

Syllabus: POLI 788-001

PART I: Fall Term

Methods, Research Skills, and Data usage in Social Science

Location: Tate Turner Kuralt Hall, Room 0113

Time: Thursdays 9:30 – 12:15

Instructor: Prof. Holger Moroff

(PART II: Spring Term - Data Analysis and Statistics)

Course schedule

Theme	Class	Topic	Assignment due
Part I: Fundamentals of Academic Writing, Research and Analysis	1	Introduction to the course	
	2	Critical Reading and Assessing Arguments	
	3	Causality	
Part II: Defining the Problem	4	Project definition and research questions	Article summary
	5	Literature review: Finding sources	Research question
	6	Literature review: Analyzing sources	
	7	Thesis proposal overview and workshop	Annotated bibliography
Part III: Methods of research and analysis	8	Case Studies: Introduction; student presentations	
	9	Case study research and Transatlantic topics; student presentations	
	10	Collecting and using evidence; student presentations	Literature review
	11	Historical Analysis; student presentations	
	12	Policy Analysis; student presentations	Mock thesis prospectus draft

Land Acknowledgment: North Carolina is home to the Occhaneechi, Lumbee, Coharie, Haliwa-Saponi, Eastern Band of Cherokee, Meherrin, Tuscarora, Sappony and Waccamaw-Siouan Nations, along with many other indigenous peoples living in both tribal homeland and urban settings. In fact, North Carolina has the largest Indigenous population east of the Mississippi River. It is important to acknowledge and give thanks to the First Peoples

of this land and their descendants. It is equally important to acknowledge and honor the crucial role of enslaved people in the early days of this campus. Enslaved people were sold as escheated property to help fund the establishment of UNC, and their labor built UNC-Chapel Hill and undergirded its operations.

Academic Integrity: The Honor Code will apply to all your work. Please read it here:

<https://studentconduct.unc.edu/about-us/forms-documents/instrument>. You are asked to familiarize yourself with the concept of plagiarism in order to avoid it. Plagiarism represents a deliberate or reckless representation of another's words, thoughts, or ideas as one's own without attribution in connection with submission of academic work, whether graded or otherwise. There is a tutorial at the library, which you can take: <https://guides.lib.unc.edu/plagiarism/>

Special Needs and Accessibility: If you are a student with special needs or a disability, please contact me so that we can make special arrangements for you. You will also need to contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services office at UNC: <https://www.uncp.edu/departments/accessibility-resource-center>.

Mental Health and Counselling: Covid-19 has taken a huge toll on mental health, especially among young students like you. I am fully aware of it and will be accommodating to your needs. I also understand that at times you may feel under a lot of pressure, which may be too much for you to deal with on your own. Please consider contacting the Counselling and Psychological Services (<https://caps.unc.edu/>) or walk in for an evaluation. I strongly encourage you to seek help as the past few years have been difficult to cope with.

Title IX Resources: Any student who is impacted by harassment, interpersonal or sexual violence, or stalking should seek support on campus or in the community. You can also contact Adrienne Allison (Adrienne.allison@unc.edu) as the director of

Title IX Compliance at UNC or Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office.

Class ground rules: My aim is to provide us with a setting where everyone feels safe to express opinions and voice disagreements. Anyone, regardless of their political view, has the right to be heard. It is my responsibility to ensure this ground rule is observed and that you are equipped with all the resources you need for our discussions. But it is your responsibility to engage in discussions in a civil and respectful manner. I will not tolerate disrespect to others in class.

Missed Deadlines: I accept late work: better late than never. If the reasons for late submission are justified due to medical reasons or other emergencies (I will need evidence), please contact me and we can find a solution. In all other cases, you will be penalized by two points for each missed day.

Inclusivity: I am committed to equitable and inclusive teaching. This means that each student should have the opportunity and space to share their view without any fears or apprehension. I would like to encourage anyone of any race, gender, nationality, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation, political background and of any special needs or disabilities to share their perspectives freely. Please contact me if you feel you are unable to express your views in my class for whatever reason. Our discussion will be strictly confidential.

Course Overview

" Methods, Research Skills, and Data usage in Social Science " will introduce students to critical thinking and enable them to apply analytical tools to better understand real-world problems. It introduces students to writing and research techniques that help answer questions in the fields of international and transatlantic relations, comparative politics, and policy analysis. These include how to read published research; collect and analyze qualitative and quantitative data; communicate research results; distinguish between theoretical, empirical, normative, ideological, and ethical questions; formulate research questions; and construct an argument. Students will be able to use these techniques to guide their graduate writing and thesis research.

Learning Objectives

Students who complete this course should be able to demonstrate the ability to:

- Apply the basic concepts of research and analysis to research problems in the fields of international and transatlantic relations, comparative politics, security studies, and policy development. Students should be able to comprehend the central concepts of research and analysis, understand the basics of argumentation, and apply critical thinking to the arguments in published research.
- Develop a strong research problem statement. Students should be able to define a research problem, evaluate and synthesize the work of others, and produce a literature review that contextualizes the research problem.
- Apply and evaluate sources of evidence. Students should be able to identify qualitative and quantitative sources of evidence, evaluate that evidence, and apply evaluated evidence in support of their research.
- Apply analytical frameworks to research questions. Students should comprehend the basics of case studies, historical analysis, qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Also, the student should be able to apply these analytical frameworks in their research.

Methodology

This course will use a mix of teaching and learning methods. The seminar will be the primary instructional method, informed by readings, lectures, discussions, and media. The seminar format requires active participation by students in the form of thoughtful and informed questions and comments. Workshops will be the secondary instructional method. Workshops provide students with an opportunity to practice research skills, explore research topics, and apply constructive criticism to their work and others, an essential element of scholarly work.

Students should complete the required readings listed before the seminar meets. The faculty has selected the readings for their relevance, quality of ideas, readability, and timeliness. These readings are listed in an order reflecting the logical development of the topic and read the text in that order unless otherwise instructed. Supplemental readings (when listed) are offered for background reference and for those who might wish to pursue a particular topic in greater depth but are not required.

Book List

The required reading for this course consists of the following texts supplemented by articles and book chapters that will be listed or made available. In many cases, I will only list the bibliographic details of the reading, but will not link to it, to encourage you to practice using the library's website to find material.

Roselle, Laura, and Sharon Spray. 2012. *Research and Writing in International Relations* 2nd ed. New York: Longman.

Shore, Zachary. 2016. *Grad School Essentials: A Crash Course in Scholarly Skills*. University of California Press.

Booth, Wayne C, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. *The Craft of Research* 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Assignments

1 to 2-page article summary and analysis, due Week 4 (10 %)

Read and respond to "The China Trap" by Jessica Chen Weiss in the Sept/ Oct 2022 issue of *Foreign Affairs*.

The summary and analysis can be in bulleted form, should use complete sentences, and should address the following questions:

- What is the main claim/ central argument of the article?
- How does the author support the argument? (Another way of saying this: what are the reasons they offer in support of the main claim? What are examples of evidence that they use to support their reasons?) Is the use of reasons and evidence effective?
- Are there any ambiguous terms in the article? What are they, and why? How do they affect the strength of the argument?
- Choose at least one of the following:
 - o How does the author use acknowledgements?
 - o Does the author make any assumptions? Explain.
 - o Are there any fallacies in the logic? Explain.

Research question, due Week 5 (10 %)

This is a short assignment with two goals: 1) to identify a significant topic of your interest in comparative politics / international / transatlantic relations, and 2) to set the initial direction for the mock thesis by formulating a research question related to that topic. The question can be generalizable; or it can be focused on a specific policy, country, region, or threat. Submissions should be 1-5 sentences and simply identify the topic, the question, and its significance.

Annotated bibliography, due Week 7 (20 %)

1. State your research topic or question at the top of the page, incorporating any feedback from from the previous week.
2. Identify 10 sources.
3. For 4 of those sources, answer:
 - What is the author trying to explain?
 - What is the main argument?
 - What kind of evidence is presented (briefly)?
 - How does the article relate to your research question?

Literature review, due Week 10 (30%)

This assignment builds on the annotated bibliography. It should be 3-5 pages, double-spaced.

First paragraph: Introduce your topic and the research question about the underlying relationship, and very briefly characterize the nature of work on it. Also state the significance of the topic.

Second paragraph: offer a road map

Divide the rest into sections, using section headings. Some options:

- Organize by conceptual issues
- Organize chronologically
- Organize methodologically

Conclude by summarizing the literature's answer to the question you posed at the beginning

Thesis prospectus draft, Due week 12 (20 %)

This assignment is the first draft of your mock thesis prospectus. The prospectus draft should include:

1. Title page
2. Provisional table of contents
3. Explanation of the case-specific research question
4. Short summary of each section and how it relates to the research question (in paragraph form)
5. Bibliography
6. Obstacles so far and particular areas where further guidance is welcome.

Participation (10 %)

Students are expected to attend all classes, contribute actively to class discussions, and demonstrate active engagement with the reading. Students are also expected to be prepared to participate in instructor determined workshops.

Grading

H
P
L
F

High Pass - Clear Excellence

Pass - Entirely Satisfactory Graduate Work

Low Pass - Inadequate Graduate Work

Fail

Session Details

Part I: Fundamentals of Academic Writing, Research and Analysis

1. Introduction to the Course

Objectives

- Review course objectives, activities, schedule, assignments, and delivery dates for the semester.
- Identify the purpose of the course in the context of the TAM curriculum and individual student goals.
- Reflect on the writing process:
 - o What is academic writing and how is it different from other kinds?
 - o What are your concerns about writing this year?
 - o What aids and undermines clarity in writing?
 - o Understand plagiarism and how to avoid it.
- Begin discussing the research process:
 - o What is research
 - o Initial and general discussion of students' research interests.
 - o Introduce students to the research process, from topic selection to the completed paper. In particular, introduce the structure and main components of a thesis.

Readings

- Course Syllabus
- George Orwell, "Politics and the English Language," first published 1946, http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/politics/english/e_polit
- Listen: "Orwell on Writing: 'Clarity Is the Remedy'" *All Things Considered*, September 22, 2006, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6124822>
- "How to Write Paragraphs," <https://medium.com/advice-and-help-in-authoring-a-phd-or-non-fiction/how-to-write-paragraphs-80781e2f3054>

Additional Material, not required

- Irvin, L. Lennie. 2010. "What is "Academic" Writing?" In *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*. Vol. 1, Parlor Press: Andersen, S.C.
- Zachary Shore, "How to Write," pages 56 to 77 in *Grad School Essentials*.
- Minto, Barbara. 1996. "Chapter 1: Why a Pyramid Structure?," pages 1 to 11 in *The Minto Pyramid Principle: Logic in Writing, Thinking and Problem Solving*.
- Allen, Sarah. 2010. "The Inspired Writer vs. The Real Writer." In *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*. Vol. 1, Parlor Press: Andersen, S.C.
- Kate McKinney Maddalena, 2010. "I need you to say 'I': Why First Person Is Important in College Writing." In *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*. Vol. 1, Parlor Press: Andersen, S.C.

2. Causality

Objectives

- Distinguish between correlation and causation.
- Discuss the pros and pitfalls of observation and statistics as ways of asserting causation.
- Define “variable” and “relationship,” and understand the use of these terms in academic theories.
- Use the example of the relationship between democracy and development [or a different relationship approved by your instructor] to demonstrate what we mean by causality and the problems around demonstrating it.

Readings

- o Edmans, Alex, “A Layman’s Guide to Separating Causation from Correlation ... and Noticing When Claims of Causality are Invalid,” <https://alexedmans.com/blog/executive-pay/correlation/>
- o Read these examples of causation to analyze in class (you don’t have to read each piece entirely but try to figure out the central causal claim in each and how they relate to each other:
 - Przeworski and Limongji, 1997. “Modernization: Theories and Facts,” *World Politics* 49:2. (This is a very influential work of modern political science. Do your best with it, using the reading skills we have been discussing. We will dissect the article together in class).
 - Daniel Treisman, “Economic development promotes democracy, but there’s a catch,” *The Washington Post*, December 29, 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/12/29/economic-development-promotes-democracy-but-theres-a-catch/?utm_term=.ca8476f50cee
 - Jason Brownlee, “Why Turkey’s authoritarian descent shakes up democratic theory,” *The Washington Post*, March 23, 2016. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/03/23/why-turkeys-authoritarian-descent-shakes-up-democratic-theory/?utm_term=.af8f732eb5d6

3. Critical Reading; and Assessing and Making Arguments

Objectives

- Review the central elements of an argument: claim, reasons, and evidence.
- Recognize acknowledgments and warrants as additional important components of an argument.
- Identify these elements-- as well as ambiguous terms, assumptions, and fallacies in logic--in arguments in an article that the professor will distribute in class.
- Develop an original outline of an argument.

Readings

- Booth et al, *The Craft of Research*, Part III: Making an Argument. (pages 105 to 171)

- Brown and Keeley, *Asking the Right Questions*, 8th edition. Chapters 4 (What Words or Phrases are Ambiguous), 5 and 6 (Value and Descriptive Assumptions), and 7 (Are There Any Fallacies in Reasoning?).
- Shore, Zachary. 2016. "How to Read, Part I." and Read: "How to Read, Part II" In *Graduate School Essentials*.

Part II: Defining the Problem

4. Research Topics and Questions

Objectives

- What are the qualities of a good research question?
- How do you turn a broad subject into a manageable research question?
- Develop your own case-specific research question
- Identify the variables in your research question
- Identify the underlying relationship in your research question, and develop a parallel research question that expresses this relationship
- What is a hypothesis? Develop your own hypothesis and ideas for testing.
- Preview of annotated bibliography assignment

Readings

- Before class, use the guidelines in the assigned chapters listed below to identify a topic of interest and formulate one or two research questions on that topic. This is not a graded assignment; but preparation that might help during class.
- Roselle and Spray, *Research and Writing in International Relations*, Chapter 1: Topic Selection and Question Development.
- Booth, et al, *The Craft of Research*, Chapter 3: From Topics to Questions

Due this week: [Article summary and analysis](#) (10 % of grade)

5. Literature Review: Finding Sources

Objectives

- What is a literature review?
- Given my research question, what should my literature review be about?
 - o One option: focusing on the conceptual issue underlying the specific empirical question.
 - o Another option: focus on summarizing existing diagnoses, existing responses to the problem, or existing proposals
- Understand the distinction between primary, secondary and tertiary sources

- Discuss the differences between peer-reviewed sources, think tank and NGO publications and reports, journalism, trade books, and more
- Become acquainted with research tools through the library. Carry out a search for sources using the library and other electronic resources.
- Details and guidance on annotated bibliography assignment, with an example

Readings

- Shore, Zachary. 2016. "How to Research." In *Graduate School Essentials*. University of California Press: Oakland
- Start reading Roselle and Spray, *Research and Writing in International Relations*, Chapter 2.

Supplemental Reading

- Booth, Colomb and Williams, *The Craft of Research*, Chapter 3

Due this week: [Research Question assignment](#) (10 % of grade)

6. Literature Review: Analyzing Sources and Writing with Clarity

Objectives

- Identify different considerations and strategies for defining concepts in your literature review.
- Learn frameworks for organizing your lit review. Distinguish between chronologically, thematically, and methodologically organized literature reviews.
- Review the components of a good paragraph.
- Assess how other authors have defined concepts and organized their literature reviews.
- Recognize common literature review mistakes.

Readings

- Shore, Zachary. 2016. "How to Write," In *Graduate School Essentials*. University of California Press: Oakland.
- Knopf, Jeffrey W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review." *Political Science & Politics*, 39, no. 1: 127-132.
- Jackson, Richard. 2016. "Chapter 10: The Definition of Terrorism," in *Routledge Handbook of Critical Terrorism Studies*. London: Routledge. (for this one, pay attention to how the literature is reviewed. How is it organized, how does the author combine reporting and analysis on others' work?)
- Finish reading Roselle and Spray, *Research and Writing in International Relations*, Chapter 2.

Supplemental resources for writing a literature review

- "What is a literature review," SeattleU, <http://libguides.seattleu.edu/c.php?g=308807&p=2059521>
- [Literature Reviews: An overview for Graduate Students](#), North Carolina State University (NCSU) Libraries
- Machi, Lawrence A., and Brenda T. McEvoy. 2009. *The Literature Review: Six steps to success*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

7. Thesis prospectus overview

This is a workshop session in which you will begin mapping the structure of your mock thesis and identify how your course papers may support your research effort.

Objectives:

- What is a thesis prospectus? What are your goals in writing it?
- Discuss ways to think about your mock thesis structure and table of contents.
- As a class, determine a schedule for thesis prospectus presentations during the last 3 sessions.

Reading

- prospectus guidance

Due this week: [Annotated Bibliography](#) (20 % of grade)

Part III: Methods of research and analysis

8. Case Studies: Introduction

Objectives:

- Understand the main point of a case study. Case studies provide detailed description of a situation, organization, group, country, territory, or other unit. The goal is often to investigate a causal relationship involving that unit, or to use that unit to make a contribution to theory.
- Understand the role of case studies in developing theory.
- Identify the unit of analysis in your research question.
- Recognize various case study goals and designs.
- Recognize the advantages and disadvantages of using case studies as evidence.
- Explore the use of case studies in international relations and security studies.
- Understand how single-case studies can demonstrate causality, for example by using the “process tracing” method of case-study based research.
- **Engage with others’ thesis prospectus presentations and offer feedback in class.**

Readings:

- George, Alexander and Andrew Bennet. 2005. “The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison.” [or maybe a different selection] In *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. 67-124. Cambridge: Harvard University
- Andrew Bennett, "Video 18: Traditional Process Tracing" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= 0YnfGju3yQ&feature=youtu.be>

Additional resources:

- Andrew Bennett, "The Mother of All Isms: Causal Mechanisms and Structured Pluralism in International Relations Theory," September 2013, *European Journal of International Relations* 19(3):459-481.

9. Case study research in the study of Transatlantic topics

Objectives

- Discuss how case studies are used to build knowledge about the processes and outcomes of transatlantic issues. In other words, how does case study research inform theory in this subject area?
- Identify limitations of case study research in this topic.
- Identify methodological issues in transatlantic research in general.
- Discuss how frameworks can be used to enhance the pursuit of your research question.
- **Engage with others' thesis prospectus presentations and offer feedback in class.**

Readings

- Transatlantic research council
- Larson, et. al. 2008. "Assessing Irregular Warfare," Chapter 3: A Framework for Assessing Irregular Warfare," https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG668.pdf
- Mahoney, 2018. "More Data, New Problems: Audiences, Ahistoricity, and Selection Bias in Terrorism and Insurgency Research." *International Studies Review*.

10. Collecting and using evidence

Objectives

- Distinguish between and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative evidence
- Understand basic concepts of statistics, surveys, and other quantitative methods
- Introduce students to datasets that may be useful for research
- Discuss techniques for using news media and social media in research
- Understand how to collect qualitative data through interviews
- Understand what it means to triangulate different sources of evidence

Readings

- Review this study as an example of using social media as evidence: https://www.isdglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Till_Martyrdom_Do_Us_Part_Gender_and_the_ISIS_Phenomenon.pdf

Some resources to review before class

- <http://libguides.gatech.edu/intlsecurity/statsdata>
- <http://guides.main.library.emory.edu/c.php?g=50098&p=324350>

- TAGS (a twitter archiving google spreadsheet): <https://tags.hawksey.info/>
- National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), Global Terrorism Database: <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>
- Maybe Luhmann's Zettlkasten / flash cards method?

Due this week: [Literature Review](#) (30 % of grade)

11. Historical Analysis

Objectives

- Understand how to employ historical sources as evidence in research.
- Recognize the challenges in using secondary and tertiary historical sources as evidence.
- Recognize the potential bias in historical and policy sources.
- Define process tracing and consider how to use it in your work.
- **Engage with others' thesis prospectus presentations and offer feedback in class.**

Readings

- Mark Atwood Lawrence, "Policymaking and the Uses of the Vietnam War," in Hal Brands and Jeremy Suri, *The Power of the Past: History and Statecraft*, Brookings

12. Policy Analysis

Objectives

- Recognize and distinguish between different policy analysis models.
- Describe the various tools available for policy analysis.
- Apply a policy analysis model to a historical, current, or potential problem or threat.
- Discuss how case studies and historical analysis can be integrated in policy analysis and foreign policy analysis.
- **Engage with others' thesis prospectus presentations and offer feedback in class.**

Readings

- "The need for simple methods of policy analysis and planning," Chapter 1 (pages 2-17 only) in Patton, Sawicki, and Clark, *Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planning*, 3rd edition, 2016.
[http://surjonopwkub.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2019/01/Basic Methods of Policy Analysis and Planing.pdf](http://surjonopwkub.lecture.ub.ac.id/files/2019/01/Basic%20Methods%20of%20Policy%20Analysis%20and%20Planing.pdf)
- Bardach, Eugene. 2012. "Part I: The Eightfold Path." *A Practical Guide for Policy Analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving*. 4th ed., selections. Los Angeles: Thousand Oaks: Sage: CQ Press

Due this week: [Thesis Prospectus first draft](#) (20 % of grade)