Course Description

Methodology is about what how we gain knowledge, a tool by which we evaluate questions we ask, the methods we use, and knowledge we acquire. As a doctoral level course aiming at providing an overview of the field, this course will focus on continuing debates across sub-fields of the discipline and help you look beyond the scope of your previous research. Students will be guided to think widely at the discipline level by overview eight major debates in the discipline. The following subjects will be introduced in class, each of which will take about two weeks of reading and discussion. Each time we meet we will spend two hours on discussion assigned readings and one hour on sharing each other’s research progress, articles or news that worth investigation.

1. How divided are we? The outlook of the discipline
2. How useful is it to label ourselves as “qualitative” or “quantitative” researchers?
3. How could we release the tension between science and philosophy? Or, how necessary is it?
4. “Science ignorance”? The reexamination the epistemology of political science
5. Scientific realism and beyond
6. How empirical is empirical enough? Method- versus problem-driven Research
7. How could theorization be achieved? The challenges of theory-driven Research
8. What else can be done? The prospect of the discipline, experiment and causality
Course Texts and Readings

The course requires active participation in reading assigned materials. Most articles are available on university’s electronic journal archives. A copy of required book chapters and some journal articles that are not available in the library or databases (marked with ** in the end of the entry) will be put in a basket with a proper label in the institute office one week before the class. You can also make a good use of the interlibrary loan system. Besides the articles, pay high attention to the class blog. You are expected to check out new posts and respond to them.

Grading Policy

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two reaction papers</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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- Reaction papers (30%): Pick up two topics of this semester in the beginning of the semester and write papers of evaluating the readings of the chosen topic. Each reaction paper should cover the readings of the week. Reaction papers should demonstrate your (re)organization of the assigned readings and your thoughts (evaluation or critiques) about the papers. Papers that (1) simply summarize the assigned readings, or (2) revealing that you are not reading them, will be returned for rewriting. Bonus points will be given to papers with extended (self-selected) readings that help develop arguments or clarify points. Papers will be graded based not on the length of the papers at all but on the organization of literature and the presentation of your thoughts. Students who choose the topics are subject to be assigned (randomly) as discussion leaders of the week.

- Research paper (40%): This is a semester-long work that addresses research topic of your interest. The paper should have a clear research purpose, a set of research questions, a compacted literature review (10 to 15 articles or books). The paper, not like any other papers of other course works, should pay a considerate amount of attention to methodology, i.e., why you design your research this way and how your research findings contribute to our knowledge about the topic you chose.

- Discussion leadership (30%): Involvement discussion ONLINE (blog) and OFFLINE (in class) include your attendance, questions provided for discussion, and responses to questions and posts. Besides the role as a discussion leader, everyone is responsible to respond to others’ words on the course blogs.

- All papers are due in class. Make sure you manage your time well and turn in the hot copies of the papers before the deadlines.

Weekly Schedule

**NOTE that the assigned readings are subject to update on the weekly basis. The list
of new articles will be added to the course Evernote notebook as a note and to the blog as a post.

1. Introduction of the Class [9/18]
   - Let’s share our research interest and purposes.
   - Frank Liu’s research projects:
     - News Collection: http://goo.gl/qN80iV
     - Personal Blog: http://frankcsliu.postach.io/

2. Think about the Career [9/25]
   - Invited Speaker Prof. Tsungwu Ho talks about phd degree and academic career.
   - Check out the posts on the course blog, and leave your comments below each article or news.

TOPIC 1: How Divided Are We? An Outlook of the Discipline

3. [10/2]
   - Extra topic: How to initiate a research paper, organize literature, and formulate argument?

4. [10/9]
   - Required:
   - Supplemental:
TOPIC 2: How Useful is It to Label Ourselves as “Qualitative” or “Quantitative” Researchers?

5. [10/16]

6. [10/23]

• Required:


• Supplemental:


TOPIC 3: How Could We Release the Tension between Science and Philosophy? Or, How Necessary is It?

7. [10/30]

• Required:


• Supplemental:


**TOPIC 4: “Science Ignorance” and the Discipline’s Evolutionary Epistemology**

8. [11/6]

• Required:


• Supplemental:


**TOPIC 5: Scientific Realism and Beyond**

11. [11/27]

12. [12/4]

  • Required:


**TOPIC 6: How Empirical is Empirical Enough? Method- versus Problem-Driven Research**

13. [12/11]

14. [12/18]

  • Required:


• Supplemental:


**TOPIC 7: How Could Theorization be Achieved? The Challenges of Theory-Driven Research**

15. [12/25]

16. [2015/1/1] (No Class)

• Required:


• Supplemental:


**TOPIC 8: How Much Truth Can We Find Out? Experiment and Causality**

17. [1/8]

18. [1/15] student oral presentation of semester research and due of the term paper

- Student Presentation: Propose Your Method(s) and Methodology

- Required:


- Supplemental:


**Topic 9: How to Embed Taiwan Studies into the Global Context? Some Examples.**

• Required:


– Lees, C. (2006). We are all comparatists now - Why and how single-country scholarship must adapt and incorporate the comparative politics approach. Comparative Political Studies, 39 (9), 1084-1108.