

**Sacramento State**  
**Fall 2021**  
**POLS 100**  
**Introduction to Research Methods in Political Science**

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Class Meeting Time: TR via csus.instructure.com  
Zoom Office Hours: M 1-3, W 8-10 <https://bit.ly/3yjdVFt>

**University Catalog Description:** Examines the foundations of scientific research methodology in political and social science. Designed to introduce students to the basic conceptual, observational and analytical methods of empirical research in political science and related social sciences.

**Required Texts:**

- Yanow, Dvora, and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. 2012. *Interpretive Approaches to Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN 9780415878081
- Schaffer, Frederic Charles. 2016. *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide*. New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN 9780415893268
- Pachirat, Timothy. 2018. *Among Wolves: Ethnography and the Immersive Study of Power*. New York, NY: Routledge. ISBN 9780415528986

All three of the above books (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, Pachirat, and Schaffer) are required for success in the course. Only one, the Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, is available in eBook form at the University Library at csus.library.edu. The other two are not, and should be either rented or purchased immediately, either at the University Bookstore or elsewhere (Yes, the ebook or hardcover editions are fine, but the ISBNs listed above are for the paperback edition of all three books). The Pachirat book will be the focal point of our unit beginning with the third week of classes, so it is vital you receive it in some form by September 10.

**Suggested non-mandatory texts:**

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Second Edition*. University of Chicago Press, 2011.

Yanow, Dvora, and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*. 2015.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion, students will possess the knowledge and skills to:

1. Identify the differences between qualitative-interpretivist, qualitative-positivist, and positivist-quantitative approaches to knowledge production and inquiry in political science and the social sciences
2. Conceptualise research design and data gathering from one of the three predominant perspectives;
3. Develop techniques and skills appropriate to the design and conduct of political science research;
4. Communicate effectively and demonstrate analytic ability in political science research design and modes of inquiry.

Now that the preliminary formalities have been observed, please allow me to begin with an overview of the course, and then detail both the classroom and applicable university policies and modes of assistance to you as a student: Hi. My name is Daniel, and I'm your instructor for this course. About me, briefly: I have a family, I like to read comic books, I'm from the East Coast originally, I'm 41 and have been teaching at Sac State for about 5 years, but I've been teaching for almost 20 years. I also happen to be a human being. Most humans today call each other by their first names, and I see no reason to depart from that convention here. I hope to encourage your learning about how humans who study other humans can learn about themselves and about other humans, and I hope to do that by remaining as human as possible myself in the course of this...course.

There are a few things you should know right away about this course and the way I've chosen to teach it:

- 1) This course will be introducing you primarily to a method of research in political science and social science that identifies as qualitative-interpretive, to distinguish itself from qualitative-positivist and quantitative-positivist research. Interpretive research is growing rapidly in popularity and usage, but quantitative research remains the predominant method of already-published political science research, and so we will examine the philosophy and application of those methods as well.
- 2) Your work will be graded according the principles of "contract grading." The rationale is simple: grades distract from learning, grades encourage artificial

hierarchies, and grades can often be unfair. While no system can repair all of this, I have found contract grading successfully addresses and ameliorates most of the more problematic features of grading. The particular way I have chosen to employ this technique will be made clear later in the syllabus, and I'll certainly be available to address any clarifying questions you may have about it.

- 3) Because of these first two considerations, I am engaging in a research project in the teaching of this course, and I need your consent to be able to do things like take (anonymous) notes, quote moments from the classroom conversation, and observe classroom behavior. There is a term for "research about teaching" and it's usually called the "Scholarship of Teaching and Learning" (SoTL). In political science, there is a journal where you can find much of this research, and it's called the *Journal of Political Science Education*. Other disciplines have journals like this, but I'm not as familiar with those. You can give your consent by simply participating in the course as normal, and also contribute anonymous comments, questions, and responses to my semester-long questionnaire weekly in the Canvas portal that will be provided. You can remove your consent at any time, by letting me know any time during or after the course that none of your comments, feedback or work may be collected for the purposes of this research, and I am bound to honor your request with no consequences to you. To be clear, your grade is not tied whatsoever to your consent to participate in my research project. I will be presenting the outcomes of this course to my colleagues in the Sacramento State Center for Teaching and Learning's Annual Teaching Institute Symposium in Spring of 2022, and beyond that, I hope to be able to eventually publish the findings from this course in a peer-reviewed journal, which you will soon see is not a small feat. If you have questions about what your participation means, please feel free to contact me at [kirsch@csus.edu](mailto:kirsch@csus.edu), stop by my office hours, or call me at 530-425-9656. Thank you in advance for your help.
- 4) One thing we won't be doing in this course is a course-wide poster presentation of your work, but instead will instead seek to build community (and skill) in other meaningful ways, namely that you will be part of a semester-long cohort group of approximately five students, and you will be assigned to do a peer review (anonymously) of your classmates' work, who are not necessarily in your group. The incentive will be to be as generous yet also as substantively constructive as possible, and you can expect the same from your classmates in return.
- 5) You will possess the opportunity to turn in a capstone research design project that may be parlayed into participation in undergraduate research symposia, potentially at the university, state, and regional level.

Now we may return to essential logistical considerations about the administration of the ideas above in a practical manner:

**Online access:** This class is administered via Canvas, and all students must have regular access to the internet and Canvas. If you need help with software, technology, or equipment (laptop, hotspot, etc.), contact IRT (Information Resources & Technology). You can find information and resources for remote learning here: <https://www.csus.edu/information-resources-technology/remote-learning/>

**Prerequisites:** There are no formal prerequisites for this course. However, this course involves logical thinking, compositional writing, audio-visual lectures, group work, and high-level abstract and empirical analysis. General computer proficiency is necessary.

**Email and Virtual Office Hours:** The best way to contact your instructor is via email. Professor Kirsch will hold virtual office hours on [TBA]. The Zoom link is posted on Canvas and at the top of this syllabus. If these office hours do not work for you, email Professor Kirsch with your availability and we will try to schedule an appointment. I will send announcements and reminders to students regularly. It is students' responsibility to check their Sacramento State email and Canvas on a regular basis.

**Online Synchronous Course:** This course is an online synchronous course, which means there is only one set time we meet as a class weekly, either online or in-person, which will happen simultaneously each week at the assigned meeting time on Thursday. During the time of the Tuesday course meetings, you may use that time at your discretion to complete the necessary work in the class, including watching/reading/viewing asynchronous lectures from the instructor (or their transcripts). You are expected to independently keep up with the course lectures, readings, and assignments. The course is divided into seven modules. Each unit is two to three weeks of the semester, and usually includes two assignments due during and at the end of the unit (see course schedule at end of syllabus). You cannot complete all of the required readings, lectures, and assignments within one day or even one week. *You must pace yourself and start each unit's readings, lectures, and assignments at the beginning of the unit.* Module requirements are designed to be completed over the course of the entire unit's allotted time.

**Attendance:** Mandatory class meetings on Thursdays, mandatory viewings of lectures throughout the week, with time set aside on an as-needed basis for periodic check-ins with Professor Kirsch and the members of your semester long Research Group. Should you miss an in-class activity that your group submits for assessment or the instructor finds you to be absent frequently, your grade will suffer. Being in class is vital to your learning process in this course. The Thursday class meetings will not be recorded, and so you may find notes from a group member if you are not able to make it to class that day.

**Academic integrity:** Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, copying other students' work, and sharing quiz answers in an online group. At the risk of being clichéd, you only cheat yourself when you

cheat in class. I encourage you to do the work, it's very straightforward. Besides attending class and viewing lectures, there is some mandatory reading (an average of 55 pages a week), some literature reviews usually about 500 words, some practicum work, and some suggested reading and discussion. The penalties will adhere to University Policy, but at the minimum will result in no credit for the assignment in question, and possibly an F in the course.

For more information, review tips for avoiding academic misconduct on the university's Office of Student Conduct's website: <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct/academic-dishonesty.html>. Review university policies and procedures regarding academic honesty here: <https://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/stu-100.htm>

**Courtesy:** Please be respectful of other's opinions and protected class status during group and class discussions. Language and/or bullying behavior singling out other students on the basis of their race, sex, religion, gender identity, nationality, health status, or appearance will not be tolerated. Rest assured that everyone will get a chance to express themselves, respectfully. Do be conscious also of the need to allow a variety of people to speak. In other words, don't dominate the conversation. Please arrive on time or a few minutes early to the Zoom meeting if you can manage it. Be sure that your comments are relevant to our discussion and not demeaning or offensive. In short, please show respect and courtesy for everyone in the classroom. This includes, but is not limited to the instructor. If the instructor is talking too much, you are extremely encouraged to raise your hand and say so, to contradict him, or to ask a clarifying question or request that we move on. Such polite and warranted interruptions are the portrait of courtesy itself, so please don't be shy. It's your time, make it count!

**Participate!** This course covers topics that are relevant to the conduct of political science as a discipline and social science as a practice. Among other considerations, you will finally be able to respond to friends and relatives when they ask "yeah, but is political science really a *science*?" You are needed to help enliven the course meetings and to contribute to the learning environment. Arrive in class prepared to do just that. Particularly, please ask questions during class meetings. If you can't make the class meetings for some reason, please e-mail the professor a question and he can answer it during the (Thursday) class meeting, or privately. Tuesday class meetings particularly are a place to bring questions about content that may help you or your Research Group in your work.

**Basic Needs:** Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact university administration for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable him to provide any resources that he may possess or can access to make your studies more effective.

**Discussion Board:** Have a general question regarding the course requirements, logistics, and/or material? Check whether your question already was answered on the discussion board. If not, post your question. The professor will monitor the discussion board and answer questions as soon as possible. You should email Professor Kirsch with personal

questions specific to you and/or your circumstances, but general questions that other students may have should be posted on the Canvas discussion board.

**Incomplete course grade policy:** An incomplete grade is assigned *only* if (1) something unforeseen and unexpected happens that prevents a student from completing coursework, (2) the student discusses the situation with the professor, and (3) the student and professor agree upon actions and measures to complete course requirements. The student must bring to the professor's attention the unforeseen but justified reason s/he cannot complete course requirements as soon as possible and provide appropriate documentation. The student and professor need to discuss the logistics of the incomplete grade *well in advance* of finals week.

**Students with disabilities:** Sacramento State is committed to ensuring an accessible learning environment where course or instructional content are usable by all students and faculty. If you believe that you require disability-related academic adjustments for this class (including pregnancy-related disabilities), please immediately contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) to discuss eligibility. A current accommodation letter from SSWD is required before any modifications, above and beyond what is otherwise available for all other students in this class will be provided. Please be advised that disability-related academic adjustments are not retroactive. SSWD is located on the first floor of Lassen Hall 1008. Phone is 916-278-6955 and e-mail is [sswd@csus.edu](mailto:sswd@csus.edu). For a complete listing of services and current business hours visit <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/centers-programs/services-students-disabilities/>.

**Academic and writing help:** The Peer and Academic Resource Center (PARC) is a great center for accessing a variety of academic assistance. You can find more information on their services at their website: [www.csus.edu/parc](http://www.csus.edu/parc). The Reading & Writing Center can help you become a better reader, writer, and editor. Tutors at the Reading & Writing Center can help you with writing assignments. Find more information on their services at their website: <https://www.csus.edu/undergraduate-studies/writing-program/reading-writing-center.html>.

**Dealing with challenges:** Sacramento State's Crisis Assistance & Resource Education Support (CARES) office provides support for students experiencing challenges or are in crisis related to a variety of needs such as mental and physical health and wellness, stable housing, and food insecurity. Find more information on their website: <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/crisis-assistance-resource-education-support/> or email the CARES office at [cares@csus.edu](mailto:cares@csus.edu).

**Coronavirus Information for Students:** You can find information from the university on a range of items including, for example, long-term laptop checkout, health and counseling,

emergency grants, housing, remote learning, free or discounted internet options, etc. on the university's Coronavirus Information for Students page: <https://www.csus.edu/student-affairs/emergency-student-information/>.

**Course policies and schedule are subject to change.** It is the student's responsibility to check Canvas for corrections or updates to the syllabus. Any changes will be posted on Canvas and announced via email.

**Research Groups:** You will be assigned to a Research Group of about 7 people in the very first class meeting. Thereafter, our Tuesday class meetings will largely consist of the instructor spending 10 minutes with each group, and the rest of the class you are expected to support each other doing class work, either group work or assisting each other in your own individual work. There is very little in this course that involves your grade as dependent on that of others in your group, but there is just a little. Most of that will take place in the first two units. Here is the trick: I am making you dependent on each other a little in the first part of the course so that you develop enough trust to be able to help each other in your future work without the possibility of specific reward. I participated in a workshop recently about teaching both online and in-person, and let me share one thing I learned by going through the experience as a student: there is perhaps no practice in the modern teaching and learning world more alienating than throwing students into a breakout room with people they don't know at all, and expecting them to develop enough trust to work together and complete a joint assignment in only about 15 minutes. So, your groups are for everything: breakout rooms on Zoom or breakout discussions in class, Group Practicum work to be completed in the first two modules, and consultation on your own work later in the course. You may of course consult whomever you wish to complete your work, so long as the work remains primarily yours, but know that the research groups are intended for you to reach out with questions that you may not want to ask the instructor. Also know that you may ask the instructor any time if you aren't feeling comfortable with your group. And yes, if you are having trouble with a group dynamic, I can step in to attempt to resolve it, or possibly relocate you to another group if you wish. We'll take it on a case-by-case basis.

**Contract Grading:** This course uses a form of grading called contract grading. There are no points or letter grades in this course, aside from the final letter grade you earn at the end. The premise of contract grading is that if you do the work required to earn a B, you will see enormous gains in your learning. Traditional grading systems encourage you to work for "points," as if learning were a game whose goal was to get a certain grade. Contract grading redirects your focus on the process of learning. Contract grading provides you with reassurance that if you complete all of the assigned work to the best of your abilities, you will earn at least a B. This can free you up to focus on your learning, not your grade.

*To Pass:* There are a few things I expect of everyone who passes this course. I expect you to attend class regularly (online or in-person), complete all literature reviews and most of your other work. I expect you to possess enough fluency in English to comprehend college-level texts and to express yourself clearly in writing. I do allow and encourage you to revise essays that are not up to standard, and I'm happy to help you with these revisions if you make the request via e-mail within a week of its return to you. However, if after revising with my help, your work is still not meeting the standards on the second draft, you will not pass the class.

*To Earn a B:* You will earn a B in the class if you complete all of the work in the class (including the reading) with sincere effort and on time. This means reading and annotating your texts for every class session; submitting all assignments; and making revisions to your work if I ask you to. To earn a B, I expect you to come to class regularly and to be fully present in class without turning your attention to (other) electronic devices.

**To Earn an A: Keep your B as well as do three Post-Critique Reflections.** In order to receive an "A" in this course, you must meet all the criteria for a "B" and submit three post-critique reflections, which you must request of the instructor within a week of receiving either a "1" (complete) or a "0" (incomplete) on the assignment. You will have one week after receiving your critique to resubmit your assignment. The goal of these reflections is to help you as you are writing. The assumption is that attending these critiques and reflecting upon your teacher's critique will improve both your final written product and your personal writing process, thereby meriting the higher grade. Each post-critique reflection is worth 1/3 of a grade bump (i.e. from a "B" to a "B+," "B+" to an "A-," and "A-" to an A), but you must be eligible for a "B" in the course to receive the grade improvement. You may not use the reflections to move your grade from a "C" to a "C+" or a "D" to a "C-," for example.

**Mid-Semester Check-In** After Module 4, I'll ask you to complete a written self-evaluation in the form of a letter addressed to me (you may send it via snail mail to me, I'll provide an address once the class begins), postmarked by the deadline provided during class. In this letter, you'll tell me how you are doing in the class, in terms of your effort, annotations of readings, completion of work, essay writing, and participation. You are also welcome to share any struggles you're experiencing in the class. I'll respond with my feedback. At the end of the course, you'll have an opportunity to present your argument for what grade you have earned in the class and why, using concrete evidence. I can't guarantee that I'll agree with your assessment, but I encourage you to make the best argument you can, based specifically on the criteria set out in the syllabus.

**Canvas-Based Weekly Anonymous Feedback Assignments:** There will be a set of questions you are invited to respond to once a week, which are part of the research study I'm doing. Any feedback is helpful, positive or negative. It will be a Canvas assignment, but it will be completely anonymous, ungraded, and visible to no one else in the class. Your



grade is not at all dependent on your participation in the study or in giving this feedback, but it will help me evaluate the class and where people are as we move forward, and it provides an opportunity to see your (anonymous) quote in print if the piece gets published! Please ask where to find the assignment if it doesn't become clear in the course webpage.

**Grading Schema:**

Grade	Post-Critique Reflections	Incomplete assignments (deemed by instructor)	Late submission drafts (documented in Canvas)
A	3	0-3	0-1
B	0	0-3	0-1
C	0	4-8	2
D	0	9-11	3
F	0	12	4+

## **Module 1**

*Contract Grading, IRB, Methods vs. Methodology, Research Groups, Literature Review & Exercise (53 pages)*

Monday August 30-Friday September 3

Monday September 6-Friday September 10

Monday September 6-Labor Day

Kirsch 25-minute Lectures:

YouTube Lecture 1: Syllabus, Contract Grading, Instructor Introduction, Methods and Methodology Choices

YouTube Lecture 2: Yanow & Schwartz-Shea Podcast, Perestroika History

YouTube Lecture 3: Yanow & Schwartz-Shea Textbook, What is Research Design? Why does it matter? What are some of the current controversies between the positivist and interpretivist traditions?

“Qualitative-interpretive approaches have a long history of use in the social sciences. In political science their use has varied by subfield and by publishing venue (i.e., journals versus books). Both comparative politics and international relations have had comparatively strong traditions, with the latter having developed an interpretive (constructivist) strain over the last decades. As a more interdisciplinary subfield, public administration has a complex history with qualitative approaches prominent but increasingly challenged by those championing quantitative methods. Despite significant exceptions like Richard Fenno’s *Home Style: House Members in their Districts* (1978), American politics has been dominated by quantitative methods—particularly when it comes to what is published in journals. However, that dominance is beginning to be challenged. (See the January 2017 PS: Political Science & Politics symposium on political ethnography, in which 3 of the 5 contributors are scholars working in the American subfield.) Finally, while political theory is conventionally thought of as a “non-empirical” field, theorists have always used the kinds of textual methods common to interpretive approaches and a new generation of theorists is challenging that convention—using interviews, policy texts, etc”.-Peregrine Schwartz-Shea

Reading:

Yanow, D. and P. Schwartz-Shea (2012). *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. New York, Routledge. Chapter A. Introduction (pp. 1-14)

Chapter 1. Wherefore Research Designs? (15-23)

Chapter 2. Ways of Knowing: Research Questions and Logics of Inquiry (24-44)

Chapter 3. Starting from Meaning: Contextuality and its Implications (45-53)

Podcasts and Clinics: Peregrine Schwartz-Shae and Dvora Yanow, *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes* (Routledge, 2012):

<https://newbooksnetwork.com/peregrine-schwartz-shea-and-dvora-yanow-interpretive-research-design-concepts-and-processes-routledge-2012/>

Suggested:

Ron Schmidt, Sr., "Interpreting the Intersections of Race and Political Participation"

<http://www.wpsanet.org/papers/docs/RSchmidtPaper-WPSA2017-2.pdf>

Cecilia Lynch, "Critical Interpretation and Interwar Peace Movements Challenging Dominant Narratives" in Yanow & Schwartz-Shea 2014.

- 1. 500 word Literature Review due September 3**
- 2. Practicum Activity due September 10: Record your group in a Zoom meeting talking about the readings for 10 minutes addressing critical thinking questions from the instructor:**
  - a. What is the main difference between interpretivists and positivists?**
  - b. Why worry about methodology? Doesn't method make more of a difference?**
  - c. Can interpretivism make a difference in how we talk about social divisions such as race, sex, and class? Give examples.**
  - d. What was your favorite example to illustrate any of their points from the reading? Explain why.**

## **Module 2**

*Ethnography, Participant Observation, and the Community of Ethnographers in an Evolving Social Science World (160 pages)*

“What does it mean to study politics from below? How does immersion of the researcher in the research world contribute to the study of power? What are the promises, and perils, of social research that invites the unruly minutiae of lived experience to converse with, and contest, abstract disciplinary theories and categories? In this practice-intensive seminar, we explore ethnographic and other qualitative fieldwork methods with specific attention to their potential to subvert, generate, and extend understandings of politics and power. Readings draw on exemplary political ethnographies and narrative journalism as well as discussions of methodology and method in political science, sociology, and anthropology.”- Timothy Pachirat

Monday September 13-Friday September 17

Monday September 20-Friday September 24

Monday September 27-Friday October 1

Kirsch 25-minute Lectures:

YouTube Lecture 4: Timothy Pachirat and *Every Twelve Seconds*

YouTube Lecture 5: *Among Wolves Acts 1-4*

YouTube Lecture 6: *Among Wolves Acts 5-7*

Reading:

Pachirat, Timothy (2017). *Among Wolves: Ethnography and the Immersive Study of Power*. London and New York: Routledge. Chapter A. Preface & Dramatis Personae

Chapter 1. Act One: Wolfdog

Chapter 2. Act Two: Fieldwork Invisibility Potion

Chapter 3. Act Three: Science Fantastic

Chapter 4. Act Four: Ethnography and Power

Chapter 5. Act Five: A Natural History of Fieldwork

Chapter 6. Act Six: The Trial

Chapter 7. Act Seven: Among Wolves

**3. Practicum Activity-Play Segment Due September 24: Act out one of the scenes (about 10 minutes) of this play in a pre-recorded segment uploaded to Canvas**

**4. Literature Review due October 1**

### **Module 3**

*The Mechanics of Ethnographic Research (66 pages of reading, 75 minutes of lecture, )*

Monday September 27-Friday October 8

Monday October 4-Friday October 8

Kirsch 25-minute Lectures:

YouTube Lecture 7: Emerson's *Fieldnotes* and its enduring utility

YouTube Lecture 8: Yanow/Schwartz-Shea & Keeping Humanity in the Research Process

YouTube Lecture 9: Brief Introduction to Methods Clinic on Political Ethnography

Reading:

From Emerson et al., *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (<https://bit.ly/3r2Q4I5>):

Chapter 2. In the field : participating, observing, and jotting notes (pp. 21-44)

Chapter 6. Processing fieldnotes : coding and memoing (pp. 171-200)

Yanow & Schwartz-Shea Chapter 7. Design in Context: From the Human Side of Research to Writing Proposals and Research Manuscripts (pp. 115-129)

Podcasts and Clinics:

Methods Clinic 3: "Political Ethnography," with guest discussants David Forrest ([Oberlin College](#)) and Natasha Behl ([Arizona State University](#)). March 19, 2021. [Flyer for Clinic 3 \(pdf\)](#); [Chat Transcript for Clinic 3 \(pdf\)](#); [Resource List for Clinic 3 \(pdf\)](#).

Suggested: *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (entire)

- 5. 500 word Literature Review of Readings Due October 8**
- 6. 500 word Ethnographic Field Notes Observation Due October 15**

## **Module 4**

*Language and Concept Research (98 pages)*

Monday October 18-Friday October 22

Indigenous People's Day (observed in December)

Monday October 25-Friday October 29

Kirsch 25-minute Lectures:

YouTube Lecture 10: Elucidating, Grounding, Locating, Exposing, and Ethics

YouTube Lecture 11: Kirsch studying with Schaffer in "Europe" and his process, explained

YouTube Lecture 12: Kirsch's research by exemplar

"With regard to substance, concepts are foundational to the social-science enterprise. This course introduces you to two distinct ways to think about and work with them. One is the positivist approach to what is called concept "formation" or "reconstruction"—the formulation of a technical, neutral vocabulary for measuring, comparing, and generalising. The other is an interpretivist approach that focuses on what I call "elucidation." Elucidation illuminates the worldviews of the people whom social scientists wish to understand, and the ways in which social scientists' embeddedness in particular languages, historical eras, and power structures shapes the concepts with which they do their work.... you will learn basic elucidative strategies derived from ordinary language philosophy and Foucauldian genealogy and how to assess the goodness of social science concepts by recognizing problems of one-sidedness, universalism, and objectivism."-Frederic Schaffer

Readings:

Schaffer, F. C. (2016). *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide*. London & New York, Routledge. Chapter A: Preface

Chapter 1. Why Do Concepts Need Elucidating?

Chapter 2. Grounding: Elucidating How People Understand a Concept

Chapter 3. Locating: Elucidating Historical and Linguistic Specificity

Chapter 4. Exposing: Elucidating Power

Chapter 5. The Ethics of Elucidating

Podcasts and Clinics:

Frederic C. Schaffer, *Elucidating Social Science Concepts* (Routledge Press, 2016):

<https://newbooksnetwork.com/frederic-c-schaffer-elucidating-social-science-concepts-an-interpretivist-guide-routledge-2015/>

**7. 500 word Literature Review Due October 22**

**8. Concept Worksheet Due October 29**

**8a. Printed Grading Letter (not an assignment, so not mandatory to do) due in class October 28 or postmarked to the my mailbox in the Department of Political Science by October 29.**

## Module 5

*Interviewing in an Interpretive Context (54 pages of reading, 75 minutes of lecture, )*

Monday November 1-Friday November 5

Monday November 8-Friday November 12

Wednesday November 11-Armistice Day (Campus Closed)

Kirsch 25-minute Lectures:

YouTube Lecture 13: The Unlucky Number: Lee Ann Fujii and the positionality of the IMM Group in Developing Interviewing Methods

YouTube Lecture 14: Lessons from the Methods Clinic

YouTube Lecture 15: What's Missing: Schaffer and Ordinary Language Interviewing

Readings:

Fujii, Lee Ann. 2015. "Five stories of accidental ethnography: turning unplanned moments in the field into data." *Qualitative Research* 15 (4):525-539.

Soss, Joe (2014). Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations. In D.Yanow & P.Schwartz-Shea (Eds.), *Interpretation and method* (2nd ed., pp. 288–322). M.E. Sharpe.

Glas, Aarie. "Positionality, Power, and Positions of Power: Reflexivity in Elite Interviewing." *PS, Political Science & Politics*, 2021, 1-5.

Podcasts and Clinics:

Methods Clinic—Interviewing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IpBhtLNlrI>

**500 word Literature Review Due November 5**

**10-minute Interview transcript Due November 12**



## Module 6

*Drafting a New Research Proposal (60 pages, 50 minutes of lecture)*

Monday November 15-Friday November 19

Monday November 22-Friday November 26

November 24-26-Thanksgiving Holiday

Monday November 29-Friday December 3

Kirsch 25-minute Lectures:

YouTube Lecture 16: How to Do a Literature Review

YouTube Lecture 17: How to Choose a Method

Readings:

Chapter 4. The Rhythms of Interpretive Research I: Getting Going (54-77)

Chapter 5. The Rhythms of Interpretive Research II: Understanding and Generating Evidence (78-90)

Chapter 6. Designing for Trustworthiness (91-114)

Podcasts and Clinics:

None

Suggested Readings:

1. Yanow, Dvora, and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. "Encountering Your IRB 2.0: What Political Scientists Need to Know." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 49, no. 2 (2016): 277-86. doi:10.1017/S1049096516000202. (11 pages)
2. Yanow & Schwartz-Shea Chapter 8. Speaking Across Epistemic Communities (130-139).
9. **500 word Literature Review (yes, very meta: a literature review about literature reviews) Due November 19**
10. **Practicum Activity: 1000 word Research Proposal (old literature review from modules 1-6 plus additional scholarship for field of interest, and brief method and data-gathering proposal) Due December 3**

## **Module 7**

### *Peer Reviews*

Monday December 6-Friday December 10

Kirsch 25-minute lectures:

YouTube Lecture 18: What to do and What Not To Do in Peer Review

YouTube Lecture 19: Kirsch Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

#### Reading:

Edwards, Mark (2015). "Peer Review" in *Writing in Sociology* (pp. 1-6). New York and London: SAGE Publications.

"Reviewer #2" Methods Clinic: see IMM website

**11. 250 word Peer Review 1 Due December 10**

**12. 250 word Peer Review 2 also Due December 10**

### **FINALS WEEK:**

Monday December 13-Friday December 17-Finals Week

December 17 at 11:59 p.m. Final opportunity to submit incomplete work and/or post-critique reflections for a final grade. Also final opportunity to send in written pleas, or self-evaluations postmarked by this date.

**Contract Agreement.** By staying in this course and attending class, you accept this contract and agree to abide by it. I (Daniel) also agree to abide by the contract and administer it fairly and equitably. I (Daniel), as the administrator of our contract, will decide in consultation with you (the student) as to whether a plea is warranted in any case. You must come to me as soon as possible, usually before you are unable to meet the contract, in order to make fair and equitable arrangements. The plea is NOT an "out clause" for anyone who happens to not fulfill the contract in some way; it is for rare and unusual circumstances out of the control of the student.

*Special thanks for the construction of this syllabus, including the course structure and assessment procedures go to April Biccum of Australian National University and Ann Schadden of Sacramento State.*

*The instructor reserves the right to change aspects of this syllabus during the course of the semester, and will endeavor to inform students in a timely manner when this occurs.*

