

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY COURSE

Phd Political Science

Credits : 4

Marks: 100

Course Outline

This course seeks to train the PhD students in understanding the concepts, theories and methods that constitute the foundational pillars of undertaking research in Political Science. Pivoting the pedagogical and epistemological constitution of the course in the linguistic cartography of the foundational grammar that determines the nature of research in Social Sciences, the course aims to facilitate the students to gain a strong grounding in the ontological, epistemological and methodological frameworks that would help them carry out a systematic and focussed study of their chosen research topics. In pursuit of this, the course begins with an introductory note to the phenomenon of puzzle driven research and lays a foundation to the conceptions of method, methodology, theory and meta-theory. The course then proceeds to familiarise the students with the historical and epistemological dimensions of the philosophy of science and the modes of application of the same to doing research in Political Science. After this, the course would teach the students the major trends that have impacted ground-breaking changes in the study of the social sciences followed by debates on the ways in which these waves of change have impacted the study of Political Science. Finally, the course would introduce to the students, the critical dimensions of doing research in the various sub-disciplines within the broader ambit of the subject of Political Science. After explaining to them the fundamentals of qualitative and quantitative research methods, the course ends with the training of students in the skills of academic writing.

Course Contents

1. Doing Research-

- a. What, When and Why- Prof. Nasreen Chowdhory (4hrs)
- b. Method and Methodology- Prof. Madhulika Banerjee (4 hrs)
- c. Theory and Meta- theory-Prof Navnita C Behera (4 hrs)
- d. Decolonizing Research Methods- Prof Navnita C Behera (4 hrs)

Recommended Readings

Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds.) (2015), *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, Second Edition, Routledge, pp. xi-xxx1, 1-23.

Walter, Maggie, “The Nature of Social Science Research”, Oxford University Press, pp. 1-2.

Reference Readings

William Roberts Clark, Chapter 1, “Asking Interesting Questions,” and Adam McCauley and Andrea Ruggeri, Chapter 2, “From Questions and Puzzles to Research Project,” in Luigi Curini and Robert Franzese, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*, London, Sage, 2020, pp. 7-43.

Olive, J. L. Reflecting on the Tensions Between Emic and Etic Perspectives in Life History Research: Lessons Learned Forum: Qualitative Research Volume 15, No. 2, Art. 6 – May 2014

Lieberson, S. Asking Too Much, Expecting Too Little Sociological Perspectives, Vol. 31, No. 4 (Oct., 1988), pp. 379-397.

Denicolo, P. & I. Becker, *Developing Research Proposals* Sage, New Delhi, 2012.

1.b. Method and Methodology

Recommended Readings

Priyam, M. (2016). Political Ethnography as a Method for Understanding Urban Politics and Elections in India. *Studies in Indian Politics*, 4(1), 119-127.

Priyam, M. (2017). Political Processes under the Microscope: Comparative Ethnography as an Approach to Understanding Democracy and Elections in India. *Studies in Indian Politics*, 5(1), 73-81.

Reference Readings

Banerjee, M. “The politics of knowledge in development: An analytical frame.” *Studies in Indian Politics* 9, no. 1 (2021): 78-90.

Singh, P. “Politics of knowledge in development: Explorations in seed sovereignty.” *Studies in Indian Politics* 9, no. 1 (2021): 105-117.

Jha, Pankaj Kumar. "State, floods and politics of knowledge: a case of the Mahananda Basin of Bihar." *Studies in Indian Politics* 9, no. 1 (2021): 91-104.

Handa, Abhishek. "The politics of knowledge of medicinal plants in India: corporations, collectors and cultivators as constituents." *Studies in Indian Politics* 10, no. 1 (2022): 93-106.

Singh, Arun Kumar. "Politics of knowledge in development: The case of sugar as an artificial sweetener." *Studies in Indian Politics* 10, no. 1 (2022): 107-117.

1.c. Theory and Meta- theory

Recommended Readings

Bryman, Alan, and Edward Bell. Chapter 1: "General Research Orientations." In *Social Research Methods*, 5th Canadian ed., 2–26. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Bingham, Andrea J., Robert Mitchell, and Daria S. Carter. Chapter 1: "Introduction"; and Chapter 2: "Understanding and Applying Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks." In *A Practical Guide to Theoretical Frameworks for Social Science Research*, 1–13, 14-25. New York: Routledge, 2023.

Sell, Jane and Webster Jr. Murray. Chapter 1: "What is a Theory?"; Chapter 2: "Concepts," In *Developing Theories In The Social Sciences: Methods and Applications*, 1-5, 6-16. Cambridge University Press, 2026.

Fay, B. (1985). Theory and metatheory in social science — or, why the philosophy of social science is so hard. *Metaphilosophy*, 16(2/3), 150–165. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24436740>

Parsons, T. (1979). On Theory and Meta theory. *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations*, 7(1), 5–16. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23261746>

Reference Readings

Sell, Jane and Webster Jr. Murray. Chapter 5: "Testing Theory," In *Developing Theories In The Social Sciences: Methods and Applications*, 47-65. Cambridge University Press, 2026.

Gonzalez-Ocantos, Ezequiel. "Designing Qualitative Research Projects: Notes on Theory Building, Case Selection and Field Research," in Luigi Curini and Robert Franzese, eds., *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*, London, Sage, 2020, pp. 104-120.

Fiske, Donald W. and Richard Schweder, eds., *Meta Theory in Social Science: Pluralism and Subjectivities*, University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Layder, Derek, *Understanding Social Theory*, Sage, 2006.

1.d. Decolonizing Research Methods

Recommended Readings

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. Chapter 1, "Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory." In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 1–19; Chapter 2, "Research through Imperial Eyes." In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 20–41; Chapter 3, "Colonizing Knowledges." In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 42–61 in Smith, Linda Tuhiwai, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, London: Zed Books.

Ziai, Aram, Daniel Bendix, and Franziska Müller. Chapter 1: "Decolonizing Knowledge Orders, Research Methodology, and the Academia: An Introduction," and Chapter 8: "Intermezzo II – Methodology," in *Beyond the Master's Tools? Decolonizing Knowledge Orders, Research Methods and Teaching*, edited by Daniel Bendix, Franziska Müller, and Aram Ziai, 1–18, 135–43, London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2020.

Reiter, Bernd. Chapter 1: "Decolonizing Epistemology: Fuzzy Logic." In *Decolonizing the Social Sciences and the Humanities: An Anti-Elitist Manifesto*, 19–40. London: Routledge, 2021.

Denscombe, Martyn. "Decolonial Research Methodology: An Assessment of the Challenge to Established Practice." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 28, no. 2 (2025): 231–240. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2024.2357558>

Reference Readings

Coulthard, Glen Sean. 2014. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Darder, Antonia, Luis F. Mirón, and Nicholas Denzin. Chapter 1: “Locating the Field: Performing Theories of Decolonizing Inquiry”; and Chapter 2, “Decolonizing Performances: Deconstructing the Global Postcolonial.” In *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*, edited by Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, and Linda Tuhiwai Smith, 21–30, 31–44. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2008.

Leinius, Johanna. “Postcolonial Feminist Ethics and the Politics of Research Collaborations across North-South Divides”; Chapter 6, Brazzell, Melanie, “Community Accountable Scholarship within a Critical Participatory Action Research Model,” in *Beyond the Master’s Tools? Decolonizing Knowledge Orders, Research Methods and Teaching*, edited by Daniel Bendix, Franziska Müller, and Aram Ziai, 71–92, 93–111. London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2020.

González, Ybiskay, Sara C. Motta, and Tiina Seppälä. 2023. “Decolonial Feminist Solidarity/ies.” In *Handbook of Feminist Research Methodologies in Management and Organization Studies*, edited by S. Katila, S. Meriläinen, and E. Bell, 297–314. Edward Elgar. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800377035.00028>.

Hutchings, Kimberly. 2019. “Decolonizing Global Ethics: Thinking with the Pluriverse.” *Ethics and International Affairs* 33 (2): 115–25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679419000169>.

Kovach, Margaret. 2021. *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Mignolo, Walter D. 2018. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures; Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Motta, Sara C., and Ybiskay Gonzalez. 2023. “Yes, We Speak: Si Tenemos Voz: On Refusing Epistemological Terra Nullius.” *Journal of Critical Southern Studies* 4. <https://doi.org/10.3943/jcss.49>.

2. Philosophy of Science –

- a. Karl Popper: Falsification – Dr Rashmi Gopi (4 hrs)
- b. Thomas Kuhn: Paradigm Shift – Dr Sitaram (4 hrs)
- c. Paul Feyerabend: Methodological Anarchism: Dr Saroj (2 hrs)

- d. Imre Lacatos: The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes-
- e. Phenomenology (4 hrs) Dr. Smita
- f. Hermunetics- Dr Smita (4 hrs)

Recommended Readings

Okasha, S. (2016). *Philosophy of science: A very short introduction* (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press.

Losee, J. (2001). *A historical introduction to the philosophy of science*. OUP Oxford.

Popper, K. R. (2002). *Conjectures and refutations: The growth of scientific knowledge* (5th ed.). Routledge.

Feyerabend, P. (2020). *Against method: Outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge*. Verso Books.

Lakatos, I. (1978). *The methodology of scientific research programmes: Volume 1: Philosophical papers* (Vol. 1). Cambridge university press.

Bedorf, T., & Herrmann, S. (Eds.). (2019). *Political phenomenology: Experience, ontology, episteme*. Routledge.

George, T. (2020). *Hermeneutics*. Plato.stanford.edu.

Giddens, A. (1982). *Hermeneutics and social theory*. In *Profiles and critiques in social theory* (pp. 1-17). London: Macmillan Education UK.

Reference Readings

Boyd, R., Gasper, P., & Trout, J. D. (Eds.). (1991). *The philosophy of science*. MIT Press.

Bird, A. (2014). *Thomas Kuhn*. Routledge.

Culler, J. (2008). *On deconstruction: Theory and criticism after structuralism*. Routledge.

Derrida, J. (2017). *The deconstruction of actuality: An interview with Jacques Derrida*. In *Deconstruction: A reader* (pp. 527-553). Routledge.

Friedman, M. (1999). Reconsidering logical positivism. Cambridge University Press.

Houston, C. (2022). Why social scientists still need phenomenology. Thesis Eleven, 168(1), 37-54.

Natanson, M. (1973). Phenomenology and the social sciences (Vol. 1) (Introduction). Northwestern University Press.

Outhwaite, W. (2014). Hermeneutics and the social sciences. In The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics (pp. 486-497). Routledge.

Roche, M. (2013). Phenomenology, language and the social sciences (Chapter 1). Routledge.

Schmidt, L. K. (2016). Understanding hermeneutics. Routledge

3. Turns

- a. Cultural Turn- Dr Surinder Mohan
- b. Aesthetic Turn- Dr Saroj (2 hrs)
- c. Quantum Turn – Dr Surinder Mohan
- d. Relational Turn – Prof Navnita C Behera (2 hrs)

Recommended Readings

3.a. Cultural Turn

Geertz, C. (1973). The interpretation of cultures. Basic Books.

Bonnell, V. E., & Hunt, L. (Eds.). (1999). Beyond the cultural turn: New directions in the study of society and culture. University of California Press.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). The location of culture. Routledge.

Reference Readings

Best, S. (2017). Culture Turn. In The Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Sociology, G. Ritzer (Ed.).

Rosati, Clayton (2017), “Cultural Turn”. In International Encyclopedia of Geography: People, the Earth, Environment and Technology, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118786352.wbieg0447>

3.b. Aesthetic Turn

Rancière, J. (2013). The politics of aesthetics. A&C Black.

Sartwell, C. (2011). Political aesthetics. Cornell University Press.

Reference Readings

Shapiro, M. (2012). Studies in trans-disciplinary method: After the aesthetic turn. Routledge.

Bleiker, R. (2001). The aesthetic turn in international political theory. *Millennium*, 30(3), 509-533.

3.d. Quantum Turn

Wendt, A. (2015). Quantum mind and social science. Cambridge University Press.

Allan, B. B. (2018). Social Action in Quantum Social Science. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 47(1), 87-98.

References Readings

Haven, E., & Khrennikov, A. (2013). Quantum Social Science. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

3.e. Relational Turn

Querejazu, A. N. C. Behera, M. Kurki, C. Lynch, G. Colello (2026). Relational Voices in IR: Pluriversalizing Relationality to Diversifying Relationalities, *International Studies Review*, 28(3), viaf032, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viaf032>

Kurki, Milja (2020). International Relations in a Relational Universe (Oxford University Press).

Trownsell, T., Behera, N. C., & Shani, G. (2022). Introduction to the Special Issue: Pluriversal relationality. *Review of International Studies*, 48(5), 787–800.

Trownsell, T. (2022). Recrafting ontology. *Review of International Studies*, 48(5), 801–820

Kurki, M. (2022). Relational revolution and relationality in IR: New conversations. *Review of International Studies*, 48(5), 821–836.

Querejazu, Amaya (2022). Cosmopraxis: Relational methods for a pluriversal IR. *Review of International Studies*, 48(5), pp. 875–890.

Reference Readings

Shani, G., & Behera, N. C. (2022). Provincialising International Relations through a reading of dharma. *Review of International Studies*, 48(5), 837–856.

Reddekop, J. (2022). Against ontological capture: Drawing lessons from Amazonian Kichwa relationality. *Review of International Studies*, 48(5), 857–874.

De la Cadena, Marisol, and Mario Blaser, eds. 2018. *A World of Many Worlds*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Dépelteau, François, ed. 2018. *The Palgrave Handbook of Relational Sociology*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Escobar, Arturo. 2018. *Designs for the Pluriverse: Radical Interdependence, Autonomy, and the Making of Worlds*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Escobar, Arturo. 2024. *Relationality: An Emergent Politics of Life Beyond the Human*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Kavalski, Emilian. 2017. *The Guanxi of Relational International Theory*. London: Routledge.

Nordin, Astrid H. M. et.al. 2019. “Towards Global Relational Theorizing: A Dialogue between Sinophone and Anglophone Scholarship on Relationalism,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 32:5, pp. 570–81.

Selg, Peeter, and Andreas Ventsel. 2020. “The ‘Relational Turn’ in the Social Sciences.” In *Introducing Relational Political Analysis: Political Semiotics as a Theory and Methods*, 15–40. Springer eBooks. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48780-5_2

4. Qualitative

- a. Textual Analysis-Prof Devender Singh (2hrs)
- b. Archival Research- Dr Sudhir (2 hrs) + Gale archival
- c. Historical Methods- Dr Smita (4 hrs)
- d. Discourse Analysis – Dr Miranda Das
- e. Comparative Method- Prof Nasreen (2 hrs)
- f. Feminist Methods- Dr Megha (2 hrs)

Recommended Readings

Benoit, K. (2020). Text as data: An overview. In *The SAGE handbook of research methods in political science and international relations* (461-497). Sage Publication.

Grimmer, J., & Stewart, B. M. (2013). Text as data: The promise and pitfalls of automatic content analysis methods for political texts. *Political analysis*, 21(3), 267-297.

Kim, D. S. (2022). Taming abundance: Doing digital archival research (as political scientists). *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 55(3), 530-538.

Moore, N., Salter, A., Stanley, L., & Tamboukou, M. (2016). *The archive project: Archival research in the social sciences*. Routledge.

Porta, D. della. (2008). Comparative analysis: case-oriented versus variable-oriented research. In D. Della Porta & M. Keating (Eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective* (pp. 198–222). Chapter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ackerly, B. A., & True, J. (2019). *Doing feminist research in political and social science*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Reference Readings

Box-Steffensmeier, J. M., Brady, H. E., & Collier, D. (Eds.). (2008). *The Oxford handbook of political methodology*. Oxford University Press.

George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. MIT Press.

Rose, R. and Mackenzie, W.J.M. (1991), Comparing Forms of Comparative Analysis. *Political Studies*, 39: 446-462

Nielsen, J. M. (Ed.). (2019). *Feminist research methods: Exemplary readings in the social sciences*. Routledge.

5. Quantitative Statistics for Research- (Dr Avantika Singh)

- a. Sample size determination
- b. Measures of central tendency: mean, median and mode
- c. Measures of dispersion: variance and standard deviation
- d. Correlation analysis and Pearson's correlation coefficient
- e. Hypothesis testing and statistical significance: null and alternative hypotheses, significance levels, p-values and interpretation of statistical significance
- f. Interpretation and presentation of quantitative findings
- g. Psephology and Election Studies

Recommended Readings

Bueno de Mesquita, E.B. and Fowler, A., (2021). *Thinking clearly with data: A guide to quantitative reasoning and analysis*. Princeton University Press.

Dunning, T. (2012). *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reference Readings

Franklin, M. (2008). Quantitative analysis. In D. Della Porta & M. Keating (Eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective* (pp. 240–262). Chapter, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Huntington-Klein, Nick. (2023). *The Effect: An Introduction to Research Design and Causality*. CRC Press.

Sanjay Kumar, Praveen Rai and Pranav Gupta, (2016). 'Do Surveys Influence Results?', Seminar, 684, pp. 61-63.

Kumar, S. (2017, March 15). The Damned Science of Psephology. Open Magazine;

6. Academic Writing- (Prof. Ashok Acharaya, Prof. Nasreen Chowdhory)

Recommended Readings

Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2008). The craft of research (3rd ed.). University of Chicago Press.

McWilliams, S. (2017). Creative Writing and the Study of Politics. PS: Political Science & Politics, 50(4), 1094–1098.

Knopf, J. W. (2006). Doing a Literature Review. PS: Political Science & Politics, 39(1), 127–132.

Reference Readings

Schmidt, D.E. (2018). Writing in Political Science: A Practical Guide (5th ed.). Routledge.

Sword, Helen. (2012). Stylish Academic Writing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Stephen Van Evera (1997), *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Cornell University Press), pp.97-128.

Kate L. Turabian (2010), *Student's Guide to Writing College Papers*, 4th Edition, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), Ch 7-8 (pp.75-88), Ch 12-13 (pp.115-128).

7. Doing Research: A (Sub)Disciplinary Lenses

- a. Indian Politics
- b. Indian Political Thought
- c. Political Theory
- d. Comparative Politics

- e. Public Administration
- f. International Relations

Recommended Readings:

The required readings will be suggested by the concerned teachers

Readings for International Relations

Recommended Readings:

Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus (2011), *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of science and its implications for the study of world politics*. Routledge.

Haraway, Donna (1988), *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), pp. 575-599.

Kurki, M. (2015). *Stretching Situated Knowledge: From Standpoint Epistemology to Cosmology and Back Again*. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 43(3), 779-797.

Lai, D., & Roccu, R. (2019). *Case study research and critical IR: the case for the extended case methodology*. *International Relations*, 33(1), 67-87.

Klotz, Audie and Deepa Prakash (eds.) (2008). *Qualitative Methods in International Relations A Pluralist Guide*. Palgrave-Macmillan.

Reference Readings:

Lamont, Christopher (2015). *Research Methods in International Relations*. SAGE Publications.

Devin, Guillaume (ed.) (2018). *Resources and Applied Methods in International Relations*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Chernoff, Fred (2002). *Scientific Realism as a Meta-Theory of International Politics*, *International Studies Quarterly*, 46(2), pp. 189–207.

