

Designing Research for Social Science

Fall 2013 at Uni Mannheim

Time: Monday 1:45 - 3.15 pm

Location: Room A 5,6 B 318

Instructor: Nikolay Marinov

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Office Location: A 5,6 C010

Office Hours: Thursday 1.30 pm - 3 pm

- **Course Description:**

In this class, students learn about research design. Topics covered include: how to formulate a social science question, how to design a study to answer it, how to qualify the conclusions one reaches based on the design. Students will discuss the promise and limitations of different research designs. Students will also offer some sample proposals of their own, and explore replication studies of existing work. We will read some of the important papers produced in comparative politics.

- **Requirements and Grading:** Grades for the course will be based on participation (50%), and final thesis (50%). The first four weeks will include discussion with librarian and student-lead presentations of methodological pieces. The remaining weeks will be structures around presentations of students' own papers. Presenting students must make their paper available to all other students at least 3 days before the presentation. During the presentation, and after the presentation each student should provide ideas to the presented on how to make further improvements. The idea is not be harsh but constructive. Criticism is encouraged and welcomed. Critical points should always culminate in a recommendation on ways in which the author can make specific improvements.

There will be a discussant for each paper. The discussant will spend less than five minutes offering comments on how to improve the project. The comments need not be written.

Presentations should be at most 25 minutes long, allowing for 5 minutes of comments by the discussant and 20 minutes of comments by all the end of the presentation. We will take a 5-10 minute break after the first presentation for each class.

Two books are required for the course: Barbara Geddes. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 2003 and Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inferences and Qualitative Research*. Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, 1994.

Course Outline and Syllabus

Week 1

Library Resources

Weeks 2-4

Methodology

Parts of Barbara Geddes. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 2003 and Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inferences and Qualitative Research*. Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, 1994 and selected pieces from Charles Boix and Susan Stokes, editors. *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford University, New York, New York, 2009.

Weeks 5-11

Student Presentations: Works-in-Progress

Weeks 12-13

Questions and Answers: Methodology, Cases, Data, Graphs

Thesis due for e-submission on date to be announced.