DESCRIPTION: This course provides an introduction to research design in political science. We address topics related to theory building and theory testing. The course focus is on the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches rather than on the technical issues related to these methods (which will be explored in different courses). Students will learn how to (a) analyze scholarly articles critically with particular attention to research design and (b) design an original research project.

REQUIREMENTS: You are expected to read all assigned materials and to be prepared to discuss them at the class meeting for which they are assigned. Most weeks have lecture and discussion sections, but a few have only one or the other. There are three assignments for the course, due as noted on the syllabus below. Late assignments will not be accepted. The first assignment will be worth 20% of your total grade, the second and third will both be worth 30%, and the remaining 20% will be based on your participation in classroom discussions.

Academic Integrity. It is your responsibility to inform me of any factor(s) that might interfere with your class performance well in advance of any problems. Under all circumstances, plagiarism is a violation of your academic integrity. If you have questions about what constitutes original research, or how to reference the work of others, please ask me.

Disability. If you are a student with a documented disability who will be requesting accommodations in my class, please make sure you are registered with the Office for Students with Disabilities (University Center 202; 858.534.4382) and provide me with documentation outlining your accommodations. I will be glad to meet with you privately during my office hours to discuss your special needs.

READINGS: The primary text for this course is


Also recommended (purchase or borrow):


Most other readings are available on the TED website for the course.

**SCHEDULE:** The weekly schedule is subject to change.

**Week 1 (1/8): The Scientific Method (Lecture only)**

- Trochim and Donnelly, Chapter 1

**Week 2 (1/15): Observation, Method, and Construct Validity**

**Assignment 1:**
Assess the validity and reliability of the IRIS dataset on quality of governance (ICRG), to be provided. Due January 22, 2020.

**Lecture Readings:**
- Trochim and Donnelly, Chapter 3 (skip 3-1d through 3-1g).

**Discussion Readings (focus on measurement strategies):**

*Updated:* December 19, 2019


Week 3 (1/22): Sampling and External Validity (Lecture Only)

Week 4 (1/29): Causal Inference; Introduction to Experiments (Lecture Only)
– Trochim. Chapter 7 (skip 161-171); Chapter 9; Chapter 12, pp. 253-260.

Week 5 (2/5): Randomized Controlled Trials
Lecture Readings:

Discussion Readings:

Week 6 (2/12): Design (Part II): Survey Experiments
Assignment 2:
Design an experiment; Discuss sampling strategies and power considerations. Due February 26, 2020.

Updated: December 19, 2019
Lecture Readings:

Discussion Readings:

Week 7 (2/12, 12-3p): Natural Experiments

Lecture Readings:
- Dunning, Thad. Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences. Chapters 1-5 and 8.

Discussion Readings:

Week 8 (2/26): Quasi Experiments

Lecture Readings:
- Cook and Campbell. Chapters 3 (skip RDD), 5.

Discussion Readings

Updated: December 19, 2019

**Week 9 (3/3): Causal Inference and Case Selection in Small n Designs**

**Lecture Readings:**
- King, Keohane, and Verba, Chapters 4 and 6.

**Discussion Readings:**

**Week 10 (3/11): Mixed Methods Designs/Wrap-up**

**Assignment 3:**
Design a mixed methods project that involves a large n natural or quasi experiment and one or more case studies. Due March 18.
- Dunning, Chapter 7.
- Rao, Vijayendra and Michael Woolcock. “Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches in Program Evaluation.”

**Discussion Readings:**
- Any other papers we did not get to earlier in quarter, or you want to talk about.

*Updated: December 19, 2019*