

# COURSE SYLLABUS

## Qualitative Methods and Research Design

### **Instructor:**

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### **Course Description:**

This course is designed for students who are beginning their dissertation projects. The aim of the course is to give students the tools to conceptualize their theses in terms of research questions and design, methodology, data collection and qualitative analysis. In doing so, this course focuses more narrowly on the issues, problems, and strategies related to “small-N” qualitative research, for the most part setting aside the techniques of large-N statistical analysis, which are best taught in a separate course. Students will read and discuss texts related to theory formation and hypothesis testing; creating proxies and measurement; descriptive and causal inference; longitudinal, comparative and case study research; field data collection; working with texts and analyzing qualitative data; and, finally, dissertation write-up. Throughout the course, we will not avoid issues of epistemology—how we know what we know and how to adjudicate competing “truth” claims. However, since this course is intended as a practicum for conducting “normal” social science, we will set aside or bracket many of the epistemological and ontological debates in order to learn techniques for researching and analyzing social phenomena on a practical level. This course is divided into four main parts focusing on the following topics: (1) the goals of social science and elements of research design; (2) selection and application of different methodologies for conducting research; (3) collection of primary and secondary data on the field; and (4) analysis and synthesis of qualitative data in the dissertation-writing process.

### **Goals of the Course:**

By the end of this course, students should be familiar with:

- (1) How to formulate a viable research question;
- (2) Principles of theory/model building and case selection;
- (3) How to distinguish probabilistic from deterministic explanations;
- (4) The role of the comparison in controlling for variation;
- (5) The benefits and drawbacks of different methodologies;
- (6) How to identify and interpret patterns in data;
- (7) How to eliminate alternative explanations; and
- (8) How to prepare and execute a feasible research project.

## Course Requirements:

- (1) Weekly Assignments (40%). Each week students will be given an assignment that will be due at 10 a.m. the day of the following seminar. Assignments will pertain to the readings for that week and range from (1) summarizing and critiquing the ideas in the readings to (2) evaluating the authors' theory and research design to (3) providing examples of how you might apply these ideas to your own research projects. Students will be expected to work either individually or in a group and should come to class prepared to discuss and critique the assignments/readings for that seminar.
- (2) Research Paper (40%). This is the main requirement for the course. The paper will serve as an important exercise in how to design a social science research project. For those who plan to conduct empirical research in their dissertations, this paper should ideally form the basis of their dissertation proposals. Students should consult with me about the paper at some point during the semester.
- (3) Class Participation (20%). Students will be expected to attend **all** the seminars and contribute to class discussion. Students will also be expected to give a 15-20 minute presentation of their work during one of the seminars (the presentation makes up half of the participation grade).

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Week 1: The Goals of Social Science Inquiry

#### *Seminar 1: Positivism and Scientific Realism*

Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (eds.), *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 116-122, 132-138.

John A. Vasquez, "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (December 1997), pp. 899-912.

#### *Seminar 2. The Research Question and Literature Review*

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 12-25, 234-249

Dina A. Zinnes, "Three Puzzles in Search of a Researcher," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 24 (September 1980), pp. 315-342.

### Further Readings

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 3-33.

Janet Buttolph Johnson and Richard A. Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods* (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2001), pp. 131-145.

## **Week 2: Elements of Research Design**

### *Seminar 3: Theories and Hypotheses*

Janet Buttolph Johnson and Richard A. Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods* (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2001), pp.33-60.

Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little Brown, 1971), pp. 1-9; 245-263.

### *Seminar 4: Concepts and Measurement*

Robert Adcock and David Collier, "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 95 (September 2001), pp. 529-546.

### Further Reading

W. Phillips Shively, *The Craft of Political Research* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2001), pp. 38-71.

## **METHODS**

### **Week 3: Choosing a Methodology**

#### *Seminar 5: Mixed Methods and Nested Analysis*

Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation* (Boulder, San Francisco, and Oxford: Westview Press, 1991), pp. 159-179.

Evan S. Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 99(August 2005), pp. 435-452.

## Seminar 6: The Comparative Method

John Stuart Mill, "Two Methods of Comparison," in *A System of Logic*, as excerpted in Aitai Etzioni and F. Dubow (eds.) *Comparative Perspectives: Theories and Methods* (Boston: Little Brown, 1970), pp. 205-213.

Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 34-52.

### Further Readings

Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 8(1975), pp. 158-177.

John Gerring, "Is There a (Viable) Crucial-Case Method?" *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 40(2007), pp. 231-253.

Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman, "Case Study Methods in International Relations Subfield," *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 40(2007), pp. 170-195.

## Week 4: The Comparative Method (continued)

### Seminar 7: Applications

Erin K. Jenne, "Ethnic Bargaining in the Balkans: Secessionist Kosovo versus Integrationist Vojvodina," *Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowerment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp.159-183.

Jared Diamond, "One Island, Two Peoples, Two Histories: The Dominican Republic and Haiti," *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), pp. 329-357.

### Seminar 8: Applications (cont.)

Dan Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 98 (November 2004), pp. 529-546.

### Further Readings

Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1991), pp. 21-65).

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp. 3-43, 284-293.

## Week 5: More on Comparative Research

### Seminar 9: Fallacies in Comparative Research

Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," *Political Analysis*, Vol. 2 (1990), pp. 131-150.

### Seminar 10: Counterfactuals and Negative Cases

Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security*, Vol. 9 (Summer 1984), pp. 58-107.

#### Further Readings

Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, "Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives," in Tetlock and Belkin (eds.) *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics* (1996), pp. 1-38.

Stephen Van Evera, "The Cult of the Offensive and the Origins of the First World War," *International Security* 9 (Summer 1984), pp. 58-107.

### Week 6: Longitudinal Analysis

#### Seminar 11: Process-Tracing and Intensive Case Analysis

Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, "Process-Tracing and Historical Explanation," *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 205-232

#### Seminar 12: Applications

Mark Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 147-199.

#### Further Readings

Jeffrey T. Checkel, "It's the Process, Stupid! Tracing Causal Mechanisms in International and European Politics," in Audie Klotz (ed.) *Qualitative Methods in International Relations* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, forthcoming).

Paul A. David, "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY," *American Economic Review*, Vol. 75, No. 2, Papers and Proceedings of the Ninety-Seventh Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association (May, 1985), pp. 332-337

Erin K. Jenne, *Ethnic Bargaining: The Paradox of Minority Empowerment* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), pp. 54-90

### Week 7: Other Methods

#### Seminar 13: The Boolean Approach

Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 85-102, 125-163.

*Seminar 14: Discourse (Text) Analysis*

“Discourse,” in Lilie Chouliaraki and Norman Fairclough (eds.) *Discourse in Late Modernity* (Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp. 37-74.

Further Readings

Thomas Risse, Daniela Engelmann-Martin, Hans-Joachim Knopf and Klaus Roscher, “To Euro or Not to Euro? The EMU and Identity Politics in the European Union,” *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (1999), pp. 147-187.

Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 154-211.

## **DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

### **Week 8: Research Design**

*Seminar 15: Planning the Research*

Janet Buttolph Johnson and Richard A. Joslyn, *Political Science Research Methods* (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2001), pp. 131-145.

*Seminar 16: Practical and Ethical Issues of Field Research*

Russel Zanca, “Intruder in Uzbekistan: Walking the Line between Community Needs and Anthropological Desiderata,” in Hermine G. De Soto and Nora Dudwick (eds.) *Fieldwork Dilemmas: Anthropologists in Postsocialist States*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), pp. 153-171.

Further Reading

Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* (Newbury Park, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1989), pp. 121-143.

### **Week 9: Methods of Data Collection**

*Seminar 17: Interviewing*

Tom Wengraf, *Qualitative Research Interviewing* (London: Sage Publications, 2001), pp. 152-181.

*Seminar 18: Archival Research*

Michael R. Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1993), pp. 1-50.

Further Reading

Victor Jupp, "Documents and Critical Research," in Roger Sapsford and Victor Jupp (eds.) *Data Collection and Analysis*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 298-316.

**Week 10: Analyzing Qualitative Data**

*Seminar 19: Displaying Data*

(No readings.)

*Seminar 20: Analyzing Data and Creating Narratives*

Robert H. Bates, "The International Coffee Organization: An International Institution," in Robert H. Bates, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry R. Weingast (eds.), *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 194-230.

Further Reading

David Boulton and Martyn Hammersley, "Analysis of Unstructured Data," in Roger Sapsford and Victor Jupp (eds.) *Data Collection and Analysis* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1996), 282-297.

**Week 11: Writing Grants and Proposals**

*Seminar 21:*

David M. Silbergh, *Doing Dissertations in Politics: A Student Guide* (London: Routledge, 2001), 50-72.

Further Reading

Lawrence F. Locke, Waneen Wyrick Spirduso, and Stephen J. Silverman, *Proposals that Work* (Newbury Park, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993), pp. 66-95, 119-129.

*Seminar 22: Wrap-up and Conclusion*