

# Field Research Methods

POLITSC 7888, Spring 2017

Wed. 9am-11:45am

Derby 2078

<https://osu.instructure.com/courses/17647>

Professor: Amanda Lea Robinson

Email: [robinson.1012@osu.edu](mailto:robinson.1012@osu.edu)

Office: Derby Hall 2080

Office hours: Wed. 2pm-4pm

Or by appointment

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar introduces students to various field methods for developing and testing theories in political science. The course is best suited for PhD students who are currently developing a dissertation prospectus, applying for research grants, or preparing for dissertation field research, but the course will also be helpful for those planning more preliminary field research. The course is focused on readings and discussions on different types of field research methods, as well as the development of a field research strategy over the course of the semester.

## REQUIREMENTS

Active participation in the seminar is essential, and students are expected to read all of the assigned articles and chapters before the start of class each week. You are also expected to actively engage in the research projects of your classmates. Thus, in addition to the assigned readings each week, students are expected to have read the circulated memos of other students in their preassigned groups (groups will change each week). The course will be very hands-on, with students discussing components of their research plan at regular intervals in order to elicit feedback from each other.

A major goal of this course is for students to leave with a realistic field research plan. Towards that end, there will be six written assignments and one formal oral presentation over the course of the semester. For each assignment, circulate your written work to other members of your group by **12 noon on Monday**, and be prepared to discuss your work in class. These regular in-class discussions will help develop your ability to speak to colleagues in a formal, yet conversational, manner about your work.

The final paper for this course will be an NSF DDIG grant application to fund field research. The final paper is due by 5pm on **Friday, April 21**.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

### 1. Participation – 20%

Regular attendance and active participation in class discussion will constitute 20% of your final grade. You must be able to discuss assigned readings, as well as the memos of other members of your group.

### 2. Memos – 30%

The memos resulting from assignments 1-6 will constitute 30% of your final grade. These memos must be circulated on time to receive full credit.

### 3. Field Research Plan Presentation – 15%

Assignment 7 asks you to present your field research plan during one of the final two class meetings. Your presentation will constitute 25% of your grade, and will be evaluated on the basis of the quality of your presentation, how well you have incorporated feedback from your previous memos, and your ability to respond to questions from the audience.

### 4. Field Research Grant Proposal – 35%

Your final field research proposal, written as an NSF DDRO grant proposal, is due April 21st by 5pm. The research proposal will count for 35% of your final grade.

Letter grades correspond to the following percentages:

A: 93-100	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	D: 60-66
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	E: 60
B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D+: 67-69	

## COURSE POLICIES

### Academic and Personal Integrity:

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct: <http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/csc>.

### Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. For additional information, visit <http://ods.osu.edu>.

## COURSE MATERIALS

We will read large portions of the following books, so you may want to purchase a copy. The Laitin and Barrett/Cason books are available electronically through OSU libraries.

Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason. 2010. *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Laitin, David. 1998. *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Wood, Elisabeth. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Additional readings include book chapters, published articles, and working papers. The latter two types of readings will be readily available online, and book chapters will be provided at least 2 weeks in advance.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION, 1/11

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Loaeza, Soledad, Randy Stevenson, and Devra C. Moehler. 2005. "Symposium: Should Everyone Do Fieldwork?" *APSA-CP* 16(2): 8-18.

Wood, Elisabeth. 2007. "Field Methods" in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics*. Oxford; Oxford University Press. pp. 123-146.

### WEEK 2: THEORY AND FIELD RESEARCH, 1/18

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Bates, Robert H., Chalmers Johnson, and Ian S. Lustick. 1997. "Controversy in the Discipline: Area Studies and Comparative Politics." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 30(2):166- 179.

Shapiro, Ian. 2002. "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics, or Whats Wrong with Political Science and What to Do About It." *Political Theory* 30(4): 596-619.

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. "Research Design and the Accumulation of Knowledge," in *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan. pp. 1-26.

OBrien, Kevin J. 2006. "Discovery, Research (Re)design, and Theory Building." In *Doing Fieldwork in China*, eds. Maria Heimer and Stig Thgersen. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. pp. 27-41.

#### **Assignment 1: Research Question**

Choose a puzzle or problem that you believe is: (a) important; (b) poorly explained by existing theories; and (c) amenable to empirical analysis using data gathered in the field. Identify at least one hypothesis/observable implication that you think might resolve this puzzle/problem/question, and state the proposition in a clear, testable, and falsifiable form. Describe the 'ideal data' that would allow you to most convincingly test your hypothesis (at this point, you do not have to be realistic – think big!).

A one page memo outlining the puzzle or problem that motivates your thinking, the theory you wish to test, its observable implication(s), and your 'ideal data' should be distributed to the rest of your group by noon on Monday.

### WEEK 3: CASE SELECTION, 1/25

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Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2: 131-150.

- Collier, David and James Mahoney. 1996. "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." *World Politics* 49(1):56-91.
- Laitin, David. 1998. *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 1-35 (skim), 365-372.
- Gerring, John. 2007. "Techniques for Choosing Cases," in *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 86-150.
- Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason. 2010. *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 6-19.

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WEEK 4: ETHNOGRAPHY AND PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION, 2/1

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**Assignment 2: Case Selection**

Identify the case(s) that you will use to test the observable implications of your theory. Write a three-page memo describing your rationale for selecting the case(s) and provide a brief narrative about how you believe your theory applies (or does not apply) to the cases you have selected. The final section of your memo should describe the data you will need specific to these cases, and the potential sources of information you have been able to identify. Circulate by noon on Monday.

- Wedeen, Lisa. 2010. "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13: 255-272.
- Bernard, H. Russell. 2006. "Participant Observation." in *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 4th edition. New York: AltaMira Press. pp. 342-386.
- Laitin, David. 1998. *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 85-104.
- Simmons, Erica S. 2016. "Market Reforms and Water Wars." *World Politics* 68 (1): 37-73.
- Walsh, Katherine Cramer. 2012. "Putting Inequality in Its Place: Rural Consciousness and the Power of Perspective." *American Political Science Review* 106 (3): 517-532 **and methodological appendices**.
- Watkins, Susan C. and Anne Swindler. 2009. "Hearsay Ethnography: Conventional Journals as a Method for Studying Culture in Action." *Poetics (Amst.)* 37(2): 162-184.

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WEEK 5: INTERVIEWS, 2/8

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- Whyte, William Foot. 1982. "Interviewing in Field Research," in Robert G. Burgess (ed.), *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*. London: George Allen and Unwin. pp. 111-122.
- Leech, Beth L, et al. 2002. "Symposium: Interview Methods in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35(4): 663-688.
- Lidow, Nicholai Hart. 2016. *Violent Order: Understanding Rebel Governance through Liberia's Civil War*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 3-31, 241-247.
- Laitin, David. 1998. *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 83-198, 394-397.

Wood, Elisabeth. 2003. *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1-50, 193-256.

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WEEK 6: ARCHIVAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DATA, 2/15

**Assignment 3: Qualitative Methods**

Choose one of the case or cases identified in Assignment 2. For that case, develop a three-page research strategy employing ethnography, participant observation, interviews, or focus group discussions to gather data to test the implications of your theory. This written research strategy should include three components: (1) a list of the “types” of individuals (and if possible, the specific respondents) you will need to observe or speak with; (2) a list of questions that you will need to have answered, either from behavioral observation or to be gathered through face-to-face interviews and; (3) a discussion of how this data will help you to accept or reject competing theories. Circulate by noon on Monday.

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 151-189.

Ferwerda, Jeremy and Nicholas L. Miller. 2014. “Political Devolution and Resistance to Foreign Rule: A Natural Experiment.” *American Political Science Review* 108 (3): 642-660.

Laitin, David D. 1998. *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 263-299, 397-399.

Harding, Robin. 2015. “Attribution And Accountability: Voting for roads in Ghana.” *World Politics* 67 (4): 656-689.

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WEEK 7: DESIGNING AND FIELDING SURVEYS, 2/22

Keeter, Scott. 2005. “Survey Research.” In Daniel Druckman (ed.) *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. pp. 123-162.

Krosnick, Jon A. and Stanley Presser. 2010. “Question and Questionnaire Design” in Peter V. Marsden and James D. Wright (eds.), *Handbook of Survey Research*. Bingley, UK: Emerald. pp. 263-314.

Laitin, David D. 1998. *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 201-216, 372-394.

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.

Berinsky, Adam, Kai Quek, and Michael Sances. 2012. “Conducting Online Experiments on Mechanical Turk.” *Newsletter of the APSA Experimental Section* 3 (1): 2-6.

Chauchard, Simon. 2013. “Using MP3 Players in Surveys: The Impact of a Low-tech Self-Administration Mode on Misreporting and Bystanders’ Influence.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77 (S1): 220-231.

**Assignment 4: Quantitative Dataset**

In a three page memo, outline a largen dataset that would produce some statistical test of your theory and develop a research strategy for building this dataset using archival, administrative, or original survey data. Describe the hypotheses amenable to quantitative tests and how the data gathered would allow you to assess those hypotheses. Outline a strategy to collect those data in the field. Circulate by noon on Monday.

Gaines, Brian J. and James H. Kuklinski. 2007. "The Logic of the Survey Experiment Reexamined." *Political Analysis* 15(1): 1-20.

Glynn, Adam N. 2013. "What Can We Learn with Statistical Truth Serum? Design and Analysis of the List Experiment." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77:159-172.

Blair, Graeme, Kosuke Imai and Jason Lyall. 2012. "Comparing and Combining List and Endorsement Experiments: Evidence from Afghanistan." *American Journal of Political Science* 58 (4): 1043-1063.

Laitin, David D. 1998. *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. pp. 217-242.

Hainmueller, Jens and Michael J. Hiscox. 2010. "Attitudes Toward Highly Skilled and Low-Skilled Immigration: Evidence from a Survey Experiment." *American Political Science Review* 104(1): 1-24.

Blaydes, Lisa and Rachel M. Gillum. 2013. "Religiosity-of-Interviewer Effects: Assessing the Impact of Veiled Enumerators on Survey Response in Egypt." *Politics and Religion* 6 (3): 459-482.

WEEK 9: FIELD AND LAB-IN-THE-FIELD EXPERIMENTS, 3/8

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**Field Experiments**

Loewen, Peter John, Daniel Rubenson, and Leonard Wantchekon. 2010. "Help Me Help You: Conducting Field Experiments with Political Elites." *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628(1):165-175.

Wantchekon, Leonard. 2003. "Clientelism and Voting Behavior: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Benin." *World Politics* 55 (3): 399-422.

Ferraz, Claudio and Federico Finan. 2008. "Exposing Corrupt Politicians: The Effects of Brazils Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123(2): 703-745.

**Lab-in-the-Field Experiments**

Grossman, Guy. 2011. "Lab-in-the-field Experiments." *Newsletter of the APSA Experimental Section* 2 (2): 13-19.

Levitt, Steven D. and John A. List. 2007. "What Do Laboratory Experiments Measuring Social Preferences Reveal about the Real World?" *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21(2): pp. 153-174.

Henrich, Joseph, et. al. 2005. "'Economic Man' in Cross-Cultural Perspective: Behavioral Experiments in 15 Small-Scale Societies." *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28: 795-815.

Fearon, James D., Macartan Humphreys and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2009. "Can Development Aid Contribute to Social Cohesion after Civil War? Evidence from a Field Experiment in Post-conflict Liberia." *American Economic Review* 99(2): 287-291.

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WEEK 10: COMBINING METHODS, BUILDING A DESIGN, AND FUNDING IT, 3/22

**Assignment 5: Experiment**

Write a three-page research memo describing a survey experiment, field experiment, or lab-in-the-field experiment that could be used to put some aspect of your theory, or the mechanisms underlying it, to an empirical test. Be sure to specify your sampling procedure, how you will randomize, what you will manipulate, and how you will address external validity. Circulate by noon on Monday.

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 82-109.

Humphreys, Macartan and Alan Jacobs. 2015. "Mixing Methods: A Bayesian Approach." *American Political Science Review* 109 (4): 653-673.

Thachil, Tariq. 2016. "Improving Surveys Through Ethnography: Insights from India's Urban Periphery." Working paper.

Palluck, Elizabeth Levy. 2010. "The Promising Integration of Qualitative Methods and Field Experiments." *ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 628(1): 59-71.

**Funding Field Research**

Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason. 2010. *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 21-26.

Agarwala, Rina and Emmanuel Teitelbaum. 2010. "Trends in Funding for Dissertation Field Research: Why Do Political Science and Sociology Students Win So Few Awards?" *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43(2): 283-293.

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WEEK 11: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, 3/29

**Assignment 6: Funding Proposal**

Prepare a short research grant proposal with a comprehensive budget (1,000 words or less, excluding budget and references). Proposals should briefly outline the basic rationale of the research, the question under study, and the methods and analytic approach to be employed. In addition, list five sources of field research funding for which you qualify. Circulate by noon on Monday.

## Professional Ethics

Humphreys, Macartan, Raul Sanchez de la Sierra, and Peter van der Windt. 2013. "Fishing, Commitment, and Communication: A Proposal for Comprehensive Nonbinding Research Registration." *Political Analysis* 21(1): 1-20.

Anderson, Richard G. 2013. "Registration and Replication: A Comment." *Political Analysis* 21(1): 38-39.

Laitin, David. 2013. "Fisheries Management." *Political Analysis* 21(1): 42-47.

LeBas, Adrienne. 2016. "Research transparency, DA-RT, and the Challenges of Fieldwork in Africa." African Politics Conference Group Newsletter, August 2016.

Aili Mari Tripp. 2016. "DA-RT and Publishing Research from Authoritarian and Conflict Settings." African Politics Conference Group Newsletter, August 2016.

## Protecting Human Subjects

MacLean, Lauren Morris. 2006. "The Power of Human Subjects and the Politics of Informed Consent" *Qualitative Methods* 4(2): 13-15.

Paluck, Elizabeth Levy. 2009. "Methods and Ethics with Research Teams and NGOs: Comparing Experiences Across the Border of Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo." in Chandra Lekha Sriram, John C. King, Julie A. Mertus, Olga Martin-Ortega, and Johanna Herman (eds.), *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations*. New York: Routledge. pp. 38-56.

McClendon, Gwyneth. 2012. "Ethics of Using Public officials as field experiment subjects." *Newsletter of the APSA Experimental Section* 3 (1): 13-20.

## WEEK 12: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS, 4/5

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Barrett, Christopher B. and Jeffrey W. Cason. 2010. *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. New York, NY: Routledge. pp. 27-89.

Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. Maclean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. pp. 332-367.

Lieberman, Evan S., Marc Morje Howard, and Julia Lynch. 2004. "Symposium: Field Research." *Qualitative Methods* 2(1): 2-15.

Thomson, Susan M. 2009. "'That is not what we authorized you to do...': Access and government interference in highly politicized research environments." in Chandra Lekha Sriram, John C. King, Julie A. Mertus, Olga Martin-Ortega, and Johanna Herman (eds.), *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations*. New York: Routledge. pp. 108-123.

Brown, Stephen. 2009. "Dilemmas of self-representation and conduct in the field." in Chandra Lekha Sriram, John C. King, Julie A. Mertus, Olga Martin-Ortega, and Johanna Herman (eds.), *Surviving Field Research: Working in Violent and Difficult Situations*. New York: Routledge. pp. 213-226.

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WEEK 13: FIELD RESEARCH PLAN PRESENTATIONS I, 4/12

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**Assignment 7 (Week 1)**

Students should prepare a 15-minute overview presentation (using overhead slides or printed handouts) of his or her research question, theory and observable implications, and full field research strategy.

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WEEK 14: FIELD RESEARCH PLAN PRESENTATIONS II, 4/19

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**Assignment 7 (Week 2)**

Students should prepare a 15-minute overview presentation (using overhead slides or printed handouts) of his or her research question, theory and observable implications, and full field research strategy.

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FINAL PROJECT: FIELD RESEARCH FUNDING PROPOSAL

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**Research Proposal**

Write an NSF DDIG research grant proposal to fund field research. The proposal should build on the seven assignments, but improve upon them based on feedback and integrate them into a coherent research proposal. Follow the guidelines outlined by NSF (format, length, etc.) as they pertain to the Project Description and Project Budget. Be sure to include a statement of your research question, a brief review of the literature, preliminary findings (if any), field research plan, and an itemized budget up to \$14,000.

**Due 4/21/17 by 5pm**