Outline of the Course

This course provides essential knowledge of research design problems and solutions in comparative social research. The course follows the main stages of a research project: identification of a research question – concept formation and formulation of hypotheses – selection of research design – case selection – data collection and analysis. Examples will be based on political economy theories (with a strong emphasis on micro theories), examples from the research frontier on distributive politics and political economy questions on developing countries.

Goal

The goal of the seminar is to establish a genuine understanding of the ingredients of theory building and the elements needed to develop a rigorous research design that allows addressing social science questions. The seminar provides participants with an overview of seminal approaches to theory building, research design and empirical identification.

Prerequisites

A good knowledge of general political science concepts, theories and basic quantitative and qualitative methods is required. Students should be able to understand and articulate themselves in English as this will be the general classroom language. Of course, perfection is not required but you should be able to make yourself understood. The term paper should be written in English as well.

Requirements

The sessions in class are designed as a very participatory seminar format. This means that the class also depends on your in-class participation. In order to ensure the quality of
participation I expect you to have prepared the required readings prior to class and to attend all meetings. The mandatory readings will be provided electronically on Ilias. You should be prepared to give a spontaneous 5 minutes presentation on the required readings in class. Moreover, each participant will prepare a **10 minutes presentation** based on the MA thesis or dissertation project in the final sessions of the class and act as a **discussant** for another presenter (**2-4 minutes**).

The **term paper** should contain all the steps of a research design as discussed in class and contain no more than 6,000 words (approximately 15-20 pages). A list of references and appendices do not count towards the page limit. You should be clear about your theory, data and methodological approach. It is vital to develop a clear research design that supports your analytical interest. You are expected to hand in a 2-page research proposal for the paper by **May 31st** (as PDF via email). It should describe the puzzle/research question, working hypotheses, and the methods (and possibly data) you are planning to use.

The final paper is due on **September 6th 2019** (24:00). Please submit your paper electronically as a PDF document to sarah.berens@uni-koeln.de. Late papers will be punished. The final grade is composed of the term paper, in-class participation and the individual presentation.

In addition to the electronic paper version (which will be checked for plagiarism), please submit a paper version in the course of the week of the due date at the secretary of the CCCP (please check our homepage for opening hours). The paper version must contain the following signed statement:

http://www.cccp.uni-koeln.de/fileadmin/wiso_fak/cccp/Lehre/ErklaerungzuArbeiten.pdf

**General References:**


**Course Schedule:**

1. **April 2nd 2019:** Introduction and Overview **Attention!** In the first week, the course takes place in the same room BUT at 17:45-19:15!
I. Logic

2. April 9th 2019: Identification of a Research Question

- GEDDES 1-88.

3. April 16th 2019: Description and Causality

- KKV 3-33 and 75-114.

4. April 23th 2019: Theory and Concept Formation

- MORTON 33-97.: Chapter 2 & Chapter 3

5. April 30th 2019: Formulation of Hypotheses and Models: (a) Game Theory & (b) Simulations

II. Designs

6. May 7th 2019: Experiments and Quasi Experiments


Recommended:

7. May 14th 2019: Case Studies and Criteria of Case Selection

- KKV 34-74 and 208-230.
- GEDDES 89-129.

8. May 21th 2019: Analytic Narratives


III. Empirical Applications

9. May 28th 2019: Small N Studies
• KKV 115-149.
• GEDDES 131-173.


IV. Paper Presentations

11. June 18th 2019: Presentation and Discussion of Research Projects


14. July 9th 2019: Presentation and Discussion of Research Projects