

2018 Short Course @ APSA, Boston

The Methods Studio—Workshop and “Crit”

Wednesday, August 29: 1:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Sheraton Fairfax B

2018 workshop topic: **Activism, Advocacy, and/vs Scholarship**

Sponsor: **Interpretive Methodologies & Methods Conference-related Group**

Co-Organizers

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The Methods Studio has two parts: a workshop—this year, on “**Activism, Advocacy, and/versus Scholarship**”—and a “crit,” which entails discussion of interpretive methods in works in progress, selected via application.

Part I [1.30-3.30] Workshop: Activism, Advocacy, and/versus Scholarship

Discussion leaders

Nick Cheesman (law and society, political theory; Asia and the Pacific), Australia National University; <https://researchers.anu.edu.au/researchers/cheesman-nw>

Joe Lowndes (racial politics, conservatism, political culture, discourse, visual rhetoric; American political development), University of Oregon; <https://polisci.uoregon.edu/profile/jlowndes/>

Lahra Smith (political institutions, ethnicity and citizenship, women and politics; African politics), Georgetown University; <http://sfs.georgetown.edu/faculty-bio/Lahra-Smith/>

Chair: Dvora Yanow (public policy, organizational studies, race-ethnicity; comparative immigrant integration policies), Wageningen University (NL), chair; <http://wu.academia.edu/DvoraYanow>

Activism and advocacy have started to generate more interest now than they have since the 1960s-70s. And in certain quarters, the same concerns are raised now as were then—that these activities are not ‘science.’ It seems a good time to revisit these matters in political science.

In sociology, in his American Sociology Association presidential address, Michael Burawoy (2005) argued for the role of public sociology, among other academic activities. The chapters in Didier Fassin’s recent book (2017) explore various entanglements of public ethnography. The table below adapted Burawoy’s

argument, indicating where activism is already present in political science and other research, in various forms. This Short Course workshop is intended to carry the exploration further in the context of scholarly work in political science.

Illustrative of the tension between advocacy and “science,” Lahra Smith, in her *QMMR Newsletter* review of Fred Schaffer’s 2016 book on concepts, wrote: His book, as I apply it to my empirical work, helps “...navigate a space between two extremes in response to the Ethiopian protests [that I studied]—the one being an advocacy version that is too embedded in one or another particular local community for my comfort as a scholar, and the other [being a scientific or academic version] too removed and mirroring the foreign policy community language of ‘diplomacy’ for my comfort either.” We take the challenge of that assessment to the heart of our concerns, exploring activism within the academy as well as outside it, domestically as well as in international settings.

		KNOWLEDGE FOR WHOM?	
		Academic setting, disciplinary audience	Extra-academic setting, practitioner audience
KNOWLEDGE FOR WHAT PURPOSE?	Normal science	BASIC (theory-testing)	APPLIED (policy, consulting, government, military)
	Change	REVISIONARY-DISCIPLINARY (theory-building, theory-challenging)	PRACTICE, SOCIAL, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE ([participatory] action research, community-based [participatory] research)

Dimensions of Social Scientific Knowledge

Source: Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2014/2006: 423).

References and *planned course readings

Burawoy, Michael. 2005. Provincializing the social sciences. In George Steinmetz, ed., *The Politics of Method in the Human Sciences*, 508–25. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

*Fassin, Didier, ed. 2017. *If Truth Be Told: The Politics of Public Ethnography*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Introduction and chapters by Dubois and Wikkam.

Schaffer, Frederic Charles. 2016. *Elucidating Social Science Concepts: An Interpretivist Guide*. NY: Routledge.

Smith, Lahra. 2016. A spark for the political imagination. *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 14 (Spring/Fall): 43-47. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.823313>

Yanow, Dvora and Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine, eds. 2014/2006. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe.

3.30-3.50 Break

Part II [3.50-5.30] "Crit": Exploring research projects [open topic]

This part of the Methods Studio adapts what is known in architectural teaching and practice as a "crit." Three researchers, selected in advance through application, will present their projects, focusing on questions about the research methods they are using and/or the ways they have written their methods sections. One or two more experienced researchers from a range of subfields and interpretive methods backgrounds will lead off in response, but the intention is to draw also on the comments and questions of others in attendance, such that the discussion serves to educate all. Like the Methods Café, the Crit entails teaching and learning through discussion and example, rather than through lecture; but the Crit enables more prolonged engagement with each presented research project. It emphasizes supportive critique, with an eye toward publication and reviewers' reactions. Previous years' Crits have seen Ph.D. students, post-docs, and Assistant, Associate, and Full Professors have presented their work.

Crit leaders, in addition to Workshop "staff" and organizers

Mary Hawkesworth (feminist theory, women and politics, contemporary political philosophy, philosophy of science, and social policy), Rutgers University;
<http://womens-studies.rutgers.edu/faculty/core-faculty/66-the-faculty/core-faculty/135-mary-hawkesworth>

Ahmed Khanani (the language and practices of democracy, human rights and sovereignty in the Muslim Middle East and North Africa), Earlham College;
<http://earlham.edu/profile/?t=dir&id=36769&r=3796&d=faculty>

Samantha Majic (gender and American politics, with specific interests in sex work, civic engagement, and celebrities and politics), John Jay College/City University of New York; www.jjay.cuny.edu/faculty/samantha-majic

Amy Cabrera Rasmussen (public policy, especially concerning environmental health, health disparities, and reproductive and sexual health), California State University Long Beach; www.cla.csulb.edu/departments/polisci/faculty-staff/amy-cabrera-rasmussen/

Researchers presenting their work for discussion

Brittany Leach, PhD candidate in political theory, University of Virginia

A conceptual, critical, and normative account of reproductive autonomy that is grounded in feminist activists' struggles to resist and create alternatives to reproductive control

Andrew Marshall, PhD student, comparative government, Georgetown University
State language policies in Kenya and Tanzania and how these differing policies contribute to individuals' understandings of national consciousness and politics

Kevin Funk, Assistant Professor, Political Science Department, University of the District of Columbia

The "socio-spatial" changes produced in Latin American cities through the creation of privatized urban spaces that are designed to be "safe" for capital accumulation