WSSR

WORKSHOPS ON SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Archival Research
Dr. Robert Adcock
Professorial Lecturer, American
University's School of International Service
May 19, 2017
9:00am – 4:30pm

adcock@american.edu

Workshop Overview

Archival research is one of the longest established data gathering methods in the social sciences. But it is also undergoing major transformation amid the technological revolutions in information storage, access, and transmission of the digital age. This workshop offers an introduction to the specific opportunities and obstacles, advantages and limitations of archival research for social scientists today. We read methodological pieces alongside selected examples of archive-based research in comparative and international studies. The examples enable us to identify, compare, and evaluate specific choices made by actual researchers in gathering and analyzing archival sources. In two of the four sessions we will take advantage of ways in which the digital age is transforming information availability to do hands-on online activities learning about archive procedures and holdings and the use of archival sources. This course can either be taken as a stand-alone one-day module, or as a supplement to the two-day course surveying "Historical Analysis and Historical Methods."

Schedule of Sessions

Session 1. Gathering Pre-Existing Materials: Opportunities and Challenges   9.00-10.30
- Diana Kapiszewski, Lauren M. MacLean, and Benjamin L. Read, *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Ch. 4: "Thinking outside the (archive) box"
- M. E. Sarotte, "China's Fear of Contagion: Tiananmen Square and the Power of the European Example," *International Security* 37, no. 2 (2012): 156-182.

Session 2. Exercise: Learning about Archive Procedures and Holdings   10.45-12.00
- Cecelia Lynch, "Peace Movements and the United Nations," in *Beyond Appeasement: Interpreting Interwar Peace Movements in World Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), Chap. 7 and Archives and Private Paper appendix.

Session 3. Using Sources: Traditional Standards and the Transparency Revolution   1.30-3.00
- John D. Milligan, "The Treatment of a Historical Source," *History and Theory* 18, no. 2 (1979): 177-96.
- Andrew Moravcsik, "Transparency: The Revolution in Qualitative Research," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 47, no. 1 (2014): 48-53.

- Elizabeth Saunders, "Transparency without Tears: A Pragmatic Approach to Transparent Security Studies Research," *Security Studies* 23, no. 4 (2014): 689-998.

Session 4. Exercise: Evaluating the Use of Archival Sources   3.15-4.30
- Elizabeth Saunders, *Leaders at War: How Presidents Shape Military Interventions* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011), Chap. 4. Read chapter as published in the book, or in the "publication view" on the Qualitative Data Repository website (information below).
- Go to the Qualitative Data Repository https://qdr.syr.edu/. Under the discover tab go to pilot projects, and scroll down through table to find link to Elizabeth Saunders example. On the next page click "show more" to read full project summary etc and then follow link at bottom of page to actually view the active citation project. You will be prompted to register. After registering you should be able to access sources used in this articles in our in-class exercise.