Syllabus

DCC5230: Research Methodology

GSIR, International University of Japan, Spring 2017

Time: Tuesday, 10:30–12:00 and 13:00–14:30
Room: 102
Office: 323
Office Hours: 10:00–12:00 on Wednesdays (and by appointment)

Instructor: Yuki Yanai (矢内 勇生)
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Website: http://yukiyanai.com
Slack: @yanai

TAs: Myat Su Tin myatsu@iuj.ac.jp Slack: @myatsu
Sokha Che chesokha@iuj.ac.jp Slack: @che

Overview and Class Goals

This course is to help you design your thesis projects by addressing the fundamentals of research designs and methods in social sciences. The course covers a variety of issues—the selection of research topic, the articulation of research questions, the development of theory, the derivation of empirically testable hypotheses, and the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The course exposes you to various research approaches in social sciences, especially in political science.

By completing this course, you will be able to:

- Conduct scientific research, which is reproducible by other researchers.
- Identify theories, hypotheses, and methods used in social science research.
- Choose a method and apply it to your own research in order to answer your research questions.
- Analyze data and communicate the results in an appropriate fashion.

Prerequisites: None

Class Format

The course will be based primarily on lectures. To engage in class discussions, you are expected to complete all the required readings before each class.

Grading

Grades will be based on:

- Class participation (10% of final grade).
- Two homework assignments (20% [10% each]).
- Three research proposals (60%)
  1. First proposal: 10%
  2. Second proposal: 20%
  3. Final proposal: 30%
- Presentation (10%).

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Final grade:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter</th>
<th>Percentage earned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96–100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A−</td>
<td>90–95</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>80–89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>70–79</td>
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<tr>
<td>B−</td>
<td>66–69</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>60–65</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Less than 60</td>
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Because this is a core course for some students, some might receive RD (report delayed) before their final grades. Refer to the Curriculum Handbook about RD.

Assignments

1. Readings
   See the Schedule section below.

2. Two Homework Assignments
   Details about homework assignments will be announced in class.
   (a) Assignment 1: Experimental Design
   (b) Assignment 2: Large-N Design and/or Survey Methods

3. Presentation
   Details about presentation will be provided in class after we know the number of students because the presentation format depends on the class size.

4. Three Research Proposals
   You have to write and submit the proposal for your thesis three times in this course.
   (a) First Proposal: Research Topic and Question
      i. Length: 1–2 pages
      ii. Description: As the first proposal, you write a short paper describing your proposed thesis topic, in which you discuss:
         A. Research question (puzzle)—what question are you trying to answer?
         B. Significance—why should we care about your research?
         You don’t have to write your answer at this point. You will revise the proposal as you learn research designs and methods in this course.
   (b) Second Proposal: Literature Review and Research Design
      i. Length: 3–4 pages
      ii. Description: As the second proposal, you must write:
         A. Overview: Write a paragraph or two to overview your thesis project.
         B. Literature Review: Identify and discuss the previous studies relevant to your research. You should not merely enumerate others’ findings related to your research topic. Rather, you should carefully select works that are related to your question and highlight the differences from your own research.
         C. Research Design: Explain the method(s) (and data) you will use to answer your research question. How do you justify your choice? Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your design.
   (c) Final Proposal: Thesis Proposal
      i. Length: As long as required (max. 10 pages)
      ii. Description: You should revise the second proposal and complete the thesis proposal. You should write a proposal based on which you can write your master’s thesis.
5. Notes:

(a) Do not discuss your homework assignments with your classmates. You are allowed to ask questions to the instructor and TAs.

(b) You are allowed, or even encouraged, to discuss your proposals with your supervisor and your friends before you submit them to the instructor.

(c) Submit your homework, proposals, or presentation slide by sending a Slack’s Direct Message to the instructor by the deadline.

(d) Please name your files sensibly so that I can easily manage your files. A file name should be like `rm-proposal1-YourName.pdf` or `rm-assignment1-YourName.pdf`.

(e) Submit your homework, proposals, and presentation slides in PDF format. I do not accept MS Word files (.docx or .doc) or PowerPoint files (.ppt or .pptx), because I do not use Microsoft software.

(f) No late submission will be accepted.

Important Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due</th>
<th>Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Research Proposal</td>
<td>10am on Friday, April 14</td>
<td>Week 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Research Proposal</td>
<td>10am on Monday, May 8</td>
<td>Week 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Set 1</td>
<td>10am on Monday, May 15</td>
<td>Week 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Set 2</td>
<td>10am on Monday, May 29</td>
<td>Week 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Proposal</td>
<td>10am on Saturday, June 10</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation Slides</td>
<td>9pm on Monday, June 12</td>
<td>Week 10</td>
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Course Materials

Course materials are distributed through Slack.

Slack

To facilitate communication outside class, we use Slack. The Slack group of this course is

https://iuj-rm.slack.com/.

Visit Getting Started | Slack to learn the basic usage of Slack.

You are expected to post questions regarding class to an appropriate channel in Slack; you may create a new channel if you cannot find one.

You should not only ask questions but also answer other students’ questions if possible. Your answers do not have to be complete or perfect. If you find an answer to your own question after you post the question, please post the answer to share it with your colleagues. If nobody posts an answer to a question, the instructor or TA will provide an answer or discuss the problem in the following class.

You can join the slack team by clicking the following link:

https://iuj-rm.slack.com/signup

To sign up, you need to use your IUJ email address ending with @iuj.ac.jp. If you would like to use another email address, please send me an email with the subject “Slack for Research Methodology,” and I will send you an invitation.

Once you join the group, please use Direct Message on Slack when you need to contact me. I strongly prefer Slack messages to emails (I do not frequently check emails).
Required Books


Reference Books

You do not have to buy the following books. Because there are many different methods, different people need to read different books depending on their research questions. You should be able to find most of them at the library.

Schedule

The readings with **M** (Mandatory) should be completed prior to the lecture for which they are listed. You should at least skim readings with **R** (Recommended) either before or after the lecture. Although you do not have to read them, readings with **O** (Optional) should enrich your understanding of the topics.

The readings with hyperlinks can be obtained on the internet through the IUJ network. The readings with * are available in the course folder:

IUJ-home/IR materials/Yanai/ResearchMethodology/Readings/

This schedule is subject to change.

**Week 1** (Apr. 4) 1. Introduction; 2. Scientific Research in Social Sciences

**M** Baglione (2016), chapter 1.


**M** *King, Keohane, and Verba (1994), chapter 1.

**M** Toshkov (2016), chapters 1 and 12 (pp. 335–344).


Finish the mandatory readings for Week 1 if you have not yet done.

**Week 2** (Apr. 11) No Class: Instructor is out of town.

**Week 3** (Apr. 18) 3. Research Question; 4. Theory

**M** Baglione (2016), chapters 2 and 4.

**M** *Geddes (2003), chapter 2.

**M** Toshkov (2016), chapters 2–3.

**R** George and Bennett (2004), chapter 1.

**R** Gerring (2012), chapters 2–3.

**Week 4** (Apr. 25) 5. Concepts and Operationalization; 6. Measurement and Description

**M** Baglione (2016), chapter 5.

**M** Toshkov (2016), chapters 4–5.


Week 5 (May 2) 7. Explanation and Causality; 8. Counterfactuals and Causal Inference


R Gerring (2012), chapters 8–9.


R Imai (2017), chapter 2.


O Hernán and Robins (Forthcoming).


Week 6 (May 9) 9 & 10. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs

M Toshkov (2016), chapter 7.


R Gerring (2012), chapter 10.


**Week 7 (May 16) 11 & 12. Large-N Designs.**

- **M** Toshkov (2016), chapter 8.
- **M** *Gerring (2012), chapter 11.

**Week 8 (May 23) 13 & 14. Survey Methods.**

- **M** *Fowler (2014), chapters 1–7.

**Week 9 (May 30) 15 & 16. Comparative Designs.**

- **M** Toshkov (2016), chapter 9.


R Gerring (2012), chapter 12.


R Mahoney, James, and Kathleen Thelen, eds. 2015. *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.


**Week 10 (June 6)** 17. Single-Case Study Designs; 18. Communicating Research

M Toshkov, chapters 10 and 12 (pp. 328–335).


R Geddes (2003), chapter 4.

R King, Keohane, and Verba, chapter 6.


O Silverman (2013).


**Week 11 (Makeup) (June 13)** 19 & 20. Presentation

**Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to act with civility, personal integrity, respect other students’ dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their own efforts. An environment of academic integrity is requisite to respect for self and others and a civil community.

Academic integrity includes a commitment to not engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty include cheating or copying, plagiarizing, submitting another persons’ work as one’s own, using internet sources without citation, taking or having another student take your exam, tampering with the work of another student, facilitating other students’ acts of academic dishonesty, etc. Unfortunately, incidents of academic dishonesty, especially plagiarism, have been observed at IUJ. Plagiarism is the act, intentional or unintentional, of using other people’s words or ideas as your own. The university, GSIR, and I expect you to write your own papers and to provide full and accurate citations for any specific ideas or language—words, phrases, sentences—that you take from outside sources, including the internet.

Refer to GSIR’s Policy Statement on Plagiarism and Cheating, IUJ Professional Ethics Committee Guideline, and the Curriculum Handbook. Following the university’s policy, any act of academic dishonesty in this class will be reported to the faculty meeting and the Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) and may result receiving an F on the assignment, dismissal from class with a final grade of F, and even suspension or expulsion from the university, depending upon the severity of the violation.