

“Research Design and Strategy”

Course Description

This short course will cover key aspects of research design and methods in political science. We will focus on concrete issues of conducting research: picking a topic, generating hypotheses, describing and measuring concepts, selecting the appropriate research method, and collecting data. It is highly recommended to read the assigned readings ahead of the course and prepare for short in-class exercises (see session 4, 7 and 8). All readings will be distributed in electronic format a week prior to class. Students are welcome to bring in questions in addition to the outlined class topics!

DAY 1: October 25, 2018

Session 1 (10:00-11:15) **Finding a research topic: questions, gaps, and puzzles**

Reading: Gustafsson, Karl & Linda Hagstrom (forthcoming). “What is the point? Teaching Graduate Students how to Construct Political Science Research Puzzles.” *European Political Science*, pp. 1-15.

Session 2 (11:30-12:45) **Developing explanations: theory and hypothesis development**

Reading: Powner, Leanne. 2014. “From Research Question to Theory to Hypothesis” In *Empirical Research and Writing*. SAGE: London, pp. 21-54.

Lunch break (12:45-13:45)

Session 3 (13:45-15:00) **Defining objects of study: conceptualization and measurement**

Reading: Schmitter, Philippe. 2008. “The design of social and political research.” In Della Porta, Donatella and Michael Keating (eds). *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Science*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pp. 263-295.

Session 4 (15:15-17:00) **Modes of inference: qualitative and quantitative designs**

Reading: Lin, Ann Chih. 1998. “Bridging Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches to Qualitative Methods.” *Policy Studies Journal* 26(1), pp. 162-180.

Assignment: Pick a book or article on a topic of interest to you and prepare a short summary of the research design (to be presented in class).

DAY 2: October 26, 2018

Session 5 (10:00-11:15) **Collecting data: the good, the bad, and the ugly**

Reading: LaPorte, Jody. 2014. "Confronting a Crisis of Research Design." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 47(2), pp. 414-417.

Session 6 (11:30-12:45) **Practical advice: Navigating the dissertation process**

Reading: Grover, Varun. 2007. "Successfully Navigating the Stages of Doctoral Study." *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* (2), pp. 9-21.

Lunch break (12:45-13:45)

Session 7 (13:45-15:00) **Student presentations**

Assignment: Prepare a brief (!) presentation of your dissertation idea, touching on research justification, RQ, tentative explanation/argument, and planned research strategy. We will then workshop the idea together.

Session 8 (15:15-16:00) **Student presentations (continued) and wrap up**

Assignment continued.

About the lecturer

After studying for a bachelor's degree at the University of Rostock, Germany, Melanie Kolbe gained a Master and PhD in Political Science and International Affairs from the University of Georgia, USA, where she then taught for several years. Melanie Kolbe specialises particularly in immigration and migration law and policy, refugees and diasporas, civil societies and social movements.