Because qualitative and quantitative methods have different strengths, there is an intuitive appeal to research designs that combine what each has to offer. Yet, social scientists often encounter severe problems in bringing these very different methods together. This class addresses this gap by considering practical strategies for integrating qualitative and quantitative methods.

The class will emphasize a set of existing research designs for combining qualitative and quantitative methods that: a) have well reasonably well-understood benefits, and b) can be implemented in a relatively straightforward fashion. We will also investigate new extensions to this existing set of “practical” research designs. Please note that almost all of our attention will be on the practicalities of designing workable research projects, and there will relatively little coverage of the epistemological or “paradigm” debates about combining qualitative and quantitative methods.

The assignments for the class will emphasize mastering the existing methodological literature on combining qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as producing written work that integrates these readings with each student's own research interests. Because this course emphasizes research design, it will not require the collection or analysis of data (nor is it intended to support projects that are already at advanced stages of data collection or analysis).

The course will be interdisciplinary in nature, with a goal of creating connections across the widely scattered fields that have contributed to both qualitative and quantitative methods. The students in this class typically come from a wide variety of disciplines, and we will take advantage of this diversity during our class discussions.

Readings, Assignments, Grades

All of the readings for this course will either be distributed in class or available electronically. There are no books or course packs to purchase.

Most of the grade for this course comes from three short papers that you will also edit into a final paper. The goal is to create a research design that uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate your own research interests. I prefer to do the grading based on your progress since the beginning of the class, rather than the percentages for each assignment [shown in brackets].

I realize that “progress” is a very subjective standard, so me clarify what I mean The main thing you need to know is that I use a completely individualized standard for progress -- it is where you are at end of the class, compared to where Y were when the class started. For example, some of you will start with strong versions of your research questions, and primarily work on specific aspects of research design. Others will beginning by working on the definition of your research questions, and primarily work on specific aspects of research design. Others will beginning by working on the definition of your research questions, so your final consideration of design issues will be broader. Those are two different starting points, and I definitely will use different standards for thinking about your personal progress in each cases.

The bottom line is that I will use progress as the basis for your grade, unless you explicitly request that I use the percentage scores on the papers.

In addition to the cumulative series of papers, there is a separate assignment to locate and comment on a published article, in your field, that combines qualitative and quantitative methods.

[5%] Initial statement of interests (300 words -- “Pass/Fail”) due via email on Jan. 16
[30%] Analysis of article (1,000 words) due Feb. 6
[ 30%] Expanded statement of interests plus combined methods (1,000 words) due Feb. 27
[ 35%] Final combined methods research design (2,000 words) due March 13

All of these “word lengths” are maximums -- if you can do as well with fewer words, please do so.
Course Outline

Week 1. Jan. 9  “Course Overview”

Week 2. Jan. 16  Individual Appointments during the week (No Class on Wed.)
Initial statement of interests due to me on Monday BY EMAIL

Week 3. Jan. 23  “Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: A Basic Framework”
   Chapter One: An Introduction and Overview
   Chapter Two: Pragmatism as a Paradigm for Mixed Methods Research
   Chapter Three: Research Design and Research Methods

Week 4. Jan. 30  “Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Design Issues”
   Chapter Four: Motivations for Using Mixed Methods Research
   Chapter Five: The Sequential Priorities Model

Week 5. Feb. 6  “Sequential Connections: Preliminary qual inputs to QUANT projects”
   Chapter Six: Preliminary Qualitative Inputs in Quantitative Projects
   Analysis of an article due by email (or in class)

Week 6. Feb. 13  “Sequential Connections: Preliminary quant inputs to QUAL projects”
   Chapter Seven: Preliminary Quantitative Inputs in Core Qualitative Projects

Week 7. Feb. 20  “Sequential Connections: Follow-up qual extensions to QUANT projects”
   Chapter Eight: Follow-up Qualitative Extensions in Quantitative Projects

Week 8. Feb. 27  Sequential Connections: Follow-up quant extensions to QUAL projects”
   Chapter Nine: Follow-up Quantitative Extensions in Qualitative Project
   Expanded interests statement and research design due by email (or in class)

Week 9. March 6  Sequential Contributions: More Complex Designs
   Chapter Ten: Multipart Sequential Designs

Week 10. March 13 “Future Directions”
   Chapter Eleven: Finding the Expertise to Combine Multiple Methods
   Chapter Twelve: Conclusions: Further Thoughts About Research Design
   Final research paper due by email (or in class)

Exam Date: There is no final exam, instead individual meetings will be available on that day