



Introduction to Research Design

Seminar, 1st term 2018-2019

Organised by Elias Dinas and Anton Hemerijck

No registration required (compulsory for all first-year researchers)

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Description

This seminar provides an introduction to research design. Research design bears on the critical links between the central puzzle of research, on the one hand, and theory, method, case selection and data collection and analysis, on the other. The purpose of effective research design is about testing plausibly imaginative ideas against the best evidence available. The course addresses key issues about research questions, theory development, case selection and data gathering and analysis. It picks up from the general truism that a researcher will never find answers if he/she does not specify what he/she wants to know.

We do Research Design by – collectively – reading a series of ‘classic’ texts from Max Weber (*The Protestant Ethic*) to Arlie Russell Hochschild (*Strangers in Their Own Land*) so as to show how different scholars define their research questions, engage in academic debates, develop theories, use methods and collect data, to construct their persuasive ‘classic’ arguments and/or explanations.

The structure of the course is intentionally based on reading carefully one book and having at least seen at least a few chapters of a so-called “shadow” book, i.e., a book that looks at the same question or a similar topic from a different angle. The rationale behind the “shadow” book is to simulate more accurately the way we learn when entering a new field of literature. We read something and this takes us to something else, we hardly ever stick to the original source only. Doing so provides a more nuanced understanding of the field. Hopefully, by actually reading the shadow books together with the main books, you will see by yourselves how this learning process works.

The discussion in the class will follow the same order every week. We will be discussing the following questions:

1. What is the research question. What does the author(s) want to know?
2. How do(es) the author(s) try to address this question? How is the research organized and the evidence assembled? (*Logic of discovery*)
3. What does the author(s) know if he/she/they are right or wrong? What kind of evidence seems suitable to prove a point or thesis? (*Logic of proof*)
4. To what debate does the author want to make a scholarly contribution?
5. What would you do differently when confronted with a similar puzzle?

Preparatory Reading (things you would benefit by reading in September):

1. Hancke, B. (2009), *Intelligent Research Design. A Guide for Beginning Researchers in the Social Sciences*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Shively, W. Phillips. *The craft of political research*. Routledge, 2016.

Requirements

Each week of the seminar, groups of two/three researcher (to be assigned at our first meeting for all the sessions) will be tasked to write a 2,3 page discussion outline, introducing and answering the five core questions and discussion points about Research Design that arise out of the assigned readings. The assignment is not to be mistaken by a general essay on a topic, but rather a succinct analysis of the book in terms of theory and methodology and how they relate to each other. The group should upload the outline of discussion points onto the EU Collab site the evening before the seminar. **All students, however, are expected to complete the readings and come prepared to discuss them in seminar.** In addition, by the second last seminar of class (December 3, 2018), each student must submit a **1500 word paper** that summarizes what you want to do in your thesis in terms of research design.

This course is mandatory for all first year students in SPS. Because this makes it a large course, we cannot allow visiting students to register for the class. If you want to write a term paper for this class as part of your general term paper requirements, you need to make significant use of the readings and topics on the syllabus and make a contribution to the discussion on Research Design (in other words, a draft of your prospectus is not an acceptable term paper). Those who wish to write a term paper should first discuss the proposed topic with either Professor Dinas or Professor Hemerijck, and then submit to both professors by email (with a cc to Jennifer Dari) and in paper copy by the January deadline for term papers.

This seminar is worth 20 credits.

Schedule

The seminar takes place on **Mondays 16:00-18.00**, in Seminar Room 4 in the Badia Fiesolana, with the exception of the first session which will be held on **Monday the 1st of October at 9:00-11:00**, also in Seminar Room 4.

The full list of the seminar sessions is the following:

Session 1:	Monday	01 October	Seminar room 4
Session 2:	Thursday	8 October	Seminar room 4
Session 3:	Thursday	15 October	Seminar room 4
Session 4:	Thursday	22 October	Seminar room 4
Session 5:	Thursday	29 October	Theatre
Session 6:	Thursday	05 November	Seminar room 4
Session 7:	Thursday	12 November	Seminar room 4
Session 8:	Thursday	19 November	Seminar room 4
Session 9:	Thursday	26 November	Seminar room 4
Session 10:	Monday	03 December	Seminar room 4

Readings

Session 1: Introduction: how to begin

Preparatory Reading (things you would benefit from by reading in September): (it is recommended to purchase the two books indicated here below):

1. Hancke, B. (2009), *Intelligent Research Design. A Guide for Beginning Researchers in the Social Sciences*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Shively, W. Phillips. *The craft of political research*. Routledge, 2016.
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Session 2: Essentials

Essentials: Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

LIB 301.045 WEB

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Shadow Reading: Cantoni, Davide. "The economic effects of the Protestant Reformation: testing the Weber hypothesis in the German lands." *Journal of the European Economic Association* 13.4 (2015): 561-598.

Hall, Peter A. (1993) 'Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policy-making in Britain', *Comparative Politics*, 25(3): 275–96

Session 3: Identity

Laitin, David D. *Identity in formation: The Russian-speaking populations in the near abroad*. Cornell University Press, 1998. LIB 305.800947 LAI

<http://ezproxy.eui.eu/login?url=http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.32407>

Shadow Reading: Hobsbawm, Eric J. *Nations and nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge university press, 2012. LIB 909.7-P HOB, chapters 1, 4, 5.

<https://www-fulcrum-org.ezproxy.eui.eu/concern/monographs/mc87pq34s>

Session 4: Social democracy

Social Democracy and Europe: Scharpf, F.W. (1991), *Crisis and Choice in European Social Democracy*, Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press. LIB 320.94055 SCH

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Shadow Reading (1): Przeworski, Adam, and John Sprague. "Paper stones: A history of electoral socialism." (1988), chapters 2, 3, 5 (pages, 29-55; 57-96; 143-167). LIB 940.287-P PRZ

[https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fSD_ILS\\$002f0\\$002fSD_ILS:101501/one](https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:101501/one)

Session 5: Conflict

Staniland, Paul. *Networks of rebellion: Explaining insurgent cohesion and collapse*. Cornell University Press, 2014. LIB 303.64 STA

Shadow Reading (1): Weinstein, Jeremy M. *Inside rebellion: The politics of insurgent violence*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. LIB 322.42 WEI

<https://www-cambridge-org.ezproxy.eui.eu/core/books/inside-rebellion/FFABBC623483806EFE0A1C48073909F6>

Chapters 1, 2, 3, 5.

Shadow Reading (2): Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The logic of violence in civil war*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. LIB 303.64 KAL [check for full-text https://ic3m.es](https://ic3m.es)
[https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fSD_ILS\\$002f0\\$002fSD_ILS:227444/one](https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:227444/one)

Chapters: As much as you can, but if you have to choose: Ch. Introduction, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Session 6: Dictatorship

Svolik, Milan W. *The politics of authoritarian rule*. Cambridge University Press, 2012. LIB 321.9 SVO
[https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fSD_ILS\\$002f0\\$002fSD_ILS:291657/one](https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:291657/one)

Shadow Reading (1): Levitsky, Steven, and Lucan A. Way. *Competitive authoritarianism: Hybrid regimes after the Cold War*. Cambridge University Press, 2010. LIB 321.9 LEV (Ch. 2, 3, 5).

<http://ezproxy.eui.eu/login?url=https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511781353>

Shadow Reading (2): Ansell, Ben W., and David J. Samuels. *Inequality and democratization*. Cambridge University Press, 2014. LIB 321.8 ANS

<http://ezproxy.eui.eu/login?url=http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511843686> (Ch. 2, 4, 5).

Session 7: Early 21st century social and political discontent

Week 7 (12 November) 21st century social and political discontent (AH)

21st century political discontent: Hochschild, A. R. (2016), *Strangers in Their Own Land. Anger and Mourning on the American Right*, New York: The New Press. LIB 320.520973 HOC

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Shadow Reading: Goffman, Alice. *On the run: Fugitive life in an American city*. Picador, 2015. Chapters 2, 5, pp.23-53; 107-139, LIB 364.3496073074811 GOF

[https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fSD_ILS\\$002f0\\$002fSD_ILS:310348/one](https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:310348/one)

Further reading: Desmond, Matthew. *Evicted: Poverty and profit in the American city*. Broadway Books, 2016.

[https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fSD_ILS\\$002f0\\$002fSD_ILS:321102/one](https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:321102/one)

Session 8: Global and Local Justice

Beth Simmons, *Mobilizing for Human Rights*. LIB 323 SIM

<https://www-cambridge-org.ezproxy.eui.eu/core/books/mobilizing-for-human-rights/4922EA5EB91DE8224C456C81D2599AB3>

Jon Elster, *Local Justice*. How institutions allocate scarce goods and necessary burdens, chapters 1, 3, 5, pp. 1-17; 62-112; 135-83. LIB 301.183 ELS

[https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:\\$002f\\$002fSD_ILS\\$002f0\\$002fSD_ILS:58253/one](https://opac.eui.eu/client/en_GB/default/search/detailnonmodal/ent:$002f$002fSD_ILS$002f0$002fSD_ILS:58253/one)

Session 9: Explaining the world

Diamond, Jared M. *Guns, germs and steel: a short history of everybody for the last 13,000 years*. Random House, 1998. LIB 901 DIA

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Shadow Reading: Robinson, James, and R. Acemoglu. *Why nations fail*. Crown Publishing Group, 2012.
LIB 338.9 ACE, Ch. 1, 2, 3, 5.

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Session 10: What have we learned?

Assessment:

1. Read the book. Each week. Read the book. And talk about it in the class.
2. Each week a group of two researchers will write a 2,3-page discussion paper, which will not be a general essay about the topic, but rather a detailed analysis of the book (in terms of theory and methodology). You will have to send this paper to the whole class 24 hours before the class, at the latest.
3. Individual assignment: after the end of the course, you will have to write a similar 2,3-page detailed summary of what you want to do in your thesis. If undecided about what you really want to do, you will have to invent something you want to do.

Last updated 18.10.2018