Course Description

Methodology is about how we gain knowledge, a tool by which we evaluate questions we ask, the methods we use, and knowledge we acquire. We will focus on reasons of doing research and help you look beyond current scope of research. Students will be guided to think widely at the discipline level by overview the major debates or controversies in the discipline. We will also evaluate some examples that may or may not advance our knowledge regarding our political life. While its reading load is heavier than other master-level courses, this course will focus more on intellectual discussion about current research in the field than on readings itself. To be more systematically formulate the flow of our discussion, the following subjects will be introduced in class, each of which will take about two weeks of reading and discussion. Note that these topics and relevant readings are introduced only for discussion purpose. We may introduce new topics and readings or modify the reading list as the semester goes.

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. How empirical is empirical enough? Method- versus Problem-Driven Research
6. How could theorization be achieved? The Challenges of Theory-Driven Research
7. What can be done? The prospect of the discipline

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 blasket 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.
Grading Policy

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<th>Requirement</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation and Discussion Leadership</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four reaction papers</td>
<td>80</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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- **Participation and Discussion Leadership (20%)**: Involvement in class discussion include your attendance, questions provided for discussion, and respondances to questions. You are asked to read through the given materials before the class and bring thoughts to the class. You will be assigned a week to play as a discussion leader.

- **Reaction papers (80%)**: Pick up four topics of this semester in the beginning of the semester and write papers of evaluating the readings of the chosen topic. Each paper have at least 5 readings, 6-10 pages, binded with a cover sheet, and doubled spaced. Reaction papers should demonstrate your (re)organization of the assigned readings and your thoughts (evaluation or critiques) about the papers. *Papers that simply summarize the assigned readings 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 on the originality of thoughts, the organization of literature, the presentation of your thoughts, and overall format (use APA or APSA style). The cover page of papers should include the following information: class name, author’s full name and student id, paper type (mid-term paper or final term paper), turn-in date, and contact information.

- 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

[Feb. 23] Introduction

[(March 2)] No class

[March 9 & 16] **TOPIC 1: How Divided Are We? An Outlook of the Discipline**

- **Required:**

- **Supplemental:**
[March (23), 28 & 30] TOPIC 2: How Useful is It to Label Ourselves as “Qualitative” or “Quantitative” Researchers?

- **Required:**

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

[April (6) & 13] TOPIC 3: How Could We Release the Tension between Science and Philosophy? Or, How Necessary is It?

- **Required:**

- **Supplemental:**
[April 20 & 27] TOPIC 4: “Science Ignorance” and the Discipline’s Evolutionary Epistemology

- Required:

- Supplemental (these are classics; no copies will be provided; read on your own):

[May 4 & (11)] TOPIC 5: Scientific Realism and Beyond

- I will be gone on May 11 for a conference in USA. The two course for this topic will be combined to May 4.

- Required:


- Required:

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

- **Required:**

- **Supplemental:**

[(June 15)] Concluding Remarks: What Can be Done? The Prospects of the Discipline

- I will be gone for a conference in France this week. The course of this week will be combined to the week of June 8.

- **Required:**

- **Supplemental:**