Course Objectives

The purpose of this course is to explore different research paradigms with an eye towards determining what approach best suits your own values, research interests and objective. Over the course of the quarter we will discuss ontology, epistemology, methodology, axiology, rhetoric and other aspects of a research program in the context of various research paradigms. The end product of this course should be a clarification of what you believe in, as a researcher, should you chose to select one research approach rather than another, or should attempt to combine aspects of multiple approaches.

The class is designed around a policy analysis-as-argument framework where the objective of policy analysis is assumed to be the recommendation of policy action based on claims that are made by arguing about what the data imply. The object is not to learn about methods but about what we consider to be the object of our study, what is our understanding of and approach to gaining knowledge, the moves we make to acquire this knowledge and the language we use in acquiring and disseminating this knowledge. Underlying this structure regarding the nature, acquisition and dissemination of knowledge is a value structure, which may or may not be made explicit. We shall also attempt to understand the implications of these values.

Course Format and Requirements

The class format will be detailed discussions of the readings. The purpose of these discussions will be to elicit the ontological, epistemological, methodological, aixiological, praxis, chronological and rhetorical assumptions underlying each approach. The hope is that at the end of the quarter we shall have a clearer understanding of the implications of these assumptions for our approach to research. Each class will begin with a report of the previous week’s class discussions.

We will be discussing logical empiricist, interpretive, narrative, critical and action theory approaches to policy research in some detail. For this project to be successful, it is imperative that everyone attends all classes.

Essential readings have been marked by *** and all students will be expected to have read the essential readings. All students will distribute their responses to the readings by noon on the day before class. Each week, students will be selected to lead
the class discussion. **Responses from those leading the discussions will be more detailed.**

Students are also expected to add to the readings we use in this class. These may be in the form of book recommendations, book chapters, articles, etc. These contributions should add to our understanding of the materials we will be discussing class or add new insights to our interpretation of the subject matter.

**TERM PAPER** The final requirement for this class will consist of a paper that (1) outlines a research issue, (2) describes the research approach, and (3) explores one or more methods that might be used to address the proposed research issue.

Deliverables: **Week 3:** Abstract
At a mutually agreed time: Progress report
**Week 14:** Presentations

**Grading**

All students in the course will receive an A as the final grade. At the end of the quarter, I will meet with each student to discuss what he or she did during the course of the quarter to merit the A grade.

**Course Materials**

The course materials we will use are listed below. Some articles are provided on CARMEN. Journal articles that are readily available from the library have not been posted on CARMEN.

Minimally, we shall be covering the ontological, epistemological and methodological basis of the positivist paradigm and then turn to some post-positivist approaches. I am not prescribing any books for the course this quarter. However, Books that we have read, in some detail, in the past include:


The following reading materials will be available on CARMEN or directly from the journals through the University's library system.

It is expected that everyone in the class will have read the articles indicated with ***.

**Week 1 January 10: Introduction**

Discussion of class structure, process, roles, and expectations.

**Week 2 January 16: Problem Formulation**


**Week 3 January 24: Argumentation**

**ABSTRACT** of final paper due on **January 23** and to be presented in class.


**Week 4 January 31: Evidence**

Readings from the 1958 Daedalus issue "On Evidence and Inference."

Aron, Raymond, Suzanne Keller and Judith K. Davison (Fall, 1958) “Evidence and Inference in History” Daedalus, Vol. 87, No. 4, pp. 11-39


*** Hart Jr., Henry M. and John T. McNaughton (Fall, 1958) “Evidence and Inference in the Law” Daedalus, Vol. 87, No. 4, pp. 40-64

*** Lazarsfeld, Paul F. “Evidence and Inference in Social Research” Daedalus, Vol. 87, No. 4, pp. 99-130

*** Lerner, D. (1958) "On Evidence and Inference” Daedalus, Vol. 87, No. 4, pp. 3-10

*** Miller, H.T. and C. Fox 2001 The Epistemic Community. Administration & Society Vol. 32: 668-685


**Week 5 February 7: Causation**

**Logic of Inquiry Syllabus**

*causation.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Kincaid, H. Causation in the Social Sciences (Chapter 36)
- Lipton, P. Causation and Explanation (Chapter 29)
- Tooley, M. Causes, Laws and Ontology (Chapter 18)


Note that this Cartwright article is the first of a number of articles on causation in this issue of *Noûs*.


**Week 6 February 14: Interpretive Approach**


**Week 7 February 21: Narrative Approach**


**Logic of Inquiry Syllabus**


Chapter 2. What are Policy Narratives?
Conclusion


**Week 8 February 28: Critical Approach**


The Critical Theorizing of Jurgen Habermas. 184-212.


**Week 9 March 7: Pragmatism**


**March 14: Spring Break**

**Week 10 March 21: Action Theory**


*** Overview of Action Research


**Week 11 March 28: Ethics**


Chapter 1. Ethical Theory in Public Administration
Chapter 2. The Normative Paradox in Contemporary Public Administration Theory
Chapter 5. Ethical Unity in Public Administration


**Week 12: April 4 Systems Philosophy**

**Week 13 April 11: Complexity**


Kim, Y and A. Desai 2008 The rigor and relevance of complexity for policy modeling. Unpublished manuscript, John Glenn School of Public Affairs.


**Week 14 April 18: Individual Presentations**

**Week 15 April 23+: Individual Meetings**