

**Central European University**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**MA1 program, fall semester 2019, winter semester 2020**

## **SCOPE AND METHODS**

Instructor: Matthijs Bogaards ([Visbogaards@ceu.edu](mailto:Visbogaards@ceu.edu))

Office Budapest: Faculty Tower 806

Office hours Budapest (September: Wednesdays, 15.30-17.00; October-December: by appointment)

Office hours Vienna: Mondays, 15.30-17.00 & Tuesdays 11.00-12.00 (place TBA).

### **Class meetings**

#### *Fall 2019*

Pre-session: Monday, 2 September, group 1 (11.00-12.30, FT809), group 2 (13.30-15.00, FT809).

Zero-week: Friday 13 September, group 1 (9.00-10.40, FT809), group 2 (11.00-12.40, N13 412A).

Fall semester, group 1: Monday, 16 September (9.00-10.40, FT309), Wednesday 18 September (13.30-15.10, FT309), Monday 23 September (9.00-10.40, FT309), Wednesday 25 September (13.30-15.10, FT509).

Fall semester, group 2: Monday, 16 September (11.00-12.40, FT309), Thursday 19 September (13.30-15.10, FT409), Monday, 23 September (11.00-12.40, FT309), Thursday, 26 September (13.30-15.10, FT409).

#### *Winter 2020*

Five sessions in total, one session each week from week 1 to week 5.

### **Course description**

This course aims to introduce students to the logic and instruments of empirical research in political science. Themes covered include the essentials of a good research proposal and good research design, issues of measurement and causality, the need for replication, the menu of methods, and political science as science. The aim is to equip students with essential practical skills, to enhance their methodological literacy, to foster a critical reading and discussion of research, and to strengthen the capacity to identify possibilities for contributing to the collective knowledge of political phenomena.

### **Course format**

This course is mandatory for all MA1 students. Sessions are organized as seminars, not lectures. To enable a seminar set-up, two groups are formed. Please note that the schedule of Scope and Methods is different from other courses and consists of two parts. The first part, with six sessions in four weeks, starts already in pre-session and ends in the last week of the fall semester spent in Budapest. This part is devoted to basic questions of doing empirical research. The second part of Scope and Methods starts in the first week of the winter semester. It consists of a total of five sessions, one per week, that are directly relevant to the process of writing your MA thesis.

### **Learning outcomes**

By the end of the course, students should have acquired: 1) a clear idea of the nature of scientific inquiry; 2) an understanding of the main methodological approaches to data collection and analysis in political science, how they link to different understandings of causality and the prospects for objectivity and generalization; 3) an improved practical sense for the research process, from the exploratory phase to conceptualization, operationalization, observation, data collection, data analysis and write-up; 4) practical skills in crafting their own thesis proposal, including the formulation of a research question and making the ensuing decisions pertaining to the most appropriate methodological approach for conducting their studies; 5) written and oral experience in reviewing, discussing, and improving on empirical research in political science.

### **Assessment and assignments**

#### *Participation (10%)*

Class attendance is mandatory. Failure to attend will lead to failing the course. Should you be unable to attend a class, please notify the instructor in advance. Active class participation is expected and graded.

#### *Exercise 1: Role models in comparative politics (5%)*

In session 4 we seek inspiration from influential political scientists. Be prepared to report on the reading you did and be prepared to share in class what you learned from these professional life stories.

#### *Exercise 2: Data transparency (5%)*

Session 11 is devoted to data transparency in empirical research. For the second reading, please select one of the final reports of the qualitative transparency deliberations of the American Political Science Association, available at:

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p5aUrbXYSMAN6sRLOB8r2rnnQROHAhQ\\_WSXqt9dEa3Q/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1p5aUrbXYSMAN6sRLOB8r2rnnQROHAhQ_WSXqt9dEa3Q/edit)).

Be prepared to share in class what you learned from it.

#### *Assignment 1: Reflection paper (20%)*

Please select an article published in the *American Political Science Review* before 1940, identify the theory and method used, summarize the argument and conclusion, and reflect on how political science today might address the same question that informed the original article. In other words: imagine that a contemporary political scientist were writing about the same topic as in the historical article you selected: what would be different? And (how) would it be better? Size: 1,000-word maximum (everything included in the word count). Deadline: to be agreed in class. All written work should be submitted on Moodle and will be checked for plagiarism by Turnitin.

#### *Assignment 2: Methods paper (20%)*

Please select an article from the special issue of the journal *Democratization* (Vol. 26, no. 1, 2019) on different methods of democratization research and summarize the possibilities and limitations of the method discussed there, the pros and cons, and how it is done best. Size: 1,000-word maximum (everything included in the word count). Deadline: to be agreed in class. All written work should be submitted on Moodle and will be checked for plagiarism by Turnitin.

*Assignments 3: Final paper (40%)*

Using Schmitter (2002) as your template, please write a 1,500-word maximum (everything included in the word count) research proposal. It should demonstrate creative thinking, concise academic writing and an ability to link theories to empirical research while taking stock of what you learnt in the course. Ideally, this proposal should be linked to your MA thesis. Before submitting your research proposal, please make use of the services provided by the CEU Academic Writing Center. The deadline of the research proposal will be aligned with the MA thesis writing and preparation process. All written work should be submitted on Moodle and will be checked for plagiarism by Turnitin.

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Session 1 (Pre-session) Introduction**

The introductory session of Scope and Methods has two aims: 1) to familiarize students with the course plan, expectations, and learning outcomes; 2) to provide background information on the course and its role in the curriculum.

Mandatory reading:

Turner, Charles and Cameron Thies (2009) What We Mean by Scope and Methods: A Survey of Undergraduate Scope and Methods Courses, *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42 (2): 367-373.

### **Session 2 (Zero week) A brief history of political science**

Political science now is different from political science then. How much so can be appreciated in the first assignment of the course.

Mandatory reading:

James Farr (1988) History of Political Science, *American Journal of Political Science* 32(4): 1175-1195.

Second reading: please see the description of [assignment 1](#).

### **Session 3 (First week of fall semester, first session this week) Ideas, facts, numbers, and cases**

This session we look at some of the main divisions that run through the profession.

Mandatory reading:

Hay, Colin (2002) *Political Analysis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, ch.6: The Discursive and the Ideational in Contemporary Political Analysis: Beyond Materialism and Idealism, pp.194-215.

Goertz, Gary and James Mahoney (2013) Methodological Rorschach Tests: Contrasting Interpretations in Qualitative and Quantitative Research, *Comparative Political Studies* 46(2): 236-251.

**Session 4 (First week of fall semester, second session this week) Political scientists**

Political science is done by people. This session we learn about influential political scientists. The readings are part of [exercise 1](#).

Mandatory reading:

Read one interview in Gerardo Munck and Richard Snyder (Eds.) (2007) *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Second reading: Find an interview with or self-portrait by a non-Western and/or female political scientist.

**Session 5 (Second week of fall semester, first session this week) Measurement and causation**

This week we read two articles that deliberately bridge methodological gaps, showing how scholars have to deal with the same issues no matter whether they do qualitative or quantitative research, whether they are examining particular cases or investigating populations.

Mandatory reading:

Adcock, Robert and David Collier (2001) Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research, *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 529-546.

Gerring, John (2010) Causal Mechanisms, Yes, But...., *Comparative Political Studies* 43(11): 1499-1516.

**Session 6 (Second week of fall semester, second session this week) Democratization research**

Students of politics today have more choice in methods than ever. This session gives an overview of the state-of-the-art in democratization research and is connected to the second assignment.

Mandatory reading:

Coppedge Michael and David Kuehn (2019) Introduction: Absorbing the Four Methodological Disruptions in Democratization Research? *Democratization* 26(1): 1-20.

Second reading, please see the description of [assignment 2](#).

### **Session 7 (Monday 6 January 2020) The research proposal**

The first session of the winter session introduces students to the main expectations regarding research proposals and provides them with strategies to formulate a good research proposal.

Mandatory reading:

Schmitter, Philippe (2002) *The Ideal Research Proposal*. Manuscript. Florence: European University Institute.

Gustafsson, Karl and Linus Hagström (2018) What is the Point? Teaching Graduate Students How to Construct Political Science Puzzles, *European Political Science* 17(4): 634-648.

### **Session 8 (Monday 13 January 2020) Research design**

There is no shortage of guides and guidelines on how to design your research. This week we reflect on the different ways in which researchers approach the social world and design their studies.

Mandatory reading:

Halperin, Sandra and Oliver Heath (2012) *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, ch. 2: Forms of Knowledge: Laws, Explanation, and Interpretation in the Study of the Social World, pp.25-52.

Blaikie, Norman (2010) *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation*, second edition. Cambridge: Polity, ch. 1: Preparing Research Designs, pp.12-34.

### **Session 9 (Monday 20 January 2020) Your MA thesis proposal**

This session is reserved for the discussion of your first ideas on the MA thesis proposal.

### **Session 10 (Monday 27 January 2020) How to read and what to read**

The title of this session says it all.

Mandatory reading:

Daley, Anthony (1995) On Reading: Strategies for Students, *PS: Political Science and Politics* 28(1): 89-100.

Daigneault, Pierre-Marc, Steve Jacob, and Mathieu Ouimet (2014) Using Systematic Review Methods Within a Ph.D. Dissertation in Political Science: Challenges and Lessons Learned from Practice, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 17(3): 267-283.

### **Session 11 (Monday 3 February) How to deal with data transparency**

In Psychology there is talk about a “replication crisis”, as scholars are frequently unable to replicate the results of previous research. What is the situation in Political Science? What are the standards to follow and what are the opportunities for you to improve on prior published studies?

Mandatory reading:

King, Garry (2006) Publication, Publication, *PS: Political Science and Politics* 39(1): 119-125.

Second reading: please see the description of [exercise 2](#).

### Other readings you might find helpful

- Beach, Derek and Rasmus Brun Pedersen (2013) *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Becker, Howard (1998) *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Billig, Michael (2013) *Learn to Write Badly: How to Succeed in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Box-Steffensmeier, Janet, Henry Brady and David Collier (eds.) (2008) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brady, Henry and David Collier (eds.) (2004) *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Bryman, Alan (2012) *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cooper, Harris (1998) *Synthesizing Research: A Guide for Literature Reviews*, 3rd ed. London: Sage.
- Delamont, Sara and Paul Atkinson (2004) *Successful Research Careers: A Practical Guide*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Dreyer, David (2014) The Engaged Public - Political Science Gap: An Analysis of New York Times Non-Fiction Bestsellers on Politics, *European Political Science* 13 (3): 266-274.
- Dunleavy, Patrick (2003) *Authoring a PhD Thesis: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Dissertation*. Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Godfrey-Smith, Peter (2009) *Theory and Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Goodin, Robert (2009) The State of the Discipline, the Discipline of the State, in *Oxford Handbook of Political Science*, edited by Robert Goodin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3-57.
- Gray, Mark and A. Wuffle (2005) Vindicating Anthony Downs, *PS: Political Science and Politics* 38 (4): 737-40.
- Hancké, Bob (2009) *Intelligent Research Design: A Guide for Beginning Researchers in the Social Sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harmon, Joseph and Alan Gross (eds.) (2007) *The Scientific Literature: A Guided Tour*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Imbens, Guido and Donald Rubin (2015) *Causal Inference in Statistics, Social, and Biomedical Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba (1994) *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kittel, Bernhard, Wolfgang Luhan and Rebecca Morton (eds.) (2012) *Experimental Political Science: Principles and Practices*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Leopold, David and Marc Stears (eds.) (2008) *Political Theory. Methods and Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lichbach, Mark (2013) *Democratic Theory and Causal Methodology in Comparative Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lipsey, Mark and David Wilson (2001) *Practical Meta-analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Martin, Michael and Lee McIntyre (eds) (1994) *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Science*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Maxwell, Scott, Michael Lau and George Howard (2015) Is Psychology Suffering From A Replication Crisis? What Does "Failure to Replicate" Really Mean, *American Psychologist* 70(6): 487-498.

- Morton, Rebecca and Kenneth Williams (2010) *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality: From Nature to the Lab*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Prior, Lindsay (2003) *Using Documents in Social Research*. London: Sage.
- Punch, Keith (2006) *Developing Effective Research Proposals*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Shadish, William, Thomas Cook and Donald Campbell (2002) *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mufflin.
- Silverman, David (2013) *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. London: SAGE.
- Ulbig, Stacy (2009) Engaging the Unengaged: Using Visual Images to Enhance Students' Poli Sci 101 Experience, *PS: Political Science and Politics* 42(2): 385-391.
- Van Evera, Stephen (1997) *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds) (2006) *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. New York: M.E. Sharpe