

University of Western Ontario
Department of Political Science
The Craft of Political Science Research
(a.k.a. Advanced Research Design)
Political Science 9502A
Fall 2025

Instructor: Dr. Zack Taylor
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Office Hours: Online via Zoom by appointment
Dates: Thursdays 9am–12pm
Location: See OWL Brightspace

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

The objective of this course is to provide early-stage doctoral students in political science with an understanding of research design principles, as well as disagreements about them, that they will carry forward into their dissertation projects and future careers as researchers. By the end of the course, students will be able to situate their research interests within the development of the discipline, recognize the value of different research approaches, and critically evaluate the theories, empirical strategies, and causal claims found in political science research products, and assess their validity. As much as possible, equal attention will be given to political science research traditions in domestic politics, comparative politics, international relations, and political theory. The goal of this course is not to teach specific *methodologies* – our department offers numerous compulsory and elective “methods” courses – but to reflect on the *craft of political science research* to develop the foundational knowledge necessary to devise and execute high-quality quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-methods research projects, including developing research questions, selecting cases and methods, and acting ethically. We will also touch on proposal and grant writing and publishing. These topics, including approaches to mixed-methods research, will be further developed in POL 9593B Foundations of Qualitative Methods.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- appreciate major methodological debates in the social sciences;
- understand how your research orientations and interests fit within political science as a scholarly discipline;
- identify and assess the positive and negative aspects of major approaches in political science;
- appreciate major issues related to designing research projects;
- assess emerging practicalities and ethical aspects of using AI in research processes;
- navigate major issues of research design with your own research questions; and
- critically analyze readings and prepare materials to teach a topic.

SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

		PART I: Approaches to Political Science Research
1	4 Sep.	Discipline and Department: The Development of the Field(s) <i>What is political science? How have political science and its subfields developed over time, globally and in Canada?</i>
2	11 Sep.	Ontology & Epistemology I: Approaches and Goals <i>What are the goals of political science? What are its possibilities and limitations?</i> • Reflection Paper 1 (for everyone) Due: <i>What do you think the goal of political science should be? What ontology and epistemology are you aligned with? What kind of political scientist do you want to become?</i> Practical discussion: Careers in/with political science
3	18 Sep.	Ontology & Epistemology II: Ways into Politics: Levels and Objects of Analysis <i>How might the researcher's chosen level or object of analysis lead to different styles of research and types of research products?</i> • Reflection Paper 2 (for non-political theorists) Due: <i>Are different research ontologies and epistemologies commensurable?</i> Practical discussion: Getting organized – information and citation management
4	25 Sep.	Ontology & Epistemology III: The Uses of Evidence <i>What is the difference between inference and interpretation? Are new techniques collapsing the distinction? Is political science necessarily empirical? Do political theorists have 'methods'?</i> • Reflection Paper 2 (for political theorists) Due: <i>What role can, or should, empirical research have in political theory?</i> Faculty member visit: Prof. Elizabeth Finneron-Burns (middle hour)
		PART II: Crafting Research Projects
5	2 Oct.	From Puzzle to Research Question <i>What is worth studying? How do we know if we have a good research question? Are you oriented toward induction or deduction, or understanding regularities or particularities?</i> Scholarship in the Age of AI <i>What are the best practices for, and ethical issues with, the use of generative artificial intelligence in scholarly research?</i> Practical discussion: Emerging AI tools for research discovery
6	9 Oct.	Units of Analysis I: Selection and Comparison in Case-Oriented Research <i>What is a case? What is an example? How should we select them?</i>

		PART II: Crafting Research Projects (continued)
7	16 Oct.	Units of Analysis II: Observations in Variable-Oriented Research <i>What is an observation? What is a sample? What is a variable?</i> • Introducing the Research Proposal Assignment Practical discussion: Applying for grants
8	23 Oct.	Conceptualization <i>How can we develop and evaluate concepts?</i> • Design Paper 1 Due: Reflect on how issues related to selecting units of analysis (cases, observations, or examples) and comparison bear on your research project. Practical discussion: Joining professional associations, discoverability and self-promotion
9	30 Oct.	Operationalization and Measurement <i>How can we operationalize concepts as data that we can collect or reliably measure?</i> Faculty member visit: Prof. Sebastián Vallejo-Vera (third hour)
	6 Nov.	Reading Week
	10 Nov.	• Research Proposal Outline Due
10	13 Nov.	Causal Analysis I <i>Political scientists often make causal arguments as they seek to describe, explain, or predict events. How can we infer the existence of relationships between causes and effects?</i> Note: This meeting will occur 9–11am online as the instructor will be in the UK.
11	20 Nov.	Causal Analysis II <i>Events unfold over time and across space – what mechanisms can we identify? How do emerging set-theoretic approaches to causal inference differ from conventional statistical methods?</i> • Design Paper 2 Due: Reflect on how issues related to conceptualization, measurement, and causation bear on your research project. Practical discussion: Conferences and publishing – When, why, how?
12	27 Nov.	Ethics, Transparency, and Replication <i>What ethical standards guide research? What standards of transparency and replicability apply to different types of political science research?</i> • Dissertation Critique Paper Due Faculty member visit: Prof. Blair Welch (third hour)
13	4 Dec.	Proposal Symposium <i>In our final meeting you will present and receive feedback on your proposal.</i> • Proposal Draft Due Sunday, November 30 Midnight • Discussant Comments Due Tuesday, December 2 Midnight • Final Proposal Due Thursday, December 11 Midnight

COURSE WEBSITE

Please refer to the course website regularly for announcements and course information. All course material will be posted to OWL Brightspace: <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>. If students need assistance with OWL Brightspace, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the [Western Technology Services Helpdesk](#) online or by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800 for technical support. Current versions of all popular browsers are supported with OWL Brightspace; what is most important is that you update your browser frequently to ensure it is current. All JavaScript and cookies should be enabled.

COURSE FORMAT

Seminar: This is a seminar course. While the instructor will introduce concepts and motivate debate, there will be no lecture. Students will lead and actively contribute to the discussion. *Reading the required texts in advance is a necessary prerequisite for doing well in this course and will make for more exciting and insightful discussion.* The course has a heavy reading load – please try to get a jump on it before the start of term.

Practical discussions: At various points throughout the term we will use some or all of the third hour of class time to discuss issues related to professional development and practical issues.

READINGS

Required readings: We will be reading substantial portions of the books listed below. Gerring (2012) is available digitally through the library, but only one person can check it out at a time, so purchasing is recommended. We will read several chapters in Parsons and in Gerring & Seawright, which are available digitally through the library. The other books are not available digitally, and the current editions are not currently part of Western Libraries' collection. These books have been ordered through the Western Bookstore and purchasing them is recommended.

- 📖 Gerring, John. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=5120101>
- 📖 King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 2021 [New Edition]. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- 📖 Lowndes, Vivien, David Marsh, and Gerry Stoker. 2018. *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, 4th ed. London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- 📖 Parsons, Craig. *How to Map Arguments in Political Science*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/west/detail.action?docID=415417>
- 📖 Gerring, John, and Jason Seawright. 2022. *Finding your Social Science Project: The Research Sandbox, Strategies for Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009118620>.

Readings from these books are marked with a 📖 in the reading list. Journal articles and book chapters available digitally through Western Libraries are marked with a 📖. Items available on

the internet are marked with a . Finally, items posted on OWL are marked with a . You may find guidance and inspiration from Cambridge University Press's excellent *Strategies for Social Inquiry* series, which expands on almost every topic we discuss, and which is available digitally through the library at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/series/strategies-for-social-inquiry/7D51FF41D1EF7D2933DCBBEAB7DC277>.

Supplemental readings: Supplemental readings are not required but may be useful to explore topics more deeply as you develop your dissertation projects and take other courses.

EVALUATION

Participation (10%): Lively, informed, and thoughtful discussion is at the heart of this course. You will be expected to provide consistent, informed, and active participation throughout the term. Read the material, reflect on it before and during the seminar, and engage in the seminar discussion in an open-minded fashion. **Not including the seminar leader, each student must submit two discussion questions through OWL before midnight the night before each class.** Grades will be assigned based not only on the frequency but also the quality of your oral contributions to the seminar.

Seminar Leadership (2 x 5% = 10%): You will deliver two substantial presentation that will offer a brief introduction to the week's readings as well as *two* additional readings you select. These may come from the supplementary readings. In addition to effective summary and integration of the selected readings, you should raise questions and challenges in such a way as to stimulate seminar discussion in the time to follow. Sign-up will occur in the first class.

Reflection Papers (2 x 5% = 10%): In Part I of the course, you will prepare two short papers (3–5 pages) in which you will reflect on the field of political science and your position in it.

Design Papers (2 x 5% = 10%): In Part II of the course, you will prepare two short papers (3–5 pages) in which you will comment on how issues raised in the readings apply to your own research project. These will help you develop your Research Proposal assignment.

Dissertation Critique Paper (Overview 5% + Critique 25% = 30%): You will access, read, and critique the research design of a dissertation that has won a best dissertation award in the past six years from the Canadian Political Science Association (the Vincent Lemieux Prize, awarded every two years), the American Political Science Association or one of its organized sections, the British Political Studies Association, or the European Consortium for Political Research (the Jean Blondel PhD Prize or the Joni Lovenduski PhD Prize).

Select a dissertation on a topic you are interested in, or which uses methodologies that may appeal to you. The goal of this assignment is to put you in the shoes of a dissertation examiner and expose you to work by peers that is deemed high-quality in the field.

The *Overview* section will describe the author's ontology, research question, research design, evidence, and methodology. The *Critique* section will evaluate the author's research design (including case selection), choice of method or approach, and quality of the analysis and

interpretation of it. Consider the appropriateness of the research design and methods to answering the research question, whether the methods and evidence used influenced the conclusion reached, and whether an alternative approach would have yielded different, and perhaps better, results. The Overview and Critique sections should *each* be no more than 5 pages in length – this is about quality and concision, not quantity.

In the Overview section, please indicate the award won and year of award, the author's department and university, the names of the supervisor and committee members, and a link to access the dissertation. Please also indicate whether the dissertation is a monograph or a dissertation-by-article. If the latter, be sure to comment on how the articles fit together.

You can find the names of the award winners and dissertation titles on the following websites:

- CPSA: <https://cpsa-acsp.ca/prizes-vincent-lemieux-prize/>
- APSA general awards: <https://apsanet.org/programs/apsa-awards/> (click on “Proposal and Dissertation Awards”)
- APSA organized section awards: <https://apsanet.org/membership/organized-sections/organized-section-awards/> (click on “Dissertation Awards”)
- British PSA: <https://www.psa.ac.uk/psa-awards-history>
- ECPR, Jean Blondel PhD Prize: <https://ecpr.eu/Prizes/PrizeWinners.aspx?PrizeID=4>
- ECPR, Joni Lovenduski Gender and Politics PhD Prize: <https://ecpr.eu/Prizes/PrizeWinners.aspx?PrizeID=9>

You can search for dissertation texts on open research repositories:

- ProQuest Theses and Dissertations Global: <https://www.proquest.com/pqdtglobal>.
- Library and Archives Canada archives Canadian theses and dissertations: <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/services/services-libraries/theses/Pages/search-theses-canada.aspx>.
- British theses are available (following registration) from the British Library at <https://ethos.bl.uk/>.
- Open Access Theses and Dissertations (contains 7.5 million dissertations): <https://oatd.org>

Not all dissertations may be publicly accessible, especially if recent. If searches fail to turn up the dissertation you seek, you may find that some winners make their dissertations available on their personal websites. Most university libraries archive their own theses and dissertations on institutional research repositories, which can be located through internet searches. If all else fails, you may write the winner to request access to their dissertation.

Project Proposal (30%): Researchers routinely prepare proposals for future research projects, often to apply for grants. Doctoral students are required to write a proposal for their dissertation project. In this assignment you will prepare a concise project proposal with the goal of applying the knowledge gained throughout the course to a research topic. While this proposal could function as the beginning of your dissertation proposal or an actual SSHRC/OGS grant application, there is no expectation that you will pursue this idea for your dissertation.

The first part of the assignment is to write an *application document* conforming to the requirements of the SSHRC Canada Graduate Research Scholarship–Doctoral competition: <https://sshrc-crsh.canada.ca/en/funding/opportunities/canada-graduate-research-scholarships/doctoral->

[program/2025/competition/instructions/applicant.aspx](https://www.westernu.ca/program/2025/competition/instructions/applicant.aspx). In addition to the CGRS-D application, you will also prepare a *separate document* that includes the following elements:

- A reflection on why this topic and research question are meaningful to you.
- A discussion of the contribution you hope to make with your project.
- A discussion of your ontological orientation to the *research question*, your *evidence collection strategy* (including selection of units of analysis), and your *analysis approach* (including conceptualization and measurement, as appropriate).
- A discussion of research ethics considerations as appropriate.
- A discussion of the limitations of your research design.

The Project Proposal assignment is scaffolded as follows:

- *Outline* (no grade) – The one-page outline should, at minimum, identify the research question and tentative claims. The instructor will provide timely feedback.
- *Draft Proposal for Discussant* (no grade) – Submit the draft proposal through OWL. The instructor will circulate your proposal to your two discussants.
- *Discussant Comments* (5%) – Submit discussant comments through OWL. In no more than three pages, you will identify the most and least successful aspects of the draft proposal and one suggestion for how to improve it. Include two questions to pose to the author at the Symposium.
- *Proposal Symposium* (no grade) – Each student will present their research proposal (maximum 8 minutes) after which each discussant will present their comments (maximum 5 minutes).
- *Final Proposal* (25%) – You will use the feedback from your discussants and symposium discussion to revise your proposal prior to final submission.

COURSE POLICIES

E-mail policy: All Western University students are required to have an @uwo.ca e-mail account. The instructor will *only* respond to e-mails sent from a Western University account, that clearly identify the sender, and have “POL9502” in the subject line. The instructor will **not** accept assignments by e-mail.

Late assignments: The penalty for late assignments is two percentage points per day (including weekend days). A grade of 80% on an assignment therefore becomes 72% in four days. Assignments more than 10 days late will not be accepted. Extensions due to illness require a medical certificate. If you foresee problems meeting submission deadlines please consult the instructor early; accommodations can always be made with adequate advance notice. This means *at least one week before the deadline*, not the night before the work is due! The last day for submission of term assignments with penalty is **Monday, December 15, 2025**, after which they cannot be accepted without special arrangements agreed.

Use of AI tools: Our goal in this course is to read texts closely and think deeply about issues and questions that you will have to resolve as you continue with your doctoral studies. Authentic, original thought is essential to this intellectual process. Using ChatGPT or other AI tools to

generate content for your assignments is unacceptable in this class, with the exception of developing the literature review for your final proposal, as we will discuss in Class 5.

Academic Offences: Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism-detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). If you are unclear about what constitutes plagiarism or how to reference sources, please visit the Writing Support Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/> or review information at: <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/>.

ASSISTANCE

If you are having trouble with the course material or are falling behind in your work, please contact the course instructor as soon as possible. We can only help you if the lines of communication are open. Learning to express ideas clearly is a central goal of the university experience. If academic writing does not come easily to you, you are strongly encouraged to make use of the Writing Support Centre: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/writing/>.

Health/Wellness Services: Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Western's Wellness and Well-Being hub at <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Accessible Education Western (AEW): Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western at http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

📖 = Journal articles and book chapters available digitally through Western Libraries

🌐 = Available on the internet 📖 = In required book 📄 = PDF on OWL

Part I: Approaches to Political Science Research		
1	4 Sep.	Discipline and Department: The Development of the Field(s) <i>On the field of political science and its development</i> 📖 Bevir, Mark. 2022. <i>A History of Political Science</i>. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009043458. 📖 Lucas, Jack. 2013. "A Century of Political Science in Canada." <i>Journal of Canadian Studies</i> 47 (2):89–118. https://doi.org/10.3138/jcs.47.2.89 or muse.jhu.edu/article/542273. 📖 Lowndes, Marsh, and Stoker, Ch. 1, "Introduction," 1–13. 📖 Collins, Randall. 1994. "Why the social sciences won't become high-consensus, rapid-discovery science." <i>Sociological Forum</i> 9 (2):155–177. https://www.jstor.org/stable/685040. <i>On contentious subfields: IR and political theory</i> 📖 Reiter, Dan. 2015. "Should We Leave Behind the Subfield of International Relations?" <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 18 (1):481–499. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-053013-041156. 📖 Corry, Olaf. 2022. "What's the point of being a discipline? Four disciplinary strategies and the future of International Relations" <i>Cooperation and Conflict</i> 57 (3):290–310. https://doi.org/10.1177/00108367221098492 📖 Rehfeld, Andrew. 2010. "Offensive Political Theory." <i>Perspectives on Politics</i> 8 (2):465–486. doi: https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592710001209. 📖 Corbett, Ross J. 2011. "Political Theory within Political Science." <i>PS: Political Science & Politics</i> 44 (3):565–570. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511000679. <i>Supplemental: The development of, and enduring debates regarding, the Canadian Politics subfield</i> 📖 <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i> 50 (1) – special issue on the journal's 50th anniversary with reflections on the journal's history, the English/French divide, gender research, Indigenous research, Americanization, methodology, pedagogy, and research transparency. https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/canadian-journal-of-political-science-revue-canadienne-de-science-politique/issue/61AF53D531FAFDBA1D5F4364933B4BDD 📖 Rocher, François. 2007. "The End of the 'Two Solitudes'? The Presence (or Absence) of the Work of French-speaking Scholars in Canadian Politics." <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i> 40 (4):833–857. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423907071132. 📖 White, Linda A., Richard Simeon, Robert Vipond, and Jennifer Wallner, eds. 2008. <i>The Comparative Turn in Canadian Political Science</i>. Vancouver: UBC Press. https://books-scholarsportal-info.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/uri/ebooks/ebooks3/upress/2013-08-25/1/9780774856188

2	11 Sep.	Ontology & Epistemology I: Approaches and Goals <i>On conflicts over ontology and epistemology in the social sciences</i> 📖 King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 1, “The <i>Science</i> in Social Science,” 1–32. 🎓 Riker, William H. 1982. “The Two-Party System and Duverger's Law: An Essay on the History of Political Science.” <i>The American Political Science Review</i> 76 (4):753–766. https://doi.org/10.2307/1962968. 📖 Lowndes, Marsh, and Stoker, Ch. 11, “A Skin is Not a Sweater: Ontology and Epistemology in Political Science,” 177–198. 🎓 Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research.” <i>Political Analysis</i> 14 (3):227–249. https://doi.org/10.1093/pan/mpj017. 🎓 Brown-Saracino, Japonica. 2021. “Unsettling Definitions of Qualitative Research.” <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> 44 (4):591–597. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-021-09498-9. 📖 Lowndes, Marsh, and Stoker, Ch. 19, “The Relevance of Political Science,” 321–331. <i>Practical discussion: Careers in/with political science</i> 🎓 Jamal, Bianca, Loleen Berdahl, Jonathan Malloy, and Lisa Young. 2024. “The Unbearable Opportunity Costs of the Political Science PhD: Evidence and Lessons from Canada.” <i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i> 57 (4): 939–954. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423924000441. <i>Supplemental on ontological and epistemological debates</i> 🎓 Lawler, Janet and David Waldner. 2023. “Interpretivism versus Positivism in an Age of Causal Inference.” Ch. 11 in Harold Kincaid and Jeroen Van Bouwel, eds., <i>The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Political Science</i>. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780197519806.013.11. 🎓 Hall, Peter A. 2003. “Aligning ontology and methodology in comparative politics.” In James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., <i>Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences</i>, 373–404. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511803963 🎓 Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2001. <i>Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How it Can Succeed Again</i>. Trans. Steven Sampson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511810503. Monroe, Kristen Renwick, ed. 1997. <i>Contemporary Empirical Political Theory</i>. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
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3	18 Sep.	Ontology & Epistemology II: Levels and Objects of Analysis 🎓 Parsons, Craig. <i>How to Map Arguments in Political Science</i>. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. Introduction, Ch. 1, and Conclusion. 🎓 Abbott, Andrew. 2004. <i>Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences</i>. Ch. 1, “Explanation,” (3–40); Ch. 2, “Basic Debates and Methodological Practices,” (41–79); and Ch. 6, “Fractal Heuristics,” (162–210). <i>Supplemental</i> 🦉 Alford, Robert R. and Roger Friedland. 1985. <i>Powers of Theory: Capitalism, the State, and Democracy</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Especially Introduction and Ch. 1 on levels and analysis and conceptualization. 🎓 Jung, Hoyoon. 2019. “The Evolution of Social Constructivism in Political Science: Past to Present.” <i>SAGE Open</i> 9 (1):1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019832703. 🎓 List, Christian, and Kai Spiekermann. 2013. “Methodological Individualism and Holism in Political Science: A Reconciliation.” <i>American Political Science Review</i> 107 (4):629–643. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055413000373. 🎓 Milner, Helen V. 1998. “Rationalizing Politics: The Emerging Synthesis of International, American, and Comparative Politics.” <i>International Organization</i> 52 (4):759–786. https://doi.org/10.1162/002081898550743.
4	25 Sep.	Ontology & Epistemology III: The Uses of Evidence <i>Types and uses of evidence: Inference and interpretation</i> 📖 King, Keohane, and Verba, Ch. 2, “Descriptive Inference,” 33–72. 🔗 Bevir, Mark, and R.A.W. Rhodes. 2006. “Defending Interpretation.” <i>European Political Science</i> 5 (1):69–83. https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/22234/2/01_Bevir_Defending_Interp_2006.pdf 🎓 Gerring, John. 2012. “Mere Description.” <i>British Journal of Political Science</i> 42 (4): 721–746. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123412000130. 🎓 Dryzek, John S. 2025. “For Example: How to Use Examples in Political Science.” <i>American Political Science Review</i> 119 (1): 449–461. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055424000480. <i>Thick and thin evidence</i> 🎓 Geertz, Clifford. 1973. “Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture.” Reprint, https://philpapers.org/archive/GEETTD.pdf 🎓 Wedeen, Lisa. 2010. “Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science.” <i>Annual Review of Political Science</i> 13 (1):255–272. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.11.052706.123951. 🎓 Tanweer, Anissa, Emily Kalah Gade, P.M. Krafft, and Sarah Dreier. 2021. “Why the Data Revolution Needs Qualitative Thinking.” <i>Harvard Data Science Review</i> 3 (3):1–32. doi: https://doi.org/10.1162/99608f92.eee0b0da.

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		PART II: Crafting Research Projects
5	2 Oct.	From Puzzle to Research Question / Scholarship in the Age of AI 🎓 Gerring, John, and Jason Seawright. 2022. <i>Finding your Social Science Project: The Research Sandbox, Strategies for Social Inquiry</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009118620. Chapters 1–5 (pp. 1–132) ** This is <u>not</u> the same book as Gerring (2012)! The whole (short) book is very good if you want to keep going. ** We will discuss emerging AI-based tools and workflows for literature discovery, mapping, and synthesis. As this is changing so quickly, no academic readings are assigned, however this article may be a good spark for discussion: 🔗 Hsu, Hua. 2025. "What Happens After A.I. Destroys College Writing?" <i>The New Yorker</i>, June 30. https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2025/07/07/the-end-of-the-english-paper

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