

Supplementary Online Appendix for “Productive Learning Through Labs: Data Laboratories and Their Value in Undergraduate Education and Scholarly Research”

The following are a series of supplementary materials referenced in our article, which provide additional information on the design and implication of data laboratories (Data Labs).

- Oppression/Resistance (O/R) Lab Description, Emily K. Gade (Summer 2020)
- Independent Research Syllabus – Northern Ireland, Emily K. Gade
- Law and Violence Data Laboratory Syllabus, Geoffrey P.R. Wallace (Winter 2022)

O/R LAB

|Emily K Gade, Ph.D. |



Lab Basics

Lab Director:

Office hours: by appointment

Office:

Team tools: [Slack](#)

Email:

Lab website ([linked](#))

Lab Policies

- Consider cultivating a **'deep work'** practice
- Turn work in on time; discuss necessary extensions in advance
- Be inclusive, act with integrity, participate fully and **ask for help!**
- I have a documented disability and will make errors frequently. If you need accommodations, let me know ASAP.

Academic Integrity

- Academic dishonesty is not tolerated. Any thought, text or image not referenced must be your own.

Lab Description

At the Oppression/Resistance Lab, we conduct public-facing, grant-funded basic research focused on the interplay of systems of oppression and dynamics of resistance. We focus on projects relevant to the current political moment, ranging from state choices to enact internment policies against their own citizens to state use of WMEs on rebel behavior. We use a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods in our work, including text-as-data/natural language processing, network approaches, process tracing and archival research. We frequently collaborate with scholars from other disciplines and specifically recruit and work to support scholars from backgrounds underrepresented in the academy. We emphasize a team-based approach to research. We hope your experience with the O/R Lab will support your critical thinking, career goals, and skill base/confidence as you move forward through your education.



Lab Learning Goals:

By the conclusion of your time with the O/R Lab, you will have experience with:

- The concepts of oppression and repression and their relationship to state power structures.
- Understanding event data

Current Lab Projects:

Militant Networks

- Direct all coding questions to **Ava** (slack)
- Direct paper questions to leads:
 - WMDs and alliances: Bree
 - Outbidding: Emily
 - Frenemies: Arica & Willa
 - Airstrikes: Bernadette & Ramin
 - HTS and rebel media: Ava

Northern Ireland

- Direct all coding questions to Lead Coder **Shreya** (slack)
- Direct paper questions to leads:
 - Internment: Sarah
 - NLP/Archives: Sarah
 - Pro-Gov Militia: Dani
 - **Event Dataset: Dani**

Rebel Consolidation

- Joint project with the University of Washington/ Naval Postgraduate School
- Direct questions to Ava

Civic Virtue

- Joint project with Monash University (Australia) and Portland State
- Direct all questions to Jess Jones

and how it is built/constructed

- Clear understanding of the research process (how to write good research questions, how to do a lit review for a peer reviewed study, how to start to build a theoretical framework, what good hypotheses look like, and the basics of research design)

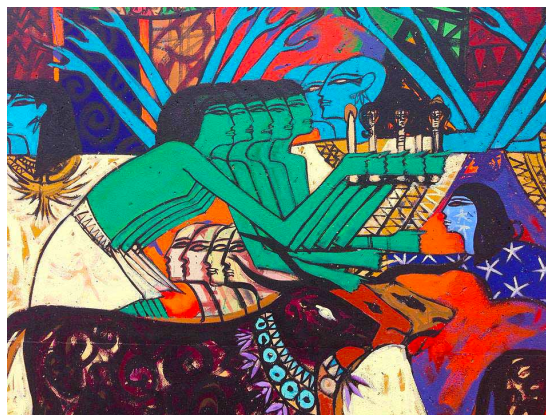
- Familiarity with tools like for team communication, project writing and data analysis, including: Slack, Asana, Overleaf, git, R and potentially python



Lab Principles:

By agreeing to participate in the lab, you agree to the following principles:

- If you are going to do something, do it right
- Don't cut corners/always be ethical
- Check your ego at the door; don't take advantage of me or one another; consider how your actions affect others;
- Work to become excellent at failing (this is the path to success)
- Always recognize the contribution and accomplishments of others/ give credit where credit is due; success should be contagious
- Don't oversell or exaggerate, but don't put yourself down; be honest, confident and proud of what you have done right; acknowledge limitations without putting your work down
- Honestly should always be your only approach (to professional self-promotion, working with advisors/teams, interacting with IRB, reporting research results, reporting research expenses, serving on promotion committees, etc.).
- Support other members of this team and do the best work you can



My Responsibilities:

I will strive to present materials and activities in ways that that respect and affirm differences in both learning style and background. I expect the same of you: while discomfort is an important part of the learning process, nobody

should be made to feel unsafe in this group. I will not allow space for offensive language or behavior as it relates to differences in gender, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, immigration status, intellectual and physical ability, sexual orientation, income, faith, socio-economic class, family status, primary language, military experience, political identification, cognitive style, or communication style.



Lab Role Breakdown:

You are expected to spend +/- 12 hrs per week on coding for the Syrian Militant Networks project, and +/- 12 hours per week coding for the Northern Ireland project, and +/- 6 hours per week on your own learning modules (aka “research enrichment” tasks) to advance your understanding of tools for the research process. The rest of your 40 hours per week will be breaks/lunch/time for the SOAR program. Please let me know if this breakdown is not working out as we move through the summer.

Coding for the Rebel Consolidation project:

This part of your role will involve being onboard to coding (creating quantitative data from text). In these project, we are coding foreign airstrikes, state attacks on civilians, violence against other rebels. Each has a separate codebook/protocol and we care most about accuracy. Effectively this process involves reading a set of assigned text and then filling out corresponding columns in an excel sheet. You **MUST** also keep a coding log every time you do work on this project, and turn in your coding log when you turn in each research chunk. Ask every time you have even an inkling of a question!!! Slack and questions are your friend!

Coding for Northern Ireland:

This part of your role will involve being onboard to coding (creating quantitative data from text). In this project, we are coding formerly classified government documents for data about pro-government militia, the Irish Republican Army and state forces. We care most about accuracy. Effectively this process involves reading a set of assigned text and then filling out corresponding columns in an excel sheet. You **MUST** also keep a coding log every time you do work on this project, and turn in your coding log when you turn in each research chunk. Ask Shreya every time you have even an inkling of a question!!! Slack and questions are your friend!

*Research Enrichment:***Basics of the research process:**

As part of the O/R Lab, you will learn some basic concepts and terms important to the research process, fundamentals of lit review for peer reviewed research and the basics of research design. These will take the form of self-learn modules that will help you advance your own research understanding and get up to speed on the fundamentals of research while simultaneously working as part of the lab team.

Learning to use research tools:

As part of the O/R Lab, you will learn how to use a range of tools relevant to the research pipeline. Not every team member will need to learn every tool, but these may include: Slack, Asana, Excel, R and Overleaf. Some interested students may also learn entry-level Git, Bash and python.

Date	Topic and Required Readings/Tasks
Before starting	Prep work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read this document! - Read background readings about Syria and Ireland - Meet with Emily to discuss any questions/your goals
Week 1: 2 June	On-boarding and Lab Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Meetings</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meet with Ava for for Rebel Consolidation - Join in to team meetings - <u>Coding</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do learning chunks for Northern Ireland - Learning chunks for Syrian state or consolidation as assigned - <u>Learning</u>: Mastering Excel, basics of event data, basics of asking questions in social science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do your excel homework (here + here + here) - How to set up data: here - Read: Asking questions in social science; event data in social science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geddes "Paradigms and Sand Castles" Chapter 2 • How to choose a research problem • preparing to write - Do your event data assignment (at the end of this document)

- Read this document!
- Read background readings about Syria and Ireland
- Meet with Emily to discuss any questions/your goals

- Meetings:
 - Meet with Ava for for Rebel Consolidation
 - Join in to team meetings
- Coding:
 - Do learning chunks for Northern Ireland
 - Learning chunks for Syrian state or consolidation as assigned
- Learning: Mastering Excel, basics of event data, basics of asking questions in social science
 - Do your excel homework ([here](#) + [here](#) + [here](#))
 - How to set up data: [here](#)
 - Read: Asking questions in social science; event data in social science
 - Geddes "Paradigms and Sand Castles" Chapter 2
 - [How to choose a research problem](#)
 - [preparing to write](#)
- Do your event data assignment (at the end of this document)

Date	Topic and Required Readings
7 June	<p>Finding your feet and basic lit review/mastering a topic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Meetings</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-1 meetings (1 each) with Ava - Join in to team meetings; meet with Emily to discuss progress/problems - <u>Coding</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code for your other project (Rebel Consolidation) - <u>Learning</u>: How to do a lit review in social science <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: lit reviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to use google scholar effectively + How to read an academic paper + writing an annotated bibliography + using Zotero with MSWord + How to write a good lit review - Do your question/lit review assignment (at the end of this document)
14 June	<p>Getting into coding; basics of social science theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Meetings</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-1 meetings (1 each) with Ava - Join in to team meetings; meet with Emily to discuss progress/problems - <u>Coding</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code for your other project (Rebel Consolidation) - <u>Learning</u>: Basics of theory <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Geddes "Paradigms and Sand Castles" Chapter 5, - Hoover and Donovan Chapter 4 ("Refinements"), - Bièvre "Falsification in Theory-Guided Empirical Social Research" - Do your theory assignment (at the end of this document)
15 June	Getting into coding; basics of research design
13 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Meetings</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-1 meetings (1 each) with Ava - Join in to team meetings; meet with Emily to discuss progress/problems - <u>Coding</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code for your other project (Rebel Consolidation) - <u>Learning</u>: Basics of research design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: understanding research design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resources on research design + SSM research design + Social Science Research - Chapter 5 + "what is research design" + King, Keohane & Verba "The Importance of Research Design"

Date	Topic and Required Readings
21 June	Getting into coding; basics of research design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Meetings</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-1 meetings (1 each) with Ava - Join in to team meetings; meet with Emily to discuss progress/problems - <u>Coding</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code for your other project (Rebel Consolidation) - <u>Learning</u>: Basics of research design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do your research design assignment (at the end of this document)
28 June	Getting into coding; basics of stats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Meetings</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-1 meetings (1 each) with Ava - Join in to team meetings; meet with Emily to discuss progress/problems - <u>Coding</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code for your other project (Rebel Consolidation) - <u>Learning</u>: Basics of stats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - watch: basic stats and modeling for social science (this is about 6 hours of video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - make sure to break it up!) - basics of stats 1 + part 2 + part 3 + part 4 + part 5 + part 6 + part 7 + part 8 + part 9 + part 10
5 July	Getting into coding; basics of R <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Meetings</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1-1 meetings with Ava - Join in to team meetings; meet with Emily to discuss progress/problems - <u>Coding</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Code for your other project (Rebel Consolidation) - <u>Learning</u>: Basics of R <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read: Why use R? + pros and cons of R - Watch: How to download and install R studio + Basics of R - R assignment: Follow swril lesson (open R file I sent you) + software carpentry R assignment (you may not finish this week; carry on where you left off after this week!)

Date	Topic and Required Readings
12 July	Getting into coding; basics of R <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meetings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1-1 meetings with Ava- Join in to team meetings; meet with Emily to discuss progress/problems- Coding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Code for your other project (Rebel Consolidation)- Learning: Basics of R<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Follow data carpentry R assignment wherever you left off and finish- Then start programming in R (skip lesson 8). You should get at least half way thru this module this week
19 July	Getting into coding; basics of R <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meetings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1-1 meetings with Ava- Join in to team meetings; meet with Emily to discuss progress/problems- Coding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Code for your other project (Rebel Consolidation)- Learning: Basics of R<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Finish programming in R- Do the Unix Shell assignment in Software Carpentry
26 July	Getting into coding; basics of bash/git <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Meetings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1-1 meetings with Ava- Join in to team meetings; meet with Emily to discuss progress/problems- Coding:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Code for your other project (Rebel Consolidation)- Learning: basics of bash /git<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Complete git software carpentry assignment- Write reflection on lab experience re what we can improve for the next group of students

Research Assignment Details

These assignments are designed to get you familiar with basic research concepts.

Please turn in each assignment to me by Sunday night. Some of these may be review.

Assignment 1: Understanding Event Data **DUE: Sunday, 31 May**

- Go to the following website ([ACLED](#)) - this is an event data collection for nonviolent and violent resistance movements. Look at the description of the dataset and the [codebook](#). We are making a dataset and codebook like this. Pick a variable in the codebook, download the data and write a short paragraph about the following:
 - What variable you picked and what you understand about it (is there a lot of variation? Do you think the numbers you see in the spreadsheet make sense based on the description of the variable? Do you have any questions?)
 - Two things you like about the coding rule for this variable
 - Any potential problems you could think of for the coding rule for this variable

Assignment 3: Lit Review **DUE: Sunday, 7 June**

Please complete an [annotated bibliography](#) **for 5 articles** based on one of the following (below). Please select the five articles that you think are most important/relevant to one of the questions described below. This will be interesting for us to discuss afterwards because we will discover people have different criteria for selecting what is interesting/important. Use your readings (above) to determine which sources to review.

For your five sources, please conduct a lit review on the following topic:

- **Pro-state Militia Influence on conflict:** When and why some states use/allow pro-government militia and how does this affect the conflict? Please pay particular attention to articles written in the last five years that advance theories about what impact these groups have on the trajectory of the conflict.

What to read for:

Each article summary should include:

- What is the question this article tries to answer
- What is the answer the authors come up with
- Why/how do they think they know
- Why should we care/why does this matter

Assignment 3: Theory **DUE: Sunday, 14 June**

Read assigned readings (above) as well as: [writing a theory](#) + [setting up a theoretical framework](#) + [constructing and using theory](#) .

After you finish those, read: "Why Civil Resistance Works" ([here](#)) and in one short paragraph, articulate (1) where in this article these authors stop their literature review and start their argument; (2) what their theory/argument is; and (3) what the testable implications of their argument are and why it is an effective test of their broader theory.

Assignment 4: Research Design **DUE: Sunday, 28 June**

Week 4 assignment (due Week 5 in class): Your homework will be to either use your own hypothesis or one of the below hypotheses and then discuss what variables you'd need to answer this question and how the data would need to be set up.

Available hypothesis if you don't want to make up your own:

- H1: State use of force against civilians will increase rebel use of force against the state.
- H2: Rebel use of force against the state will increase unsanctioned pro-government militia use of force against rebels.
- H3: State use of force against rebels will increase unsanctioned pro-government militia attacks against rebels.

You will turn in a one to two page write up of how you'd assess your hypothesis including:

- What your unit of analysis would be,
- What your dependent variable is (check out [this](#) reading)
- What your independent variable is (check out [this](#) reading)
- What kind of control variables you'd need
- As well as one [potential flaw](#) with this approach to evaluating this hypothesis

POLS 497-r: Independent Research Syllabus – Northern Ireland

Emory University
Spring Semester 202

Course meeting time: Wednesday OR Thursday from 1-2 pm

Course location: TBD

Course Instructor: Dr. Emily Kalah Gade

Teaching Assistant: Dani Villa, Emory University

Lead Coder: Shreya Pabbaraju (Emory University)

Email: emily.gade@emory.edu

Office: Tarbutton 336

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Objectives:

This course has two objectives: 1) provide promising undergraduate students with the opportunity to join a research team, learn about the research process, and advance their own research skills; and 2) to advance an existing research project on the role paramilitaries in the escalation of violence (funded by the National Science Foundation). I hope our meeting times and this course will be fun, informative and challenging and will give you a good sense of the social science research process, which will be useful as you decide what you want to do academically or professionally going forward.

Project Description:

The broader team you'll join is working on a National Science Foundation-funded project which evaluates the competing relationship between threats to national security and democratic legal order. Specifically, we seek to identify how state agents internally justify their decisions to violate their own states' democratic rule of law. In the process of this research, we uncovered data that we think can help answer a related question: How do pro-state militant groups influence conflict dynamics? Does the presence of pro-state militant groups contribute to greater conflict escalation and violence against civilians? The data collected from this project will provide an understanding of the distribution of pro-state militant groups, how pro-state violence affects conflict intensification, and how pro-state violence affects patterns of anti-state violence against civilians, state security forces, and pro-state groups.

My Role:

Along with Dani, my goal is to provide you with a clear understanding of three parts of the research process: literature review; research design; qualitative coding/working in coding teams; and finally, in a research "personal growth" of your choice. Dani and I will provide you with detailed feedback on three primary learning assignments (week 1-3) as well as check-ins on the thirteen required assignments (weeks 3-15) including detailed feedback on your two "personal" assignments.

Student Responsibilities:

1. Complete two ungraded assignments and thirteen "chunks" of research work (described below).
2. Attend all course meetings, unless you have advance permission.
3. Be supportive of your fellow students and do your best to engage rigorously with the course material.
4. Be respectful of others. I expect each student to engage in thoughtful discussion and respect others' opinions. This will only make our discussions more productive and more helpful. Any derogatory, demeaning or otherwise disrespectful behavior towards any member of this course or research group will not be tolerated.

Required Chunks:

Each chunk should take between 6-9 hours, except learning chunks which will likely be closer to 1-3 hours.

- 1 lit review learning chunk (not graded, but you will get feedback)
- 1 coding learning chunk (not graded, but you will get feedback)
- 2 lit review chunk (graded)
- 1 research design chunks
- 9 x coding chunks
 - o Example of a coding chunk for a student who registered for three credits: code -/+ 10 documents (each containing between 35-60 “events”); **keep coding log documenting coding process and choices**; type any questions into the questions sheet
- 2 x personal chunks
 - o Examples include: extending a research paper you’ve already written; working on graduate school applications; working through a statistical coding module; learning about other types of qualitative data analysis; doing a directed reading on a topic of your choice; whatever else you and I spoke about in our one-to-one meeting.

Course Outline:

- **Week one:** In class, I spend a few minutes introducing myself and getting to you know all. I will give a project overview and discuss the background of the conflict readings you completed. I will go over how to conduct a good lit review and what it should include.
 - o **Week one readings (complete before coming to class in Week one):**
 - [Brexit and the Irish Border](#)
 - [Conflict in Northern Ireland background \(Britannica\)](#)
 - [Podcast re 2010s violence in Ireland and its roots](#)
 - **Week one assignment** (due Week 2 of class by the Wednesday class meeting): Everyone will conduct research on the same topic independently and synthesize five articles. You will select whichever articles/sources you believe are most important and many people may overlap. You will get feedback on this that you can incorporate in your lit review chunks, but this assignment is not graded. Submit this on canvas by our week 2 meeting (the Wednesday class time). See lit review assignment sheet for details on Canvas.
 - o Resources to help you: [How to effectively use google scholar](#) + [how to read academic material 1](#) + [how to read academic material effectively 2](#) + [how to write an annotated bibliography](#) + [using Zotero with word](#)

Week two: Understanding event data review/discussion, thinking about event data in Ireland
We will answer questions about your Week 1 assignment. I will talk about what event data is and set up your readings/required assignment week two. We will also talk about what kind of data we are creating for Northern Ireland and why it is cool.

- **Week two assignment** (due week three of class by the Wednesday class meeting):
Understanding event data
 - o Read the following:
 - [Understanding event data](#)
 - o Go to the following website ([ACLED](#)) – this is an event data collection for nonviolent and violent resistance movements. Look at the description of the dataset and the [codebook](#). We are making a dataset and codebook like this (and you also participated in this in 499 last quarter!). Pick a variable in the codebook, download the data and write a short paragraph about the following:

- What variable you picked and what you understand about it (is there a lot of variation? Do you think the numbers you see in the spreadsheet make sense based on the description of the variable? Do you have any questions?)
- Two things you like about the coding rule for this variable
- Any potential problems you could think of for the coding rule for this variable
- Submit this on canvas by class time on the third week of the quarter

Weeks 3: How to code for this project

- We will go over “how to code” for this project, as well as a general overview of why we do this and what the end result will be. We will discuss potential pitfalls and areas where people often struggle. We will go over inter-coder reliability, how to use and keep a coding log, and where to go to answer questions.
- **Week three assignment** (due week four of class on canvas): You will get a “test set” of two documents (about 100 events) to code. You will get feedback on this that you can incorporate in your future coding chunks, but this assignment is not graded. Due in our Week 3 meeting. **REMEMBER TO KEEP A CODING LOG AND TURN THIS IN WITH YOUR DATA** – this is in canvas.
 - Please also read this [article](#) re understanding research design

Weeks 4: Research design chunk

- We will respond to questions from the sample coding chunk; you will receive written feedback about this before you start coding in earnest in Week 4. Today we will discuss research design with event data. I will give a short intro discussion – building on the [article](#) you read for today – re how to design a study that deals with event data.
 - **Week 4 assignment** (due Week 5 in class): Your homework will be to either use your own hypothesis (you need to get approval from me in class if you want to do this) or one of the below hypotheses and then discuss what variables you’d need to answer this question and how the data would need to be set up.
 - Available hypothesis if you don’t want to make up your own:
 - H1: State use of force against civilians will increase rebel use of force against the state.
 - H2: Rebel use of force against the state will increase unsanctioned paramilitary use of force against rebels.
 - H3: State use of force against rebels will increase unsanctioned paramilitary attacks against rebels.
 - You will turn in a one to two page write up of how you’d assess your hypothesis including:
 - what your [unit of analysis](#) would be,
 - the time interval you’d use (month, day, year?)
 - what your dependent variable is (check out [this](#) reading)
 - what your independent variable is (check out [this](#) reading)
 - what kind of control variables you’d need
 - as well as one [potential flaw](#) with this approach to evaluating this hypothesis

Weeks 5-15 + finals week:

- Each week from here on out you will turn in one “chunk” assignment (2x lit review, 9 x coding, 2x personal). In class time, we will answer questions, talk about each person’s research personal chunk, what they have learned, or any questions anyone has. You get to decide what you turn in each week, but personally I’d recommend spacing out your coding chunks. At the end of the quarter, we will go over what people did for their personal chunks so everyone gets exposure to more aspects of research.
 - Assignment: coding tasks, each of you will develop an individual “assignment” for your personal chunks with me/Dani, that will include readings and a detailed description of your final product and how that will be assessed.

Disabilities:

Students with documented Disabilities please contact me at any time if you need help.

I have a documented learning disability – I am dyslexic. I may from time to time (okay all the time) make spelling errors, etc.

Please see OUE one-page syllabus add-on for Emory policies etc.

POLITICAL SCIENCE (POL S) 403 B
LAW AND VIOLENCE DATA LABORATORY
ADVANCED SEMINAR IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Winter 2022

M/W 1:30pm-3:20pm

Savery Hall (SAV), Room 130

Professor: Geoffrey Wallace

Email: gprwall@uw.edu (preferred method of contact)

Office Hours: See course website for details.

Course Website: On Canvas (<https://canvas.uw.edu>)

“One accurate measurement is worth a thousand expert opinions.”

– Grace Hopper (computer scientist and U.S. Navy rear admiral)

“Better a little which is well done, than a great deal imperfectly.”

– Plato in *Phaedo* (On the Soul)

Overview

Why do countries comply with international treaties? Why are some groups able to resolve their differences peacefully, while others resort to military force? Why are civilians violently targeted to a greater extent in some conflicts compared to others? These and related questions have significant historical precedents, and important theoretical and policy implication in the contemporary era. However, before any of these questions can be answered, we need to have a clear sense of *what* exactly we think we should be measuring, *how* we are going to measure it, and *why* that measurement strategy is preferable to the available alternatives. For example, what is compliance and how do we know it when we see it? How should civilians be defined and what sorts of actions should be in/excluded as violent?

This seminar introduces students to some of the crucial earlier stages of the social scientific research process – including concept formation and research design, but in particular the many matters of measurement and data collection. In most courses, students are often presented with the “final products” from scholarly endeavors, usually in the form of journal articles or books (e.g., on different arguments about compliance with treaties, or targeting civilians in war). These publications are frequently the culmination of years of hard work, resulting from countless decisions large and small made along the way. But often left not fully answered are questions like the following: How did the researchers come to formulate the questions they asked? What challenges and trade-offs did they inevitably encounter in the early stages of the research process, and how did they address them? And how did they come to select particular types of methods and data for answering their questions (and perhaps just as crucially, why did they choose *not* to use others)?

In this seminar, students will address these and related questions by thinking through, and engaging with, the many steps that together form the data collection process. We will do so through an in-depth examination of different approaches to conceptualizing and measuring political and social phenomena, taking into account their empirical, methodological, cultural, and ethical implications. While these approaches are relevant across various fields, we will focus substantively on applications from the study of law and political violence – areas with particularly rich and varied methodological traditions.

To make some of these abstract principles more concrete and put them into action, this course also has a large collaborative and experiential component, where students will work individually and together on a larger data collection initiative related to violence against journalists worldwide.

All information in the syllabus, as well as additional readings and announcements can be found on the Canvas course website at <https://canvas.uw.edu> (additional materials will be posted to a shared Google Drive). It is the student's responsibility to check the website on a frequent basis, since this is where all course-related information and developments will be posted.

*****Important Note*****: By enrolling in this course, students acknowledge that they have read, understand, and agree to follow **ALL** of the requirements, policies, and procedures laid out in this syllabus.

Course Objectives

- Define and describe some of the main considerations in conceptualizing and measuring phenomena in the social sciences, including validity, reliability, and precision.
- Compare and contrast a range of data collection approaches, including archives, government and non-governmental reports, interviews and surveys, experiments, newspapers, social media, and satellite and other spatial data, among others.
- Identify and apply some of the particular dynamics involved in, and tools available for, collaborative data collection endeavors.
- Advance a larger research project on the use of violence as a strategy against journalists and other members of the media.

My hope is that this course will be enjoyable, informative, and challenging, and will give students a more comprehensive sense of the earlier formative stages of the research process in the social sciences, which may prove useful for students when deciding what to do academically or professionally going forward.

Project Description and Relationship to the Course

Data collection endeavors in the social sciences are becoming increasingly ambitious in breadth and depth, often involving large collaborative teams. As such, students will join work on a larger project related to dynamics involving various forms of violence against journalists. This component of the project focuses on the killing of members of the media through a data set on all journalist killings worldwide for the years 1992-2020. Specifically, this project seeks to identify patterns in the resort to violence against journalists: for instance, why are journalists targeted to a greater extent in some countries, or at certain periods, than others? The long-term hope is that this project will provide a firmer basis for being able to address these and related questions involving the causes and consequences of violence against journalists. But an important prerequisite for answering any of these questions is to have a comprehensive accounting of episodes of journalist killings and the different attributes and dynamics involved.

A core motivation of this laboratory course concerns the many benefits offered by an experiential approach, where “learning-by-doing” provides for a more effective and stimulating path to developing a deeper understanding of the data collection process. Following this belief, we will be integrating work related to this substantive project on violence against journalists throughout all aspects of this course to help us better think about different aspects of data collection.

Readings

There are no required books for purchase. All readings are available in electronic format and will be posted on the Canvas course website.

Course Requirements

****Important Note**:** The nature and weighting of assessments are subject to change based on possible alterations in the mode of course delivery due to Covid disruptions, university policy changes, or related health and safety concerns. Any changes will be clearly announced by the instructor.

Students are expected to attend all class meetings (see further below for health-related issues).

Final grades for the course are determined by the following components:

- Data Collection/Classification (aka “coding”) Chunks and Logs/Journaling (weekly) – 50%
- Data Presentation – 10%
- Reflective Essay – 15%
- Participation – 25%

Data Collection/Classification (aka “coding”) Chunks and Logs/Journaling

Students will be expected to devote time and effort (around 3-4 hours each week) to specific coding tasks related to the project on journalist killings. This will include keep a log and journal of the work performed weekly. All coding and logs will be due by 9am of the following Monday morning each week. More details to be provided.

Data Presentation

One of the most challenging, but rewarding, tasks is to communicate with others about data-related matters. As part of developing professionalization and visual/oral communication skills, students will work in small groups to give a data presentation on one of the “Data Features” assigned each week, putting themselves in the shoes of the investigators for the relevant project. More details to be provided.

Reflective Essay

Using their prior logs and journaling, each student will write a short critical reflective essay closer to the end of the quarter on the journalism violence research project and how it fits with one or more of the general dimensions of data collection covered in the course. More details to be provided.

Participation

Because this is a small seminar, we have a great opportunity to engage with each other and discuss the course material and issues related to data collection. In the aim of making this experience rewarding for everyone involved, full and thoughtful participation is essential. Activities will include analyzing the readings and course material, discussing the “Data Features,” raising and resolving challenging cases in the journalism violence project, and applying course themes to current events. Students will be evaluated based on the quantity *and* quality of their participation. Further details on the structure and expectations for seminar will be provided.

The following is a set of general guidelines for how participation will be assessed.

	Exemplary (3.5-4.0)	Proficient (2.5-3.4)	Developing (1.5-2.4)	Inadequate (<1.5)
Frequency of participation in class	Student initiates contributions more than once in each class.	Student initiates contribution once in each class.	Student initiates contribution at least in half of the class	Student does not initiate contribution & needs instructor to solicit input.
Quality of comments	Comments always respectful, insightful & constructive. Uses appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions.	Comments mostly respectful, insightful & constructive. Mostly uses appropriate terminology. Occasionally comments are too general or not relevant to the discussion.	Comments are sometimes respectful, constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Lacking in appropriate terminology. Comments not always relevant to the discussion.	Comments are disrespectful or uninformative. Does not use appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, e.g., “I love it,” “I hate it,” “It’s bad,” etc.
Listening Skills	Student listens attentively when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that reflect & build on others’ remarks, i.e., student hears what others say & contributes to the dialogue.	Student is mostly attentive when others present ideas, materials, as indicated by comments that reflect & build on others’ remarks. Occasionally needs encouragement or reminder from instructor of focus of comment.	Student is often inattentive and needs reminder of focus of class. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking.	Does not listen to others; regularly talks while others speak or does not pay attention while others speak; detracts from discussion; sleeps, etc.

Data Lab Principles and Expectations

Beyond formal rules of academic misconduct (see further below for general UW policies), there are also important norms guiding data collection and social science research more generally. By participating in this seminar, all students agree to the following principles.¹

1. We are a team engaged in a collective effort. Reciprocity matters, so consider how your actions affect others.
2. We are also a community. We should treat each other with respect at all times. We may sometimes disagree (in fact, this is expected), but we will try our best to leave personal judgements and attacks aside.
3. Honesty is always the best policy in all endeavors, especially when it comes to data collection. Data-related work should never be falsified or misrepresented for any reason.
4. It’s OK to make mistakes – indeed, it’s almost inevitable when doing anything worthwhile. Students will **never** get into trouble for making mistakes (and it’s better for me to know about a mistake now than not know and find out later!). What matters is being forthright, learning from mistakes, and moving forward.

¹ Hat tip to Emily Gade’s (Emory University) Oppression/Resistance Lab for informing and inspiring several of these principles.

5. To reduce mistakes, when engaged in coding give your full attention and effort. Data collection and multitasking don't mix.
6. Don't be afraid to ask questions (chances are almost certain that others feel similarly). It is by asking questions that we learn.

Class Communications

- Canvas: For most administrative or logistical questions not of a personal nature (e.g., readings for the week), please consult the website and syllabus first. General announcements will also be posted via Canvas. Please consult regularly.
- Google Drive and Docs: All your assigned files related to the research project will be stored in individual folders on a shared class Google Drive, and you will enter your data and logs/journaling there (accounts will be associated with your UW NetID). This also allows for remote backing up of your work, one of the first principles of data collection.
 - We will be primarily working with Google Docs and Sheets (here is a brief [introduction](#) to the spreadsheet software).
- Classroom Discussion: We will devote time in each class session to connecting the weekly theme to the journalist killings project, as well as answering and discussing coding-related questions and reflections related to students' logs and journaling.
- Zoom: Office hours will take place over Zoom.
 - Office hours will be an open discussion format, allowing students to bring up any other coding or course-related questions that were not covered in class.
 - Everyone is likely familiar with Zoom at this point, but here is a brief [introduction](#) to using this meeting interface.
- Email: For all other matters, feel free to email me from your @uw.edu email address with the Subject Heading: "POL S 403: ..." Expect replies within 24 hours, excluding weekends.

Grading Scale

The 4.0 scale used in this course will be posted on Canvas.

Grading Policy and Appeals

Appeals must be made at least 24 hours after, but within one week, of when an assignment was originally returned to the class, or the grade posted online. Verbal appeals, or appeals simply asking for more points, will not be considered. To make an appeal, students are required to write a typed memo (no longer than the equivalent of 1 page single-spaced in 12-point Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins) clearly explaining the reasons why they feel the grade they received was inappropriate.

Religious Accommodations

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#). Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request Form](#).

Accessibility

If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to the instructor as soon as possible so we can

discuss your needs in this course. If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to: mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you should likewise contact DRS at 206-543-8924, email uwdrs@uw.edu, or online at <http://disability.uw.edu>. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor, and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

No alternative accommodations will be granted in this course without documentation from DRS. Students interested in obtaining accommodations should thus make appropriate arrangements with DRS as soon as possible in the quarter.

Acknowledgement of Course Material Content

All of the assigned materials for this course (lectures, readings, audio-visual materials, discussion) are directly relevant to its central theme – data collection on law and violence. The assigned materials are all widely recognized as important scholarly or cultural works. Students who intend to take this class should be aware, however, that a number of the assigned works contain adult themes and language. In particular, the reports on episodes of journalist killings used in the main project may include violent and other troubling details. Students who believe that exposure to such content will detract from their ability to absorb and understand the required course materials, or complete assignments, are encouraged to reach out to the instructor to discuss their concerns, but may need to consider dropping the class. By remaining in this course, students acknowledge that the instructor has alerted them to the adult themes and language present in some of the assigned materials, and that they are responsible for all of the required materials, even those that they might find offensive.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is a serious offense at the University of Washington. All cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Arts and Sciences Committee on Academic Conduct, and may result in a grade of 0.0 for the assignment in question in addition to other potential consequences. The instructor takes instances of academic misconduct seriously, and is apt to pursue the most serious sanctions available under university guidelines.

University policies and guidelines regarding cheating and plagiarism can be found at <https://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>.

What constitutes academic misconduct? The University of Washington Student Conduct Code defines it as the following (WAC 478-120-024).

Academic misconduct includes:

- (a) **“Cheating,”** which includes, but is not limited to:
 - (i) The use of unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; or
 - (ii) The acquisition, use, or distribution of unpublished materials created by another student without the express permission of the original author(s).
- (b) **“Falsification,”** which is the intentional use or submission of falsified data, records, or other information including, but not limited to, records of internship or practicum experiences or attendance at any required event(s). Falsification also includes falsifying scientific and/or scholarly research.

- (c) **“Plagiarism,”** which is the submission or presentation of someone else’s words, composition, research, or expressed ideas, whether published or unpublished, without attribution. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:
 - (i) The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment; or
 - (ii) The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or acquired from an entity engaging in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.
- (d) **Prohibited collaboration.**
- (e) Engaging in behavior specifically prohibited by an instructor in the course of class instruction or in a course syllabus.
- (f) **Multiple submissions** of the same work in separate courses without the express permission of the instructor(s).
- (g) Taking deliberate action to destroy or damage another’s academic work in order to gain an advantage for oneself or another.
- (h) The recording of instructional content without the express permission of the instructor(s), and/or the dissemination or use of such unauthorized records.

If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism, please ask the instructor. The Political Science/JSIS/LSJ/CHID Writing Center also offers guidance on plagiarism, general advice on writing, and related issues of academic integrity:
<http://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/forstudents.html>.

COVID-19

We are all in this together! The health and safety of the entire University of Washington community is of the highest priority. Masks covering the nose and mouth are required in the classroom or other indoor spaces, regardless of vaccination status. Eating and drinking will not be permitted in class. The instructor and TAs have the authority to cancel class if students do not comply. Non-compliant students may be reported to the Community Standards and Student Conduct office. For further details on UW’s face covering policy, see [here](#).

If you have [symptoms](#), do not come to class and do get [tested](#). For additional information about COVID-19 and UW policies, see [here](#).

Self-Care

Undergraduate studies are hard enough in normal times, but these are unfortunately not normal times. We are currently living through a global pandemic, heightened economic uncertainty, a period of renewed attention domestically and internationally to racial injustice, and an intensely polarized political environment.

The Counseling Center and Hall Health are excellent resources on campus that many UW students utilize. Students may get help with study skills, career decisions, substance abuse, relationship difficulties, anxiety, depression, or other concerns.

- [Husky Health & Well-Being Portal](#)
- [Counseling Center](#)
- [Hall Health](#)

Course Schedule

The following is a schedule of topics and readings for the course. The schedule is subject to change based on the pace of the class. The instructor will clearly announce any changes.

What a Typical Week Looks Like

Topics are usually ordered thematically by week, meaning the two classes should be viewed as closely connected, often continuing on where the prior one left off. A general week looks like the following.

- Students submit and update their coding work and logs/journaling by 9am Monday morning for the prior week.
- Start with a general overview of the week's theme by the instructor, followed by small group exercises and/or class discussion.
- Time allotted each class to discuss work and progress on the journalist killing project, addressing specific questions/challenges, as well as connecting the project to the themes from the current or prior weeks.
- "Data Feature" presentation and discussion. This will usually occur in the second class meeting of the week, but exact timing will depend on pace and other considerations. Will be clearly announced ahead of time.

Week 1 (M 1/3; W 1/5): Introduction and Overview – Or, Why Are We Here? The Art and Science of Data Collection with an Overview of Journalist Killings Project

M 1/3: Overview of Course Content and Organization

- Hoover Green, Amelia. 2013. "How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps." (4 pgs).
 - This article provides a foundation for more effectively reading and understanding many of the subsequent readings in the course.
- International News Safety Institute (INSI). 2007. *Killing the Messenger: Report of the Global Inquiry by the International News Safety Institute into the Protection of Journalists*.
 - Read Excerpt 2-18 to get a sense of violence against journalists and one approach to studying the topic. Skim Appendix A (55-69) for a summary of some trends in journalist killings.

W 1/5: Overview of the Journalist Killings Data Collection Project

- Instructions and Codebook for Journalist Killings Data Set (On Google Drive)
 - Read entire codebook to get a sense of the full project, but concentrate on the variables listed in the accompanying "Instructions" document.

Training Note: We will be going over the basic files, organization, and tasks involved in the work involved in the journalist killings project.

Week 2 (M 1/10; W 1/12): What's the Question...but Just as Importantly What's the Story? Inquiring and Theorizing as First Steps in Data Collection

- Brancati, Dawn. 2018. *Social Scientific Research*. Thousand Oaks, C.A.: SAGE Publications. Ch.3 "Identifying a Research Question" (31-44).

Data Feature

- Eck, Kristine, and Lisa Hultman. 2007. "One-Sided Violence Against Civilians in War: Insights from New Fatality Data." *Journal of Peace Research* 44(2): 233–246.

Week 3 (W 1/19): Constructing Up or Tearing Down? Concepts as Fundamental Building Blocks

*****No Class M 1/17 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day*****

- Brancati, Dawn. 2018. *Social Scientific Research*. Thousand Oaks, C.A.: SAGE Publications. Ch.5 "Building Effective Concepts" (61-76).

Data Feature

- Cohen, Dara K. 2016. *Rape During Civil War*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. Ch.2 "Research Strategy, Cross-National Evidence (1980–2009), and Statistical Tests" (Excerpt 56-71) and Appendix "Notes on Data Collection on Wartime Rape" (201-208).

Week 4 (M 1/24; W 1/26): Getting Operational(ized) – From Concepts to Measurement

- Pollock, Philip H. 2020. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*. Washington, D.C.: CQ Press. Ch.2 "Measuring and Describing Variables" (Excerpts 34-49, 55-60, 64-65).
 - Don't get too bogged down in some of the technicalities (especially of the portions of the chapter that are not assigned). Rather, get an overall sense of different sorts of measures and their relative strengths/weaknesses.

Data Feature

- Fjelde, Hanne, and Kristine Höglund. 2022. "Introducing the Deadly Electoral Conflict Dataset (DECO)." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 66(1):162-185.

Week 5 (M 1/31; W 2/2): And from Measurement to the Collection Process – Some Best (or at Least Better?) Practices

- Lieberman, Evan S. 2010. "Bridging the Qualitative-Quantitative Divide: Best Practices in the Development of Historically Oriented Replication Databases." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13 37–59.

Data Feature

- Morrow, James D., and Hyeran Jo. 2006. "Compliance with the Laws of War: Dataset and Coding Rules." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 23 (1): 91–113.

Week 6 (M 2/7; W 2/9): First, Second (and Third?) – Evaluating Primary and Secondary Sources

- Thies, Cameron G. 2002. "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations." *International Studies Perspectives* 3 (4): 351–372.

Data Feature

- Kopstein, Jeffrey S., and Jason Wittenberg. 2018. *Intimate Violence: Anti-Jewish Pogroms on the Eve of the Holocaust*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. Ch.3 "Measuring Threat and Violence" (43-56), Ch.4 "Beyond Jedwabne" (Excerpts 57-58; 64-72 for a sense of how the various data were used), and Appendix (137-142).

Week 7 (M 2/14; W 2/16): Power to the People? Asking Around about Interviews and Surveys

- Mosley, Layna. 2013. "Introduction. 'Just Talk to People'? Interviews in Contemporary Political Science." In *Interview Research in Political Science*. Layna Mosley, ed. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. (1-28).
- Pew Research Center. [Writing Survey Questions](#) (including 5-minute embedded video).

Data Feature

- Straus, Scott. 2006. *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. Ch.1 "Introduction" (Excerpt 1-6), Ch.5 "Why Perpetrators Say They Committed Genocide" (122-152), and Appendix (Excerpt 260-264).

Week 8 (W 2/23): What's Valid and/or What's "Right"? Ethical Considerations in Data Collection

*****No Class M 2/21 – Presidents' Day*****

- Desposato, Scott. 2014. "[Ethics and Research in Comparative Politics](#)." *The Monkey Cage: The Washington Post* (blog). (November 3).
- Brooks, Sarah M. 2013. "The Ethical Treatment of Human Subjects and the Institutional Review Board Process." In *Interview Research in Political Science*. Layna Mosley, ed. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press. (45-66).

Presentation and Q&A on W 2/23 from Galen Basse, Human Subjects Division, UW.

Data Feature

- Van der Windt, Peter, and Macartan Humphreys. 2016. "Crowdseeding in Eastern Congo: Using Cell Phones to Collect Conflict Events Data in Real Time." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 60(4): 748-781.

Week 9 (M 2/28; W 3/2): Ethics Continued; The Trauma of Data Collection (for Participants and Researchers)

- Cronin-Furman, Kate, and Milli Lake. 2018. "Ethics Abroad: Fieldwork in Fragile and Violent Contexts." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51(3): 607-614.
- Loyle, Cyanne E., and Alicia Simoni. 2017. "Researching Under Fire: Political Science and Researcher Trauma." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 50(1): 141-145.

Data Feature

- Humphreys, Macartan, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2004. "What the Fighters Say: A Survey of Ex-Combatants in Sierra Leone June-August 2003."

Week 10 (M 3/7; W 3/9): New Technologies for Old Questions? The Future of Data Collection in the (Social) Sciences

- Zeitzoff, Thomas. 2017. "How Social Media Is Changing Conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 61(9): 1970-1991.

Data Feature

- Agnew, John, Thomas W. Gillespie, Jorge Gonzalez, and Brian Min. 2008. "Baghdad Nights: Evaluating the US Military 'Surge' Using Nighttime Light Signatures." *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 40(10): 2285-2295.

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