

Research Methods in Political Science

a joint PhD course held at Stockholm and Uppsala University, Dept. of Political Science/Dept. of Government, 15 ECTS

Course content

The aim of this course is to introduce the participants to a broad range of established research methods in political science. This is done through a mix of lectures and seminars on four different topics that combine the presentation of basic concepts and with a critical discussion of different methods. Exercises encourage the participants to apply these methods and elaborate on methodological aspects of their dissertations projects.

Each of the four course parts is equivalent to **3.75 ECTS**. This course is commonly organized by the Department of Political Science at Stockholm University and the Department of Government at Uppsala University. Part 1 and 2 are taught in Uppsala, and part 3 and 4 are taught in Stockholm.

The first part of the course introduces students to the philosophy of science and covers issues such as naturalist and interpretivist approaches in the social sciences, the formulation of research questions, research design, and concept formation.

The second part of the course provides an introduction to quantitative research methods. Themes range from univariate statistics and basic inferential statistics to multivariate regression, nonlinear effects, interaction effects, and logistic regression.

The third part of the course introduces students to the comparative method and case studies. Lectures and seminars cover issues from case selection and process tracing to mixed-method approaches and the introduction of a software package for qualitative data analysis.

The fourth part of this course on textual analysis and normative analysis provides an overview of various approaches to the study of political writings, documents, and legal material. It covers challenges to textual analysis and normative analysis, legal interpretation, and discourse analysis

Examination

Each course part is examined separately. All learning activities in the course are compulsory.

Part 1: This section will be examined on the basis of a single course paper on the formulation of a research question.

Part 2: The examination comprises two assignments. The assignment will be discussed at the two mandatory seminars. For at least one of the assignments participants will work in pair or in small groups. Both assignments require the use of statistical software.

Part 3: The examination consists of three smaller assignments. Participants write an input note on a case selection related to their dissertation project. Second, participants will write a critique of these input notes in smaller groups. For the third assignment, participants chose between a revision of the input note and a short paper on a research strategy for process-tracing.

Part 4: This section will be examined on the basis of two written assignments and one oral assignment, where participants are expected to discuss questions related to the course literature on textual analysis and discourse analysis.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of the course participants should be able to:

- describe and evaluate relevant research methods in different areas and traditions of political science
- identify and summarize important methodological debates in political science research
- apply knowledge and insights from the methodological literature to concrete research projects in political science
- critically discuss and reflect upon strengths and weaknesses of research methods in political science

The teaching staff

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Course literature

Part 1

Bartelson, Jens. 2000. Three concepts of conceptualization. *International Sociology*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 180-196.

Connolly, John. 1993. *The Terms of Political Discourse*. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, Preface to the third edition, introduction and chapter 1.

Gerring, John: *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework* (Cambridge UP, 2011), chapter 5 (Concepts), pp. 107-140.

Guzzini, Stefano. 2005. The concept of power: a constructivist analysis. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, vol. 33, no. 3, p. 495-522.

Kratochwil, Friedrich. 2008. Constructivism: what it is (not) and how it matters. In Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating, eds, *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 80-98.

Palonen, Kari. 1999. Rhetorical and temporal perspectives on conceptual change: Theses on Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck. *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*, pp. 41-59.

Richter, Melvyn. 2005. More than a two-way traffic: analyzing, translating, and comparing political concepts from other cultures. *Contributions*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 7-20.

Sartori, Giovanni. 1984. Guidelines for Concept Analysis. In Giovanni Sartori (ed.) *Social Science Concepts: A Systematic Analysis*. Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage, pp. 15-88

Part 2

Brambor, Thomas, William Clark, and Matt Golder. 2006. "Understanding Interaction Models: Improving Empirical Analysis." *Political Analysis* 14:63–82

Braumoeller, Bear. 2006. "Hypothesis Testing and Multiplicative Interaction Terms." *International Organization* 58:807–820

Edling, Christofer och Peter Hedström. 2003. *Kvantitativa metoder*. Lund: Studentlitteratur

Kellstedt, Paul and Guy Whitten. 2009. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Pampel, Fred. 2000. *Logistic Regression: A Primer*. London: Sage Publications

Part 3

- Biesenbender, Sophie, and Adrienne Héritier. 2014 Mixed-Methods Designs in Comparative Public Policy Research: The Dismantling of Pension Policies." In: Engeli and Rothmayr (eds.), *Comparative Policy Studies: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges*. Palgrave: 237-264.
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Part 4

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