

Peace and Conflict Studies Program
University of California, Berkeley
PACS 190
“Senior Seminar”
Fall 2016
Wednesday 2-5PM
Hearst Field Annex B5

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Office hours: Monday 1:30-3:30PM

Learning objectives and structure of the course

This is the final core course of the Peace and Conflict Studies major. You will review your PACS coursework thus far and apply relevant knowledge, methodologies, and theories you have learned to develop a Capstone Project. Your Capstone Project will be the culmination and synthesis of your learning experiences at PACS and will pave the way for your next steps after graduation.

Course Outcomes

This course serves to integrate the field and prepare you for real world application. Peace and Conflict Studies rest on the convergence of theory, research, and practice and aim to empower you to make critical changes in the real conflict-ridden society. Therefore, you will create a Capstone that will be an integrated product of theory, research, and practice of PACS with a topic of your choice.

This course will promote active learning and will be tailored to your specific interests. Topics of your Capstone are as varied as your interests. You may focus on writing a rigorous analytical thesis or you may capitalize on your real-world field or internship experiences. In either case, you will be guided in 1) developing a research question, 2) developing and implementing a research design, and 3) analyzing and presenting the results.

More specifically, you will refine and cultivate the following skills:

- *Analytical skills.* By discussing research that advances different claims, and builds on different methodological approaches, you will improve your ability to read, interpret, and evaluate arguments and evidence, as well as your ability to identify causal logics. You will also develop competence in interdisciplinary literacy and understand how different tools can illuminate different nuances of the puzzle. By engaging with real-world scenarios and policies, you will eventually be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of policies, programs and actors.

- *Methodological skills.* Research methodology is critical. It is the pathway to finding an answer to your questions. Even if your question is good, your answers may not be as convincing without a robust design. The trick is, without knowing research methods, it is hard to project a path of how to arrive at an answer. A prerequisite for taking this course is that you have successfully completed your research methods requirements (e.g., IAS 102). We will refresh these methodological skills and apply them to your empirical project.
- *Communication and argumentation skills.* These skills are also critical anywhere you go. We will keep exercising them throughout the semester while engaging in class discussions and debates, as well as making oral presentations on your research plans and the final product at the end. Not only you will formulate a thesis and argument supported by evidence in your Capstone, but you will further present it and defend it publicly. In addition to defending your own project, you will also work on evaluating and constructively criticizing the work of your peers.

The second set of goals for this course is to help you through the transition to your post-graduate career. There is a life after graduation. You will need to have a job first to apply all the research-oriented skills outlined above, and most likely you will be applying them while working with others and for others. As PACS soon-to-be graduates, we will discuss:

- *Your portfolio.* We will explore your career paths and options. During the course, we will try to arrange guest speakers from various sectors, invite trainers for preparing your professional resumes and interview skills, to hopefully expand the horizon of your future trajectories.
- *Reflective, responsible and engaging citizenship.* You will explore what a “global citizen” means to you. What will you carry from PACS when you embark on your own path after this semester? By synthesizing theories, ethics, and principles covered throughout your academic career with real world problems, we will aim to achieve a fuller understanding of civic and ethical responsibility at the core of PACS and enhance your skills for lifetime learning and public service.

Readings are available on bCourses. Additional readings may be uploaded throughout the semester. The schedule may be slipping to accommodate the pace of the class.

Requirements

Pre-requisites:

- PACS major declared
- Being a senior
- Having completed PACS 10 and PACS 100
- Having completed IAS 102 (or equivalent)

Attendance is mandatory. The course will require extensive peer to peer interaction as research partners. The class will be divided in two groups; each group will meet in class

nine times (generally every other week) to discuss your current writing, critique your peers' writing, and gain mutual support. The remaining weeks are for individual work. You will be assigned a partner at the beginning of the semester and are encouraged to meet with your partner when your group does not meet in class.

Meetings are structured as workshops. There are bi-weekly assignments, and you will circulate the assignments three days before class (that is, on Sunday, 5PM). On the class meeting day, you will have 5 minutes to introduce the work and/or identify the main issues. Your partner will then offer her comments. The remainder of the class time will be devoted to discussion—you are expected to read the assignment of your partner and provide written comments, as well as to read the assignments of everyone else in your group and come prepared with comments. Class time will be equally split between the students.

You will develop a Capstone proposal by the end of the first semester. The proposal will include a clearly defined research question and research and practical framing, as well as a finalized methodological plan. If you are engaging in a practical project, the proposal will detail your goals and your implementation strategy. You will then carry out the research you proposed in 190A, including original data collection and analysis, over the course of the second semester (PACS 195). You will have wide freedom in the Capstone project you choose, but you are expected to develop a project that is feasible in scope, linked to your concentrations, built upon past work, and future-oriented, meaning your project should generate a set of recommendations.

The final grade will be computed according to the individual components listed below.

- *Peer feed-back* (20 points); you will be paired with a class-mate at the beginning of the semester and will provide constructive *written* feed-back on all his/her assignments. You are also required to read the assignments of everyone in your group and come prepared with comments.
- *Assignments (HW 1-5)* (50 points, 10 points each). These assignments essentially are sections of your final capstone that you will write throughout the semester to develop your project step-by-step. It is strongly recommended that you do the readings for the week in which your assignment is due while you are working on the assignment.
- *Capstone project first-semester paper* (20 points) and *capstone project class presentation* (10 points)

Policies

Attendance is mandatory. Assignments should be submitted on time. Late submissions will not be accepted and will be given 0 points. Beside extraordinary circumstances, no extension will be granted.

As members of the campus community at UC Berkeley, you are expected to demonstrate integrity in all of academic endeavors and will be evaluated on your own merits. Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work. In all of your assignments, including your homework or drafts of papers,

you may use words or ideas written by other individuals in publications, web sites, or other sources, but only with proper attribution—that is by fully identifying the original source and extent of your use, usually in the form of a footnote or parenthesis. As a general rule, if you are citing from a published source or from a web site and the quotation is short (up to a sentence or two) place it in quotation marks; if you employ a longer passage from a publication or web site, please indent it and use single spacing. In both cases, be sure to cite the original source in a footnote or in parentheses.

Students with disabilities should contact me after class or during office hours so that they can be accommodated. They will be asked to provide a “letter of accommodation” from the University’s Disabled Students’ Program.

The Capstone Project

The purpose of the capstone is to further develop your expertise in an issue of concern to the field of Peace and Conflict Studies and to demonstrate your ability to engage in critical analysis and prepare you for working in the field. You may engage in either a research project or a practicum project.

Option 1: Thesis, part A (25-30 pages)

Introduction

This section should present and justify the added-value of your research. You should state the problem under investigation and discuss its importance, from both a practical perspective (why should we care about it?) and a theoretical perspective (what we do not yet know about the issue? what can we learn from your research?). Then, you should concisely present your arguments and summarize how you will approach the analysis in the remainder of the thesis. Outline both how you will determine the validity and reliability of the evidence gathered and analyzed and the potential limitations. Finally, provide a concise summary of each section of the thesis and conclude with your findings and conclusions. Remember that this section is very critical to catch any readers attention, by explaining concisely what the thesis is about, how it is realized, and what is its value (from both an academic and practical perspective). You should add a separate section/footnote to acknowledge all people that have contributed to the realization of the project.

Literature review

This section fully situates your work within the existing literature on the topic you are studying. You want to outline what we know already about the topic and the problems. Is there debate on what existing studies agree and on what they do not agree? Are there contrasting hypotheses? Are there inconsistent empirical findings? Is there enough empirical evidence to address your problem and question? Do you find any biased assumptions that may have skewed the previous findings? In essence, this is where you outline how your study will contribute to the body of knowledge about the subject. Depending on the nature of your research question and your literature review, you will discuss whether your research will be an exercise of theory-testing or theory-building.

Theoretical framework

Here you discuss your theoretical frameworks in details. Remember that you do not necessarily need to have an original theory, or a theory at all (for example, you can start off an open question). However, you do need to state your assumptions and your guiding argument(s).

Research design and methodology Outline your plan for carrying out the study. You need to explain what methods you will use to gather the information and data you will need to address your question. Your research question should guide you in designing the most appropriate methods. Justify the choice of your research method. Discuss your sources, their validity and their reliability. Discuss how you will operationalize the main variables, and how you will analyze the data you will collect. If you are planning research with human subjects,

discuss how you will select them, recruit them, and deal with them. Identify potential biases and explain how you will cope with them.

Bibliography

This is the list of cited works. It is not an annotated bibliography. Choose a style (e.g., APA, MLA) and follow it consistently.

Option 2: Practicum, Part A (15-25 pages, depending on the project)

The practicum project can take different forms. You may build on your internship or you may engage in your personal practical project. The goal of the practicum is to integrate PACS theory and practice. The specific structure of this paper varies from case to case, based on the nature of your chosen project. If you choose to build on an internship, you can engage in evaluation research, for example.

The following criteria apply to the practicum option:

- If you choose to build on your internship, you need to have over 30 hours of internship and to provide me with a letter from your employer/volunteering organization, which explains your tasks and responsibilities.
- If you engage in the evaluation of internship, you will need authorization from your employer/organization to conduct such evaluation, and to collect and use their data.
- The internship experience should be relevant to the field of Peace and Conflict Studies.
- The components of the practicum should be decided in consultation with the instructor on a case-by-case basis. The following guidelines are applicable to most cases:
 - You should frame your own question concerning the goals and the deliverables of the organization.
 - Main tasks of the practicum should be to evaluate the organizations works, outcomes, and/or outputs based on the stated objectives of the organization, with a view to recommending ways to improve.
 - Alternatively (or in addition) if you are engaged in a personal project within the framework of the organization, you should discuss the implementation of your project and how it aligns to the goals of both the organization as well as PACS, and properly evaluate it.
 - You will need to include, at least, introduction, theoretical framework, analysis on the organizations theory of change, log frame of the organization, reflection of your experience, and conclusion.
- Other options, such as the realization of a personal project, will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.
- Group projects are accepted, but the final capstone thesis should be individually written.

In any case, your final product of the semester should include the following:

- statement of the problem, your driving question and goal;
- justification and the importance of your question/goal;
- theoretical framework and hypothesis, expected “theories of change”, expected outcomes;
- literature review that points out the strengths and weaknesses of the surveyed literature, and clearly identify the contribution of your project;
- a discussion of the methodological choices, preliminary identification of variables, proposed data collection and analysis, if applicable;
- a discussion of the steps for implementation;
- bibliographic references.

Schedule

It is strongly recommended that you do the readings for the week in which your assignment is due while you are working on the assignment.

We will read many chapters from this book (Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. Chicago: University of Chicago Press). The selected chapters are available on the course website as well as on the reader. However, you may want to consider to buy the entire book, perhaps on Amazon.

Week 1 (August 24) Group 1 & 2 —Introduction

Overview of the course. Doing scientific research in the social sciences. Discussion of research in Peace and Conflict Studies and of students' capstone project ideas.

- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd ed. Chicago Guides to Writing, Editing, and Publishing. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008. (Prologue)

Suggested readings:

- King, Kehoane, Verba (1994) *Designing social inquiry*, Princeton University Press. "Chapter 1: The *Science* in Social Science"

Week 2 (August 31) Group 1 —Developing a research question in PACS

- Booth, Wayne C. *Craft of Research* (3rd Edition)—*Chapter 3: From Topics to Questions, Chapter 4: From Questions to a Problem*

HW 1 (Due on Sunday 9/28, 5PM): Research proposal. "Review your field of concentration, reflect on the courses taken, and explore open questions and your personal interests. Based on this reflection, identify one or more topics you would like to study. If you will engage in the practicum project, describe the goals and activities of your organization and identify the individual project you will be pursuing there and/or the components of your work or the work of the organization that you propose to evaluate." Everyone reads all proposals and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 3 (September 7) Group 2 —Developing a research question in PACS

- Booth, Wayne C. *Craft of Research* (3rd Edition)—*Chapter 3: From Topics to Questions, Chapter 4: From Questions to a Problem*

HW 1 (Due on Sunday 9/5, 5PM): Research proposal. "Review your field of concentration, reflect on the courses taken, and explore open questions and your personal interests. Based on this reflection, identify one or more topics you would like to study. If you will engage

in the practicum project, describe the goals and activities of your organization and identify the individual project you will be pursuing there and/or the components of your work or the work of the organization that you propose to evaluate.” Everyone reads all proposals and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 4 (September 14) Group 1— Finalize RQ. Significance

Discussion on significance of your projects. Lecture on research methods—How to select the best methodology/methodologies for your capstone project

- Booth, Wayne C. *Craft of Research* (3rd Edition)—*Chapter 5: From Problems to Sources* and *Chapter 6: Using Sources*
- Prezworski, A and Salomon, F., *On the Art of Writing Proposals*, Social Science Research Council, 1995.
- John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Third Edition. Los Angeles: Sage. Chapter 4, “Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations—Writing Ideas” (pag. 83-92 only)

HW 2 (Sunday 9/11, 5PM): Literature review/Significance. “If applicable, rework your research question. Write section on state of the art and significance: why is your question/project significant? Situates your work within the existing literature on the topic you are studying. You want to outline what we know already about the topic and the problems.” (Use Booth, Chapter 3-6 as a guide). Everyone reads all proposals and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 5 (September 21)— Group 2— Finalize RQ. Significance

Discussion on significance of your projects. Lecture on research methods—How to select the best methodology/methodologies for your capstone project

- Booth, Wayne C. *Craft of Research* (3rd Edition)—*Chapter 5: From Problems to Sources* and *Chapter 6: Using Sources*
- Prezworski, A and Salomon, F., *On the Art of Writing Proposals*, Social Science Research Council, 1995.
- John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Third Edition. Los Angeles: Sage. Chapter 4, “Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations—Writing Ideas” (pag. 83-92 only)

HW 2(Sunday 9/18, 5PM): Literature review/Significance. “If applicable, rework your research question. Write section on state of the art and significance: why is your question/project significant? Situates your work within the existing literature on the topic you are studying. You want to outline what we know already about the topic and the problems.”

(Use Booth, Chapter 3-6 as a guide). Everyone reads all proposals and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 6 (September 28) Group 1 —Argument

- Booth et al. The Craft of Research. (Chap 7 Making good arguments; Chap 8 Making claims)

HW 3 (due Sunday 9/25, 5PM): Theory section: Write theory section. Everyone reads all proposals and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 7 (October 5) Group 2 —Argument

- Booth et al. The Craft of Research. (Chap 7 Making good arguments; Chap 8 Making claims)

HW 3 (due Sunday 10/2, 5PM): Theory section: Write theory section. Everyone reads all proposals and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 8 (October 12) Group 1 & 2— Professional portfolio

HW (due Sunday 10/9, 5PM): Submit your professional portfolio: CV/resume, cover letter, samples. Everyone reads all portfolios and come prepared with comments in class.

Week 9 (October 19)Group 1 —Methods

Experiments and case studies

- Rose McDermott (2002) “Experimental Methodology in Political Science,” Political Analysis
- Jason Seawright and John Gerring (2008) Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options, Political Research Quarterly 2008; 61; 294

Interviews and Focus Groups

- Brouneus, Karen. “In-Depth Interviewing: The Process, Skill and Ethics of Interviews in Peace Research.” In Understanding Peace Research: Methods and Challenges, 13045.
- Lee Ann Fujii (2010) Shades of truth and lies: Interpreting testimonies of war and violence, Journal of Peace Research 2010 47: 231
- Daniel W. Turner, III (2010) Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators, The Qualitative Report Volume 15 Number 3 May 2010 754-760

- Sderstrm, Johanna. “Focus Groups: Safety in Numbers?” In Understanding Peace Research: Methods and Challenges, 14664.
- Richard Krueger and Mary Ann Casey, “Focus Groups. A practical guide for applied research.” 4th edition. Sage publications, 2009. Chapter 1 (pg. 1-15) and Chapter 3 (pg. 35-61)
- Ellen Taylor-Powell, Marcus Renner (2003) *Analyzing Qualitative data*

HW 4 (due 10/16, 5PM) Method section. “Write section on methods. If using experiments/case study/interviews/focus groups, prepare supporting documentation (case study selection, questions...)” (The specific assignment is subject to change, based on your capstone research) Everyone reads all documents and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 10 (October 26) Group 2 —Methods

Experiments and case studies

- Rose McDermott (2002) “Experimental Methodology in Political Science,” Political Analysis
- Jason Seawright and John Gerring (2008) Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options, Political Research Quarterly 2008; 61; 294

Interviews and Focus Groups

- Brouneus, Karen. “In-Depth Interviewing: The Process, Skill and Ethics of Interviews in Peace Research.” In Understanding Peace Research: Methods and Challenges, 13045.
- Lee Ann Fujii (2010) Shades of truth and lies: Interpreting testimonies of war and violence, Journal of Peace Research 2010 47: 231
- Daniel W. Turner, III (2010) Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators, The Qualitative Report Volume 15 Number 3 May 2010 754-760
- Sderstrm, Johanna. “Focus Groups: Safety in Numbers?” In Understanding Peace Research: Methods and Challenges, 14664.
- Richard Krueger and Mary Ann Casey, “Focus Groups. A practical guide for applied research.” 4th edition. Sage publications, 2009. Chapter 1 (pg. 1-15) and Chapter 3 (pg. 35-61)

HW 4 (due 10/23, 5PM) Method section. “Write section on methods. If using experiments/case study/interviews/focus groups, prepare supporting documentation (case study selection, questions...)” (The specific assignment is subject to change, based on your capstone research) Everyone reads all documents and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 11 (November 2) Group 1 —Methods

Surveys

- John Creswell, *Chapter 8, Quantitative methods–Surveys* (156-166)
- Kristine Eck *Survey research in Conflict and Post-conflict Societies*, in Höglund and Magnus (2011) “ Understanding Peace research”
- Laura Colosi, *Designing an Effective Questionnaire*
- Ellen Taylor-Powell (2003) *Sampling*
- Jennifer Leahy, “Using excel for analyzing survey questionnaires”

HW 5 (due 10/30, 5PM) Method section. “(Re-)Write section on methods. If using surveys, prepare supporting documentation (sampling, instrument)” Everyone reads all documents and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 12 (November 9) Group 2 —Methods

Surveys

- John Creswell, *Chapter 8, Quantitative methods–Surveys* (156-166)
- Kristine Eck *Survey research in Conflict and Post-conflict Societies*, in Höglund and Magnus (2011) “ Understanding Peace research”
- Laura Colosi, *Designing an Effective Questionnaire*
- Ellen Taylor-Powell (2003) *Sampling*
- Jennifer Leahy, “Using excel for analyzing survey questionnaires”

HW 5 (due 11/6, 5PM) Method section. “(Re-)Write section on methods. If using surveys, prepare supporting documentation (sampling, instrument)” Everyone reads all documents and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 13 (November 16) Group 1 —Capstone proposal presentations

HW (due Sunday 11/13, 5PM): Final paper draft (all sections)

Everyone reads all proposals and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 14 (November 23) — Non instructional day

Week 15 (November 30) Group 2—Capstone project presentations

HW (due Sunday 11/27, 5PM): Final paper draft (all sections)

Everyone reads all proposals and come prepared with comments in class. Partners bring written comments

Week 16 (December 7)—RRR week

December 14: Capstone project due (2PM)