

RPOS 618
QUALITATIVE METHODS
Spring 2014

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of qualitative approaches to political science research. It also provides grounding in recent debates over methodology and epistemology in political science. The emphasis is on introducing the qualitative research process from its design to final analysis through an overview of how qualitative approaches operate and through introduction to specific epistemologies and methods. Throughout the course, we will look at questions of methodology to understand the important differences within qualitative research and between qualitative and quantitative frameworks. Students should come away from the course with an understanding of: (1) what qualitative research is and how it fits in the broader discipline of political science; (2) the logics of qualitative research design; (3) the nuts and bolts of conducting qualitative research; and (4) how to analyze, interpret, and understand qualitative data. Though no course can be the definitive answer to “how do I write my dissertation,” this seminar should add a significant arsenal of potential tools to your kits. Prerequisites: POS 516 and POS 517 or the equivalent.

The course will be run in a seminar format, with the students spending most of the class time discussing the readings. The professor will facilitate these discussions both formally and informally. A few sessions will take place through Blackboard discussions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

First, a caveat: this course will be taught on a graduate level and the workload and expectations will be high. You must come to each class meeting having done all of the readings thoroughly and carefully. Class attendance and participation will constitute a significant portion of your grade. You will be expected to keep up with the reading throughout the term, as the course is cumulative.

The major writing assignment for the course is to draft and revise an empirical research design. Guidelines for this assignment will be distributed early in the term, and periodic deadlines will help to keep you moving forward. You will also be responsible for reviewing and commenting on your classmates’ designs.

Students will also do five additional writing assignments during the weeks these are available (as noted below in the syllabus). You may choose any five weeks, but you may only

write on the topic for the given week, and you may submit only one paper per week. The weights of your various obligations are detailed below:

Class participation	10%
Weekly writing assignments	10% each (50% total)
Draft research design	5%
Peer critiques	10% total
Final research design	25%

The timing for the draft research design submission is inflexible so as not to inconvenience your classmates.

POLICIES

Students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with the professor soon. Please request that Disabilities Resource Center send a letter verifying your disability.

Extensions for papers. Because of the nature of the course, no extensions are possible for the short weekly assignments. If you cannot complete one on time, just choose another week. Any student who does not turn in her or his draft design on time and has not contacted the professor in advance will lose a half grade per day for every day the paper is late unless there is some apocalypse-level calamity in play.

Class attendance. You are expected to attend class. Excessive absences will affect your class participation grade negatively.

Regrading of materials. You may request regrading of materials. If you wish to make such a request, contact the professor for a copy of the regrading policy. You will be asked to provide a written explanation of why you wish to have the assignment regraded.

Plagiarism or cheating. This one's simple: don't do it. Don't even think about doing it. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's words or ideas without giving the original author credit by citing him or her. If you use someone else's language directly, you must use quotation marks. If you rely on another person's ideas in creating your argument, you must provide a citation. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please contact me *before* you submit the assignment for grading. Likewise, if you intend to double submit work for this class, you must clear it with me in advance. If you plagiarize or cheat in this class, the **BEST** outcome you can hope to achieve is a failing grade from me, in addition to any mandatory university sanctions. Plagiarism or cheating, even if unintentional, will result in a failing grade for the assignment at the *very minimum*.

MATERIALS

Required books are available for purchase exclusively at Mary Jane Books and are listed below. The other required materials assigned for the course (articles and excerpts from books) should all be accessible through the course's Blackboard site and are denoted with an asterisk. Please note that you are responsible for the articles listed even when they are not posted or posted incompletely. If you have trouble accessing a document, please contact me immediately. I have not scanned the recommended readings, but if you have trouble finding any of them, please let me know.

Required books:

Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin. 2005. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow. 2012. *Interpretive Research Design*. New York: Taylor and Francis.

Edward Schatz (ed). 2009. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Generally recommended books:

Howard S. Becker. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Henry Brady and David Collier (eds) 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Latham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

John Gerring. 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Gary Goertz. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jerome Kirk and Marc L. Miller. 1985. *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Michele Lamont and Patricia White. "Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research." http://www.nsf.gov/sbe/ses/soc/ISSQR_workshop_rpt.pdf.

Charles C. Ragin. 2000. *Fuzzy Set Social Science*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea (eds). 2013. *Interpretation and Method*. New York: Routledge.

SYLLABUS

January 27 Introduction: What is Qualitative Research?

*Fred Eidlin. 2011. "The Method of Problems versus the Method of Topics." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 44: 4. 758-761.

*John Gerring. 2012. "Mere Description." *British Journal of Political Science* 42:4, 721-746

*Rogers Smith. 1997. "Still Blowing in the Wind: The American Quest for a Democratic, Scientific Political Science." *Daedalus* 126: 253-287.

Recommended

Anne Norton. 2003. *95 Theses on Politics, Culture, and Method*. Yale University Press.

FOUNDATIONAL CONCERNS

February 3 Epistemology

Assignment: Write a 3-4 page paper answering: Which article do you find most compelling and why? While this is a paper based on your opinion, it is not an opinion piece. Please make an argument and back it up with evidence from the reading.

*Karl Popper. "Science: Conjectures and Refutations."

*Charles Taylor. "Interpretation and the Science of Man."

David Laitin, "The Perestroikan Challenge to Political Science" (in Norton, *Perestroika!*)

*Ian Shapiro, "Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics" (in Norton, *Perestroika!*)

*Yanow, "Thinking Interpretively" (Y+SS ch. 1)

Recommended

Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, eds. 2001. *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Barbara Geddes, *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. 2003. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

February 10 Social Science and the Qualitative/Quantitative Divide

Assignment: Write a 3-4 page reaction paper on the readings. Where do you stand in the debate over the merits and demerits of qualitative and quantitative research? Is qualitative research merely what you do when you can't amass enough data to build good generalization?

King, Keohane, and Verba, *DSI*. 3-49

*Brady, Collier, and Seawright, *RSI*. (15-32)

*Bartels, *RSI*. (83-88)

*McKeown, "Case Studies and the Limits of the Quantitative World View."

*James Mahoney and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis* 14 (3). 227-249.

*Ronald Rogowski. 2010. "Getting Qualitative Research Back into the APSR." *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 8 (10). 2.

*Colin Elman. 2010. "Giving Pieces a Chance: Submitting Manuscripts to the APSR." *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research* 8 (10). 3-4.

Recommended

Nina Eliasoph. 1998. *Avoiding Politics: How Americans Produce Apathy in Everyday Life*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jacobs, Cook and Delli Carpini. 2009. *Talking Together: Public Deliberation and Political Participation in America*.

Joseph Lowndes and Victoria Hattam. "The Ground Beneath Our Feet: Language, Culture and Political Change in Formative Acts: Reckoning with Agency in American Politics, edited by Stephen Skowronek, University of Pennsylvania Press.

Gerring. 2012. "Arguments" and "Analyses." (58-102).

February 17 Interpretive and Critical Approaches

Assignment: Write a 3-4 page reaction paper on the readings. How do interpretive approaches differ from positivist quantitative approaches? What is gained and lost?

King, Keohane, and Verba, *DSI*. 36-43 (review).

*Clifford Geertz. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books. Chapter 15.

Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, *Interpretive Research Design*

Recommended

Michael McCann. 1994. *Rights at Work*

Tim Pachirat. 2013. *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lee Ann Fujii. 2011. *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

THE CASE STUDY APPROACH

February 24 What is a Case?

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you. Write a 3-4 page paper on how you would use cases to develop concepts, models, or theories. Incorporate the authors below.

*Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapter 1. 67-88, 109-24.

*Barbara Geddes. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Chapter 3.

*Robert Adcock, "Generalization in Comparative and Historical Social Science" (Y+SS ch 3)

*Bent Flyvbjerg, "Five Misunderstandings about Case Studies," *Qualitative Inquiry* 12:2 (April 2006), 219-45 (on BB)

Recommended

John Gerring. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Robert K. Yin. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Dietrich Reuschemeyer. 2003. "Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?" in J. Mahoney and D. Reuschemeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press (305-336).

Sally Friedman. 2007. *Dilemmas of Representation: Local Politics, National Factors, and the Home Styles of Modern U.S. Congress Members*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. Chapter 2. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

March 3 Analyzing Causality

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you. Write a 3-4 page paper on how you would use cases to analyze causal mechanisms and conjunctions. Incorporate the authors below.

*Henry E. Brady, David Collier, and Jason Seawright. 2006. "Toward a Pluralistic Vision of Methodology." *Political Analysis* 14 (3). 353-368.

*Nathaniel Beck. 2006. "Is Causal-Process Observation an Oxymoron?" *Political Analysis*, 14 (3). 347-352.

*Charles Epp, *The Rights Revolution* (excerpts)

*Joe Soss. 1999. "Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action." *APSR*.

Recommended

Gerring 2012. "Causal Analyses" and "Varying Approaches to Causal Inference" (218-255 and 327-358).

Charles Ragin. 2000. *Fuzzy Set Social Science*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (rest)

March 10 Using Cases to Conduct Historical Analysis

LITERATURE REVIEW DUE

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you. Write a 3-4 page paper on how you would use cases to analyze history. Incorporate the authors below.

*Anthony Marx, *Making Race and Nation* (excerpts)

*Paul Pierson. 2004. "Timing and Sequence." *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. 54-78.

*Paul Pierson. 2003. "Big, Slow-Moving, and...Invisible: Macro-Social Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics." In *Comparative-Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*.

*Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett. "Process Tracing and Historical Explanation." (Chapter 10)

*David Collier. 2011. "Understanding Process Tracing." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 44: 4. 823-830.

Recommended

John Gerring. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Chapter 7.

Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel (eds). 2014. *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytical Tool*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kathleen Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics, *Annual Review of Political Science* 2, June 1999: 369-404.

Theda Skocpol. 1992. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

James Mahoney. 2012. "The Logic of Process Tracing Tests in the Social Sciences." *Sociological Methods and Research* 41:4, 566-590

March 24 Case Selection

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you and create a research design involving case studies. Write a 3-4 page paper laying out your question, your design, and justifying your case selection. Your paper should show evidence in the design and justification from the following authors.

*Gary Goertz. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapters 7.

*John Gerring. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Pages 57-60 and Chapters 4 & 5.

*Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapters 8.

*James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 1-52.

*David Laitin, "Book Review--*Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 30, 1 (1999): 177-179.

Recommended

John Gerring. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

QUALITATIVE PRACTICES

March 31 Participant Observation and Political Ethnography

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you and design a practical study involving participant observation. Write a 3-4 page paper describing your question, your design, and your observations on what it is like to conduct participant observation. Your paper should show evidence in the design and analysis from the assigned authors.

Schatz, ed. *Political Ethnography* (selected chapters)

Recommended

Tim Pachirat. 2013. *Every Twelve Seconds: Industrialized Slaughter and the Politics of Sight*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Alice Goffman. 2014. *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Prologue, Preface, Introduction, Chapter 1 and Methodological Appendix.

April 7 Interviewing and its Variations

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you and design a practical study involving either interviews or focus groups. Write a 3-4 page paper describing your question, your design, and your observations on what it is like to conduct interviews or a focus group. Your paper should show evidence in the design and analysis from the following authors.

*Joe Soss. "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations: A Practice-Centered Approach to In-Depth Interviews for Interpretive Research." In. D. Yanow and P. Schwartz-Shea (eds) *Interpretation and Method*. New York: M.E. Sharpe.

*Herbert Rubin and Irene S. Rubin. 2005. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. p. 64-107, 129-172.

*Kenneth Goldstein. 2002. "Getting in the Door: Sampling and Completing Elite Interviews." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. 35(4). 669-672.

*Renee Ann Cramer, "Sharing in Community While Interviewing 'Outlaws'." *International Journal of Qualitative Research* 1(4) (Dec. 2009), 453-479

Recommended

Dara Strolovitch. 2007. *Affirmative Advocacy: Race, Class, and Gender in Interest Group Politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Joe Soss, "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations" (in Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method*)

Frederick Schaffer, "Ordinary Language Interviewing" (in Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method*)

April 14 Archival and Documentary Research

DRAFT DESIGN DUE

Assignment: Choose a particular research question of interest to you and design a practical study involving archival research (note, the New York State Library has some good archives to poke around in). Write a 3-4 page paper describing your question, your design, and your observations on what it is like to conduct archival research. Your paper should show evidence in the design and analysis from the following authors.

*Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History And Theory* 8:1 (1969), 3-53 (on BB)

*Pamela Brandwein, "Studying the Career of Knowledge Claims" (Y+SS ch 12)

*David C. W. Parker. 2012. "If It's Tuesday, It Must Be Albuquerque: Using Archives to Research Congressional Campaigns." *Doing Archival Research: A Practical Guide for Political Scientists*. Cambria Press.

*Kathleen Sullivan and Patricia Strach. 2012. "Digging through Trash: Finding What You Need in Municipal Archives." *Doing Archival Research: A Practical Guide for Political Scientists*. Cambria Press.

*Marc Trachtenberg. 2006. "Working with Documents." in Marc Trachtenberg, *The Craft of International History: A Guide to Method*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

*Ian Lustick. 1996. "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias." *American Political Science Review*. 605-618.

Recommended

Scott Frisch, Douglas Harris, Sean Kelly, David C.W. Parker. 2012. *Doing Archival Research: A Practical Guide for Political Scientists*. Cambria Press.

April 21 Discourse and Content Analysis

*Herrera and Braumoeller. 2004. "Discourse/Content Analysis Symposium." *Qualitative Methods Newsletter*.

*Jennifer Milliken. 1999. "The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods," *European Journal of International Relations* 5, 2. 225-54.

*Patricia Strach. 2007. *All in the Family: The Private Roots of American Public Policy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Chapter 6.

*Julie Novkov. 2011. "The Conservative Attack on Affirmative Action." In David Ericson (ed) *The Politics of Inclusion and Exclusion: Identity Politics in Twenty-First Century America*. New York: Routledge.

*Ted Hopf. (Forthcoming). "The Limits of Interpreting Evidence." In Richard Ned Lebow and Mark Lichbach (eds) *Political Knowledge and Social Inquiry*.

Recommended

Mark Bevir, "How Narratives Explain" (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method*)

Cecelia Lynch, "Critical Interpretation and the Interwar Peace Movements" (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method*)

Clare Ginger, "Interpretive Content Analysis" (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method*)

Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," *Signs* 12:4 (Summer 1987), 687-718 (on BB)

Roxanne Lynn Doty, "Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of US Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines," *International Studies Quarterly* 37:3 (September 1993), 297-320 (on BB)

Kevin Bruyneel. 2007. *The Third Space of Sovereignty*. University of Minnesota Press.

Victoria Hattam. 2007. *In the Shadow of Race*. University of Chicago Press.

April 28 Research Participants and their Interests

*Faye Ginsburg, *Contested Lives* (excerpts)

*Lynn Fujiwara, "Immigrant Rights Are Human Rights: The Reframing of Immigrant Entitlement and Welfare," *Social Problems* 52(1) (2005), 79-101

*Virginia Eubanks, "Double-Bound Putting the Power Back into Participatory Research," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 30(1)(2009)

*Laura Stark, "Victims in Our Own Minds? IRBs in Myth and Practice," *Law and Society Review* 41 (2007), 777-786 (on BB)

*Jack Katz, "Toward a Natural History of Ethical Censorship," *Law and Society Review* 41 (2007), 797-809 (on BB)

Recommended

Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, "Doing Social Science in a Humanistic Manner" (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method*)

Lynn Fujiwara. 2008. *Mothers Without Citizenship*. University of Minnesota Press.

Robin Jacobson. 2008. *The New Nativism*. University of Minnesota Press.

May 5

Presentations and discussions of research designs; MONDAY MAY 11 FINAL RESEARCH DESIGNS DUE