
Winter Term Seminar

Prof Dr Heike Klüver

“Research Designs and Research Questions“

27 – 28 October 2016



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Course Description

This course will introduce PhD students to the fundamentals of crafting a research design in the Social Sciences. A well-thought and carefully designed research plan is the key to a good dissertation. The research design specifies how you are going to carry out your research project and, particularly, how to use empirical evidence to answer your research question. This course is designed to introduce students to the core issues involved in developing a sound research design. We will first cover basic issues of crafting a research design such as finding a research question, conceptualization and measurement. Afterwards we will talk about different research design types such as large-N quantitative studies, small-N case studies and a combination of both in mixed methods research designs involving a wide variety of quantitative and qualitative methods. Afterwards, we will talk about publication strategies in order to prepare PhD students for publishing their work as articles in international journals and as books in international publishing houses. Finally, students will present their own research designs in the light of the different design strategies discussed in the seminar. Students will learn about different types of research designs and become aware of the trade-offs involved in choosing a particular design. Students will develop their own ideas about potential research designs in the framework of their dissertations and are expected to actively participate in the seminar meetings.

Introductory readings

Gerring, John (2009): Case study research: Principles and practices, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

De Vaus, David (2001): Research Design in Social Research, London: Sage.

Gschwend, Thomas (2011) (Eds.): Research design in political science: How to practice what they preach, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Halperin, Sandra and Oliver Heath (2012): Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba (1994): Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

About the instructor

www.heike-kluever.com