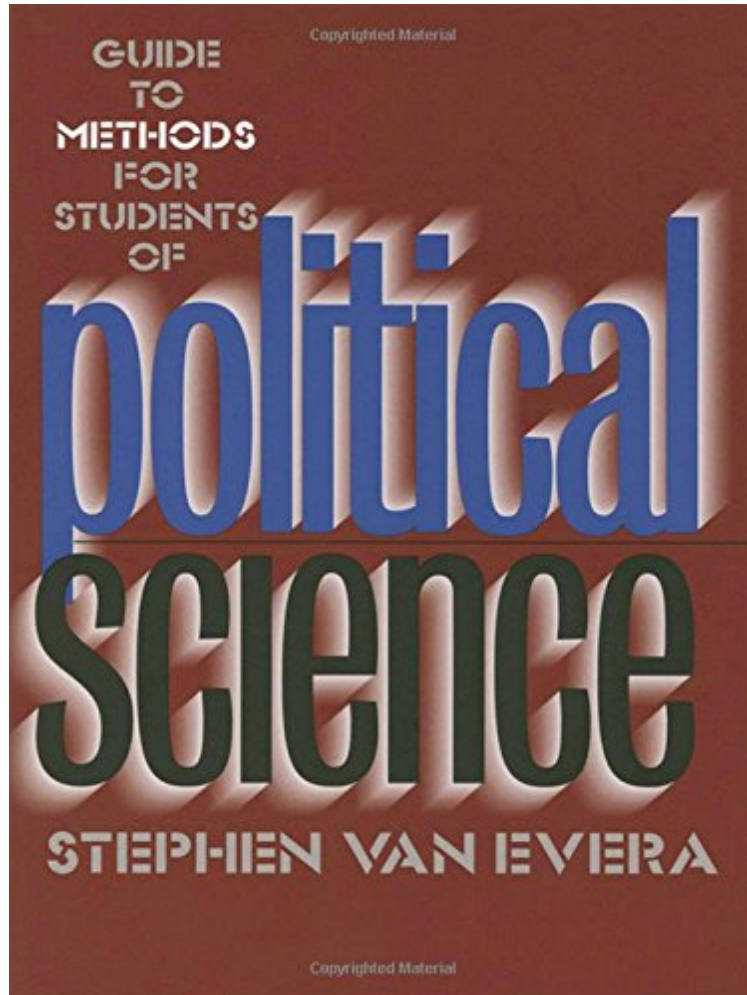


Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science

Stephen Van Evera

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Stephen Van Evera greeted new graduate students at MIT with a commonsense introduction to qualitative methods in

the social sciences. His helpful hints, always warmly received, grew from a handful of memos to an underground classic primer. That primer evolved into a book of how-to information about graduate study, which is essential reading for graduate students and undergraduates in political science, sociology, anthropology, economics, and history - and for their advisers.-How should we frame, assess, and apply theories in the social sciences? "I am unpersuaded by the view that the prime rules of scientific method should differ between hard science and social science. Science is science."-A section on case studies shows novices the ropes.-Van Evera contends the realm of dissertations is often defined too narrowly Making and testing theories are not the only games in town. . . . If everyone makes and tests theories but no one ever uses them, then what are they for?"-In "Helpful Hints on Writing a Political Science Ph.D. Dissertation," Van Evera focuses on presentation, and on broader issues of academic strategy and tactics.-Van Evera asks how political scientists should work together as a community. All institutions and professions that face weak accountability need inner ethical rudders that define their obligations in order to stay on course."

"Stephen Van Evera's Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science makes an important contribution toward improving the use of case studies for theory development and testing in the social sciences. His trenchant and concise views on issues ranging from epistemology to specific research techniques manage to convey not only the methods but the ethos of research. This book is essential reading for social science students at all levels who aspire to conduct rigorous research."Alexander L. George, Stanford University, and Andrew Bennett, Georgetown University "Stephen Van Evera has a keen awareness of the questions that arise in every phase of the political science research project from initial conception to final presentation. Although others may not agree with all of his specific advice, all will appreciate his user-friendly introduction to what is sometimes seen as an abstract and difficult topic."Timothy J. McKeown, University of North Carolina, Chapel HillAbout the Author Stephen Van Evera is Ford International Professor in the Political Science Department at MIT.