

# POLS 531

## Qualitative Research Methods

Halit Mustafa Tagma  
Office Hours: After Class and by Appointment  
Email: [halit.tagma@gmail.com](mailto:halit.tagma@gmail.com)

### Summary:

The course is designed to familiarize graduate students with a range of qualitative research methods and to prepare them to employ these methods in writing their dissertations, theses, articles, and grant applications. The readings include the methodology and epistemology of qualitative methods and the application of it in political science and sister-disciplines as anthropology, history and sociology. Required readings must be completed before the class for which the reading is scheduled to be discussed. Students from other disciplines are welcome to take the course, provided that they have a basic background in research methods. They should also understand that the bulk of the examples in class will be drawn from political science and international relations.

### Communication & Office Hours:

I am available to meet students during regularly scheduled office hours or, if need be, by previously scheduled appointment. Appointments are best scheduled via email by contacting me at [halit.tagma@gmail.com](mailto:halit.tagma@gmail.com). Please feel free to email me if you have difficulty comprehending, say, one of the concepts, or, a couple of the paragraphs of the weekly reading.

### Assignments:

Written Assignments: There are three take-home assignments: a methodological critique; a research design from your own work; and a funding application. All papers must be use 1.5 line spacing, must be presented in Times New Roman 12 point font, and must have 1 inch margins at top and bottom and 1.5 inch margins on left and right.

#### **Assignment One: Methodological Critique**

A 3,000 word methodological critique of any article or book having a clear argument that can be expressed as an “if, then” generalization. Your job is to restate the author’s main hypothesis, the definitions of key concepts and variables, the procedure used in measuring variables in particular cases, the tests devised to show covariation between independent and dependent variables, how the author eliminates alternative explanations, how the cases have been selected and the relation of the author’s hypothesis to more general theories. You should also provide where the author’s method has shortcomings, and how it might have been improved. This assignment makes up 20% of your course grade. **Due Second Friday of November.**

#### **Assignment Two: Research Design:**

A 3,500 word paper based on your own research, ideally on a major paper that you will be writing for another course this or next semester. This paper should lay out an interesting puzzle and sketch how rigorous methods can be used to try to solve it. This assignment makes

up 20% of your course grade. **Due First Friday of December. Read George and Bennet Book Appendix 1.**

### **Assignment Three: Sample Chapter on Methodology**

An 8,000 word paper, including all the relevant background literature on method(s) that your thesis/dissertation relies on. You are going to show me **how** you are going to test your argument in your thesis/dissertation relies on. You will be expected to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed methodology, and elaborate on alternative methodologies that could have been used, and why you chose the one you did. You shall also provide how you define your concepts, how you select your cases, how you operationalize your variables, how the method will allow you to support your main hypothesis. You should treat this paper as if it is going to serve as the methods chapter for your thesis/dissertation. This assignment makes up 30% of your course grade. **Due First Friday of January.**

### **Participation:**

Attendance will be monitored. The format of the class will be group discussion and debate. The most important requirement for this course is for students to engage the readings, and to come prepared to discuss them in class. Everyone is expected to participate in class discussions. As a graduate student you are expected to come to every session. Absences must be university approved and officially documented. If you miss a class due to circumstances then your designated “buddy” would inform you of news/topics that may have been covered in class during your absence.

### **Courtesy:**

Students are, of course, encouraged to disagree—to raise scholarly concerns, to voice nagging doubts, to offer counter-points, to expose logical absurdities, etc.—with the arguments offered by the texts, by each other. Nevertheless, such disagreements must fall within the grounds of appropriate decorum. Inappropriate disruptions, disregard for messages, and/or personal attacks can not be tolerated. Severe and/or repeated infractions may result in a failing grade. In short, always show respect to your fellow students and scholars.

### **Academic Honesty:**

Cheating on an exam or paper assignment will result in an automatic loss of all points for that assignment and possible failure of entire course. This includes copying any part of an argument or paragraph without properly crediting the source. If you heard or read about an idea somewhere, then it belongs to that source.

A good general rule for this course, and truly for all courses, is that students need to be aware of what constitutes academic dishonesty and the consequences thereof. Plagiarism is not tolerated. This includes stealing, copying, as well as not citing where you got the idea or sentence that you are mentioning in your work. Please visit the relevant websites of Sabanci University for further information:

[http://www.sabanciuniv.edu/eng/?genel\\_bilgi/felsefemiz/bilimsel\\_arastirmada\\_suistimal\\_politikasi.html](http://www.sabanciuniv.edu/eng/?genel_bilgi/felsefemiz/bilimsel_arastirmada_suistimal_politikasi.html)

### **Incompletes:**

A grade of incomplete will be awarded only in the case of dire emergencies that prevent an otherwise satisfactorily progressing student from completing his or her work.

### **Late Papers:**

Make-Up exams will only be scheduled in situations that meet the following criteria:

- 1) A university-sanctioned excuse, properly documented, plus advance notice.
- 2) Legitimate extreme hardship, properly documented (i.e. a doctor's note).

*Late papers will be accepted without penalty only if accompanied by medical (or other appropriate university-sanctioned) documentation. Late papers without an officially documented excuse will incur an automatic penalty of 5 points for each day, where the next day is defined as after 12:00am of the day the assignment was due.*

### **Grading:**

#### **Participation:**

A major component of the final grade stems from the ability to think critically about the major concepts and topics introduced in readings and discussions. Your ability to show your comprehension of key concepts in your in-class interactions, as well as in your prose and exams, will form the basis for awarding grades.

Since participation makes up 30% of your grade, you should be aware that coming to class is only a fraction of this. You must come to class having read and prepared to discuss the readings. You are also required to come up with critical questions on the readings in relation to the overall subject matter of our course. To encourage participation, I may take down the names of those who actually voice intelligent questions, concerns, and comments. Your weekly attendance and participation will be monitored, and made available online.

The following is what is expected of you:

- Preparation — your contributions demonstrate that you carefully read the assignment and understand the key points.
- Quality of Argument — you contribute accurate, relevant evidence with sound and insightful reasoning.
- Quality of Expression — your contribution is clear, concise, audible, and directed to your peers.
- Contribution to the Process — your contributions demonstrate that you are listening to others' comments, building upon their ideas, responding to them, respecting them, constructively criticizing them, or asking constructive questions.
- Critical Thought — your contributions show critical awareness, and avoid basic logical fallacies.

## Course Readings

### **Week 1 Introduction**

#### Introduction

(Please come to class having read the following short book)

Nisbett, Richard. and Cohen, Dov. "The Culture of Honor The Psychology Of Violence." in *The South Westview Press*, 1996 [Reserve](#)

### **Week 2 Science and Progress: Paradigms, Research Programs and Research Traditions**

Kuhn, Thomas. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* .Chps. 1-10 [Reserve](#)

Lakatos, Imre. "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes." in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, ed. Lakatos, Imre. and Musgrave, Alan. Pp: 91-196. [PDF](#)

Lauden, Larry. *Progress and its Problems*. Chapter 3, [PDF](#)

### **Week 3 Two Views on Qualitative Methods**

*KKV's Designing Social Inquiry*, 3-74, 75-114, [Available at Reserve](#)

Brady, Henry. and Collier, David. eds. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* selected chapters. [Available at Reserve](#)

Wendt, Alexander. "On Constitution and Causation in International Relations." *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 24 (December 1998): 101-117

Almond, Gabriel. and Genco, Stephen. "Clouds Clocks, and the Study of World Politics." *World Politics* , Vol 29, No 4 (1977) pp:489-522. [PDF](#)

### **Week 4 Concept Formation**

Sartori, Giovanni. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* , Vol 6, No 4 (1970) : 1033-1053 [PDF](#)

Collier, David. and Adcock, Robert. "Democracy and Dichotomies: A Pragmatic Approach to Choices and Concepts." *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol 2 (1999): 537-65 [PDF](#)

Collier, David. and Levitsky, Steven. "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research." *World Politics*, Vol 49, No 3 (1997): 430-451. [PDF](#)

Goertz, Gary. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (2006): Ch. 3 , [available at Reserve](#)

## Recommended

Gerring, John. "What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences." *Polity*, Vol 31(1999): 357-93. [PDF](#)

Sartori, Giovanni. "Guidelines for Concept Analysis." in *Sartori Social Science Concepts: A systematic Analysis*. Beverly Hills Sage (1984): 15-85 [Reserve](#)

Collier, David. and Mahoney, James. "Conceptual Stretching Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis." *American Political Science Review*, Vol 87 (1993): 845-55. [PDF](#)

Mahoney, James. "Strategies of Causal Inference in small-N analysis." *Sociological Methods and Research* Vol 28, No 4 (2000 ): 387-424. [PDF](#)

## **Week 5 The Comparative Method**

Hall, John Peter A. "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Research." in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer eds. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, (2003): 373 – 404.

Ragin, Charles C. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: Univ. of California Press (1987): 1-33. [Reserve](#)

Lijpart, Arend. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* Vol. 65 No 3: 682-693.

Scheuch, Erwin K. "The Development of Comparative Research." in *Comparative Methodology: Theory and Practice in International Social Research*. ed. Else Oyen. Sage (1990): 19-37

Lijphart, Arend "The Comparable-Cases Strategy in Comparative Research." *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol.8, No 2 (July 1975): 158-177.

## Recommended:

Collier, David. "The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change." in *Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives*, eds. Rustow and Erickson, Harper Collins (1991): 7-31.

Przeworski, Adam. and Teune, Henry. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York, J. Wiley: (1970): 17-30 [Reserve](#)

Sartori, Giovanni. "Compare Why and How: Comparing, Miscomparing and the Comparative Method." in *Comparing Nations: Concepts, Strategies, Substance*. Eds. Mattei Dogan and Ali Kazancigil, Oxford, Blackwell (1994): 14-34.

Mahoney, James. "Strategies of Causal Inference in small-N analysis." *Sociological Methods and Research*, Vol 28, No 4 (2000): 387-424. [PDF](#)

## **Week 6 Case Studies**

Bennett, Andrew. and Elman, Colin. "Case Study Methods" in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations* [Library Reserve](#)

Geddes, Barbara. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 1990 [PDF](#)

Eisenhardt, Kathleen M. "Building Theories from Case Study Research." *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (Oct., 1989): 532-550. [PDF](#)

George, Alexander. "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision-Making." *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations* Vol. 2:21-58

Alexander, George. and Bennett, Andrew. *Case Studies and Theory Development*: 1-37, 65-125.

#### Recommended:

Van Evera, Stephen. *Guide to Methods for Graduate Students of Political Science*. Cornell University Press (1997): 49-88. [Reserve](#)

Bennett, Andrew. 1999; Causal Inference in Case Studies, From Mill's Methods to Causal Mechanism [PDF](#)

Alexander, George. and Bennett, Andrew. The Case for Case Studies [PDF](#)

### **Week 7 Case Selection and Process Tracing**

Bennett, Andrew. <http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/kritzer/teaching/ps816/ProcessTracing.htm>

Bennett, Andrew and Alexander L, George. *Case Studies and Process Tracing in History and Political Science*. Eds. Elman and Elman (2001) [Reserve](#)

Tansey, Oisín. "Process Tracing and Elite Interviewing: A Case for Non-probability Sampling *PS*." *Political Science and Politics* . Vol 40, No 4 (2007): 765-772 [PDF](#)

Klein, Hans. *Causation and Case Studies*. 1992 [PDF](#)

Lustick, Ian. "History and Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records of the Problem of Selection Bias" *American Political Science Review* Vol 90, No 3 (1996): 605-618. [PDF](#)

### **Week 8 Causal Mechanisms, Necessary and Sufficient Conditions**

Elster, Jon. "Mechanisms." in *Social Mechanisms*, ed. by Hedstrom, P. and R. Swedberg. New York: Cambridge University Press (1998). [PDF](#)

Goertz, Gary.; Mahoney, James. and Walnder, David. "Symposium section of APSA Qualitative Research Methods Newsletter." (Fall 2010) [PDF](#)

Goertz, Gary. and Starr, Harvey. *Necessary Conditions Theory Methodology and Applications* New York: Rowman and Littlefield (2002): Ch 1 [Reserve](#)

Dessler, David. *A Causal Theory of War* [PDF](#)

Goertz, Gary. and Levy, Jack. "Causal Explanation, Necessary Conditions, and Case Studies: The Causes of World War I." Ch 2-3 [PDF](#)

Tagma, HM. *Realism at the Limits: Post Cold Realism and Nuclear Disarmament Contemporary Security Policy* (2010) [PDF](#)

### Recommended Readings:

Petersen, Roger. "Mechanisms and Structures in Comparison." in *Critical Comparisons in Politics and Culture*, edited by Bowen, J. and R. Petersen. New York: Cambridge University Press (1999)

Gerring, John. "Causation: A Unified Framework for the Social Sciences." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, vol. 17, no. 2 (2005): 163-198

Ray, James Lee. *Case Studies, Covering Laws, and Causality* [PDF](#)

Jervis, Robert. "Complexity and the Analysis of Political and Social Life." *Political Science Quarterly Winter*, Vol 112, No 4 (1997-98): 569-594

Levy, Jack. "Necessary Conditions in Case Studies: Preferences, Constraints, and Choices in July 1914." in *Necessary Conditions Theory Methodology and Applications*, ed. Gary Goertz and Harvey Starr New York: Rowman and Littlefield (2002): 113-145. [Reserve](#)

## **Week 9 Taking Temporality Seriously: Sequences, Tips, and Paths**

Hall, Peter. and Taylor, Rosemary. "Three Institutionalism in Political Science ." [PDF](#)

David, Paul. 1985. "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY." *American Economic Review* 75 (2): 332-337

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

Pierson, Paul. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependency, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review*. Vol 94, No 2 (2000):251-267

Mahoney, J. "Path dependence in historical sociology." *Theory and Society* Vol 29, No 2 (2000):507-548

Camyar, Isa. and Tagma, Halit. "Why Does Turkey Want to Join the EU? A Historical Institutional Approach" 2010 [PDF](#)

### Recommended Readings

Pierson, Paul. "Big Slow Moving, and Invisible: Macro-social Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics" in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* Cambridge University Press, 2003. [Reserve](#)

Rueschemeyer, Dietrich, and John D. Stephens. "Comparing Historical Sequences: A Powerful Tool for Causal Analysis." *Comparative Social Research*, Vol 16 (1997): 55-72

## Week 10 Interviewing for Qualitative Research

Interview methods in political science Forum in - *Political Science & Politics*, Vol 35 (2002)

Dexter, Lewis. *Elite and Specialized Interviewing*. 1990 Available at:

<http://books.google.com/books?id=spGyXLNREukC&lpg=PA71&ots=z7S34gx8G6&dq=Lewis%20Dexter%20pointed%20out%20in%20his%20book%20Elite%20and%20Specialized%20In-%20interviewing%3A&pg=PA4#v=onepage&q&f=false>

## Week 11 Interpretation and Narratives

Wedeen, Lisa. "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science." *Annual Review of Political Science*. Vol 13 (2010): 255–272.

Geertz, Clifford. "The Interpretation of Cultures." (1973): Chps 1,4,5, 6,7 available at Reserve

Hopf, Ted. "The Limits of Interpreting Evidence." PDF

Miliken, Jennifer. "The Study of Discourse in IR." PDF

## Week 12 Critical Discourse Analysis

Chilton, Paul. and Schäffner, Christian. "Introduction: Themes and principles in the Analysis of political discourse." in *Politics as Text and Talk: Analytic Approaches to Political Discourse*, John Benjamin's Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia (2002): 1-44 available as Ebook

Wodak ,Ruth. "What CDA is about—a summary of its history,important concepts, and its developments." in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* available as Ebook

Meyer, Michael. "Between Theory, method, and politics: positioning of the approaches to CDA." in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. Ch 2 available as Ebook

Jager, Siefrid. "Discourse and knowledge: Theoretical and methodological aspects of a critical discourse and dispositive analysis." in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. Ch. 3 available as Ebook

Fairclough, Norman. "Critical Discourse Analysis as a method in social scientific research." in *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* available as Ebook

Shapiro, M. "Notes on a Terrorist Text in International/Intertextual Relations." Lexington Books.

## Week 13 Archive Work

Thies, Cameron, "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations." *International Studies Perspectives* Vol 3, No 4 (November 2002): 351-372.

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

### How Archives have been read from different angles

Wohlforth, William. "Reality Check: Revising Theories of International Politics in Response to the End of the Cold War." *World Politics*, Vol 50, No 4 (July 1998): 650-680.

Greenstein, Fred I. and Immerman, Richard H. "What Did Eisenhower Tell Kennedy About Indochina? The Politics of Misperception." *Journal of American History*, Vol 79, No 2 (September 1992)

Moravcsik, Andrew, "Active Citation: A Precondition for Replicable Qualitative Research." *PS* Vol 43, No 1 (2010): 29-35.

Trachtenberg, Marc, *The Craft of International History*, Appendix I and Appendix II, available at: <http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/methbk/AppendixI.html>

<http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/faculty/trachtenberg/methbk/AppendixII.html>

## **Week 14 How to Write and Publish in Political Science**

Van Evera, Stephen. "Guide to Methods for Graduate Students of Political Science" Cornell University Press (1997)

### On writing and preparing:

Donovan, Stephen K. "How to Alienate Your Editor: A Practical Guide for Established Authors." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing* Vol 36, No 4 (2005): 238-242. Read pp. 240-242

Donovan, Stephen K. "Putting Editors to Trouble (or People of That Sort)." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, Vol 41, No 1 (2009): 103-109

Stimson, James A. "Professional Writing in Political Science: A Highly Opinionated Essay." Paper, University of North Carolina. Retrieved from: [www.unc.edu/~jstimson/Writing.pdf](http://www.unc.edu/~jstimson/Writing.pdf) [Skip portions that are not relevant for you.]

### On Rejection:

Stephen K. Donovan. "The Importance of Resubmitting Rejected Papers." *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*. Vol 38, No 3 (2007): 151-155

Weeks, Gregory. "Facing Failure: The Use (and Abuse) of Rejection in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Vol 39, No 4 (2006): 876-882

### Reflections of a previous editor:

Dina A. Zinnes, "Reflections of a Past Editor," *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Vol 18, No 3 (1985): 607-612

### Data on Publication Correlates

Lewis-Beck, Michael S. and Levy, Dena. "Correlates of Publication Success: Some AJPS Results." *PS: Political Science and Politics*. Vol 26, No 3 (1993): 558-561

## (Suggested Readings)

### Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies

Ragin, Charles. "Fuzzy Set Social Science" (selections) [Available at Reserve](#)

Mahoney, James .and Goertz, Gary. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis* Vol 14, No 3 (2006): 227-249 [PDF](#)

Bennett, Andrew. "Where the Rubber Meets the Road: Combining Statistical, Formal, and Case Study Methods" 2002

#### Recommended

Goldthorpe, John. "On Sociology: Numbers, Narratives, and the Integration of Research and Theory" 2000 (selections) [Available at Reserve](#)

### Counterfactuals in Social Research

Fearon, James D. "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics*, Vol 43, No 2 (1991):169-195

Weingast, Barry R. "Off-the-Path Behavior: A Game-Theoretic Approach to Counterfactuals and Its Implications for Political and Historical Analysis." in *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*, edited by Tetlock, P. E. and A. Belkin. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1996 [Available at Reserve](#)

Bueno de Mesquita, Bruce. "Counterfactuals and International Affairs: Some Insights from Game Theory." In *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*, edited by Tetlock, P. E. and A. Belkin. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1996 [Available at Reserve](#)

Tetlock, Philip E., and Belkin, Aron. *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics*. Their introduction. 1996 [Available at Reserve](#)

Tetlock, Philip E. "Close-Call Counterfactual and Belief-System Defenses: I was Not Almost Wrong But I Was Almost Right." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol 75, No 3 (1998): 639-652.

### Analytical Narratives (Suggested Readings)

Bates, R. H., A. Greif, M. Levi, J. L. Rosenthal, and B. R. Weingast. *Analytic Narratives*.

Elster, Jon. "Rational Choice History: A Case of Excessive Ambition." *American Political Science Review*, Vol 94, No 3 (2000): 685-695

Bates, R. H., A. Greif, M. Levi, J. L. Rosenthal, and B. R. Weingast. "The analytic narrative project." *American Political Science Review*, Vol 94, No 3 (2000): 696-702

Carpenter, Daniel P. "What is the Marginal Value of Analytic Narratives?" *Social Science History*, Vol 24, No 4 (2000): 653-668

Skocpol, Theda. "Commentary: Theory Tackles History." *Social Science History*, Vol 24, No 4 (2000): 669-676

Parikh, Sunita. "The Strategic Value of Analytic Narratives." *Social Science History*, Vol 24, No 4 (2000): 677-684

Bates, Robert H., Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry Weingast. 2000. "Analytic Narratives Revisited." *Social Science History*, Vol 24, No 4 (2000): 685-696