative Politics Possible?" in Alasdair MacIntyre, Against the Self-Images of the Age (1971), pp. 260-279.

Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research (1963), pp. 5-24 on validity, pre-experimental and true

experimental research designs. This short book is an early, intuitive and useful introduction to experimental research designs.

Dvora Yanow. "Neither Rigorous Nor Objective? Interrogating Criteria for Knowledge Claims in Interpretive Science." In Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, (eds.) Interpretation and Method: Empirical Methods and the Interpretive Turn, 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe (2014), Chapter 6.

2. The KKV Debate in Political Science Methods

Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1994). Chapters 1, 2 and 6.

Brady and Collier, Rethinking Social Inquiry 2nd ed. (2010). Chapters to be assigned.

Stephen Morgan and Christopher Winship, Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research 2nd ed. (2015), Chapter 1.

L. A. Paul and Kieran Healy, "Transformative Treatments", *Noûs* 52 (2018), pp. 320-335.

3. Case Studies, Process Tracing, Sequential Temporal Analysis

Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel (eds.) Process Tracing (2015), Selected chapters.

Derek Beach and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. "The Three Different Variants of Process Tracing and Their Uses." Chapter 2 in Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press (2013).

Kimberly Morgan. "Process Tracing and the Causal Identification Revolution." *New Political Economy* 21:5 (2016).

James Mahoney, Kathleen Mahoney (eds). Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis. Cambridge, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, (2015), Chapters 1, 9.

4. Mechanisms

Jon Elster, Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences, 2nd edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2015). Chapters to be assigned.

5. Concepts, Indicators, Measurement, Data

Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, "Concepts and Measurement: Ontology and Epistemology," Social Science Information 51:2 (2012), pp. 205-216

Giovanni Sartori. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *The American Political Science Review* 64:4 (1970), pp. 1033-46.

John Gerring. "What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences." *Polity* 31, no. 3 (1999): 357-393.

Gary Goertz. Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide. Princeton: Princeton University Press (2006), pp. 6-7, Chapters 1-3.

Ruth Garrett Milikan. Beyond Concepts: Unicepts, Language, and Natural Information. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, (2019). Introduction, Chapter 1.

Mark Bevir, and Asaf Kedar. "Concept Formation in Political Science: An Anti-Naturalist Critique of Qualitative Methodology." *Perspectives on Politics* 6, no. 3 (2008), pp. 503–17.

Eric Margolis and Stephen Laurence. "The Ontology of Concepts—Abstract Objects or Mental Representations?" *Noûs*, 41:4, (2007), pp. 561-593.

Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Reference," In Peter Geach (ed.) Max Black trans. Translations From the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, (1960) [1892]), pp. 56-78.

Kate Crawford, Atlas of AI. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press (2021), Chapters 4,5. [Data, Classification].

Marion Fourcade and Kieran Healy, "Seeing like a Market", Socio-Economic Review 51 (2017), pp. 9-29.

6. Conceptual Analysis and Formal Theory

James Johnson. "Models Among the Political Theorists." *American Journal of Political Science* 58(3), (2014), pp. 547–60.

Frank Lovett. A General Theory of Domination and Justice. New York: Oxford University Press. (2010), Chapter 1.

Sean Ingham, and Frank Lovett. "Republican Freedom, Popular Control, and Collective Action." *American Journal of Political Science* 63, (2019), pp. 774-787.

Thomas Simpson. 2017. "The Impossibility of Republican Freedom." *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 45(1), (2017), pp. 27–53.

7. Ethnography and Interpretivism

Edward Shatz, ed. Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2010), Selected chapters to be assigned.

Ellen Pader, "Seeing With an Ethnographic Sensibility: Explorations Beneath the Surface of Public Policies", in Yanov and Schwartz-Shea. (eds.) Interpretation and Method. Routledge: London (2014), Chapter 8.

Carole McGranahan, "Ethnography Beyond Method: The Importance of an Ethnographic Sensibility", Sites N.S. 15 (2018), pp. 1-10.

Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie, Place in Research: Theory, Methodology and Methods Routledge: New York (2014). Chapters TBA.

Akos Sivado, "Ways To Be Understood: The Ontological Turn and Interpretive Social Science", Philosophy of the Social Sciences 50 (2020), pp.

Frederic Schaeffer, "Ordinary Language Interviewing", in Dvora Yanov and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds. Interpretation and Method: Empirical Methods and the Interpretive Turn, 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe (2014), pp. 150-160.

J. L. Austin, "How To Do Things With Words Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press (1975 [1955]).

Part 2 Selected Theoretical Issues and Conceptual Problems

8. Identification, Endogeneity

Charles Manski, Identification Problems in the Social Sciences Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press (1995), Introduction, Chapter 7, pp. 127-132.

Joshua D. Angrist, and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. Mostly Harmless Econometrics: An Empiricist's Companion. Princeton University Press, (2008), Chapters 1, 2.

Joshua Angrist and Allen B. Krueger, "Instrumental Variables and the Search for Identification: From Supply and Demand to Natural Experiments," Journal of Economic Perspectives 15 (2001), pp. 69-85.

James Heckman, "Instrumental Variables: A Study of Implicit Behavioral Assumptions Used in Making Program Evaluations", Journal of Human Resources 32 (1997), pp. 441-462.

James Heckman, "Randomization and Social Policy Evaluation". In Charles Manski and Irwin Garfinkel (eds.) Evaluating Welfare Training Programs Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press (1999).

Hudson Meadwell, "Endogeneity and Qualitative Political Analysis: Debates about Method or Debates about Ontology?" (forthcoming)

Jasjeet S. Sekhon and Rocío Titunik, “When Natural Experiments are Neither Natural Nor Experimental”, American Political Science Review 106 (2012), pp. 36-57.

Stephen Morgan and Christopher Winship, Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research 2nd ed. (2015), Chapter 13.

Tjalling C. Koopmans, “Identification Problems in Economic Model Construction”, Econometrica 17 (1949), pp. 1215-144.

Trygve Haavelmo, “The Probability Approach in Econometrics”, Econometrica 12 (1944), pp. 51-115.

Philip Wright, The Tariff on Animal and Vegetable Oils New York: Macmillan (1928), Appendix.

9. Induction Without Externalism: Hume’s Dilemma

Colin Howson. Hume’s Problem: Induction and the Justification of Belief. Oxford University Press, (2000), Chapters 1 and 2 [Hume’s Argument, Reliabilism].

Jonathan Weisberg, Odds and Ends. Introducing Probability and Decision with a Virtual Emphasis. Open Access. <https://jonathanweisberg.org/vip/main.pdf> . Appendix D. [The Problem of Induction].

Galen Strawson, The Secret Connexion: Causation, Realism and David Hume. Oxford University Press, (2014), Chapters 1, 9. (If interested, compare with Jonathan Bennett, Learning From Six Philosophers Oxford: Oxford University Press (2001) vol 2, pp. 276-282)

W. V. Quine, “Natural Kinds”, In Ontological Relativity and Other Essays. New York and London, Columbia University Press (1969), pp. 114-138.

Frank Ramsey, “Truth and Probability”, In Frank Ramsey, The Foundations of Mathematics and Other Logical Essays. Ed. R. B. Braithwaite London: Kegan Paul (1931 [1926]).

Ian Hacking, The Emergence of Probability. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press. (1987 [1975]), Chapter 19. [Induction].

10. Bayes Theorem, Heterogeneity and Common Priors, Computability

Ian Hacking. An Introduction to Probability and Inductive Logic. Cambridge University Press, (2001), Chapters to be assigned.

Ian Hacking. “Slightly More Realistic Personal Probabilities.” *Philosophy of Science* 34, (1967), pp. 311-25.

Jonathan Weisberg, Odds and Ends. Chapter 18. [The Problem of Priors].

Alistair Smith and Alan C. Stam, "Bargaining and the Nature of War," Journal of Conflict Resolution 48:6 (2004), pp. 783-813.

Stephen Morris. "The Common Prior Assumption in Economic Theory", Economics and Philosophy 11 (1995), pp. 227-253.

Part 3 Social Metaphysics and Ontology

11. Social Kinds, Human Kinds, Natural Kinds

Social Ontology, General: Philip Pettit, "Three Puzzles for Social Ontology." In Julie Zahle and Finn Collin eds. Rethinking the Individualism-Holism Debate. Springer (2014).

Social Ontology, General: Deborah Tollefsen, "Social Ontology". In Nancy Cartwright and Elonara Montuschi eds. Philosophy of Social Science. A New Introduction. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2014).

Social Ontology, General: Brian Epstein. The Ant Trap: Rebuilding the Foundations of the Social Sciences. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, (2015). Introduction, Chapter 6, 276-279.

Literature on Kinds

John Dupré. "Preface". In Catherine Kendig (ed.) Natural Kinds and Classification in Scientific Practice London and New York: Routledge. (2016), pp. ix-xi.

Matthew H. Slater and Andrea Borghini. "Introduction: Lessons From the Scientific Butchery." In Carving Nature at Its Joints: Natural Kinds in Metaphysics and Science. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, (2011).

Ian Hacking. "A Tradition of Natural Kinds." *Philosophical Studies* 61, (1991), pp. 109-126.

Rachel Cooper. "Why Hacking Is Wrong about Human Kinds." *The British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 55, no. 1 (2004): 73-85.

Rebecca Mason. "The Metaphysics of Social Kinds." *Philosophy Compass* 11, (2016), pp. 841-850.

Roger Scruton. On Human Nature. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, (2017). Chapter 1.

Daniel Little, A New Social Ontology of Government. Palgrave Macmillan: New York (2020).

Sally Haslanger. Resisting Reality: Social Construction and Social Critique. New York: Oxford University Press, (2012). Chapters 2, 4. [Ontology and Social Construction, Feminism in Metaphysics].

Ronald Mallon, The Construction of Human Kinds. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2016).

Theodore Bach. "Gender is a Natural Kind with a Historical Essence." *Ethics* 122(2), (2012), pp. 231-272.

COVID: This is a seminar that is to be offered on-campus, in-person. If circumstances change, and the seminar is to be taught virtually, then aspects of the course will be modified, particularly format, grade requirements and the use of platforms like Zoom and MyCourses. However, we think this is an unlikely eventuality.

Language of Submission: In accordance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded. Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

Academic Integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures" (see McGill's guide to academic honesty for more information).

Extraordinary Circumstances Statement: In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University's control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.

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