Tulane University Professor Mark Vail

Spring 2016 324 Norman Mayer

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Office hours: Thursday, 1:00-3:00

**POLS 7411: QUALITATIVE METHODS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE**

The course is organized around five broad topics: formulating a research question, designing research, collecting data, managing and analyzing data, and presenting findings. Research design and data collection are treated at greater length than the other topics. The course will introduce participants to a broad and extensive set of literatures that investigate these five topics and to engage participants in practical experience through rudimentary exercises in qualitative methods. Participants will gain the knowledge and skills to begin to apply relevant qualitative empirical methods to produce a high‐quality research product from an original research question.

# RESPONSIBILITIES AND BASIS FOR EVALUATION

The requirements for this course involve four responsibilities. First, it is your responsibility to attend class meetings *on time* and prepared to discuss required reading materials and exercises knowledgeably and thoughtfully. Participation will count for 15 percent of your grade. Late arrival in class (meaning more than five minutes after class begins) will result in deductions from your participation grade for that day.

Second, you are responsible for completing all required exercises and one optional exercise to make up 40 percent of your course grade. These assignments will be due **in the box on my office door, as hard copies, by 5:00 p.m. sharp on the Monday before class meets the following day. I will pick the papers up at that time and any papers that are not there will not be accepted.** If you choose to do an optional assignment from a particular week, it must be turned in by the same time on the same day, along with any required assignments for that week. **No late or missed assignments will be accepted for any reason other than *documented* instances of hospitalization or a death in the family. No exceptions. No electronic submissions will be accepted for any reason.**

Third, you will be responsible for leading class discussion on one class day, meaning that you will read the material for that week closely and come to class with themes and sets of questions that will facilitate and shape class discussion. This responsibility will account for 15 percent of your grade. **The sign-up sheet for discussion leadership will be posted on my door and available at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, 14 January. Sessions will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Only one student may sign up for any day’s class.**

Finally, you are responsible for completing one of the following major assignments, accounting for 30 percent of your course grade: (1) Design a thoughtful, well‐crafted proposal to conduct original empirical research that appropriately applies general principles and some qualitative methods treated in this course. (2) Select any five studies in political science using qualitative methods listed on the syllabus and write a thoughtful, well‐crafted paper that uses these works as a basis for devising a common set of methodological standards against which qualitative works on different subjects (and perhaps different fields) of political science may be usefully compared and evaluated. **This assignment is due as a hard copy in the box on my door by 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, 3 May.**

Required reading materials consist of all or much of the six books listed below. Other material is available on Blackboard.

* Robert Bates, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean‐Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry R. Weingast, *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998).
* Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005).
* John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
* Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994).
* James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
* Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*

(Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2005).

**PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

Week 1 (12 January): Introduction and Orientation

-Stephen Jay Gould, *The Hedgehog, the Fox, and the Magister’s Pox: Mending the Gap between Science and the Humanities* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2003), chs. 1-3.

-George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language,” in *George Orwell: A Collection of Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1981), pp. 156-171.

-Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 1-51, 160-173.

Week 2 (19 January): What Is a Research Question? What Is Your Research Question?

‐James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research,” *Political Analysis*, vol. 14, no. 3 (2006): 227–249.

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

‐Howard S. Becker, “Terrorized by the Literature,” in *Writing for Social Scientists* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 135–149.

‐Adam Przeworski and Frank Salomon, “On the Art of Writing Proposals,” (Social Science Research Council, 1995): 1–8.

‐Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*

(Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage, 2005), 39–63.

For further reading:

1. Wright Mills, “On Intellectual Craftsmanship,” *The Sociological Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 195–226.

Required exercise:

In fewer than 250 words, explain, as best you can at this point in your intellectual career, the question you are most likely to investigate in your dissertation research. Include relevant context [5 points].

**PART II: RESEARCH DESIGN**

# Week 3 (26 January): Descriptive and Causal Inference

‐Daniel Little, *Microfoundations, Method, and Causation* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1998), 197–214.

‐Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 34–114.

For further reading:

‐Daniel Little, *Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1991), 11–38.

-Ronald Rogowski, “How Inference in the Social (but Not the Physical) Sciences Neglects Theoretical Anomaly,” in Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 75–83.

‐Dietrich Rueschemeyer, “Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 305–336.

Optional exercise:

In fewer than 1500 words, summarize the relationship between descriptive and explanatory aims in investigating your research question [10 points].

# Week 4 (2 February): Conceptualization and Measurement

‐Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 150–207.

‐Gary Goertz, *Social Science Concepts: A User’s Guide* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006), 1–24.

‐Robert Adcock and David Collier, “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 95, no. 3 (2001): 529–546.

‐ Rawi Abdelal, Yoshiko M. Herrera, Alastair Iain Johnston, and Rose McDermott, “Identity as a Variable,” *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 4, no. 4 (2006): 695–711.

For further reading:

‐David Collier and James Mahoney, “Conceptual Stretching Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 87, no. 4 (1993): 845–855.

‐David Collier and Steven Levitsky, “Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research,” *World Politics*, vol. 49, no. 3 (1997): 430–451.

‐Jerome Kirk and Marc L. Miller, *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1986).

‐Gerardo Munck and Jay Verkuilen, “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices,” *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 35, no. 1 (2002): 5–34.

‐Giovanni Sartori, “Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 64, no. 4 (1970): 1033–1053.

‐Eugene J. Webb, Donald T. Campbell, Richard D. Schwartz, and Lee Sechrest, *Unobtrusive Measures*, rev. ed. (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2000).

Required exercise:

In fewer than 250 words, discuss your measures for a concept of importance to your own research [5 points].

**NO CLASS, TUESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY (MARDI GRAS BREAK)**

Week 5 (16 February): Natural Experiments

‐John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 151–171.

‐Thad Dunning, “Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments,” *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 2 (2008): 282–293.

‐Daniel N. 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, no. 4 (2004): 529–545.

For further reading:

‐Rose McDermott, “Experimental Methods in Political Science,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 5 (2002): 31–61.

# Week 6 (23 February): Case Study Method

‐Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 3–36, 87–124.

‐John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 15–63.

For further reading:

‐Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage, 1989), 13– 60.

# Week 7 (1 March): Case Selection

‐Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 115–149, 208–230.

‐John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 68–150.

‐David Collier, James Mahoney, and Jason Seawright, “Claiming Too Much: Warnings about Selection Bias,” in Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), 85–102.

‐Lily Lee Tsai, “Cadres, Temple and Lineage Institutions, and Governance in Rural China,” *China Journal*, no. 48 (2002): 1–27.

For further reading:

‐Douglas Dion, “Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study,” *Comparative Politics*, vol. 30, no. 2 (1998): 127–145.

‐Barbara Geddes, “How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics,” *Political Analysis*, vol. 2 (1990): 131–150.

‐James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, “The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Comparative Research,” *American Political Science Review*,” vol. 98, no. 4 (2004): 653–669.

‐W. Phillips Shively, “Case Selection: Insights from *Rethinking Social Inquiry*,” *Political Analysis*, vol. 14, no. 3 (2006); 344–347.

Optional exercise:

In fewer than 1500 words, explain how the implications of Dion (1998) and Geddes (1990) regarding selection on the dependent variable can (or cannot) be reconciled [10 points].

Week 8 (8 March): Process Tracing and Path Dependence

‐Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 205–232.

‐John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 172–185.

For further reading:

‐Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman, “Qualitative Research: Recent Developments in Case Study Methods,” *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 9 (2006): 455–476.

‐Nathaniel Beck, “Is Causal‐Process Observation an Oxymoron?” *Political Analysis*, vol. 14, no. 3 (2006): 347–352.

# PART III: DATA COLLECTION

# Week 9 (15 March): Macro‐Historical Comparison

‐James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, “Comparative Historical Analysis: Achievements and Agendas,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 3–38.

‐Paul Pierson, “Big, Slow‐Moving, and ... Invisible: Macrosocial Processes in the Study of Comparative Politics,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 177– 207.

‐Kathleen Thelen, “How Institutions Evolve: Insights from Comparative Historical Analysis,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 208–240.

‐James Mahoney, “Strategies of Causal Assessment in Comparative Historical Analysis,” in James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 337–372.

**NO CLASS, TUESDAY, 22 MARCH (SPRING BREAK/EASTER)**

Week 10 (29 March): Analytic Narratives

‐Robert Bates, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean‐Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry R. Weingast,

*Analytic Narratives* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), any two chapters.

‐Jon Elster, “Rational Choice History: A Case of Excessive Ambition,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 94, no. 3 (2000): 685–695.

‐Daniel P. Carpenter, “What Is the Marginal Value of Analytic Narratives?” *Social Science History*, vol. 24, no. 4 (2000): 653–668.

‐Theda Skocpol, “Commentary: Theory Tackles History,” *Social Science History*, vol. 24, no. 4 (2000): 669–676.

‐Sunita Parikh, “The Strategic Value of Analytic Narratives,” *Social Science History*, vol. 24, no. 4 (2000): 677–684.

‐Robert Bates, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean‐Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry R. Weingast, “The Analytic Narrative Project,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 94, no. 3 (2000): 696–702.

‐Robert Bates, Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean‐Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry R. Weingast, “Analytic Narratives Revisited,” *Social Science History*, vol. 24, no. 4 (2000): 685–696.

# Week 11 (5 April): Interviews and Focus Groups

‐Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce, and Laura Johnson, “How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability,” *Field Methods*, vol. 18, no. 1 (2006): 59–82.

‐Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*

(Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2005), 64–78, 108–200, 201-245.

For further reading:

‐Martha S. Feldman, Jeannine Bell, and Michele Tracy Berger, eds., *Gaining Access: A Practical and Theoretical Guide for Qualitative Researchers* (Walnut Creek, Cal.: Altamira Press, 2003).

‐Matthew J. Salganik and Douglas D. Heckathorn, “Sampling and Estimation in Hidden Populations Using Respondent‐Driven Sampling,” *Sociological Methodology*, vol. 34 (2004): 193– 239.

‐“Symposium: Interview Methods in Political Science,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 35, no. 4 (2002): 663–688.

‐Joe Soss, “Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations: A Practice‐Centered View of Interviewing for Interpretive Research,” in Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz‐Shea, eds., *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2006), 127–149.

‐David L. Morgan, “Focus Groups,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 22 (1996): 129–152.

Required exercise:

On your own or with one or more fellow students, prepare an interview protocol to investigate some specified research question, and conduct at least two semi‐structured interviews each using this protocol. *Keep your interview notes for the Week 11 exercises.* [10 points].

# Week 12 (12 April): Participant Observation and Ethnographic Fieldwork

‐Richard F. Fenno, Jr., *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts* (Boston: Little Brown, 1978), 249–295.

‐William Foote Whyte, *Learning from the Field: A Guide from Experience* (Newbury Park, Cal.: Sage, 1984), 23–33.

For further reading:

‐Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3–30.

Required exercise:

In fewer than 1500 words and drawing from your interview notes from the Week 10 exercise, write up your preliminary findings [5 points].

# Week 13 (19 April): Fieldwork and Mixed Methods

‐Elisabeth Wood, “Field Methods,” in Carles Boix and Susan Stokes, eds., *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics* (2007): 123–146.

‐Michael Coppedge, “Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large N and Small in Comparative Politics,” *Comparative Politics*, vol. 31, no. 4 (1999): 465–476.

‐Evan S. Lieberman, “Nested Analysis as a Mixed‐Method Strategy for Comparative Research,” *American Political Science Review*, vol. 99, no. 3 (2005): 435–452.

For further reading:

‐Ingo Rohlfing, “What You See and What You Get: Pitfalls and Principles of Nested Analysis in Comparative Research,” *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 41, no. 11 (2007): 1492–1514.

**PART IV: CONCLUSION**

# Week 14 (26 April): Presentation of Findings

‐Jonathan Kirshner, “Alfred Hitchcock and the Art of Research,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 29, no. 3 (1996): 511–513.

‐Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*

(Thousand Oaks, Cal.: Sage, 2005), 246–273.

‐David Thunder, “Back to Basics: Twelve Rules for Writing a Publishable Article,” *PS: Political Science and Politics*, vol. 37, no. 3 (2004): 493–495.

For further reading:

‐Royce A. Singleton, Jr. and Bruce C. Straits, *Approaches to Social Research*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 540–556.

Required exercise:

Be prepared to present in class your research question, its intellectual context, and your proposed strategy for investigation. You may prepare a handout, but you may not use PowerPoint. Your presentation may not exceed 12 minutes (5 points).