

PLSC 523: Mixed Methods Research

Fall 2020

Instructor: Professor Elizabeth Nugent
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Seminar Hours: Th 9:25-11:15 am
Taught over Zoom

Office Hours: T 10-11:45am (over Zoom; sign up on Calendly [here](#))

Course Description

This course is intended as an overview for creating and critiquing sophisticated research using mixed quantitative and qualitative methodologies and data. It is ideal for graduate students interested in learning more about designing and carrying out mixed methods research in seminar papers, dissertations, and independent research projects. The course builds to a final paper in which students propose a mixed method research design, and I encourage graduate students in the second and third year of study to use the final project as a first draft of a prospectus. Relatedly, this year's course includes a special session featuring political science librarian Kenya Flash and data science librarian Barbara Etsy on conducting online and alternative forms of mixed methods research in order to help students creatively overcome the current challenges to doctoral research created by COVID-19. We begin the course with fundamental definitions and assumptions underpinning mixed methods research. Next, we explore the strengths and weaknesses of specific combinations of quantitative tests, case studies, and narrative and interpretive work. We conclude by discussing the research design choices of two completed projects to evaluate the qualitative and quantitative data in isolation and in combination.

Course Policies

A Note on COVID-19

We are in weird times, to say the least, and online seminars are not an ideal form of teaching or learning. I hope we can work together to make this course the best experience it can be for everyone. Please communicate any challenges you are facing or any feedback you have for me to improve the class as soon as they arise.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is expected in all seminars. Please communicate absences ahead of class when possible. If you miss more than three sessions without speaking with me, you will receive no more than half of the available points for participation.

E-mail Policy

If you have a quick (i.e. non-substantive) question, email is the best way to contact me. While I typically respond to emails quickly, please allow 48 hours for a response. If you do not receive a response within 48 hours, follow up with a reminder. This article is recommended reading about how to draft an effective email: Laura Portwood-Stacer, "[How to Email Your Professor \(without being annoying AF\).](#)"

If you email me the night before a deadline with a last minute request, please do not expect a response. It is important that you look at the assignments early to ensure I can answer any questions you may have in a timeframe that is useful to you. Longer questions -- for example, those dealing with your performance in the course or substantive questions about the course material -- are better asked in person. I will hold regular office hours on Tuesdays from 10-11:45am throughout the semester, and appointments can also be made on an individual basis.

Policies on Incomplete Grades and Late Assignments

For every day a written assignment is late, you will lose 2 points out of the total points available. No final papers will be accepted after December 20 without prior permission. Familiarize yourself with [Yale University's policy on incomplete grades](#).

Academic Integrity

Familiarize yourself with Yale University's policy on academic integrity. In short, don't turn in the same paper for two classes, don't plagiarize someone else's work, and don't cheat on the in-class exam or other assignments. When in doubt, come talk to me. To ensure that you do not accidentally violate Yale's academic honesty policies, please review [Yale University's Definitions of Plagiarism, Cheating, and Documentation of Sources](#).

Commitment to Diversity

Your experience in this class is very important to me. If you have already established accommodations with the [Resource Office on Disabilities](#), please communicate those to me as early as possible so we can discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through ROD, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but are not limited to: mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), please contact ROD. ROD offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, me, and the ROD.

Commitment to an Inclusive Learning Environment

Yale University adheres to the philosophy that all community members should enjoy an environment free of any harassment, sexual misconduct, discrimination, or violence. If you encounter sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability please contact the Title IX Coordinator, [Stephanie Spangler](#), or [any of the University Title IX Coordinators](#). You may also report an incident to me. I am required to notify the Title IX coordinator about the basic facts of the incident, though you may choose to request confidentiality from the University.

Course Requirements, Format, and Grading

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

- 20 points of your grade will be determined by attendance and participation

The class will be taught as a seminar and revolves around class discussion. The quality of a seminar hinges on the quality of class discussion. Regular attendance and participation are important for understanding the material and for getting the most out of this course. Students are expected to come to class having completed all assigned 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.

- 20 points of your grade will be determined by an in-class facilitation during weeks 3-10

You will be expected to provide a brief introduction to the topic covered for that day, introduce a number of questions to guide our conversation, and lead us in discussion for the first half of class.

- 50 points of your grade will be determined by a final paper outlining an original mixed methods research design

This class is designed to be helpful for your research. As such, the course builds towards a final paper at least 25 pages in length, in which students 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 dissertation or similarly ambitious research project. 10 points of this component of your grade will be determined by a peer review exercise. The final paper is due to Canvas by December 15, 2020 by 5 pm EST. Please see section below with additional guidelines.

- 5 points of your grade will be determined by attending my office hours once during the semester to discuss your final paper
- 5 points of your grade will be determined by an in-class presentation of your final paper

Books to Purchase

Available through Yale Bookstore and online retailers. All other readings are available online and linked through Canvas.

1. Bussell, Jennifer. *Clients and Constituents: Political Responsiveness in Patronage Democracies*. Oxford University Press, 2019.
2. Seawright, Jason. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Additional Guidelines for Final Paper

This class focuses on mixed methods training and is designed to be helpful for your research. The final assignment is a paper at least 25 pages in length, in which you propose an original mixed methods research design. I strongly encourage graduate students in the second and third year of study to use the final paper as a first draft of a prospectus. The final paper is due through Canvas on **December 15, 2020 by 5 pm EST**.

Due Dates, Page Length Requirements, and Points

50 points of your grade will be determined by the final paper. Smaller components of the paper will be due throughout the semester and I expect that you will incorporate my feedback and feedback from the peer review exercise in the final version. Please pay attention to page length requirements. These are minimum requirements; you can certainly write more though you may not write less. Each assignment should be posted to Canvas before the beginning of class.

Assignment 1

- Due October 8, 2020 before class
- Research question and literature review
- 10 pages (double spaced)
- 10 points

Assignment 2

- Due November 12, 2020 before class
- Research design and justification of methodological approach
- 10 pages (double spaced)
- 10 points
- *Note: Please submit the 10 new pages, and a document combining both the 10 new pages and the 10 pages due for assignment 1, through Canvas separately in the appropriate submission portals.*

Assignment 3

- Due December 3, 2020 before class
- Peer review exercise
- 1 page (single spaced)
- 10 points

Final Paper

- Due December 15, 2020, 5pm EST
- Final paper
- 25 pages (double-spaced)
- 20 points
- *Note: This should not be the previous assignments copied and pasted together. You should incorporate feedback you received on previous assignments*

Research Question and Literature Review

A good literature review synthesizes and critiques existing work on a topic, both in substantive and in method. This review goes beyond summary by critically engaging existing studies, identifies gaps in how a question has been investigated, and situates the current study in that gap. You can find exemplary literature reviews by searching your topic in the *Annual Review of Political Science*, which exclusively publishes review essays written by top scholars. Alternatively, shorter literature reviews appear at the beginning of (nearly) all published articles. For this class, the research question and literature review section should end with a proposal of your original theory and how it addresses lacunae in the literature.

Resources:

- General guidelines for writing the literature review of a paper: <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/literaturereview> and <http://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/types-of-writing/literature-review/>
- How to guide: <http://levente.littvay.hu/litreview/>
- Yale resources for political science reviews: <https://guides.library.yale.edu/politicalscience/litreviews>

Research Design and Justification

The research design section of the paper describes the data collection and analyses you conduct to investigate a research problem. This should include how you will measure your dependent and independent variables, and how you will support your causal or descriptive argument, and with what data. For this class, this section will be prospective – i.e., what research you *will* undertake to test your theory. In published research pieces, this section is titled “data” and/or “research design,” is written in the past tense, and details how data was collected and analyzed. For the purposes of this class, this section must describe a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analyses.

Resources:

- General guidelines for writing the methods section of a paper: <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/methodology>
 - Quantitative: <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/quantitative>
 - Qualitative: <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/quantitative>
- Qualitative methods section of a paper: https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/writing_up_your_phd_qualitative_research.pdf (starting page 29)
- Mixed methods research design: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1558689815594687> (Note: search the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* for additional examples of how to read and write a mixed methods research design section)

This section should also answer the question of why your proposed research design and methodological approach best answers your proposed research question. A good justification will reference both the strengths and limitations of a given approach. Justifications for mixed methods often discuss how a combination of approaches complement each other. You might cite the material we cover from weeks 2 through 5 on the syllabus for a mixed method design.

Resources:

- <http://methods.sagepub.com/reference/sage-encyc-qualitative-research-methods/n392.xml>
- <https://www.oxbridgeessays.com/blog/writing-dissertation-methodology/>

Peer Review

The assignment is to provide meaningful and constructive feedback on the paper proposal in the style of a manuscript review at an academic journal. Please write one page single spaced and follow the guidelines posted in "[How to Be a Peer Reviewer: A Guide for Recent and Soon-to-be PhDs](#)" by Beth Miller, Jon Pevehouse, Ron Rogowski, Dustin Tingley, and Rick Wilson.

Schedule of Class Meetings

Part I. Fundamentals

1. September 3
Course Introduction
2. September 10
Definitions and Logics of Quantitative and Qualitative Research (in Isolation)
3. September 17
Definitions and Logics of Mixed Methods Research
4. September 24
Mixed Methods Research Design
5. October 1
Conducting Mixed Methods in the Age of Covid-19

Part II. Components of Mixed Methods Research

6. October 8 **** Assignment 1 Due to Canvas by Beginning of Class****
Case Studies in Mixed Methods Research
7. October 15
Regression Analysis in Mixed Methods Research
8. October 22
Fieldwork, Interviews, Ethnography in Mixed Methods Research
9. October 29
Experimental Evidence (Natural and Otherwise) in Mixed Methods Research
10. November 5 *Transparency and Replicability of Mixed Methods Research*

Part III. Examples of Mixed Methods Research

11. November 12 **** Assignment 2 Due to Canvas by Beginning of Class ****
Mixed Methods Example: Dissertation
12. November 19
Mixed Methods Example: Book

Part IV. Applying What We've Learned

13. December 3 **** Assignment 3 Due to Canvas by Beginning of Class ****
In-Class Presentations

**** Final paper due December 15, 5pm****

Part I: Fundamentals

Class 1. September 3

Course Introduction

Please come to class prepared to give a brief introduction of yourself and your research, and having read the following articles:

David Collier and Colin Elman, "Qualitative and Multimethod Research" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford University Press (2008): 779-795.

Charles Franklin, "Quantitative Methodology" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford University Press (2008): 796-813.

Michael Bernhard. "Methodological disputes in comparative politics." *Comparative Politics* 41.4 (2009): 495-515.

Examples:

Jennifer M. Larson and Janet I. Lewis, "Rumors, Kinship Networks, and Rebel Group Formation." *International Organization* 72:4 (2018), 871-903.

Noam Lupu, "Brand Dilution and the Breakdown of Political Parties in Latin America." *World Politics* 66:4 (2014), 561-602.

Class 2. September 10

Definitions and Logics of Quantitative and Qualitative Research (In Isolation)

Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. University of California Press (1984): 1-84 (chapters 1 and 2).

James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis* 14 (2006): 227-249.

Henry E. Brady, "Doing Good and Doing Better: How Far Does the Quantitative Template Get Us?" in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* eds. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.

Larry M. Bartels, "Some Unfulfilled Promises of Quantitative Imperialism" in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, eds. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.

David A. Freedman, "On Types of Scientific Inquiry: The Role of Qualitative Reasoning" in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* eds. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.

Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research." *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (1994): 163-194.

Jason Seawright, *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, Chapter 2.

James Mahoney, "Toward a Unified Theory of Causality." *Comparative Political Studies* 41.4-5 (2008): 412-436.

Class 3. September 17

Definitions and Logics of Mixed Methods Research

John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, 2011. Chapters 1 & 2

Seawright, Jason Seawright, *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. Cambridge University Press, 2016. Chapter 1.

Sidney Tarrow, "Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide" in *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* eds. Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Rowman & Littlefield, 2010.

David Laitin and James Fearon, "Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods" in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford University Press (2008): 756-776.

Creswell, John W. Creswell, "Controversies in Mixed Methods Research" in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds. N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln. Sage, 2011: 269-284.

Gitte Sommer Harrits, "More than method? A discussion of paradigm differences within mixed methods research." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research* 5.2 (2011): 150-166.

Class 4. September 24

Mixed Methods Research Design

John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications, 2011. Chapters 3 (53-106), 4 (107-142); 6-8 (171-272).

Jennifer Greene, Valerie Caracelli, and Wendy Graham, "Toward a Conceptual Framework for Mixed-Method Evaluation Designs." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 11.3 (1989): 255-274.

Mario Luis Small, "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent trends in a rapidly growing literature." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37 (2011).

Class 5. October 1

Conducting Mixed Methods Research in the Age of Covid-19

Please come to class having read the material linked under “background reading” and skimmed the links under “resources” and “adapting methods.”

First half of class: Guest Lectures

- Yale Political Science Librarian Kenya Flash: resources on campus and online
- Yale Data Librarian Barbara Etsy: identifying data by reading existing literature

Second half of class: Brainstorming Session

Background reading

- [Conducting Social Science Research During Crisis](#) from Professor Lauren Duquette-Rury (Sociology, Wayne State University)
- Social Science Research Council guide for [Social Research and Insecurity](#)
- Advancing Conflict Research’s guide for [Research on and During the Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

Resources

- Yale Library research guide for [Political Science and Policy Studies](#)
- Department panel on [How to Do Comparative Politics during COVID](#)

Adapting methods for online research

- [Rethinking Research](#)
- [Alternative Fieldwork](#)
- [Digital Ethnography](#)
- [Online Archives](#)

Part II: Components of Mixed Methods Research

Class 6. October 8

Case Studies and Mixed Methods Research

John Gerring, “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.

Jason Seawright, *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, Chapter 8.

Kendra L. Kiovu and Annika Marlen Hinze, "Cases of Convenience? The divergence of theory from practice in case selection in qualitative and mixed-methods research." *PS: Political science & politics* 50.4 (2017): 1023-1027.

David Collier. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science & Politics* (2011) 44 .4: 823-830.

Christine Trampusch and Bruno Palier, "Between X and Y: how process tracing contributes to opening the black box of causality." *New Political Economy* 21.5 (2016): 437-454.

Ezequiel Gonzalez-Ocantos and Jody LaPorte, "Process Tracing and the Problem of Missing Data." *Sociological Methods & Research* (2019): 0049124119826153.

Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism." *World Politics* 59.3 (2007): 341-369.

Examples:

Daniel Mattingly, "Elite Capture: How Decentralization and Information Institutions Weaken Property Rights in Rural China." *World Politics* 68.3 (2016) 383-412.

Killian Clarke and Korhan Kocak, "Launching Revolution: Social Media and the Egyptian Uprising's First Movers." *British Journal of Political Science* 50.3 (2020): 1025-1045.

Class 7. October 15

Regression Analysis in Mixed Methods Research

Jason Seawright, *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, Chapter 3.

Michael Coppedge, "Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large-N and Small in Comparative Politics" *Comparative Politics* 31.4 (1999): 465-476.

Evan Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 99.3 (2005):435-52.

Christopher H. Achen, "Let's put garbage-can regressions and garbage-can probits where they belong." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 22.4 (2005): 327-339.

Examples:

Erica de Bruin, "Preventing Coups D'état: How Counterbalancing Works." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 62.7 (2018): 1433-1458.

Omar Wasow, "Agenda Seeding: How 1960s Black Protests Moved Elites, Public Opinion, and Voting." *American Political Science Review* (2020), 1-22.

Class 8. October 22

Fieldwork, Interviews, Ethnography in Mixed Methods Research

Elisabeth J. Wood, "Field Research" in *The Handbook of Comparative Politics*, edited by Carles Boix and Susan Stokes.

Diana Kapiszewski, "Interviews, Focus Groups, and Oral Histories" in *Field Research in Political Science*, eds Kapiszewski and MacLean. Cambridge University Press, 190-233.

Lee Ann Fujii, *Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach*. Routledge, 2018. Chapter 1, skim 2 and 3.

John Boswell, Jack Corbett, Kate Dommett, Will Jennings, Matthew Flinders, R.A.W Rhodes, and Matthew Wood, "State of the Field: What can political ethnography tell us about anti-politics and democratic disaffection?" *European Journal of Political Research*. 58.1 (2019) :56-71.

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

Examples:

Heba Gowayed, "The Unnecessary Nudge: Education and Poverty Policy in a Cairo Slum." *Sociological Forum*. Vol. 33. No. 2. 2018.

Tariq Thachil, "Improving Surveys through Ethnography: Insights from India's urban periphery." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 53.3 (2018): 281-299.

Class 9. October 29

Experimental Evidence (Natural and Otherwise) in Mixed Methods Research

Jason Seawright, *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016, Chapter 7.

Thad Dunning, *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. Cambridge University Press. Chapters 1 and 11.

Elizabeth Levy Paluck, "The Promising Integration of Field Experimentation and Qualitative Methods." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628: 59-71.

Thad Dunning, "Transparency, Replication, and Cumulative Learning: What experiments alone cannot achieve." *Annual Review of Political Science* 19 (2016): S1-S23.

Examples:

Ana Arjona, "Institutions, Civilian Resistance, and Wartime Social Order: A Process-driven Natural Experiment in the Colombian Civil War." *Latin American Politics and Society* 58.3 (2016): 99-122.

Elizabeth R. Nugent, "The Psychology of Repression and Polarization." *World Politics* 72.2 (2020): 291-334.

Pia Raffler, "Does Political Oversight of the Bureaucracy Increase Accountability? Field Experimental Evidence from an Electoral Autocracy." Working paper, 2019.

Class 10. November 5

Transparency and Replicability of Mixed Methods Research

Graeme Blair, Jasper Cooper, Alexander Coppock, and Macartan Humphreys. "Declaring and Diagnosing Research Designs." *American Political Science Review* 113.3 (2019): 838-859.

"Data Access and Research Transparency (DA-RT): A Joint Statement by Political Science Journal Editors." *Political Science Research and Methods* 3.3 (2015): 421.

Newsletter of the American Political Science Association's Organized Section for Comparative Politics, 26.1 (2016), 1-99.

Newsletter of the American Political Science Association's Organized Section for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research, 13.1 (2015), 1-64.

Additional resources:

[Final reports](#) on the Qualitative Transparency Deliberations issued by the American Political Science Association's Organized Section for Qualitative and Multi-Method Research

Part III: Examples of Mixed Methods Research

Please come to class having read the entire manuscript 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.

Class 11. November 12

Mixed Methods Example: Dissertation

Elizabeth R. Nugent, “The Political Psychology of Repression and Polarization in Authoritarian Regimes.” Doctoral dissertation, Princeton University, 2017.

For those interested in how different a dissertation and book read, you can also find a pdf of the final book manuscript in Dropbox. Elizabeth R. Nugent, *After Repression: How Polarization Derails Democratization*. Princeton University Press, 2020.

Class 12. November 19

Mixed Methods Example: Book

Jennifer Bussell, *Clients and Constituents: Political Responsiveness in Patronage Democracies*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Part IV: Applying What We’ve Learned

Class 13. December 3

In-Class Presentation of Research Designs

Please come to class prepared to give a 5-minute presentation on the topic and research design of your final paper.