

PLSC 352: Mixed Methods Research

Professor Elizabeth Nugent

Spring 2019

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OH: T 10-11:45am

Office: 409 Rosenkranz

Seminar Hours: Th 9:25-11:15 am

Classroom:

Course Description

This course is intended as an overview for creating and critiquing sophisticated research designs using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies and data. The course will begin with fundamental definitions and assumptions underpinning mixed methods research, and then move on to analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of specific combinations of quantitative tests, case studies, and narrative and interpretive work. Next, the course will discuss the research design choices of two award-winning books using mixed methods research, and then evaluate the qualitative and quantitative data in isolation and in combination. The final assignment is to build on the course material to produce a mixed method research design proposal. This course is ideal for upper level undergraduates and early career graduate students who are interested in learning more about designing and carrying out mixed methods research in seminar papers, senior essays, dissertations, and independent research projects.

Course Requirements, Format, and Grading

The class will be taught as a seminar which revolves around class discussion. The quality of a seminar hinges on the quality of class discussion. Students are expected to come to class having done the readings and prepared to talk about them in depth. This may require you to prepare notes in order to remember important aspects of the readings.

This class is designed to be helpful for your research. As such, the course builds towards a final paper in which the student is required to create an original mixed methods research design. The paper should propose a research project using a mixed methods approach, with the goal of producing something that will help you in preparing a senior essay, dissertation, or other independent research projects.

Relatedly, we will do a peer review exercise in the process of completing your final paper. You will submit a short (3-5 page) proposal for your research paper to me electronically before class on week 11. I will then send each proposal to two other students in the class, who will provide 3-5 pages of written feedback, due electronically to the author and myself before our final class. The purpose of this task is to become familiar with the process of peer review, a central aspect of academia, and to provide you with helpful advice about how to move forward with the project. The final paper is due in hard copy to my Rosenkranz mailbox or by email on Friday, May 3, 2019 by 5 pm.

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

- 20 points of your grade will be determined by attendance and participation in lectures. Regular attendance and participation are important for understanding the material and for getting the most out of this course.

- 20 points of your grade will be determined by five two-page reading responses. You may choose which readings you respond to, but are limited in your choices for weeks 2 to 9.
- 20 points of your grade will be determined by a peer review exercise.
- 40 points of your grade will be determined by a final paper (15 pages minimum, 20 pages maximum) outlining an original mixed methods research design.
 - For undergraduate students, the paper must be 15 pages minimum and 20 maximum. The paper can serve as a research design for a senior project or an independent research project.
 - For graduate students, the paper must be at least 25 pages. The paper can serve as a research design for a dissertation project (in which case, the design may require more than 25 pages) or an independent research project.

Schedule of Meetings

Part I: Fundamentals

1. Course Introduction – January 17

2. Causal and Probabilistic Logics of Inference – January 24

- Ragin, Charles. 1987. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. University of California Press: 1-84.
- Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2006. “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research.” *Political Analysis* 14: 227-249.

3. Definitions, Strengths and Weaknesses of Quantitative and Qualitative Research (in Isolation) – January 31

- Franklin, Charles. 2008. “Quantitative Methodology” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford University Press: 796-813.
- Brady, Henry E., and David Collier, eds. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman & Littlefield and Berkeley Public Policy Press. Chapters 3 and 4.
- Collier, David and Colin Elman. 2008. “Qualitative and Multimethod Research” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford University Press: 779-795.
- Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2006. “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research.” *Political Analysis* 14 (3): 227-249.

4. Definition and Logic of Mixed Methods Research – February 7

- Seawright, Jason. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. Cambridge University Press, 2016. Chapter 1.
- Laitin, David and James Fearon. 2008. “Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford University Press: 756-776.
- Brady, Henry and David Collier. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Rowman & Littlefield and Berkeley Public Policy Press. Chapter 7.

- Tarrow, Sidney. 1995. "Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide in Political Science." *American Political Science Review*. 89 (2): 471-474.
- Sommer Harrits, Gitte. "More than method? A discussion of paradigm differences within mixed methods research." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 5.2 (2011): 150-166.

5. Mixed Methods Research Design – February 14

- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. 2011. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Chapters 1 (1-18), 3 (53-106), 4 (107-142).
- Greene, Jennifer, Valerie Caracelli, and Wendy Graham. 1989. "Toward a Conceptual Framework for Mixed-Method Evaluation Designs." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 11 (3): 255-274.

Part II: Components of Mixed Methods Research

6. Case Studies in Mixed Methods Research – February 21

- Gerring, John. "What is a Case Study" and "What is a Case Study Good For?" in *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* ed. John Gerring, Cambridge University Press, 2012, 17-64.
- Seawright, Jason. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, Chapter 8.
- Collier, David. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science & Politics* (2011) 44 .4: 823-830.

7. Regression Analysis in Mixed Methods Research – February 28

- Seawright, Jason. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, Chapter 3.
- Coppedge, Michael. 1999. "Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large-N and Small in Comparative Politics." *Comparative Politics* 31(4): 465-476.
- Lieberman, Evan. 2005. "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 99(3):435-52.

8. Fieldwork, Interviews, Ethnography in Mixed Methods Research – March 7

- Wood, Elisabeth J. "Field Research" in *The Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan Stokes. Oxford, 2008
- Kapiszewski and MacLean, eds. *Field Research in Political Science*, Cambridge University Press, 2015. Chapter 6: "Qualitative Interviewing in the Field: In-Depth Interviews, Focus Groups, and Oral Histories"
- Kubik, Jan. 2009. "Ethnography of Politics," In *Political Ethnography*, Edward Schatz, ed. Chicago, POS 6933 Qualitative and Mixed Methods 8 University of Chicago Press: 25-52.

- Creswell, John W., et al. "How interpretive qualitative research extends mixed methods research." *Research in the Schools* 13.1 (2006): 1-11.

9. Experimental Evidence (Natural and Otherwise) in Mixed Methods Research – March 28

- Paluck, E.L. 2010. "The Promising Integration of Field Experimentation and Qualitative Methods." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628: 59-71.
- Dunning, Thad. (2012). *Natural experiments in the social sciences: A design-based approach*. Cambridge University Press. Chapter 11.
- Seawright, Jason. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, Chapter 7.

10. Analyzing and Writing Up Mixed Methods Research – April 4

- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. 2011. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Ch.6-8 (171-272).

Part III: Examples of Mixed Methods Research

Please come to class having read the entire book assigned for week 11 and week 12. We will first discuss the author's research design choice, and then evaluate the qualitative and quantitative data in isolation and in combination.

- 11.** Finkel, Evgeny. *Ordinary Jews: Choice and Survival during the Holocaust*. Princeton University Press, 2017 – **April 11**
 - **3-5 page write-up of research design due by email at the beginning of class**
- 12.** Melani Cammett, *Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon*. Cornell University Press, 2014 – **April 18**

Part IV: Applying What We've Learned

- 13. In-class presentation of research designs – April 25**
 - **3-5 page peer review of research design due by email at the beginning of class**
 - Please come to class prepared to give a 10-minute presentation introducing the topic and research design of your final paper.

Final design due: May 3, 2018