

Qualitative Research Methods

Professor Jack S. Levy
304 Hickman Hall; (732) 932-1073;
jacklevy@rci.rutgers.edu
<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~jacklevy/>
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11-1pm & by appointment

Rutgers University
formally PS 627
Spring 2006

This is a combination of a research seminar and course in research design. The research design component will focus on qualitative methods. The research seminar component is open as to method. Students will present a research design on a topic of their choice, utilizing any method or combination of methods they think is appropriate. More advanced students can present a more complete piece of research. The focus is empirical. All research projects in this seminar must involve the empirical testing/validation/exploration of a theoretical argument. Given the research focus, the seminar will not be open to first-year students. I hope that the seminar will be useful both to second year students who have just begun to think about a research project and to dissertation students who are more engaged in research. We have to go with existing course numbers, so the seminar will be listed under the course number PS627 and title "Topics in International Politics."

Many things motivated me to develop this course, but three stand out. First, too many students in our program (and in some other programs as well) get to the dissertation stage without having done any research, with negative consequences for the dissertation and for the student's future job prospects. Second, I believe that research design is potentially the single most important course students can take in graduate school. The research design component of our first year methods sequence is very good, as is the entire sequence. The research design section is conceived, as it should be, as a survey of different methodological approaches, but that does not allow enough time to go into depth into any particular approach. The Department offers several statistics courses and a couple of courses on rational choice modeling. It has no course on qualitative methods, although topics falling within that broad subject may be covered in various courses.

My third motivation in developing this course is to expose students to selected topics in qualitative methodology, a topic that has been attracting increasing attention in the discipline, particularly in the last few years. That interest is reflected in increasing methodological self-consciousness in qualitative research, in articles and books on qualitative methodology, in the new section of the American Political Science Association on Qualitative Methods, and in the emergence of the Training Institute on Qualitative Research Methods (IQRM) at Arizona State University. A more personal indicator of the growing interest in qualitative methods is that over the last couple of months I have been asked to write four different essays on qualitative methods.

But let me repeat. The qualitative methods focus pertains only to the "research design" component of the course. Student research projects can utilize any method.

Let me emphasize that this course is not a broad survey of qualitative methodologies. For one thing, the field of qualitative methodology incorporates a vast range of topics, and we do not have the entire semester to devote to them. Given the need to be selective, I have decided to focus primarily on those subjects getting most attention at the IQRM training institute, which I think reflects the new wave of work on qualitative methodology that is beginning to impact many fields in the discipline, especially comparative politics and international relations. More specifically, the focus is primarily on what might be labeled "positivist methods," broadly defined, with considerably less attention to "interpretivist" methods (though I am not convinced that the two are as incompatible as is often asserted). I have scheduled one guest lecture on interpretivist methods, and have another speaker on the subject of "measuring identity."

The course will have two **formal requirements**:

- 1) Each student will present a research design. Ideally, I am looking for something like a dissertation proposal or grant proposal. My expectations will vary depending on the student's status in the program. I assume that advanced students will present their dissertation research, but the presentation of another research project would also be acceptable. The research design should include a statement of the question or puzzle you want to investigate, a survey of the literature and its limitations, your preliminary explanation for the puzzle, and your design for bringing empirical evidence to bear on your theoretical argument.
- (2) A written version of the presentation, one that incorporates feedback from the presentation.

As for **grades**, figure 30% presentation, 70% written version. In addition, the quality and quantity of contributions to class discussion will have a decisive effect on borderline grades.

Auditors are encouraged, but not required, to present a research design.

Required Books (at Douglass bookstore)

Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press, 1994.

Henry E. Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham, MD.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004.

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

Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING

This is tentative, and may change depending on speakers.

1. **Course Introduction** (January 17)

Course description

Sociology of the profession

2. (January 24) no meeting

3. **Philosophy of Science** (January 31)

Social Science and History

Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*. Chap. 1.

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, "The Benefits of a Social-Scientific Approach to Studying International Affairs." In Ngaire Woods, ed., *Explaining International Relations Since 1945*. New York: Oxford, 1996. Pp. 49-76.

Jack S. Levy, "Explaining Events and Developing Theories: History, Political Science, and the Analysis of International Relations." In Colin Elman and Mirian Fendius Elman, *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001. Pp. 39-83.

John Lewis Gaddis, "In Defense of Particular Generalization: Rewriting Cold War History, Rethinking International Relations History." In Colin Elman and Mirian Fendius Elman, *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001. Pp. 327-50.

Robert Jervis, "International History and International Politics: Why Are They Studied Differently?" In Colin Elman and Mirian Fendius Elman, *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001. Pp. 385-402.

Paul W. Schroeder, "International History: Why Historians Do It Differently than Political Scientists." In Colin Elman and Mirian Fendius Elman, *Bridges and Boundaries: Historians, Political Scientists, and the Study of International Relations*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001. Pp. 403-14.

The Covering Law Debate in Historiography

Carl G. Hempel, "The Function of General Laws in History." *The Journal of Philosophy* 39 (1942), pp. 235-248.

William Dray, "The Historical Explanation of Actions Reconsidered." In Patrick Gardiner, ed., *The Philosophy of History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974. pp. 66-89.

4. Philosophy of Science - Evaluating Theories (February 7)

Carl G. Hempel, *Philosophy of Natural Science*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1966. Chap. 4.

Terence Ball, "Is There Progress in Political Inquiry?" In Terence Ball, ed., *Idioms of Inquiry: Critique and Renewal in Political Science*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987. Pp. 13-44.

Imre Lakatos. "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs." In Imre Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programs. Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1. Ed. by John Worrall and Gregory Currie. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978. Pp. 8-101. Also in Imre Lakatos and A. Musgrave eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Milton Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics." In Friedman, *Essays in Positive Economics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953. Pp. 3-43. Reprinted in Michael Martin and Lee C. McIntyre, eds., *Readings in the Philosophy of Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996. Pp. 647-60.

Jack Snyder, "'Is' and 'Ought': Evaluating Empirical Aspects of Normative Research," in Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, *Progress in International Relations Theory*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003. Pp. 350-377

George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, chap. 12.

Optional

If you have not read selections from Popper and Kuhn, you should do so before you take your exams or go on an interview.

Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*. New York: Harper Torchbacks, 1989. Chap. 1.

Thomas Kuhn, "Logic of Discovery or Psychology of Research." In Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970. Pp. 1-23.

Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

Colin Elman and Miriam Fendius Elman, "Lessons from Lakatos." In Colin and Miriam Elman, eds., *Progress in International Relations Theory: Metrics and Methods of Scientific Change*, MIT Press 2001. Pp. 21-68, 19-20.

Terry M. Moe, "On the Scientific Status of Rational Models." *American Journal of Political Science* 23 (February 1979): 215-43. Critique of Friedman

Albert O. Hirschman, "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance to Understanding," *World Politics* 22 (April 1970), 329-43.

5. Causal Explanations (February 14)

Conceptions of Causality

King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, chap. 3.

George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, chap. 7.

Gary Goertz and Jack S. Levy, "Causal explanations, necessary conditions, and case studies: World War I and the end of the Cold War." In Gary Goertz and Jack S. Levy, eds., *Causal Explanations, Necessary Conditions, and Case Studies: World War I and the End of the Cold War*. Unpublished book manuscript, 2005.

Optional

Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979. Chap. 1.

Daniel Little, *Microfoundations, Method, and Causation: On the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1998. Chap. 10-12.

John Gerring, "Causation: A Unified Framework for the Social Sciences." *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 17, 2: 163-98.

Henry Brady, "Models of Causal Inference: Going Beyond the Neyman-Rubin-Holland Theory." Unpublished paper.

Counterfactuals

Philip E. Tetlock and Aaron Belkin, "Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics: Logical, Methodological, and Psychological Perspectives." In Tetlock and Belkin, eds., *Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Optional

Jan Elster, *Logic and Society*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978. Chap. 6.

James D. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science." *World Politics* 43 (1991), 169-95.

Richard Ned Lebow, "What's So Different About a Counterfactual?" *World Politics*, 52 (July 2000), 550-85.

Complex Causation

Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method*, chap. 1-2.

Optional

J.L. Mackie, "Causes and Conditions." In Ernest Sosa, ed., *Causation and Conditionals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975. Pp. 15-38.

Threats to Validity

Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979. Chap. 2.

6. Case Study Research Designs – I (February 21)

George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, chap. 1 (plus preface), 3-6, 8-9

Jack S. Levy, "Qualitative Methods in International Relations." In Michael Brecher and Frank P. Harvey, eds., *Millennial Reflections on International Studies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002. Pp. 432-54.

Optional

David Collier, "The Comparative Method." In Ada W. Finifter, ed., *Political Science: The State of the Discipline II*. Washington, D.C.: American Political Science Association, 1993. Chap. 5.

Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, eds., *What Is A Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992. Introduction and chap. 10.

Donald Campbell, 1975. "'Degrees of Freedom' and the Case Study." *Comparative Political Studies* 8: 168-93.

J.S. Mill, 1888 [1970]. "Two Methods of Comparison." In A. Etzioni and F. Dubow, eds., *Comparative Perspectives: Theories and Methods*, 205-213. (Taken from Mill, *A System of Logic*, book 3, chap. VIII, "of the four methods of experimental inquiry.")

Arend Lijphart, "The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research." *Comparative Political Studies* 8 (1975): 158-77.

Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science." In Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds., *Handbook of Political Science*, vol 7. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975. Pp. 79-137.

Theodore Meckstroth, "'Most Different Systems' and 'Most Similar Systems': A Study in the Logic of Comparative Inquiry," *Comparative Political Studies* July 1975, pp. 133-177.

Benjamin A. Most and Harvey Starr, "Case Selection, Conceptualizations and Basic Logic in the Study of War." *American Journal of Political Science* 26 (November 1982): 834-56. Reprinted in Most and Starr, *Inquiry, Logic and International Politics*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989. Chap. 3.

John Gerring, "Single-Event Studies: A Methodological Primer." Forthcoming, *International Sociology*.

7. Case Study Research Designs – II (February 28)

Critique of Mill's Methods

Stanley Lieberman, 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases." *Social Forces* 70:2 (December) 307- 20. Reprinted in "Small N's and Big Conclusions." In Charles Ragin and Howard Becker, eds., *What Is a Case?* New York: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 105-18.

Case Selection

King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, chap. 4, 6.

Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*, chap. 6.

Ian Lustick, "History, Historiography, and Political Science: Multiple Historical Records and the Problem of Selection Bias," *American Political Science Review* 90, 3 (September 1996): 605-618.

Optional

Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," *Political Analysis* 2: 131-52.

James Mahoney and Gary Goertz. 2004. "The Possibility Principle: choosing negative cases in comparative research." *American Political Science Review* 98, 4 (November 2004): 653-70.

Douglas Dion, 1998. "Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study." *Comparative Politics* (January) 127-45.

David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research." World Politics, 49/1 (October 1996), pp. 56-91.

Stanley Lieberson. (1994) "More on the Uneasy Case for Using Mill_Type Methods in Small-N Comparative Studies." *Social Forces*. (June), 1225-1237.

Process-Tracing

George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, chap. 10.

Typological Theory

George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, chap. 11.

8. Interpretivism (March 7)

Speaker: Jan Kubik

Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man." *Review of Metaphysics* 25, 1 (September 1971), 3-51. Reprinted in Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, eds., *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*. Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1979). Pp. 25-71.

Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *American Political Science Review*, 96,4 (December 2002), 713-28. Attached.

Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." In Clifford Geertz, *Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. Pp. 412-53.

King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, pp. 36-43.

David Brooks, "Questions of Culture." *New York Times*, 19 February, 2006.

Spring Break (March 14)

9. no meeting (March 21, ISA)

10. no meeting (March 28, post-ISA)

Reading: Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*

11. **Concepts and Measurement** (April 4)

presentation: David Mislin, "From Reds to Rogues: How Americans Identify Threats"

King, Keohane, and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, chap. 5.

David Collier and James Mahoney, "Conceptual Stretching Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis," *American Political Science Review*, 87, 4 (December 1993), 845-855.

Optional

Giovanni Sartori, 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64, 4 (December): 1033-46.

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

Robert Adcock and David Collier, "Democracy and Dichotomies," *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 2, 1999, pp. 537-565.

Hubert Blalock, "The Measurement Problem: A Gap Between the Languages of Theory and Research," in Blalock and Blalock, *Methodology in Social Research*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968.

12. **Complex Causation** (April 11)

Two-Level Theory

Gary Goertz and J. Mahoney. "Two-Level Theories and Fuzzy-Set Analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research* 33, 4 (May 2005), 497-538.

Macro-Historical Comparisons, Critical Junctures, and Path Dependency

James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29, 4 (2000): 507-48.

Optional

Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Paul Pierson, 2000. "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics." *American Political Science Review* 94:2 (June).

Andrew Bennett and Colin Elman, "Complex Causal Relations and Case Study Methods: The Example of Path Dependence," unpublished paper 2006.

Giovanni Capoccia and R. Daniel Kelemen, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative and Counterfactuals in Institutional Theory." Unpublished paper, 2005.

Scott E. Page, "Path Dependence." *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 1 (2006): 87-115.

James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds., *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Boolean Approaches

Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method*, chap. 6-8.

Fuzzy Set Approaches

Charles C. Ragin, "Fuzzy-Set Analysis of Necessary Conditions." In Gary Goertz and Harvey Starr, eds., *Necessary Conditions: Theory, Methodology, and Applications*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. Pp. 179-96.

Optional

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

13. **Multi-method research** (April 18)

speaker: Patricia Young

Multiple Paths to Knowledge

Charles Ragin, *The Comparative Method*, chap. 10.

Jack S. Levy, "Theory, Evidence, and Politics in the Evolution of Research Programs." Unpublished paper, 2005.

Sidney Tarrow, "Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide." In King, Keohane, and Verba, chap. 10.

King, Keohane, and Verba, "The Importance of Research Design." In King, Keohane, and Verba, chap. 11

Multi-method Approaches

Evan S. Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research." *American Political Science Review* 99, 3 (August 2005), 435-52.

Analytic Narratives

Bates, Robert H., Avner Greif, Margaret Levi, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, and Barry Weingast. *Analytic Narratives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998. Introduction (pp. 3-22).

Optional

Edgar Kiser, "The Revival of Narrative in Historical Sociology: What Rational Choice Theory Can Contribute." *Politics and Society*, 24, 3 (September 1996), 249-71.

Applications

George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development*, chap. 2.

Jack S. Levy, "Preferences, Constraints, and Choices in July 1914." *International Security*, 15, 3 (Winter 1990-91): 151-186.

Optional

Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005.

Beth A. Simmons, *Who Adjusts? Domestic Sources of Foreign Economic Policy During the Interwar Years*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Kenneth A. Schultz, *Democracy and Coercive Diplomacy*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

14. Wrapping Up (April 25)

Presentation:

Donald S. Sylvan, "Measuring Identity in the Study of Israeli-Palestinian Relations"

Other Presentations (week to be decided)

Patricia Young

David Mislan

Additional Sources

Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979.

Jon Elster, *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Steve Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Cornell, 1997).

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

John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology: A Criterial Framework*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Donald Green and Ian Shapiro, *Pathologies of Rational Choice. A Critique of Applications in Political Science*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994.

Ian Shapiro, Rogers M. Smith, and Tarek E. Masoud, eds., *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias, eds., *Models, Numbers, and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004.

Arthur L. Stinchcombe, *Constructing Social Theories*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1968.