

Kendra L. Koivu  
Spring 2015  
Office Hours:  
Monday 10:00 am – 12 pm  
Thursday 1:00 pm – 2 pm  
Room 2048

## Qualitative Research Methods

### Course Description

This seminar offers a broad introduction to the field of comparative methodology, conventionally regarded as “qualitative” methods for the analysis of a relatively small number of cases. The goal of this course is to enable students to create and critique research designs in the social sciences. The course focuses on recent methodological writings, substantive examples from various subfields of political science, and classical pieces. The course also includes readings from the broader social sciences (sociology and history) in addition to political science. The course assumes no background in qualitative methodology.

The seminar will begin with a focus on concept formation and causal inference. The seminar will then delve into the central issues of qualitative research design, such as case studies, cross-case comparison, typological theory, case selection, process tracing, natural experiments, set theory and interpretivism.

### Requirements

- (1) Seminar Discussion (10%):** Students are expected to read the assigned chapters and articles and come prepared to discuss them
- (2) Concept Paper (15%):** An essay of 6-8 pages in which students analyze a concept of their choice. Ideally, this concept should be a dependent variable of interest; this variable may (should) be used in subsequent assignments. This essay will be due in class February 12.
- (3) Causal Assessment Paper (20%):** An essay of 8-10 pages in which students discuss the qualitative methods used by other scholars to assess hypotheses concerning their

chosen dependent variable. This essay should be critical, evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of this literature. This essay will be due in class March 26.

**(4) Research Design Paper (25%):** An essay of 20-25 pages (including references) in which students develop a research design for carrying out a project using qualitative methods/mixed methods. This research design can form the basis for a project that is pursued at a later date. This essay will be due May 14.

**(5) Response Papers (30%):** Students will write two 8-10 page response papers to selected readings. A sign-in sheet will go around the first week, and students will sign up to write response papers for the readings of two separate weeks.

### **Books to Purchase**

*Required:*

Gary Goertz, *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton University Press, 2005

Charles Ragin, *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond*. University of Chicago Press, 2008

Thad Dunning, *Natural Experiments in the Social Sciences: A Design-Based Approach*. Cambridge University Press, 2012

Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*. University of Michigan Press, 2013

Katherine Dettwyler, *Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa*. Waveland Press, 1993

Clayton Roberts, *The Logic of Historical Explanation*. Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996

*Recommended:*

We will only read two chapters from the books below and those chapters will be disseminated, so it is not necessary to purchase them. However, these are important books in the field of qualitative methods, and it is recommended to add them to your library at some point.

Henry Brady and David Collier eds. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, second edition. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010

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

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

### **Accommodation of Disabilities**

Qualified students with disabilities needing appropriate academic adjustments should contact me as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. Handouts are available in alternative accessible formats upon request. If you need more information on the Americans with Disability Act, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity at 277-5251.

## Course Outline

Below are the required readings for the course. There is also a section titled “for further reading.” This is not required reading, but rather suggestions for the future should you choose to learn more about the topic. Most of the suggested readings are good empirical examples of the type of method discussed that week.

### January 15: Substantive Examples

Tannenwald, Nina, “The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use,” *International Organization* 53:3 (Summer 1999), pp. 433-68

Wickham-Crowley, Timothy P. “A Qualitative Comparative Approach to Latin American Revolutions,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 32 (1991), pp. 82-109

Wedeen, Lisa, “Acting “As if”: Symbolic Politics and Social Control in Syria,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40:3 (July 1998) pp. 503-523

Fenno, Richard, “Observation, Context and Sequence in the Study of Politics,” *American Political Science Review*, 80 (1986), pp. 3-15

### January 22: Overview of the Field

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba (hereafter **KKV**), “The Science in Social Science,” in King, Keohane and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) pp. 3-34

Mahoney, James, “After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research,” *World Politics* 62:1 (January 2010) pp. 120-147

Brady, Henry, David Collier, and Jason Seawright, “Introduction to the Second Edition: A Sea Change in Political Methodology” and Refocusing the Discussion of Methodology,” in

Brady and Collier eds. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, second edition (hereafter **RSI**) (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010) pp. 1-32

George, Alexander and Andrew Bennett, "Case Studies and Theory Development," in George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Science* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005) pp. 3-36

Hall, Peter "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research," in Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) pp. 376-401

For further reading:

Collier, David, "The Comparative Method," in Ada W. Finifter, ed. *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II* (Washington, DC: American Political Science Association, 1993) pp. 105-119

Eckstein, Harry "Case Studies and Theory in Political Science," in Greenstein and Polsby, eds. *Handbook of Political Science* (Addison-Wesley, 1975) pp. 79-138

## **January 29: Concepts and Measurement**

Goertz, Gary, *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 1-94

Adcock, Robert N. and David Collier, "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *American Political Science Review* 95:3 (September 2001) pp. 529-546

Collier, David and James Mahon, "Conceptual "Stretching" Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis," *APSR* 87:4 (December 1993) pp. 845-855

Ahram, Ariel, "Concepts and Measurement in Multi-method Research," *Political Research Quarterly* 66 (June 2013) pp. 280-291

Bevir, Mark and Asaf Kedar, "Concept Formation in Political Science: An Anti-naturalist Critique of Qualitative Methodology," *Perspectives on Politics*, Issue 3 (September 2008) pp. 503-517

### **February 5: Examples from Work on Democracy**

Munck, Gerardo and Jay Verkuilen, "Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices," *Comparative Political Studies* 35:1 (February 2002) pp. 5-34

Collier, David and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," *World Politics* 49:3 (April 1997), pp. 430-451

Paxton, Pamela, "Women's Suffrage in the Measurement of Democracy: Problems of Operationalization," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 35:3 (September 2000) pp. 92-111

Bowman, Kirk, Fabrice LeHoucq and James Mahoney, "Measuring Political Democracy: Case Expertise, Data Adequacy, and Central America," *Comparative Political Studies* 38:8 (October 2005) pp. 939-970

### **February 12: Causality and Causal Inference**

KKV, "Causality and Causal Inference," pp. 75-114

RSI, "Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference: Toward an Alternative View of Methodology," pp. 161-199

Bennett, Andrew, "The Mother of all Isms: Causal Mechanisms and Structured Pluralism in International Relations Theory," *European Journal of International Relations* 19:3 (2013) pp. 459-481

Goertz and Mahoney, "Causes of Effects vs. Effects of Causes," and "Hume's Two Definitions of Cause," in *A Tale of Two Cultures*, pp. 41-50 and 75-86

Schaffer, Frederic Charles, "Questions About Causes," *Qualitative and Multi-method Newsletter*, Fall 2013 pp. 23-27

Brady, Henry. "Causation and Explanation in Social Science," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology* eds. Janet Box-Steffensmeier, Henry Brady and David Collier, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010 pp. 217-246

### **February 19: Case Selection**

Geddes, Barbara, "How the Cases you Choose Affect the Answers you Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," *Political Analysis* 2 (1990)

Collier, David and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," *World Politics* 49 (October 1996) pp. 56-91

Gerring, John and Jason Seawright, "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options," *Political Research Quarterly* 61: 2 (June 2008) pp. 294-308

Goertz and Mahoney, "Negative Case Selection: The Possibility Principle," in Chapter 7 of Goertz, *Social Science Concepts*

Edelstein, David, "Occupational Hazards: Why Military Operations Succeed or Fail," *International Security* 29:1 (Summer 2004) pp. 49-56, 80-91

For further reading:

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (as an example of selection bias)

## **February 26: Cross-Case Analysis**

Elman, Colin, "Explanatory Typologies in Qualitative Studies of International Politics," *International Organization* 59 (2005) pp. 293-326

Mahoney, James, "Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis," *Sociological Methods and Research* 28:4 (May 2000) pp. 387-409 ONLY

George and Bennett, "The Congruence Method," pp. 181-204

Locke, Richard and Kathleen Thelen, "Apples and Oranges Revisited: Contextualized Comparisons and the Study of Labor Politics," *Politics and Society* 23(3): 337-67

For further reading:

Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*

Morris Fiorina, *Congress, Keystone of the Washington Establishment*

Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*

## **March 5: Within-Case Analysis and Historical Explanation**

Clayton Roberts, *The Logic of Historical Explanation*, pp. 1-159

For further reading:

Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization*

Jack Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World*



**March 12: NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)**

**March 19: Within-Case Analysis: Process Tracing and Counterfactuals**

Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen, *Process-Tracing Methods: Foundations and Guidelines*.  
University of Michigan Press, 2013, pp. 1-143

For further reading:

James Mahoney, *The Legacies of Liberalism: Path Dependence and Political Regimes in Central America*

Paul Pierson, *Dismantling the Welfare State?: Reagan, Thatcher, and the Politics of Retrenchment*

**March 26: Macro-Historical Comparison, Critical Junctures and Path Dependency**

Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, "Comparative-Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agendas," in their *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, 2003) pp. 3-38

Pierson, Paul, "Not Just What, But When: Timing and Sequence in Political Processes," *Studies in American Political Development* 14:1 (2000) pp. 72-92

Thelen, Kathleen, "The Political Economy of Skills in Comparative Historical Analysis," in *How Institutions Evolve: The Political Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain, the United States and Japan* (Cambridge University Press), 2004 pp. 1-38

Collier, Ruth and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 27-39

Mahoney, James, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29 (2000) pp. 507-548

For further reading:

Eric Schickler, *Disjointed Pluralism: Institutional Innovation and the Development of the US Congress*

Frank Dobbin, *Forging Industrial Policy: The United States, Britain and France in the Railway Age*

## **April 2: Natural Experiments**

Dunning, Thad *Natural Experiments: A Design-Based Approach*, pp. read 1-102, skim 102-207, read 208-231

For further reading:

Sekhon, Jasjeet and Rocio Titiunik, "When Natural Experiments Are Neither Natural nor Experiments," *APSR* 106:1 (2012) pp. 35-57

John Snow, *On the Mode of Communication of Cholera* (this is considered a classic example of both natural experiments and process-tracing, and an old one at that. It's from 1855)

Daniel Posner, "The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi," in *APSR* 98:4 (2004), pp. 529-545

## **April 9: Qualitative Comparative Analysis**

Ragin, Charles, *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), pp. 1-84, 109-123

Mahoney, James, Erin Kimball and Kendra Koivu, "The Logic of Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences" *Comparative Political Studies* 42:1 (January 2009) pp. 114-146

For further reading:

Goertz and Mahoney, "A Mathematical Prelude" in *A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research Designs*

Hicks, Alexander, Joya Misra, and Tang Nah Ng, "The Programmatic Emergence of the Social Security State," *American Sociological Review*, 60:3 (June 1995) pp. 329-349

Carsten Schneider and Claudius Wagemann, *Set Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences: A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*

## **April 16: NO CLASS**

## **April 23: Multi-method Research**

Lieberman, Evan, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review* 93:3 (August 2005) pp. 435-452

Rohlfing, Ingo, "What You See and What You Get: Pitfalls and Principles of Nested Analysis in Comparative Research," *Comparative Political Studies* 41:11 (2008) pp. 1492-1514

Ahmed, Amel and Rudra Sil, "When Multi-method Work Subverts Methodological Pluralism- or, Why We Still Need Single-method Research," *Perspectives on Politics* 10:4 (2012) pp. 935-953

Chatterjee, Abhishek, "Ontology, Epistemology, and Multimethod Research in Political Science," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 43:1 (2013) pp. 73-99

Schenider, Carsten Q. and Ingo Rohlfing, "Combining QCA and Process Tracing in Set-Theoretical Multi-method Research," *Sociological Methods and Research* 42:4 (2013) pp. 559-597

For further reading:

Daniel Drezner, *The Sanctions Paradox: Economic Statecraft and International Relations*

Jeffrey Paige, *Agrarian Revolution: Social Movements and Export Agriculture in the Underdeveloped World*

### **April 30: Interpretivism and Constructivism**

Klotz, Audie and Cecilia Lynch, "Constructivism" in *Strategies for Research in International Relations* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2007), pp. 3-23

Wendt, Alexander "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics" *International Organization* 46:2 (March 1992), pp. 391-425

Yanow, Dvora, "Thinking Interpretively: Philosophical Presuppositions and the Human Sciences," in Yanow and Schwartz-Shea *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2006) pp. 5-26

Weldes, Jutta, "Constructing National Interests," *European Journal of International Relations* 2:3 (September 1996), pp. 275-318

For further reading:

Lisa Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions: Public, Power and Performance in Yemen*

## **May 7: Field Work**

Katherine Dettwyler, *Dancing Skeletons: Life and Death in West Africa*

Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, "Encountering your IRB: What Political Scientists Need to Know," in *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research Newsletter* 12:2 (Fall 2014) pp. 34-40

For further reading:

William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States*

Elizabeth Jean Wood, *Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador*