Methodology Match

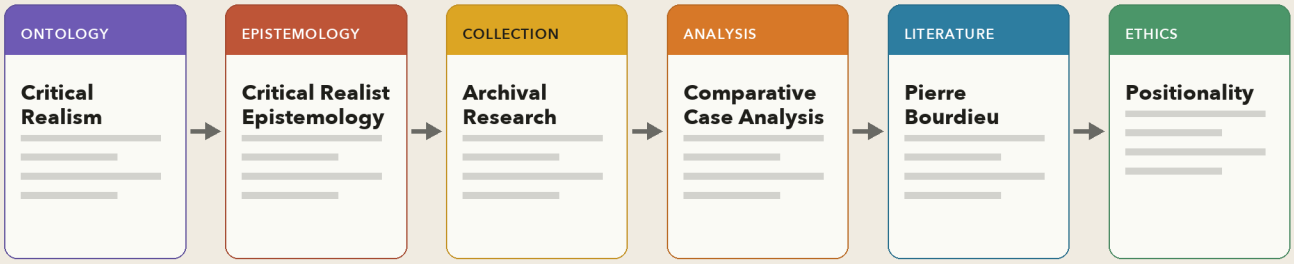
Build a thesis. Defend it. Reviewer 2 not included.

2-4 PLAYERS OR TEAMS
20-30 MINUTES
NO CARD-GAME EXPERIENCE NEEDED

Everyone designs a PhD about the same **Object of Study**. You collect cards until you have a complete research design, then explain to the others why your choices belong together. Not everything does. You can't quote Derrida in a lab report.

Nobody scores points. The game is finished when the conversation is.

WHAT YOU ARE BUILDING: A THESIS



What is real? EXACTLY 1	*How can we know it?* EXACTLY 1	*How will you gather material?* 1 OR MORE	*How will you make sense of it?* 1 OR MORE	*Who are you in conversation with?* 1 OR MORE	*What do you owe to others?* OPTIONAL



All of it must suit the **Object of Study** in the middle of the table, which everyone shares. Read your finished thesis as one sentence: "I am studying exhibitions. I take reality to be layered, so I can know it by reasoning back to hidden mechanisms. I will gather archive records, compare cases, and think with Bourdieu."

Six words you need

Deck
A pile of cards, backs up. You take cards from the top.

Hand
Your own cards, not yet used. Lay them in a row in front of you, fronts up.

Draw
Take one card and add it to your hand.

Play
Move a card from your hand into your thesis. It stays there.

Discard
Give up a card: put it on the discard pile, front up. Anyone may take it later.

Turn
One player's go. Turns pass to the left, round and round the table.

The cards

FOUNDATIONS DECK

- **Ontology** 6 (+3)
- **Epistemology** 8 (+2)
- **Research Tradition** (+7)

TOOLKIT DECK

- **Method: Collection** 12 (+5)
- **Method: Analysis** 12 (+6)
- **Literature** 12 (+10)
- **Research Ethics** 4 (+6)
- **Chance** 6 (+7)

ON THE TABLE

- **Object of Study** 8 (+9)

◆ Numbers in brackets are **expansion** cards. Each has this diamond in a top corner, front and back. Leave them out of your first games.

Plus 4 **reminder cards**, one per player.

The **front** of a card carries the full information. The **back** shows its type and name, so you can always see what is on top of a deck. Only Chance cards keep their secret.

BEFORE YOU START

Setting up



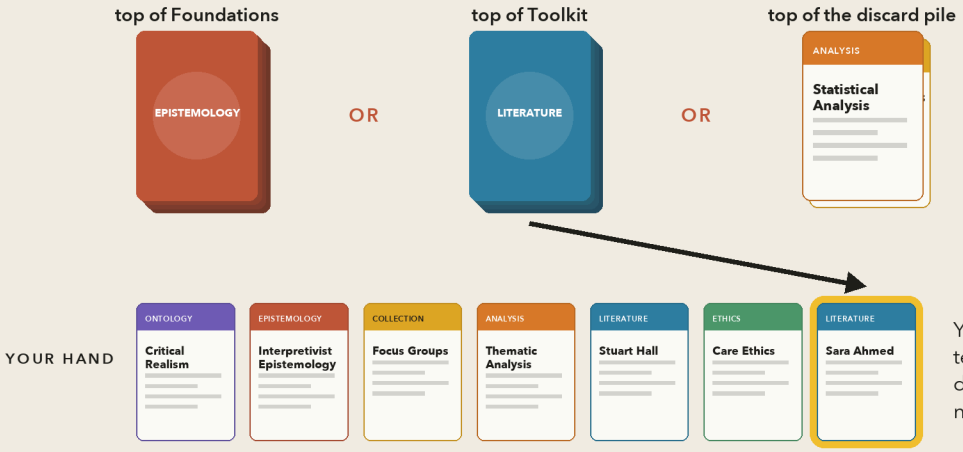
1. Shuffle the **Object of Study** cards and turn one over in the middle. Everyone researches this. Put the other Objects back in the box.
2. Sort the remaining cards into two decks. **Foundations** = Ontology and Epistemology. **Toolkit** = everything else. Shuffle each and place it backs up.
3. Leave a space for the **discard pile**. It starts empty.
4. Give each player **2 Foundations cards and 4 Toolkit cards**. Lay them in a row, fronts up. This is your hand, and everyone can read it. Got a Chance card? Put it in the box and take another.
5. Leave a space above your hand. Your **thesis** will grow here, one card at a time.

Who goes first? Whoever most recently read a methodology textbook. If no one has, whoever most recently pretended to. **Why are hands face-up?** This is a learning game: read each other's cards, ask what they mean, give advice.

Your turn: two steps

1 Draw 1 card

Take **one** card from **one** of these three places and add it to your hand.



You now hold **7 cards**. The backs tell you what is on top of each deck, so choose what your thesis needs.

2 Play 1 card, or discard 1 card

EITHER PLAY

Move one card from your hand into your thesis. It stays there, front up.



OR DISCARD

Nothing you want to play? Put one card on the discard pile, front up.



That is the whole turn. You are back to **6 cards** in your hand, and the player on your left goes next.

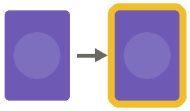
Why would I...?

...take from the discard pile?
Because someone has just thrown away the card your thesis needs.

...discard a card?
You must do one or the other each turn. Give up the card you need least, but check first whether it is exactly what the next player wants.

...hold a card back?
A card that clashes with your thesis is hard to explain later. It can be worth waiting for one that fits.

Three things that can happen



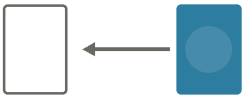
Changing your mind

You may only have one Ontology and one Epistemology. Play a new one and the old one goes to the discard pile.



Chance

If a Chance card is on top of the Toolkit when your turn begins, it is yours. Read it out, do what it says, put it in the box. Then take your normal turn.



A deck runs out

Shuffle the discard pile and sort it back into the two decks, using the backs.

Matches, submitting and the round-table



Type and the question it answers

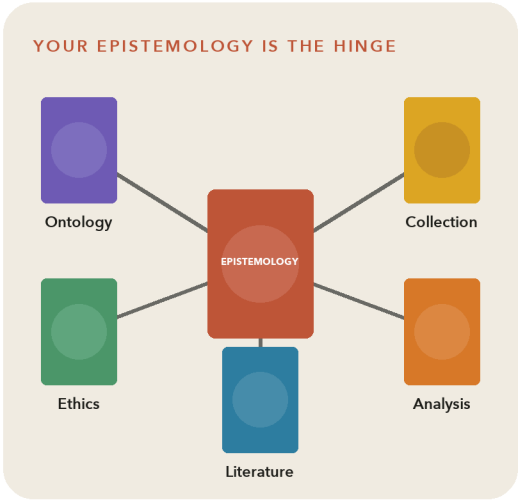
Name

Definition in one or two sentences

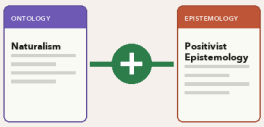
+ Fits: these support each other

– Tension: these pull against each other

Key thinkers, and a **QR code** to the longer story online



Checking two cards



Fits

Naturalism lists Positivist under +. Play them together with confidence.



Tension

Naturalism lists Interpretivist under –. Allowed, but you will need a good argument.



Not listed

Neither card names the other. It is open: make your case.

Ontology cards list Epistemologies. Epistemology cards list Ontologies. Every other card lists the Epistemologies it suits. A match counts if **either** card names the other. The matches are prompts for discussion, not rulings.

Finishing, and the round-table viva

THE ROUND-TABLE: EVERYONE TOGETHER, NO EXAMINERS

1 Thesis complete
One card in each of the five slots.

2 Say "Submitted"
At the end of your turn. You don't have to straight away.

3 One last turn
Every other player gets one more turn.

4 Read it out
Go round the table. Everyone reads their thesis as one sentence, finished or not.

5 Talk it through
Together, look across all the theses. Where do cards fit? Where is the tension?

6 Revise
Anyone may swap a card with their hand, or with someone else's, and say why.

No scores, no winner. Questions for the group: Which two theses would find the most different things about the Object? What can each design not see? What would you borrow from someone else's?

Other ways to play

Seminar mode (15 minutes, no turns). Leave Chance in the box. Deal everyone 2 Foundations and 6 Toolkit cards. Take five minutes to build the best thesis you can, swapping freely with neighbours, then hold the round-table.

Teams. Pairs share one hand and one thesis. Recommended for a first game.

Expansion. Cards with a small diamond are the expansion. Shuffle them into their decks for more variety; sort them out again by the diamond. **Research Traditions** join Foundations: one Tradition fills both your Ontology and Epistemology slots, as the pair printed on it.

Notes for pedants

Literature matches reflect how thinkers are commonly used in research, not how they described themselves. Foucault rejected "post-structuralist".

Epistemology cards mix positions, traditions and orientations. Whether those are the same kind of thing is a fair question for the round-table.

Research Traditions are not called paradigms: Kuhn's term implies worldviews that cannot talk to each other. These can.

The point. There is no single correct way to do research. Choose an approach that fits your question, and be able to say why.