Description/Goal/Requirements

This is a methodological/meta-theoretical introduction to PhD-level research and writing. It also highlights certain cutting-edge research programs in political and historical sociology. All interested TUFS PhD students are welcome to attend the course; however, once you are in, you will have to complete all your assignments and you will not be allowed to withdraw from the class in the midcourse (therefore, please think carefully before registering this course; see also my policy on course credits in the below). The required assignments are (1) weekly readings and active seminar participation, and (2) writing either (a) the first draft of an original research paper of quality potentially publishable at peer-reviewed academic journals or (b) an extensive “review essay” of an academic subfield—in both cases, the expected length is between 8,000 and 10,000 words.

Make sure to consult the instructor with regard to the draft outline of your research paper (or your “review essay”) and receive his feedback by the midsemester point (that is, November 15). For the details of the “review essay” option, see the guidelines posted in the TUFS Moodle (for access to the course site in the TUFS Moodle, see below). The modified and final version of your fully-written outline needs to be approved by the instructor by the first week of December.

For the structure of a paper outline, see the “Guidelines on Paper Outlines” posted in the Moodle. Additional resources regarding how to find puzzles and prepare paper outlines, as well as examples of “review essays,” are posted in the Moodle. For citation style, follow the “Recommended Citation Guidelines” also posted in the Moodle.

The paper assignment is due via email on Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Course Credits and Grading

You will earn two credits upon completion if (and only if) I am a member of your PhD supervisory committee. If I am not part of your committee, you may attend and fully participate in the course but will not earn any credit. (If you are not sure who are or will be in your committee, urgently consult with your main academic supervisor.)

Active classroom participation: 50%
Final assignment (a draft paper): 50%

Schedule

Week 1 (October 4) General introduction (goals, requirements, credits, and committee formation).

Week 2 (October 11): Concept (1)—the Positivist Tradition
Week 3 (October 18): Concept (2)—the Interpretivist Tradition
Week 4 (October 25): Social Construction of Reality
Week 5 (November 1): Culture in Interaction
Week 6 (November 8): Culture in Contention
Week 7 (November 15): Temporality (1)

(November 22) School holiday—no class
Week 8 (November 29) Course holiday [the instructor will be traveling]—no class
Week 9 (December 6): Temporality (2)
Week 10 (December 13): Historical Sociology
Week 11 (December 20): Events
Week 12 (January 10): Comparison
Week 13 (January 17): Single-Outcome Studies

Paper is due on Wednesday, January 31.

Readings

A. REQUIRED READING “ON THE SIDE” (posted in the Moodle; make sure to read—or re-read—these before you start working on your paper/“review essay” assignment):

On the meta-theoretical goals of social scientific research and finding “puzzles”:


On the stylistic requirements of academic writing:


B. WEEKLY SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNED READINGS

Week 1 (October 4) General introduction (course goals, requirements, and credits).

Week 2 (October 11): Concept (1)—the Positivist Tradition

Required Reading:


Recommended Further Reading:


Week 3 (October 18): Concepts (2)—the Interpretivist Tradition


**Recommended Further Reading:**


Week 4 (October 25): Social Construction of Reality

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Further Reading:**

TBA

Week 5 (November 1): Culture in Interaction

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Further Reading:**


Week 6 (November 8): Culture in Contention

**Required Readings:**

Recommended Further Reading:

TBA

Week 7 (November 15): Temporality (1)

Required Readings:


Recommended Further Reading:

_____ 1992a “From Causes to Events: Notes on Narrative Positivism,” Sociological Methods and Research 20(4); rep. in Abbott (2001), Ch. 6.

November 22: School holiday—no class

Week 9 (November 29) Course holiday [the instructor will be traveling]—no class

Week 10 (December 6): Temporality (2)

Required Readings:


Recommended Further Reading:


Week 11 (December 13): Historical Sociology

Required Readings:

Recommended Further Reading:


**Week 12 (December 20): Events**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Further Reading:**


School break: December 26 through January 4

**Week 13 (January 10): Comparison**

**Required Readings:**


**Recommended Further Reading:**

**Week 14 (January 17): Single-Outcome Studies**

**Required Readings: **


**Recommended Further Reading: **


Paper due on Wednesday, January 31.