This course provides an introduction to multi-method research in political science, but with an emphasis on its qualitative component. It approaches the issue from two angles: as an emerging body of methodological work on how qualitative techniques can be used to support causal claims; and by considering examples of good empirical work. Although taught in 10, 3 hour sessions the course is broken into four modules and 20 segments.

Requirements for the course include the following. First, all students will write two short assignments (2-4 pages) based on the prompt or another question that might interest you. These will count for 30% of your grade (15%) each.

In addition, you can choose one of the following (60%):
- Three additional short assignments drawn entirely from the reading.
- A prospectus (10-15 pages) for a qualitative design, detailing the theory you want to test and the data that you would need to do the work.
- A proposal and pilot of a qualitative dataset (again, 10-15 pages).
- A chapter from your dissertation that involves a qualitative design.
- Any other proposal that is reasonable.

The remainder of the grade—10%—will be for participation and quizzes if there is an indication that reading is not being done.

Two books are suggested for purchase. Parts of Gary Goertz, *Multimethod Research, Causal Mechanism and Case Studies: An Integrated Approach* (Princeton University Press, 2017) will be assigned but I suggest you purchase and read the whole book in parallel with the course; it is an excellent guide. We will also be reading all of Katherine Kramer, *The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker* (Chicago 2016).

There are three books from which we are reading roughly half of the book, and they will be posted on TED as there are no stable URLs for them. If you would prefer to have hard copies, they are: Elizabeth Wood, *Forging Democracy from Below: Insurgent Transitions in South Africa and El Salvador*, David Stasavage, *Public Debt and the Birth of the Democratic State* and Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, *Dictators and Democrats: Masses, Elites and Regime Change*.

Office hours: Wednesday 10-12 and 3-4 1425 Robinson Building Complex or by appointment.
April 4. Introduction: The Lay of the Land (Week 1)

Session 1. The Core Debates

“Causal inference” is increasingly associated with a particular research design: the randomized controlled trial and the identification of average treatment effects within populations. Alternative approaches, for example using observational data, are effectively ranked by the extent to which they approach this ideal. The premise of this class is that this assertion is fundamentally normative, that experimental designs yield results that are also ultimately correlational, that we have an interest in singular causation (“why did X happen?”) as well as findings related to populations. There are a variety of alternative ways of thinking both about causation. The first session outlines the evolution of the field and some of this basic terrain.


Recommended


Stephen Van Evera, Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science (Cornell University Press, 1997), a quirky guide by a prominent IR theorist that is still relevant.


Goertz, Gary, and James Mahoney, A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences (Princeton University Press, 2012).

Session 2. Concept Formation, Measurement Validity and “Mere” Description

The emphasis on causal inference has shifted attention away from concept formation, measurement validity and “mere” description. But concepts are at the core of both qualitative and quantitative analysis and inferences will be flawed unless concepts are coherent and measured properly. In addition to a general treatment, we look at two exercises in concept formation, one of potential DVs, the other of a chosen IV.


Jessica Weeks, *Dictators at War and Peace* (Cornell University Press, 2014), Ch. 1 (14-36) and Ch. 2 (37-41 only) [here](#).

**Recommended**

David Collier and John Gerring, eds. *Concepts and Method in Social Science* (Routledge 2009), an extended treatment of Sartori’s contribution including original essays.


**Assignment.** Outline the logic of the typologies developed by Weeks or Stokes. On what dimensions does the concept in question vary? Does the typology incorporate causal assumptions?

**Module I: Process Tracing and Within-Case Causal Inference**

**April 11. Some Basics: Case Selection and Causal Process Observation (Week 2)**

**Session 1. The Logic of Case Selection in Multimethod Designs**

Much of the remainder of the course will work through methods and examples of conducting within-case or cross-case qualitative analysis. However, for most students at UCSD these will be paired with quantitative analysis in a multi-method design. We therefore need to match a discussion of within case causal inference and comparative analysis (taken up in more detail below) with an understanding of how to select cases from various quantitative designs, whether experimental or observational.


Jason Seawright, *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Qualitative Tools* (Cambridge University Press, 2016), Ch. 3, 4 and 8 [here](#).
**Recommended**


Colin Elman, John Gerring and James Mahoney, *Case Study Research: Putting the Quant into the Qual*. Special issue of Sociological Methods and Research 45, 3 (August 2016) discusses case analysis in the context of a variety of different statistical techniques, including matching. [Here](#).

**Session 2. The Mechanism Approach to Causation and Within-Case Causal Inference**

Goertz argues that within-case causal inference is the main function of the analysis of cases and it is certainly one dominant strand of this research. We start by considering the basics of the process-tracing or causal process observations approach, introducing a vocabulary of a variety of tests. I will also talk about the role of counterfactual analysis and narrative.


**Recommended**


For a formal treatment of the Bayesian logic, see Macartan Humphreys and Alan Jacobs, “Mixing Methods: A Bayesian Approach,” *APSR* 109, 4 (November 2015).

**Assignment (strongly recommended).** On p. 83, Seawright outlines the menu of choices for selecting cases. Pick one and discuss its logic and drawbacks, taking issue with Seawright if you think it appropriate.

**April 18. Within-Case Causal Inference: Examples (Week 3)**
The standard use for process tracing is to test whether cases plausibly support causal mechanisms stipulated in theories and demonstrated through panel or cross-sectional quantitative designs. However, probabilistic models often assume linear or “linear like” causal relationships or relatively simple interactions. Qualitative designs may have inherent advantages for testing complex, multi-stage causal theories; as a result, they open the possibility of thinking about such theories in the first place.

**Session 1. Using Process Tracing to Test for Causal Mechanisms**

Kenneth Schulz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), Chs. 5-7 [here](#).

**Session 2. Testing Complex Process-Oriented Theories**


**Assignment.** In two-three pages, diagram and discuss the causal argument that Wood or Schulz proposes and how it is tested. For Schulz it means outlining the logic of moving from quantitative analysis to case selection: consider the Fashoda case in Chapter Five and one of the cases in Chapter Six. For Wood, this involves considering the arc of the four chapters on a single case.

**April 25. Game Theory and Qualitative Designs (Week 4)**

For some time, there has been an extended discussion among methodologists in political science about how to test formal models. This effort has largely gelled around a project called Empirical Implications of Theoretical Models or EITM (website is [here](#); Granato provides an introduction and Goertz Ch. 6 offers a critique). But it is a well-known secret that many game theorists test their work through qualitative designs. These efforts typically attempt to show that some case demonstrates or even validates the theory through within-case causal inference. What are the nature of these tests and what evidence is required for them, in particular about mental states such as preferences and beliefs? In addition, we need to take into account the additional complications raised by the emergence of the behavioral revolution, particularly in international relations, which has introduced a variety of individual level characteristics that are theoretically salient, such as time and risk preferences, beliefs about fairness and emotion.

**Session 1. Game Theory and Qualitative Designs I: Basic Logic and Rationalist Examples**


**Recommended**


**Session 2. Behavioral Approaches**


**Assignment.** Pick one of the empirical pieces and describe how the theory is mapped onto to the narrative and qualitative material. What are the parameters of the model that are being tested? What is the nature of the evidence that is—or can—be provided about the mental states of the actors (beliefs, preferences, emotions)?

**Module II: Comparative Analysis**

**May 2. Comparative Historical Analysis (Week 5)**

The traditions of comparative historical analysis and historical institutionalism trace their methodological roots to Mill’s *System of Logic*: the methods of agreement, difference [counterintuitively known as the most similar systems design] and the combined method of agreement and difference. The logical underpinnings of Mill’s method opens on to conceptions of cause related to necessary, sufficient, necessary and sufficient and the INUS and SUIN conditions. But comparative historical analysis and historical institutionalism has also raised a variety of other questions, including critical junctures, path dependence and sequencing.

**Session 1. The Basics**

Colin Elman, “Explanatory Typologies in Qualitative Studies of International Politics,” *International Organization* 59 (Spring 2005): 293-326 [here]. [Note; this piece is complex and Elman introduces a series of amendments, but focus on the basic point about explanatory typologies first before unpacking Elman’s extensions.]

Recommended.


James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschmeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge 2003) and James Mahoney and Kathleen Thelen, eds. *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis* (Cambridge 2015) pull together both examples of such work in particular areas and theoretical pieces. Not covered here is the interesting discussion of institutional change opened up by Kathy Thelen in *How Institutions Evolve: The Political Economy of Skills in Germany, Britain the United States and Japan* (Cambridge 2004) and the concepts of “drift” and “conversion” outlined in Jacob Hacker, Paul Pierson and Kathleen Thelen, “Drift and Conversion: Hidden Faces of Institutional Change” in Mahoney and Thelen 2015.

Sidney Tarrow, “The Strategy of the Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice,” *Comparative Political Studies* 43, 2 (2010) [here]. This piece is strongly recommended; reviews a number of highly successful examples.


**Session 2. Critical Junctures and Path Dependence**


Recommended.


Assignment.

- How does Elman’s explanatory typology framework relate to the necessary-and-sufficient conditions framework elaborated by Mahoney? Or to the typologies developed by Weeks and Stokes et. al. in Week One?
- Arriola makes reference to critical junctures and path dependence in his comparative analysis of Kenya and Cameroon. What is the logic of the critical juncture explanation, and what are the mechanisms explaining the observed path dependence?
- What is the logic of Tsai’s argument concerning institutional change? Could it be quantified, and if so, what would the benefits and drawbacks be?

**May 9. Comparative Historical Analysis Continued (Week 6)**

We continue with a sophisticated example that combines within-case and cross-case historical analysis before turning briefly to Qualitative Comparative Analysis or QCA. This field has exploded and become quite technical, with distinctive softwares and tests that are increasingly quantitative in form. I will outline the logic and we will consider a prominent fuzzy-set example that is rooted in case analysis.

**Session 1. Combining Within Case and Cross-Case Analysis**

David Stasavage, Public Debt and the Birth of the Democratic State. (Cambridge University Press, 2003), Chapters 1, 2, 4-6.

**Session 2. QCA**

Recommended

Carsten Q. Schneider and Claudius Wagemann. *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences: A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. (Cambridge University Press 2012) and Schneider’s syllabus to his advanced course for a sense of the field here. For a critical symposium on the topic—and Collier’s objections--see the symposium in the QMMR Newsletter here.

Assignment.

- What is the comparative logic in Stasavage looking both at change over time within the cases and the comparison between them?
- Outline the truth table logic of the Mahoney piece; how does it generate causal inference?

May 16. Large N-Qualitative Designs (Week 7)

Many phenomena of interest to political scientists involve relatively rare events: wars and civil wars, financial crises, famines, genocides, regime changes. As a result, there has been a new interest in whether both theories and extant quantitative tests might be interrogated through large-N qualitative designs and even those that interrogate all cases of the phenomenon in question. These sessions consider the logic of this approach, including “thin” case coding as a type of within-case causal inference and the use of distributions and anomalous cases to develop theory and refine testing.

Session 1. The Logic of Large-N Qualitative Design I


Session 2. The Logic of Large-N Qualitative Design II

Stephan Haggard and Robert Kaufman, *Dictators and Democrats: Masses, Elites and Regime Change* (Princeton University Press, 2016), chapters 1-5. On TED or will distribute copies. Scan the dataset at here.

Assignment. This approach is based in part on the generation of distributions. How are the distributions generated? Snyder and Borghard find few cases supportive of the theory, but what implications can be drawn where there are both examples that conform to the theory and those that don’t, as in Haggard and Kaufman?

Module III. Methods of Qualitative Analysis: The Variety of Data

May 23. Documentary and Interview Sources (Week 8)
In this module, we take a different approach to the problem of qualitative designs: a consideration of what the source material is from which qualitative accounts are constructed. As we have already seen from examples such as Stasavage, “qualitative” accounts can be anchored by quantitative data, particularly time trends on parameters of interest. But we often want to explain discrete events and thus actions, which can require chronologies that can be very tight (think of actions surrounding a crisis or a change in political regime). Depending on the nature of the theory being tested, we sometimes want to know the preferences, beliefs, intentions and other mental states of the actors. We consider the issues surrounding use of both primary and secondary documents and interviews of various sorts in getting at these issues.

Session 1. Using Primary and Secondary Documents


Keren Yarhi-Milo, *Knowing the Adversary: Leaders, Intelligence and Assessment of Intentions in International Relations* (Princeton 2014), Ch. 1 (14-35) and Chs. 8-10 [here](#).

*Recommended.*


Session 2. The Variety of Interview Data

Diana Kapiszewski, Lauren M. Maclean and Benjamin Read, *Field Research in Political Science* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), Ch. 6 (Ch. 7 is on ethnography if interested). On TED


*Recommended.*

Steiner Kvale and Svend Brinkmann, *Interviews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (Sage, 2009)


*Assignment.* Under what theoretical circumstances would primary or interview data not only be desirable but necessary to make causal claims? If appropriate, draw on Yarhi-Milo.
May 30. In the Field: Field Research and Ethnography (Week 9)

Ethnography is not the preserve of interpretivists alone; it can also be used to support experimental field designs and other research methods. We start with new work combining field experiments with qualitative research (particularly open-ended interviewing) before turning to some interpretivist examples. One central area in which interpretivism has had a powerful influence is in the study of contentious politics, where mobilization depends in part on the framing of the particular injustice. How do we study these frames? Katherine Kramer’s study of Wisconsin goes a step farther, identifying a “rural consciousness” that shapes virtually all aspects of politics.

Session 1. Qualitative Support for Experimental Designs


Recommended.

Elizabeth Wood, “Field Research” in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes, eds. The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics (2009) here for examples of fieldwork that are immersive.


Session 2. Ethnography 1: Social Frames and Contentious Politics

Sidney Tarrow, Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics (Cambridge 2011, 3rd edition), Ch. 7. On TED.


Start Katherine Kramer, The Politics of Resentment: Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker (Chicago 2016); we will discuss next week.

Recommended

Sidney Tarrow, The Language of Contention: Revolutions in Words 1688-2012 (Cambridge 2013).

Kevin O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, Rightful Resistance in Rural China (Cambridge University Press, 2006).
Assignment.

- Why is Palluck’s proposal qualitative? What is the qualitative component exactly and what does it do that the experimental design can’t? Pay particular attention to her description of her own field experiment.
- Tarrow is making a theoretical point about the importance of frames, but it would appear to virtually require a qualitative, interpretivist method. Or?

June 6 (1). In the Field: Ethnography (con’t; Week 10)

Session 1. Ethnography 2: Interpretivist Focus Group Immersion


Recommended.


Module IV. Professional and Ethical Issues

June 6 (2). Professional and Ethical Issues

Here we do not address the broader question of human subjects but of the transparency of qualitative data. Is it possible to have standards that are common to quantitative and qualitative information, and if not, why not? The question is roiling the discipline.


Isaac, Jeffrey C. “In Praise of Transparency, but not DA-RT,” *Newsletter of the APSA International History and Politics Section* (Winter 2016) here.