IS 300 - Research Methods in International Studies

Course Times and Location:
Friday 2:30PM-5:20PM at Harbour Center

Instructor:
Dr. Sally Sharif
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Office Hours
Friday 1:30PM-2:20PM or via appointment on Zoom

Calendar Description
This course adopts a critical approach to examine the processes and methods of global knowledge production. The question that centers our discussions throughout the course is: Who gets to produce what kinds of knowledge, for whom, and how? This seminar is a survey course, designed to cover a wide range of methodologies; it does not provide intensive training in any single approach. The course is designed as a site of intellectual practice; while we will focus on technique, the seminar is less a "how to" step-by-step guide, and more a space to discuss what makes compelling scholarship.

Course Details
This course has three main pedagogical objectives:
(1) Develop greater understanding of competing social scientific approaches to knowledge,
(2) Distinguish between different approaches to knowledge in the social sciences, and critically evaluate the assumptions and arguments on which these approaches are based
(3) Gain familiarity with a range of quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection commonly used in the social sciences
(4) Practice designing a research project and write a research proposal

Grading
Your grade in this class will be made up of several components:
- **Seminar attendance and participation (20%)**
I want you to come away from this class better equipped to succeed as a social scientist, and participation is a key component of learning. All readings should be completed before class, and all students should listen to and respect the perspectives of all students in the class.
- **Applied Methods (40%)**
Throughout the semester, you will complete four hands-on exercises (5 double-spaced pages each). These should be submitted to Canvas by 11:59pm on the designated deadline. Full descriptions of the assignments are below:
1. Analysis Discourse/concept (*Due: February 15*)
2. Interview (*Due March 1*)
3. Ethnography fieldnotes (*Due March 22*)
4. Coding and interpretation of archival documents, transcripts, or images (*Due April 5*)

- **Research design (30%)**

Propose a thorough design for a do-able, dissertation-size research project on an important question in your field. Your full proposal should be 10-12 pages and should include a clear statement of the research question, an analytic review of relevant literature, a clear explanation of your research design, a discussion of feasibility and ethics, and estimates of the project's timetable and funding needs. A more detailed set of instructions can be found below.

- **Presentation (10%)**

Students will present their research design in a mini conference on the last day of class, and each student will be assigned to offer discussant comments to a peer. Each student should present their proposed project in 10 minutes. Criteria for grading: (a) concise, presentable slides, (b) fitting the presentation to 10 minutes, (c) clearly presenting the research question, (d) briefly explaining what research agenda your project speaks to and what your contributions are, (e) briefly explaining the data collection method, (f) briefly describing the data analysis method, and (g) discussing researcher positionality.

Requirements

Students will be required to submit their written assignments on Canvas. The School for International Studies strictly enforces the University's policies regarding plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Information about these policies can be found at:
http://www.sfu.ca/policies/gazette/teaching.html.

Materials

This course does not follow a textbook. All course readings will be available electronically via SFU Library and hyperlinked through the course Canvas page.

Week 1   What is Our Role?

8 September

- Review of the syllabus
- Darian-Smith, Eve. 2014. "Global Studies – The Handmaiden of Neoliberalism?" *Globalizations* 12(2): 164-8.

Week 2   Ways of Knowing

15 September

- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Dvora Yanow. 2012. "Ways of Knowing: Research Questions and Logics of Inquiry." *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. New York: Routledge. [pp 24-44]
- King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Chapter 1 and pages 34-49]
- Mahoney, James. 2010. "After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research," *World Politics* 62(1): 120-147.
- Mona Lena Krook. 2009. "Teaching Gender and Politics: Feminist Methods in Political Science." *Qualitative Methods* 7(1): 24-29.

Week 3   Concepts, Concepts, Concepts

22 September

- Goertz, Gary. 2020. *Social Science Concepts: New and Completely Revised Edition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Chapters 1-4]
- Gerring, John. "What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences." *Polity* 31:3 (1999), pp. 357-393.

Week 4   Operationalizing Concepts and Building Theories
29 September
📖   Adcock, Robert, and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95(3): 529-547.
📖   Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Chapter 8 - Causal Arguments]
📖   Milja Kurki. 2008. *Causation in International Relations: Reclaiming Causal Analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Introduction].

📋   Assignment 1 (due 6 October): Pick a concept that is used in International Studies. It could be very abstract (e.g., justice, regime), very concrete (e.g., occupation, campaign advertisement), or something in between (e.g., social cleavage, political socialization, stability). construct a narrative of your concept's history and etymological roots. How has this word been used over time in ordinary language, scholarly texts, and political documents? What are the effects of how this concept has been wielded? Diagram the concept's dimensions, specify the measures, and discuss the intension/extension. What is it about the concept and/or its operationalization that makes it work well? How has it been measured? You can use one of the concepts in the readings below.

Recommended readings
Hill, Sean C. 2017. "Toward Conceptualizing **Race and Racial Identity** Development Within an Attractor Landscape." *SAGE Open 7*(3).
Brady, Henry E., and Cynthia S. Kaplan. 2009. "Conceptualizing and Measuring **Ethnic Identity**." In *Measuring Identity: A Guide for Social Scientists*. Eds Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 33–71.
Mann, Michael. 2005. *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining **Ethnic Cleansing***. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Chapter 1]
Collier, David, and Steven Levitsky. 1997. "**Democracy** with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics* 49(3): 430-51.
Ferreira, Ines A. 2017. "Measuring **State Fragility**: A Review of the Theoretical Groundings of Existing Approaches." *Third World Quarterly* 38(6): 1291-1309.
Sambanis, Nicholas. 2004. "What Is **Civil War**? Conceptual and Empirical Complexities of an Operational Definition." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 48(6): 814-858.
Kalyvas, Stathis N. 2003. "What is **Political Violence**? On the Ontology of Civil War." *Perspectives on Politics* 1(3): 475-494.
Findley, Michael G., and Joseph K. Young. 2012. "**Terrorism** and Civil War: A Spatial and Temporal Approach to a Conceptual Problem." *Perspectives on Politics* 10(2): 285-305.
Quinn, Jason M., T. David Mason, Mustafa Kirisci, and Sally Sharif. "**Proto-Insurgency**, Repression-Driven Contagion, and Civil War Onset." *Peace and Defense Economics* (March).
Sedgwick, Mark. 2010. "The Concept of **Radicalization** as a Source of Confusion." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22(4): 479-494.
Cunniff Gilson, Erinn. 2016. "Vulnerability and Victimization: Rethinking Key Concepts in Feminist Discourses on **Sexual Violence**." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42(1): 71-98.

MacKenzie, Megan. 2009. "Securitization and Desecuritization: **Female Soldiers** and the Reconstruction of Women in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone." *Security Studies* 18(2): 241-261.

Overton, Kathryn, and Sally Sharif. 2023. "Agents with Principles? Preventing **Conflict-Related Sexual Violence** with Human Rights Laws and Norms." *Human Rights Quarterly* (August).

Gutiérrez Sanín, Francisco. 2008. "Telling the Difference: **Guerrillas** and **Paramilitaries** in the Colombian War." *Politics & Society* 36(1): 3–34.

Berry, Brent. 2008. "Indices of Racial Residential **Segregation**: A Critical Review and Redirection." In *White Logic, White Methods: Racism and Methodology*, eds. Tufuku Zuberi and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. New York: Rowman and Littlefield. [Chapter 12]

Grzymala-Kazlowska, Aleksandra, and Jenny Phillimore. 2018. "Introduction: Rethinking **Integration**: New Perspectives on Adaptation and Settlement in the Era of Super-Diversity." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44(2): 179-196.

Bauder, Harald, and Lorelle Juffs. 2020. "'**Solidarity**' in the Migration and Refugee Literature: Analysis of a Concept." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46(1): 46-65.

Week 5   Making Data
6 October
- Goertz, Gary. 2020. *Social Science Concepts: New and Completely Revised Edition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. [Chapter 5]
- Saldaña, Johnny. 2015. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Chapters 1-2]

Week 6   Critical Analysis of Data
13 October
- Walter, Maggie, and Chris Andersen. 2016. *Indigenous Statistics: A Quantitative Research Methodology*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press. [pp.21-40.]
- Skye, Courtney. 2020. "Colonialism of the Curve: Indigenous Communities & Bad Covid Data." *Policy Brief Issue 63*. Toronto, ON: Yellowhead Institute, Ryerson University.
- Zou, James, and Londa Schiebinger. 2018. "AI can Be Sexist and Racist – It's Time to Make it Fair." *Nature* 599(7714): 324-26.

Week 7   Case Studies
20 October
- George, Alexander and Andrew Bennett. 2004. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [Chapter 4]
- Soss, Joe. 2021. "On Casing a Study Versus Studying a Case." In *Rethinking Comparison*, eds. Erica Simmons and Nicholas R. Smith. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Lynch, Julia. 2005. "Can One Country Be Better Than Two for Comparative Politics?" *Italian Politics and Society* 60: 8-10.

Week 8   Ethnography and Participant Observation
27 October
- Schatz, Edward. 2009. "What Kind(s) of Ethnography does Political Science Need? In *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*, ed. Edward Schatz. University of Chicago Press. [Pages 1-22, 303- 318].
- Emerson, Robert, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. [Chapters 1-2].

📖   Wedeen, Lisa. 2010. "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13: 255–272.

📖   Musante, Kathleen, and Billie R. DeWalt. 2010. *Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press. [Chapter 1]

📋   Assignment 2 (due 3 November): Choose a fieldsite and plan to spend 1 hour there. En route, take jottings on the location of the site and its relationship to its surroundings. What is your mode of entry? What is your positionality, literally and figuratively? Your substantive aim is to better understand how power is at work in your fieldsite. Focus on the *setting*. Use all five senses to take jottings on the physical and symbolic space of the fieldsite. Focus on *people* of interest. Note their physical appearance, clothing, mannerisms, gender presentation, age, socio-economic status, racial/ethnic presentation, and anything else of interest. on interactional sequences that take place in your fieldsite. These may involve one or more people in the fieldsite, nonhuman animals, plants, or objects, and perhaps even you, the researcher. Dialogue should be recorded verbatim whenever possible, but note that interactions need not be verbal. Experiment with roles as both (more passive) observer and (more active) participant in the site.

Recommended readings (that employ ethnography)

Souleimanov, Emil A., David S. Siroky, and Peter Krause. 2022. "Kin Killing: Why Governments Target Family Members in Insurgency, and When It Works." *Security Studies* 31(2): 183-217.

Fu, Diana. 2017. "Disguised collective action in China." *Comparative Political Studies* 50(4): 499-527.

Gallien, Max and Florian Weigand. 2021. "Channeling Contraband: How States Shape International Smuggling Routes." *Security Studies* 30(1): 79-106.

Schwartz, Stephanie. 2019. "Home, Again: Refugee Return and Post-Conflict Violence in Burundi." *International Security* 44 (2): 110–145.

Week 9   Process Tracing

3 November

📖   Bennett, Andrew and Jeffrey T. Checkel. "Process Tracing: From Philosophical Roots to Best Practices." In *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, eds. Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

📖   Beach, Derek and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. "The Three Different Variants of Process Tracing and Their Uses." In *Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Recommended readings (that employ process tracing)

Wilde, Melissa. 2009. "How Culture Mattered at Vatican II: Collegiality Trumps Authority in the Council's Social Movement Organizations." *American Sociological Review* 69(4): 576- 602.

Kim, Jae Yeon. 2020. "Racism Is Not Enough: Minority Coalition Building in San Francisco, Seattle, and Vancouver." *Studies in American Political Development* 34(2): 195–215.

Madariaga, Aldo, Antoine Maillet, and Joaquín Rozas. 2021. "Multilevel Business Power in Environmental Politics: The Avocado Boom and Water Scarcity in Chile." *Environmental Politics* 30(7): 1174–95.

Pratt, Simon Frankel. 2019. "Norm Transformation and the Institutionalization of Targeted Killing in the US." *European Journal of International Relations* 25(3): 723–47.

Schwartz, Rachel A., and Scott Straus. 2018. "What Drives Violence against Civilians in Civil War? Evidence from Guatemala's Conflict Archives." *Journal of Peace Research* 55(2): 222–35.

Week 10   In-Depth Interviewing and Ethics of Human Research
10 November

    📖 Martin, Cathie Jo. 2014. "Crafting Interviews to Capture Cause and Effect." In *Interview Research in Political Science*, ed. Layna Mosley. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 109-125.

    📖 Brooks, Sarah M. 2013. "The Ethical Treatment of Human Subjects and the Institutional Review Board Process." In *Interview Research in Political Science*, ed. Layna Mosley. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 45-66.

    📖 Soss, Joe. 2014. "Talking our Way to Meaningful Explanations: A Practice-Centered View of Interviewing for Interpretive Research." In *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, ed. Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 161-182.

    📋 Assignment 3 (due 17 November): Complete the TCPS2 CORE Tutorial training: https://tcps2core.ca/welcome (you need to create an account). Fill up the consent form for the interview you want to conduct: https://www.sfu.ca/research/researcher-resources/ethics-human-research/guidance-resources. Then, conduct a 30-minute ordinary language interview. It is OK to speak with someone you already know, though it would be a good exercise to approach a stranger. Choose a concept (preferably the same concept you picked for Assignment 1) and draft a list of questions to make sense of how your interviewee understands the word. Remember to have lots of follow-up questions on hand since it is in getting people to elaborate on initial answers that meanings are most vividly revealed. If you are speaking with a stranger, think about how you will approach someone ("I'm a social scientist researcher in training"). Remember to obtain formal consent. Record the interview and transcribe it. Write up your findings and reflections. What did you discover about how your interviewee uses and understands your concept of choice? Did you learn anything new about your concept? If you could do the interview over again, what would you do differently? Did you miss any opportunities for follow-up questions? What questions about ordinary language interviewing did this field-site exercise raise for you? The final submission should include your TCPS2 CORE Tutorial certificate, consent form signed by interviewee, list of questions, the interview transcript, and a 3-5-page write-up of your findings and reflections.

Recommended readings that employ in-depth interviews

Bleich, Erik, and Robert Pekkanen. 2014. "How to Report Interview Data." In *Interview Research in Political Science*, ed. Layna Mosley. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 84-109.

Simonsen, Kristina, B. 2018. "What It Means to (Not) Belong: A Case Study of How Boundary Perceptions Affect Second-Generation Immigrants' Attachments to the Nation." *Sociological Forum* (33): 118-138.

Sharif, Sally. 2022. "Can the Rebel Body Function without Its Visible Heads? The Role of Mid-Level Commanders in Peacebuilding." *International Peacekeeping* 29(5): 709-740.

Hochschild, Jennifer. *What's Fair? American Beliefs about Distributive Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [pages 15-45 and 292-308].

Week 11   Field Experiments, Natural Experiments, and Quasi-Experiments
17 November
- 📖   McDermott, Rose. 2002. "Experimental Methods in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 5: 31-61.
- 📖   Dunning, Thad. 2010. "Design-Based Inference: Beyond the Pitfalls of Regression Analysis." In *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, eds. Henry Brady and David Collier. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Recommended readings (that employ experiments)
Posner, Daniel. 2004. "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi." *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545.
MacLean, Lauren Morris. 2010. *Informal Institutions and Citizenship in Rural Africa*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press. [Chapters 1-2]
Sharif, Sally. 2022. "How Wartime Bonds Affect Ex-Combatant Political Attitudes: A Natural Experiment with the FARC." *Terrorism and Political Violence*.

Week 12   Field Research
24 November
- 📖   Lieberman, Evan, Julia Lynch and Marc Morjé Howard. 2004. "Symposium: Field Research." *Qualitative Methods* 2(1): 2-15.
- 📖   Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. MacLean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2014. *Field Research in Political Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press. [Chapters 1-4]
- 📖   Harbin, M. Brielle. 2021. "Who's Able to Do Political Science Work? My Experience with Exit Polling and What It Reveals about Issues of Race and Equity." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 54(1): 144-146.

Week 13   Student Presentations
1 December

Week 14   Final Exam Week
15 December
- •   Submit your paper by 12 pm on Canvas (no hardcopies)