Prof. Patricia Strach  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-2:30pm AND by appointment  
304 Milne Hall  

Class meets: Tuesdays 2:45 to 5:35pm (Husted 12)  

This seminar covers the research process from its design to final analysis, focusing on qualitative and mixed-methods research. That is, we look at how to collect, analyze, and interpret data outside of or in addition to statistical techniques. Throughout the course, we will look at questions of methodology to understand the important differences within qualitative research and between qualitative and quantitative frameworks. Students should come away from the course with an understanding of: (1) what qualitative research is and how it fits in the broader discipline of political science; (2) the logic of qualitative and mixed-methods research design; (3) the nuts and bolts of conducting qualitative research; and (4) how to analyze the results. This seminar is designed to be an important step in the logic and practice of qualitative and mixed methods research.  

**Prior to starting the course, you must complete the online human subjects training. You may have done this already in POS 516, if not please see:**  
http://www.albany.edu/research/compliance/Training.htm#IRB  

Requirements:  
- 5 Weekly Assignments. You may choose which particular week you would like, but please keep in mind you may only write on the topic for any given week and only one paper per week (50%).  
- 3 Research Designs (40%)  
  - Choose TWO of the following three (20%)  
    - Positivist qualitative research design  
    - Interpretivist qualitative research design  
    - Mixed-methods research design (Note: this is covered on the final week of class)  
  - Final Revised Design Due December 15 (20%)  
- In-class participation (10%)  

Reading Materials:  
The following required books are available for purchase at Mary Jane’s. In addition, there are a large number of required articles available on the course website for your convenience. Please note, you are responsible for the articles listed even when they are not posted or posted incompletely. If you have trouble accessing a document, please contact me.  

Required:  


**Recommended:**


**Class Participation:**

This class is a hands-on approach to conducting research. Most days when you come to class, there will be a research question and teams listed that will work together to solve it. You’ll need to come prepared having done the reading and having thought enough about it to apply the material to many different scenarios.

I. **Foundations of Research**

September 1: What is Qualitative Research? (No Meeting--APSA)

Alice Goffman. 2014. *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. **Please be sure to read the methodological appendix**

Assignment: Write a 3-4 page reaction paper on the readings

^King, Keohane, and Verba, *DSI*. 3-49

^Brady, Collier, and Seawright, “Refocusing the Discussion of Methodology”

^Bartels, “Some Unfulfilled Promises of Quantitative Imperialism”

McKeown, “Case Studies and the Limits of the Quantitative World View.”
September 15: Is Epistemology a Bigger Divide than Quantitative/Qualitative? What Is Epistemology, and How Can I Tell Where I Fit?

**Assignment:** Write a 3-4 page paper on what your favorite academic book or article is and why. Your paper should show evidence from the following readings:

- Karl Popper. “Science: Conjectures and Refutations.”

**Recommended**


September 22: No Meeting (Yom Kippur)

September 29: How Do I Do Good (Qualitative) Work?

**Assignment:** Write a 3-4 page reaction paper on the readings


Patricia Strach. *Commodity Politics*, prospectus drafts.


**Recommended:**


II. How Do I Design Qualitative Research?

October 6: Cases to Develop Concepts, Models, Theories, or Typologies

**Assignment:** Choose a particular research question of interest to you. Write a 3-4 page paper on how you would use cases to develop concepts, models, or theories. Incorporate the authors below.


**Recommended:**


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• **Theory Development**

• **Models and Concepts**

• **Typologies**

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October 13: Cases to Analyze Causal Mechanisms and Conjunctions

**Assignment:** Choose a particular research question of interest to you. Write a 3-4 page paper on how you would use cases to analyze causal mechanisms and conjunctions. Incorporate the authors below.


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October 20: Cases to Analyze History--Timing and Sequence, Process & Narrative

**Assignment:** Choose a particular research question of interest to you. Write a 3-4 page paper on how you would use cases to analyze history. Incorporate the authors below.


• **Process Tracing**
Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett. “Process Tracing and Historical Explanation.” (Chapter 10)


Recommended:


Theda Skocpol, "Why I am a Historical-Institutionalist," Polity 28 (Fall 1995): 103-6.


October 27: Choosing Cases

***First Research Design Due***

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you and create a research design involving case studies. Write a 3-4 page paper laying out your question, your design, and justifying your case selection. Your paper should show evidence in the design and justification from the following authors.


Recommended


III. Help! How Do I Do Qualitative Research?
November 3: Entering the Field

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you. Write a 3-4 page paper on the steps you would take to prepare to collect your data. Include a timeline. Take into account the experiences of the authors below and be realistic on how your project would look similar or different from theirs.


Accusations of Alice Goffman’s Dishonesty. http://pastebin.com/BzN4t0VU

Recommended


Symposium by Evan Lieberman, Marc Howard, and Julia Lynch on Fieldwork in Qualitative Methods Newsletter.


November 10: Participant Observation

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you and design a practical study involving participant observation. Write a 3-4 page paper describing your question, your design, and your observations on what it is like to conduct participant observation. Your paper should show evidence in the design and analysis from the following authors.


Recommended


November 17: Interviews and Focus Groups

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you and design a practical study involving either interviews or focus groups. Write a 3-4 page paper describing your question, your design, and your observations on what it is like to conduct interviews or a focus group. Your paper should show evidence in the design and analysis from the following authors.

- **Interviews**

- **Focus Groups**

*Recommended:*

November 24: Archives and Documents

***Second Research Design Due***

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you and design a practical study involving archival research (note, the New York State Library has some good archives to poke around in). Write a 3-4 page paper describing your question, your design, and your observations on what it is like to conduct archival research. Your paper should show evidence in the design and analysis from the following authors.


**Recommended:**

The following databases (accessible through UAlbany library) will help you identify where collections are housed: Archives USA and Worldcat.

**IV. How Do I Analyze and Interpret My Data (Yes, they’re called data in qualitative research too)?**

December 1: Analysis, Interpretation, and Results

**Assignment:** Choose a particular research question of interest to you and design a practical study involving discourse/content analysis. Write a 3-4 page paper describing your question, your design, and your observations on what it is like to conduct discourse or content analysis. Your paper should show evidence in the design and analysis from the following authors.

- **Moving from Raw Data to Results**

- **Discourse and Content Analysis**

- **Genealogy**

**Recommended**
Resources
http://www.content-analysis.de/software/qualitative-analysis

December 8: Multi-method Research
Assignment: Choose an article or study (largely qualitative or quantitative) that you find particularly compelling. What would multiple methods add to the project? How would you go about doing it? Your paper should show evidence from the following authors.

Andrew Bennett and Bear Braumoeller. “Where the Model Frequently Meets the Road: Combining Statistical, Formal, and Case Study Methods.”

Recommended

December 15 Final Research Design Due
Information and advice on:

**Dissertation Proposals in Political Science**

Craig Parsons, Oregon, HOW TO FIND A GOOD DISSERTATION
http://www.uoregon.edu/~rmitchel/gradprogram/tip_diss_choose_write.htm

Peter Hall, Harvard, Tips for Writing a Dissertation
http://www.engl.niu.edu/wac/psdiss.html

Doing Dissertations in Politics: A Student Guide
http://www.routledgepolitics.com/books/Doing-Dissertations-in-Politics-isbn9780415246866

**Dissertation Proposals in General**

University of Minnesota, Dissertation Calculator (excellent resource for timeframe impaired)
http://www.lib.umn.edu/help/disscalc/

Starting a Dissertation Project

University of North Carolina, Dissertations

**Proposals in general**

Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon, The Art of Writing Proposals
http://www.ssrc.org/workspace/images/crm/new_publication_3/%787a9cb4f4-815f-de11-bd80-001cc477ec70%7D.pdf

Don Thackrey, University of Michigan, Proposal Writer's Guide
http://www.research.umich.edu/proposals/pwg/pwgcontents.html