

Contemporary Political Research, POSC 6101, Fall 2016, Sec. 701, M 4:00-6:40 p.m.
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Our knowledge is a little island in a great ocean of nonknowledge.

— Isaac Singer

Method without substance may be sterile, but substance without method is only fortuitously substantial.

— V.O. Key, Jr. (1958 APSA Presidential Address)

Overview. This course is designed to give you an introduction to the various approaches to the study of political science. Because so many topics are covered, you are unlikely to leave this class an expert in any one of them. But, you will leave better able to understand research articles or books you read in your other political science courses. I hope you will also have a better idea about the value of understanding and employing multiple methods in a research project and a confidence in your own ability to begin to use primary source data in your own research. To start, we will consider questions such as “What is science?” and “How can political science be more scientific?” since they will shape our discussions of data collection and analysis. The second part of the course examines the design of a research project, while the third section looks at various ways to collect primary source data related to politics, including experiments, participant observation, elite interviewing and mass surveys, focus groups, and archival research and content analysis. Finally, we will conclude with how one analyzes different numbers of cases, through an overview of case study, comparative, and statistical approaches.

Requirements. Course requirements include serving two times as discussion leader. This involves a short (10 minute) presentation on a given week’s readings *and* the responsibility for *guiding* (not monopolizing) discussion of that week’s readings. Presentations should include topics such as what you found most interesting in the readings, some thoughts on the “questions for consideration” for the week on the syllabus, your suggestions for further discussion questions that will shape the discussion portion of the class session, and anything else you would include in a written critique of the week’s readings. You will also send the class, at least one day ahead of time, a *current* (2016) political science research article connected to the topic of that week. You will sign up for the weeks ahead of time in class. Presenting on a given week’s readings does not excuse you from discussing readings in other weeks. *Everyone* will do the readings before class; to encourage this, class participation is a significant portion of your final grade, and it will extend for several days after class via the online discussion board on the D2L.

Other requirements are: (1) two short assignments handed out the week before they are due (one of these will likely be during the statistics section of the course), (2) considerable participation in the post-class session D2L discussions, and (3) a final research proposal that is due at the end of the semester. On the D2L website, there will be a forum for discussion threads that will run from the end of each class session until the following class session. A non-trivial portion of your class participation grade will come from these D2L discussions. We will talk about the D2L requirement in more detail at the first class session. The research proposal should be between 20 and 25 pages. You must have a “literature review” and a meaningful section laying out and justifying the methods you propose to use. The proposal is not necessarily easier than a typical research paper you will write in your research seminars. Because you are not presenting results, you must be *extremely* convincing that it is a worthy project and that your approach makes sense; you will be writing the proposal as if you are trying to convince someone to fund the research. Note: I take plagiarism on such papers *very* seriously; do not put yourself in a position to find out.

There are two books that you are required to purchase: Janet B. Johnson, H. T. Reynolds, and Jason D. Mycoff, *Political Science Research Methods* (8th edition, 2016); Philip H. Pollock, *The Essentials of Political Analysis* (5th edition, 2016). You are encouraged to get the paperback version of each book, but please make sure that you have the correct edition! Other required readings are on reserve, including a number of my articles, giving you a chance to critique my research. You should also become familiar with the Web site for the Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff book (<http://college.cqpress.com/sites/psrm/home.aspx>).

Semester Grade: The breakdown is as follows: (A) final paper, 40%; (B) short assignments, 10% total; (C) presentations/discussion leading on readings, 15% total; and (D) class participation (in class and D2L), 35%.

CLASS SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

- * = Reading on D2L; ** = Reading available at the listed website;
*** = Get as .pdf via Memorial Library electronic journal subscription

Part I: Political Science?

Week 1 (Aug. 29): Introductory session: Science and social science.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, *Political Science Research Methods* (2016), ch. 1 (pp. 1-6 only) and ch. 2 (pp. 46-58 only).

*Karl Popper, 1934/1968. *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York: Harper & Row), chs. 1-2, 10.

*Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962/1970), pp. 23-65, 160-210.

*Marsh and Furlong, "A Skin Not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science," in Marsh and Stoker, eds., *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (2002), pp. 17-41.

*Martin A. Schwartz, "The Importance of Stupidity in Scientific Research," *Journal of Cell Science* 121: 1771.

**Heather Z. Lyons, Denise H. Bike et al., "Qualitative Research as Social Justice Practice with Culturally Diverse Populations," *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology* 5, no. 2 (2013): 10-25, available at: http://www.psysr.org/jsacp/Lyons-Etal-V5N2-13_10-25.pdf

***Donna M. Mertens, "Transformative Mixed Methods Research," *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, no. 6 (2010): 469-474.

*Alan D. Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity," *Social Text* 46/47 (Spring-Summer 1996): 217-252 (skim this article).

*Alan D. Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries: An Afterword," *Dissent* 43, no 4 (Fall 1996): 93-99.

In-class videos: "What is Ontology?," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FN2zwqE_Qo0; "Introduction to Epistemology," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3IcbRNQR4c>.

Question for consideration: What is the difference between knowledge and "scientific knowledge"?

Question for consideration: Do you agree with Schwartz that good science requires us to be "stupid"?

Question for consideration: Social scientists would consider the topics of ontology and epistemology central to an understanding of research methods, but Mertens also includes the topic of axiology. Is this a useful addition?

Question for consideration: Lyons, Bike, et al. argue that qualitative research can be used to facilitate social justice? Do you agree with their argument and/or have concerns with the idea in principle and practice?

Question for consideration: What lessons can we draw from Sokal's initial article and his "Afterword"?

Week 2 (Sept. 5): No class, Labor Day.

Week 3 (Sept. 12): The scientific study of politics?

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 1 (pp. 6-45 only), ch. 2 (pp. 58-72 only).

Pollock, *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, "Introduction."

*Gabriel A. Almond, "Separate Tables: Schools and Sects in Political Science," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 21, no. 4 (Autumn 1988) 828-842.

*Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Political Science* (2004), ch. 1.

**"An Open Letter to the APSA Leadership and Members," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 33, no. 4 (December 2000): 735-737.

*Ada W. Finifter, "Editor's Notes," *American Political Science Review* 94, no. 4 (Dec 2000): viii-xi.

*Rogers M. Smith, "Political Science and the Public Sphere Today," *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 2 (June 2015): 366-376.

In-class videos: "How to Understand Power," TED-Ed, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c_Eutci7ack; "What is Power?" available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1MeEd8NI9a4>.

Question for consideration: In what ways does political science differ from the natural sciences? Is political science a science?

Question for consideration: Far from a single and coherent discipline, political science has been called “a discipline divided.” How much of a problem is the lack of unity and coherence in political science?

Question for consideration: What from Rogers Smith’s discussion of the “The Road Ahead for Political Science” did you find most persuasive? Least persuasive?

Part II: Designing Scientific Studies of Politics.

Week 4 (Sept. 19): Research questions, causal claims, and the importance of theory.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 3 (pp. 75-82 only) and ch. 4 (pp. 104-109 only).

*Paul Diesing, *How Does Social Science Work? Reflections on Practice*, ch. 8 (“Science Politics”).

*Benjamin A. Most, “Getting Started on Political Research.” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 23, no. 4 (December 1990): 592-596.

*John Gerring, “Causation: A Unified Framework for the Social Sciences,” *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 17, no. 2 (April 2005) 163-98.

***Lawrence Mohr, *The Causes of Human Behavior* (1996), ch. 4 (pp. 97-106 only).

*Milton Friedman, *Essays in Positive Economics* (1962): pp. 3-43.

*Stuart McAnulla, “Structure and Agency,” in Marsh and Stoker, eds., *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (2002), pp. 271-291.

In-class video: Michael Strange, “The Role of Theory in Your Research Project,” video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-t5Ug7Mcu4>.

Question for consideration: Diesing provides a provocative account of why certain research questions get asked and others do not. How does his discussion of “science politics” shape your view of political science research?

Question for consideration: Does Gerring’s discussion of causation convince you that there is a rather unified approach to this concept in social science? Do Mohr’s claims challenge or support Gerring? Why?

Question for consideration: Do you agree with Friedman’s position on theories needing logical assumptions?

Question for consideration: To what extent does the structure versus agency approach discussed by McAnulla help us make sense of the myriad theories in political science? What are the limitations of this approach?

Week 5 (Sept. 26): The role of the literature review.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 3 (pp. 82-102 only).

*Jose L. Galvan, *Writing Literature Reviews* (1999), chapter 1. **NOTE:** I would strongly encourage you to buy this book (used copies should be very inexpensive). It will come in handy in your research seminars. There are many newer editions (the 5th edition came out in 2013).

*David Thunder, “Back to Basics: Twelve Rules for Writing a Publishable Article,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37, no. 3 (July 2004): pp 493-495.

*Gary King, “Publication, Publication,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39, no. 1 (Jan. 2006): 119-125.

*Kevin Smith, “Data Don’t Matter?: Academic Research and School Choice,” *Perspectives on Politics* 3, no. 2 (June 2005): 285-99.

*Lowell Barrington and Brian Silver, “Ethnic Minorities and Political Support,” National Science Foundation Research Grant Proposal Statement, 1997.

In-class video: “Literature Reviews: An Overview for Graduate Students,” NCSU Libraries video, available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2d7y_r65HU.

Question for consideration: If your literature review does only one thing, what should that be?

Question for consideration: Why should the sources for your literature review come primarily from books and academic journals rather than the internet?

Question for consideration: Kevin Smith's article lays out a number of things to look for when evaluating a research study about school choice. Can we apply these criteria to our critique of any research work?

Question for consideration: Based on their review of the literature, what are the strengths and weaknesses of Barrington and Silver's case to the NSF about the need for a new project on Russian-speaking ethnic minorities?

Week 6 (Oct. 3): From research questions to hypotheses: Traditional and formal approaches.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 4 (pp. 109-121 only).

Pollock, ch. 3 (pp. 48-58 only).

*Rogers M. Smith, "Identities, Interests, and the Future of Political Science," *Perspectives on Politics* 2, no. 2 (June 2004): 301-312.

**Philippe C. Schmitter, "The Nature and Future of Comparative Politics," *European Political Science Review* 1, no. 1 (2009): 33-61 (pp. 33-49 only). Available at: <http://www.eui.eu/Documents/DepartmentsCentres/SPS/Profiles/Schmitter/NatureAndFutureofCPEPSR2009.pdf>

*Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, chs. 3, 14, and 16.

*D. H. Judson, "Human Migration Decision Making: A Formal Model," *Behavioral Science* 35 (1990): 281-189.

*Lowell Barrington, "Examining Rival Theories of Demographic Influences on Political Support: The Power of Regional, Ethnic, and Linguistic Divisions in Ukraine," *European Journal of Political Research* 41, no. 4 (2002): 455-491. **Read pp. 455-471 only.**

*Bronston T. Mayes and Daniel C. Ganster, "Exit and Voice: A Test of Hypotheses Based on Fight/Flight Responses to Job Stress," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* 9, no. 3: 199-216. **Read pp. 199-203 only.**

In-class video: Mark Rosengarten, "It's ONLY A Theory! - The Scientific Method," video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Re8QxKZdm0>

Question for consideration: Probably because they require some knowledge of math, formal models are usually seen as something more consistent with quantitative research than with qualitative research. In ch. 2 of KKV, the authors argue that formal models can be used in qualitative research. Are you convinced?

Question for consideration: Think back to our Week 4 discussion about Friedman and assumptions. Although the math may be somewhat hard to follow in formal arguments, it is important to pay close attention to their assumptions. Which assumptions of both Downs and Judson make sense and which ones don't?

Question for consideration: Both Barrington and Mayes and Ganster produce theoretically-based, testable hypotheses in a less than formal way. Downs and Judson employ a more formal approach to the derivation of testable hypotheses. What are the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches?

Week 7 (Oct. 10): The "conceptualization," "operationalization," and coding of variables.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 4 (pp. 121-127 only), ch. 5.

Pollock, chs. 1-2.

*John Gerring, "What Makes a Concept Good?," *Polity* 31, no. 3. (Spring 1999): 357-393.

*Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *American Political Science Review* 64, no. 4: 1033-1053.

*Lowell Barrington, "Nations and Nationalism: The Misuse of Key Concepts in Political Science," *PS: Political Science & Politics*, December 1997, pp. 712-716.

David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (April 1997) pp. 430-451. Available at: http://0-muse.jhu.edu.libus.csd.mu.edu/journals/world_politics/v049/49.3collier.html (Skim this one**).

In-class video: Leslie Curry, "Fundamentals of Qualitative Research Methods: Data Analysis (Module 5)." Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=opp5tH4uD-w>.

Question for consideration: Think of a political science example of “conceptual stretching.”

Question for consideration: Why is it difficult to make the transition from the idea of a variable to its operationalization? Is this harder in political science than other disciplines? Why or why not?

Part III: Gathering Data.

Week 8 (Oct. 17): The “experimental ideal” for collecting causal inference data.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 6.

Pollock, ch. 4.

*Lundervold and Belwood, “The Best Kept Secret in Counseling,” *Annual Editions: Research Methods 01/02* (1st edition, 2001), pp. 78-90.

*Rose McDermott, “Experimental Methods in Political Science,” *Annual Review of Political Science* 5 (2002): 31-61.

*Andrew Barrett and Lowell Barrington, “Newspaper Photographs and Voter Evaluations of Political Candidates,” *Press/Politics* 10, no. 4 (2005): 98-113.

In-class videos: “Milgram Experiment Proves We Blindly Obey Authority,” video available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DxSKTSOA_E;

Question for consideration: I call experiments an “ideal” approach in the title for this week above. Why? What issues/concerns related to experiments might call into question the labeling of them as “ideal”?

Question for consideration: The Lundervold and Belwood reading on counseling research discusses the concept of an experiment based on a single case. Is this a valid form of experimentation?

Question for consideration: What are the strengths and, more interesting, the weaknesses of the Barrett and Barrington experiment?

Week 9 (Oct. 24): Participant and nonparticipant observation.

FIRST PRESENTATIONS ON PROGRESS TO DATE ON THE FINAL PAPER, AT THE START OF CLASS.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 8.

*Jennifer H. Elder, “Videotaped Behavioral Observations,” *Annual Editions*, pp. 106-110.

*David Laitin, *Identity in Formation*, ch. 5 (“Family Strategies in Response to the Cataclysm”).

*Richard Fenno, *Homestyle: House Members in Their Districts* (1978), pp. 101-135, 249-295.

In-class videos: “Participant Observation,” available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVHoUkQSIkU>;
“Test your observation skills,” available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAFfYLR_IRY

Question for consideration: What are the problems with being a “participant observer” for the collection and interpretation of one’s data?

Question for consideration: After reading Fenno’s methodological appendix, are you more or less confident in the other part of his book that you read for this week?

Week 10 (Oct. 31): Documents and content analysis.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 9.

*Peter Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Politics* (2004), ch. 7 and ch. 10 (**pp. 236-249 only**).

*Marcus Ethridge, *The Political Research Experience*, ch. 7 (“Content Analysis”). *Excerpt 10*. Dalton, Beck, and Huckfeldt, “Partisan Cues and the Media: Information Flows in the 1992 Presidential Election.”

*Andrew W. Barrett and Lowell W. Barrington, “Bias in Newspaper Photograph Selection,” *Political Research Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (Dec. 2005): 609-618.

In-class video: Ross Avilla, “Observational Methods: 4 - Archival research,” video available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4_nptsT4r8

Question for consideration: The issue of “replication” has been an important topic among political scientists in recent years. Does content analysis pose particular challenges for replication?

Question for consideration: In chapter 10, Burnham et al. discuss “discourse analysis.” What assumptions underlie this approach? How well does it fit with ideas of political science research we’ve discussed?

Week 11 (Nov. 7): Talking to people: Mass surveys, elite interviewing, and focus groups.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 10.

*Morin, “When the Improbable Becomes Inexplicable,” *Washington Post Weekly*, Aug. 19-25, 1996: 34.

*Joel D. Aberbach and Bert A. Rockman, “Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35, no. 4 (Dec 2002): 673-676.

*Lowell Barrington, “The Making of Citizenship Policy in the Baltic States,” *Georgetown Immigration Law Journal* 13, no. 2. (1999): 159-199. **NOTE:** This is a long (and “thick”) piece; focus on the use of elite interviews as data.

*Richard A. Krueger, “The Future of Focus Groups,” *Annual Editions*, pp. 111-113.

*David W. Stewart and Prem N. Shamdasani, *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice* (Sage, 2016), ch. 3.

*Lowell Barrington, “Views of the ‘Ethnic Other’ in Ukraine,” *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 8, no. 2 (2002): 83-96.

In-class video: Leslie Curry, “Fundamentals of Qualitative Research Methods: Interviews (Module 3).”

Video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PhcglOGFg8>.

Question for consideration: Can we trust what people tell us when we interview them? How might we design a research project to enhance our confidence in what we are being told?

Question for consideration: Given what you know so far about sampling and response issues in surveying, what is your view of tracking polls used by the media during U.S. campaigns?

Question for consideration: Barrington’s work on citizenship relies heavily on elite interviews. What concerns do you have about the validity of these data? Are these concerns fatal to his conclusions? Why or why not?

Question for consideration: What are the advantages of focus groups compared to mass surveys for understanding attitudes of ordinary people? What are their limitations?

Part IV: How Many Cases?: Case Studies, the Comparative Method, and Statistical Analysis.

Week 12 (Nov. 14): Case studies: Depth vs. generalizability and qualitative vs. quantitative research.

Readings:

*John W. Creswell, *30 Essential Skills for the Qualitative Researcher* (Sage, 2015), “1. Thinking Like a Qualitative Researcher” (pp. 2-10).

***Gary Thomas, “A Typology for the Case Study in Social Science Following a Review of Definition, Discourse, and Structure,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 17, no. 6 (July 2011): 511–521.

**Pamela Baxter and Susan Jack, “Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers,” *The Qualitative Report* 13, no. 4 (December 2008): 544-559. Available at: <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-4/baxter.pdf>.

***Joseph A. Maxwell, “Using Numbers in Qualitative Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 16, on. 6 (July 2010): 475–482.

***Bent Flyvbjerg, “Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 2 (April 2006): 219-245.

***“Lee Peter Ruddin,” You Can Generalize Stupid! Social Scientists, Bent Flyvbjerg, and Case Study Methodology,” *Qualitative Inquiry* 12, no. 4 (August 2006): 797-812.

***Lawrence Mohr, *The Causes of Human Behavior* (1996), ch. 4 (pp. 106-118 only).

In-class video: Graham R Gibbs, “Types of Case Study. Part 1 of 3 on Case Studies,” Video, available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gQfoq7c4UE4>. Concentrate on the examples of different subjects of case study research.

Question for consideration: What can case studies tell us and what can they not tell us? Given your answer to the first question, are case studies something that should be encouraged or discouraged in political science?

Question for consideration: While many scholars assume case studies are strong on internal validity and weak on external validity, Larry Mohr also makes a novel argument about the potential for external validity that comes from “understanding the process.” Do you agree with him that the ability to understand the process in a case study makes it possible to generalize from one case?

Week 13 (Nov. 21): The Comparative Method.

SECOND PRESENTATIONS ON PROGRESS TO DATE ON FINAL PAPER, AT THE START OF CLASS.

Readings:

- *Lijphart, “Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method,” *American Political Science Review* 65 (1971): 682-693.
- *Collier, “The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change,” in Rustow and Erickson (eds.), *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives* (1991), pp. 7-31.
- *Theodore Meckstroth, “‘Most Different Systems’ and ‘Most Similar Systems’: A Study in the Logic of Comparative Inquiry,” *Comparative Political Studies*, July 1975, pp. 133-177.
- *Dan Posner, “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi,” *American Political Science Review* 98 (November 2004): 529-546.
- *Huber, “Letter from the President: The Role of Cross-regional Comparison,” *APSA-CP Newsletter* 14, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 1-6.
- *Geddes, “How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics,” *Political Analysis* 2 (1990): 131-150.
- *Collier, Mahoney, and Seawright, “Claiming Too Much: Warnings about Selection Bias,” in Brady and Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (2004), pp. 85-102.
- ***Lawrence Mohr, *The Causes of Human Behavior* (1996), ch. 4 (pp. 118-129 only).

In-class video: “Scientific Method in Comparative Politics,” video available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9duJchhAWIQ> (Start video at 8:00).

Question for consideration: Evaluate the argument by Geddes in light of the critique by Collier, Mahoney, and Seawright. Are there other problems with Geddes’s argument that they miss?

Week 14 (Nov. 28): Univariate and bivariate statistical analysis: Central tendencies, difference of means tests, cross-tabulations, correlation, and bivariate OLS regression.

Readings:

- Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 11, ch. 13.
- Pollock, ch. 3 (pp. 58-77 only), ch. 5, ch. 8 (pp. 183-201 only).

In-class video: “What is Correlation?” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ypgo4qUBt5o>

Question for consideration: Why would someone examine the characteristics of just one variable?

Question for consideration: What are the advantages and limitations of bivariate analysis? In what situations would bivariate analysis be quite limited?

Week 15 (Dec. 5): Multivariate regression, and determining statistical significance and “explained variance” in statistical analyses (probability, error, confidence intervals, and R²)

Readings:

- Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 7, ch. 12, and ch. 14 (pp. 516-559 only).
- Pollock, chs. 6-7, ch. 8 (pp. 201-214).

- *Barrington, “Examining Rival Theories of Demographic Influences on Political Support: The Power of Regional, Ethnic, and Linguistic Divisions in Ukraine,” *European Journal of Political Research* 41, no. 4 (2002): 455-491.
- *Gary King, “How Not to Lie With Statistics,” *American Journal of Political Science* 30, no. 3 : 669-678.

In-class video: “Confirmation Bias: Your Brain is So Judgmental.” Video available at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tZvDaPBqAyg>

Question for consideration: In what situations would it *not* be appropriate to estimate multivariate statistical models?

Question for consideration: Barrington uses a large number of “dummy variables” in his statistical model. In what situations is it appropriate to use dummy variables?

Question for consideration: One of the discussion questions for week 11 related to tracking polls. Given what you now know about confidence intervals, what is your view of the media’s use of tracking polls during U.S. campaigns *now*?

Question for consideration: Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff present regression results which include “standardized regression coefficients.” What is the logic behind this statistic (see especially pp. 521-524)? According to King in his “How Not to Lie with Statistics” article, why is this logic flawed? (Also see J & R’s emphasis on, and description of, R^2 – pp. 524-525 – compared to that in King).

Part V: Conclusion

Week 16 (Friday Dec. 9, OPTIONAL additional class session): The marriage of different methods, and continuing methodological debates.

Readings:

Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff, ch. 15.

*Evan Lieberman, “Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research,” *American Political Science Review* 99, no. 3 (August 2005): 435-52.

*Lowell W. Barrington, Brian D. Silver, and Erik S. Herron, “The Motherland is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad,” *World Politics* 55 (January 2003): 290–313.

*Lowell Barrington, “Russian-speakers in Ukraine and Kazakhstan: ‘Nationality,’ ‘Population,’ or Neither?,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 17 (April-June 2001), pp. 129-158.

*David Laitin, “Comment on Lowell Barrington,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 17 (April-June 2001), pp. 159-163.

*Lowell Barrington, “A Reply to David Laitin,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 17 (April-June 2001), pp. 164-166.

*David Laitin, “The Perestroikan Challenge to Social Science,” *Politics & Society* 31, no. 1 (March 2003): 163-184.

*Bent Flyvbjerg, “A Perestroikan Straw Man Answers Back: David Laitin and Phronetic Political Science,” *Politics & Society* 32, no. 3 (September 2004): 389-416.

In-class video: Brian Epstein, “The End of Social Science as We Know It,” TEDx-Stanford, video available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FLbEKpL-5Z0&index=1&list=PLrb5XV0d1Jsjgk8ygBexN6YJ0XgB34ZLz>.

Question for consideration: After this semester, do you think the study of politics is more scientific or less scientific than you did at the beginning?

FINAL PAPER DUE: Wednesday, December 14th, 5:00 p.m. (in my department mailbox).