<u>PECOSXXXX Analytic perspectives on peace and conflict</u>

Convenor for 2022: Dr Jana Krause

About this class

This class examines fundamental principles of research methods and design in political science as applied to the field of peace and conflict research. It prepares students to design and conduct an independent research project of their own. This class also equips students to assess the validity and reliability of published research in political science and to reflect on ethical challenges pertaining to research in the field of peace and conflict.

This class is organized as a series of lectures on the following topics:
Logics of inference in political science research (JK)
What are concepts and how to measure them (PL)
Selecting cases and using data (PL)
Developing and testing theory (JK)
Counterfactual thinking (PL)
Ethics and transparency in peace and conflict research (JK)
Causal inference from process-tracing and congruence tests (MBH)
Research design and debates in the field of security studies (MBH)
Research design and debates in the field of civil war research (JK)
Developing strategies to tackle challenges to inference (JK)

Knowledge

Students learn:
- Fundamental principles of research methods and research design in political science
- How to assess the validity and reliability of inferences in research designs and published findings
- How to discuss ethical problems and challenges in peace and conflict research

Skills

After taking this class students can:
- Identify and discuss different strategies for inference in political science research
- Distinguish between different kinds of research questions and strategies for inference
- Identify and tackle bias problems in political science research
- Design and implement a research design in the field of peace and conflict studies

Basic competencies

Students learn
- How to create and improve a research design suited to answer their research question
- How to think systematically about measurement, inferences and explanation in political science research
- How to engage in constructive assessment of research design choices and strategies for inference, especially in issue areas with limited or biased data
- How to provide constructive feedback on research design to others and how to integrate such feedback into their own projects

Assessment

Students will prepare an essay on challenges to inference on a topic of their choice in the field of peace and conflict studies. There will be a multiple-choice mid-term exam.

Short paper: present draft (1000 words) and provide feedback to other students in a structured setting (pass/fail)
Long paper: submit paper (3000-4000 words excluding references)

1. **Logics of inference in political science research (JK)**

   The field of peace and conflict studies is methodologically pluralist. This means that empirical research can use quantitative, qualitative/positivist and qualitative/interpretivist approaches. These approaches link to different research processes and logics of inference. In this introductory session, students will familiarize themselves with the basic elements of research designs and the different logics of inferences in different research approaches. We will discuss what makes for a good research question and compare strengths and weaknesses of different approaches and their understandings of inference.

   Required readings:
   - King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton university press.
   - McKeown, T. J. (1999). Case studies and the statistical worldview: Review of King, Keohane, and Verba's Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research. *International organization*, *53*(1), 161-190.
   - Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Dvora Yanow. *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes*. Routledge, 2013. Chapter 2: Ways of Knowing.

   Recommended Readings:
   - S. Van Evera Guide to Methods for Students in Political Science
   - Kalyvas, S. N. (2006). The Logic of Violence in Civil War. Cambridge University Press. Introduction Chapter.

2. **What are concepts and how do we measure them? (PL)**
   What are civil wars? What do we understand by the concept of democracy? How do we measure protest events? In social science research, the results and interpretation of studies often depend on how researchers define and measure concepts of interest. In this session, we discuss positivist and interpretivist approaches, their similarities and differences, as well as their shortcomings. Finally, we consider the sources of bias that can arise when measuring these concepts in peace and conflict research.

   Required readings:
   - Collier, David, and Robert Adcock (1999). "Democracy and Dichotomies: A Pragmatic Approach to Choices about Concepts." *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, no. 1, 537–65. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.polisci.2.1.537.
   - Kalyvas, S. N. (2006). *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press: Chapter 1 'Concepts and Definitions'.
   - Schwarz-Shea and Yanow 2013, Chapter 3 'Contextuality and the Character of Concepts and Causality'.
   - Weidmann, N. B. (2016). A closer look at reporting bias in conflict event data. *American Journal of Political Science*, *60*(1), 206-218.

   Recommended readings:
   - Kalyvas, S. N. (2006). *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. Cambridge University Press: Chapter 2 'Pathologies"

- Goertz, Gary, and James Mahoney. 2012. "Concepts and measurement: Ontology and epistemology". *Social Science Information* 51 (2): 205–216

3. Selecting cases and using 'data' (PL)

What makes a case worthwhile to study? How do researchers acquire data? And what problems may occur in this process? In this session, we talk about different strategies for case selection and data sources to use in peace and conflict research. We have a look at archival sources, qualitative data such as interviews, and quantitatively measured data and discuss their advantages and limitations in learning about peace and conflict processes.

Required readings:
- Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options. *Political Research Quarterly*, *61*(2), 294-308.
- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Dvora Yanow. *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes.* Routledge, 2013. Chapter 4
- Gleditsch, K. S., Metternich, N. W., & Ruggeri, A. (2014). Data and progress in peace and conflict research. *Journal of Peace Research*, *51*(2), 301-314.

Recommended Readings:
- Christopher Darnton; Archives and Inference: Documentary Evidence in Case Study Research and the Debate over U.S. Entry into World War II. International Security 2018; 42 (3): 84–126.
- Scharpf, A., & Gläßel, C. (2020). Why underachievers dominate secret police organizations: Evidence from autocratic Argentina. *American Journal of Political Science*, *64*(4), 791-806.

4. Theories and Evidence (JK)

What makes a good theory? What is the difference between a theory, a theoretical assumption, and an explanation? How abstract should a theory be to offer adequate explanation? How do we theorize in qualitative and in quantitative research? This session discusses descriptive, causal, and normative inferences as well as evidence derived from interpretation of sources. We examine different logics and expectation about what a theory is and does for political science research.

Required Readings:
- Gerring, John. "Mere description." *British Journal of Political Science* (2012): 721-746.
- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, and Dvora Yanow. *Interpretive research design: Concepts and processes.* Routledge, 2013. Chapter 5 &6.
- Kelle, Udo. "Mixed methods and the problems of theory building and theory testing in the social sciences." *The Oxford handbook of multimethod and mixed methods research inquiry.* 2015.

Recommended Readings:
- Kalyvas, S. N. (2006). *The Logic of Violence in Civil War.* Cambridge University Press. Chapter 3: Barbarism.

- Mach, K. J., Kraan, C. M., Adger, W. N., Buhaug, H., Burke, M., Fearon, J. D., ... & von Uexkull, N. (2019). Climate as a risk factor for armed conflict. Nature, 571(7764), 193-197.

5. Counterfactual Thinking (PL)

Many questions and theories in peace and conflict studies are concerned with cause-and-effect questions such as: do UN peacekeeping missions cause peace? This session introduces a formalized way how to think about research designs aimed at causal inference. We discuss the so-called potential outcome framework and assumptions necessary for identifying causal effects. Finally, we will talk about research designs that can achieve this, in particular experiments, and their pitfalls.

Required Readings:
- Morgan, Stephen L., and Christopher Winship. 2015. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference. Methods and Principles for Social Research.* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Chapter 2)
- Lyall, J., Zhou, Y. Y., & Imai, K. (2020). Can economic assistance shape combatant support in wartime? Experimental evidence from Afghanistan. *American Political Science Review*, *114*(1), 126-143.

Recommended Readings:
- Gilligan, M. J., & Sergenti, E. J. (2008). Do UN interventions cause peace? Using matching to improve causal inference. *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, *3*(2), 89-122.
- Morgan, Stephen L., and Christopher Winship. 2015. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference. Methods and Principles for Social Research.* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Chapter 3)

6. Ethics and transparency in peace and conflict research (JK)

Questions of research ethics are of prime importance in political science and in peace and conflict research. However, quantitative and qualitative/interpretivist researchers may have different understanding about notions such as research transparency, validity and reliability of research results. Furthermore, data, sources, and material in/about conflict zones can raise numerous ethical challenges connected to fieldwork, interviewing, or the use of archives and other sources in non-democratic regimes. This session focuses on questions of research ethics. The aim is for students to develop a thorough understanding of the main ethical research challenges and debates in the field of peace and conflict studies.

Required readings:
- Kapiszewski, D., & Wood, E. (2021). Ethics, Epistemology, and Openness in Research with Human Participants. *Perspectives on Politics*, 1-17. doi:10.1017/S1537592720004703;
- Hoover Green, Amelia, and Dara Kay Cohen. "Centering Human Subjects: The Ethics of "Desk Research" on Political Violence." *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6.2 (2021): ogaa029
- McDermott, Rose, and Peter K. Hatemi. "Ethics in field experimentation: A call to establish new standards to protect the public from unwanted manipulation and

real harms." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117.48 (2020): 30014-30021.

Recommended Readings:
- Carnegie, Allison, and Austin Carson. "The disclosure dilemma: nuclear intelligence and international organizations." *American Journal of Political Science* 63.2 (2019): 269-285.
- Tripp, Aili Mari. "Transparency and integrity in conducting field research on politics in challenging contexts." *Perspectives on Politics* 16.3 (2018): 728-738.

7. Causal inference from process-tracing and congruence tests
Several scholarly debates (e.g. regarding the causes of war) focus on specific historical examples and debates about how to assess and weigh the available evidence. In this session we probe specific procedures for identifying causal connections with a single or a small number of cases: process-tracing and congruence tests. Process-tracing allows scholars to assess how a theory actually performs when confronted with rich qualitative evidence, and to develop fine-grained arguments about causal processes at the micro-level. We assess how different kinds of evidence can be used to develop and assess specific causal claims via these two approaches, e.g. in explaining the causes of wars and how different state elites assess the intentions of their adversaries.

Required readings
- Mahoney, James. "Process tracing and historical explanation." *Security Studies* 24.2 (2015): 200-218.
- Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds. *Process tracing*. Cambridge University Press, 2015
- Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*, pp. 49-88

Recommended readings:
- Blatter, Joachim, and Till Blume. "In search of co-variance, causal mechanisms or congruence? Towards a plural understanding of case studies." *Swiss Political Science Review* 14.2 (2008): 315-356.
- Yarhi-Milo, Keren. "In the eye of the beholder: How leaders and intelligence communities assess the intentions of adversaries." *International Security* 38.1 (2013): 7-51.

8. Research design and debates in the field of security studies
If victorious states write history, how does this affect what we know about war? In this session students compare three approaches – realist, constructivist and behavioral approaches – to explain the origins of the 2003 Iraq war. Students will compare how each article applies evidence from the 2003 war in making broader theoretical claims, and assess the validity of this evidence. In this class we will also discuss how the relative scarcity, or inaccessibility, of evidence from defeated states can create bias problems and, ultimately, affect theory construction and testing.

Required readings:
- Lake, David A. "Two cheers for bargaining theory: Assessing rationalist explanations of the Iraq War." *International Security* 35.3 (2010): 7-52.

- Braut-Hegghammer, Målfrid. "Cheater's Dilemma: Iraq, Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Path to War." *International Security* 45.1 (2020): 51-89.
- Deudney, D., and G.J. Ikenberry. 2017. Realism, Liberalism and the Iraq War. *Survival* 59(4): 7–26.

9. **Research design and debates in the field of civil war research (JK)**
   In this session, students compare research designs in rationalist and constructivist approaches to explain violence against civilians, dynamics within armed groups, and civilian agency. We examine different approaches to theory building and theory testing, case selection, and the notion of empirical evidence across the rationalist/constructivist divide. What type of knowledge and understanding do scholars gain or lose by employing rationalist or constructivist approaches to the study of armed conflict? Can the approaches be combined, and with what consequences for research designs?

   Required readings:
   - Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The logic of violence in civil war*. Cambridge University Press, 2006. Chapter 10: Intimacy.
   - Checkel, Jeffrey T. "Socialization and violence: Introduction and framework." (2017): 592-605.
   - Krause, Jana. 2018. Resilient Communities: Non-Violence and Civilian Agency in Communal War. Cambridge University Press. Chapter: Introduction.

   Recommended Readings
   - Fujii LA. 'Talk of the town': Explaining pathways to participation in violent display. *Journal of Peace Research*. 2017;54(5):661-673.

10. **Developing strategies to tackle challenges to inference (JK)**
    Many relevant topics in the field of peace and conflict studies are difficult to research due to a lack of access to the necessary sources. Even where scholars can access interview respondents, datasets, documents, or archives, sources are always embedded within a specific political context and conflict narratives. In this session, students will learn how to think about the various types of biases that peace and conflict researchers encounter, and what methodological tools can be used to mitigate bias. Topics include dealing with missing conflict statistics in under-researched environments, inferences about ethically sensitive questions, and issues of data availability and manipulation in authoritarian settings.

    Required Readings
    - Sophia. "The problem of the missing dead." *Journal of Peace Research* (2020): 0022343320962159.
    - Krause, Jana. "Restrained or constrained? Elections, communal conflicts, and variation in sexual violence." *Journal of peace research* 57.1 (2020): 185-198.
    - Carlitz, R., & McLellan, R. (2021). Open Data from Authoritarian Regimes: New Opportunities, New Challenges. Perspectives on Politics, 19(1), 160-170. doi:10.1017/S1537592720001346.