

CPO 6096  
Spring 2025  
Room: 216 Anderson  
Time: T 3:00-6:00

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Office Hours: F 9:30-12:00  
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## **Seminar: Comparative Qualitative and Mixed Methods**

**AUDIENCE:** Open to all graduate students. No prerequisites.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course has been designed to help students refine their research design skills and to think about how combining more than one form of inference can lead to greater confidence in one's research findings. Class time will be devoted to discussing causal and probabilistic forms of inference, concept formation and measurement, small-n comparison, the use of in-depth case studies, nested analysis using large and small-n components, and a range of alternative methods, which lend themselves to combined strategies of investigation.

**WHY SHOULD YOU TAKE THIS COURSE?** Within the discipline, qualitative and mixed methods are important tools of research. Within the American Political Science Association, the launching of a Qualitative and Mixed Methods section has been seen as an important step in integrating quantitative and qualitative modes of investigation. Many political scientists are committed to this ecumenical view of methods and, for this reason, the section is one of the largest in the association. With the increased prominence of normal science models and the regression model to provide inference in the social sciences, qualitative methods have experienced a revival as well. The nature of this is two-fold. First, there are recognized limitations to what quantitative social science using the regression model can study. Many interesting and worthwhile questions demand the use of alternative strategies of research or the combination of more than one method. Second, the expansion of large-n studies using the regression model in the last twenty years has made the issue of how to generate legitimate inferences and the explicit study of methods a central concern of the discipline. This trend has led to a renaissance of explicit methodological thinking on the part of qualitative social scientists. Many qualitative social scientists have begun to consider how their styles of work generate valid inferences about the social world, and how their logic of inference departs from that of other modes of inquiry. The centrality of these questions across many schools of social science has been fruitful in thinking about how multiple forms of inquiry complement each other and allow us to make stronger logical inferences about the social world.

**REQUIREMENTS:** There is substantial reading each week (several articles or a book, or some combination thereof). Careful reading and preparation for active and cogent participation in class discussions is essential. Students will prepare a research paper.

*Research paper:* I am looking for three types of research design papers in this course. You should consider these as strictures unless you discuss an alternative way of meeting the paper requirement with me. The first kind of paper that I would like to see would be explicitly methodological. That is, it would address one of the methodological controversies that are raised in the literature. The second kind of paper I would like to see would consciously use one of the research methods discussed in the course and apply it to a research question (e.g. case study, QCA, process tracing, ethnographic, small-n comparison, nested regression, etc.). Such a paper would need to be methodologically explicit in the framing of its design and execute the test/validation of a hypothesis/proposition using the method selected. The third kind of paper that is appropriate to this course is the execution of a research design for a larger project. Here I would expect the framing of a very defined research question, and falsifiable hypotheses/propositions about it that grow out of a survey of the relevant theoretical literature. I would also expect a detailed discussion of the kind of inferential strategy or strategies that would be used to provide verification of your hypothesis/proposition, and a discussion of the data or sources that would be used. Students should take this as an invitation to do a trial run of dissertation or funding proposals.

**PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION:** Course requirements will be weighted in the following manner. Paper - 60%, research topic presentation -- 5%, research project outline presentation – 10%, research presentation -- 10%, participation -- 15%.

<u>Grading Scale</u>	(Grade Point Equivalent)
A = 93 or above	4.00
A- = 90-92	3.67
B+ = 87-89	3.33
B = 83-86	3.00
B- = 80-82	2.67
C+ = 77-79	2.33
C = 73-76	2.00
C- = 70-72	1.67
D+ = 67-69	1.33
D = 63-66	1.00
D- = 60-62	0.67
E = 59 or below	0.00

**PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodation should connect with the Disability Resource Center. [Click here](#) to get started with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (including policy on AI):** Academic integrity entails the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights, and property, and help create and maintain an environment in

which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts. To these ends, students admitted to UF have agreed to abide by its [code of conduct](#). It is worthwhile to reread this pledge periodically.

AI can be a useful tool in research – looking for literature, and even summarizing it. It can help you locate and master software that will help you produce and analyze data. It is not a substitute for your thinking or writing. You are here to learn to write, make an argument, think critically, and use evidence to further advance your intelligence and human potential. Reliance on such programs to formulate your argument or write it is a form of cheating yourself from realizing your full potential. **Please note that under the Honor Code: “Commissioning or seeking to commission another person or Entity, with or without compensation, to produce or complete academic work or to impersonate a student in any academic activity.” This regulation precludes the use of artificial intelligence software (e.g. Chat GPT or similar programs) to write your assignments.**

**PLAGIARISM:** All students should observe the University of Florida’s standards of academic honesty. In the event that a student is found cheating or plagiarizing, he/she will automatically fail the course and will be reported to Student Judicial Affairs and the Department Chair and Graduate Coordinator for possible dismissal from the program. Acts of Plagiarism include:

- Turning in a paper or another assignment that was written by someone else (i.e., by another student, by a research service, or downloaded off the Internet);
- Copying, verbatim, a sentence or paragraph of text from the work of another author without properly acknowledging the source through a commonly accepted citation style and using quotation marks;
- Paraphrasing (i.e., restating in your own words) text written by someone else without citing that author;
- Using a unique idea or concept, which you discovered in a specific reading, without citing that work.

**POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** Vagaries of life and scheduling sometimes make the handing in of assignments on time difficult. If students approach the instructor ahead of time and provide a good reason, accommodation may be possible. Such requests should be made prior to the deadline of the assignment. Retroactive accommodation will only be granted in the rarest and direst of cases.

**CLASS BEHAVIOR:** Cell phones must be silenced and put away during class. Computers and tablets may be open but can only be used for note-taking and reference work on the internet. Engagement with persons outside the class via social media is not permitted. During discussion, students are expected to comport themselves respectfully in conversation with the instructor and other students. It is our joint responsibility to maintain an atmosphere where different viewpoints are respected and all participants feel they can express themselves.

**STUDENT WELLNESS:** Some students experience personal and academic challenges that pose difficulties for their work and life satisfaction. No one needs to cope with these in isolation. UF has extensive services to protect student wellness and assist in academic challenges. Among the many resources are:

### Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: Visit the [Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center*: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the [UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- *GatorWell Health Promotion Services*: For prevention services focused on optimal well-being, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

### Academic Resources

- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).
- *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

**READINGS:** All readings are available online. There are direct links to open-source materials. Many books and articles are available online through the library. The easiest way to find them is to use the UF VPN and search for them in Google Scholar. This will produce a direct link to the UF holding. Older articles and chapters are available through ARES on the UF library site.

<https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/ares/ares.dll>

### COURSE OUTLINE

#### January 14: Course Overview

#### January 21: Logics of Inference

Ragin, Charles. 1987. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley, University of California Press: 1-84. [ARES].

Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. "A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research." *Political Analysis* 14: 227-249. [Available online].

Hall, Peter A. 2003. "Aligning Ontology and Methodology in Comparative Politics." In James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 373-406. [ARES].

### **January 28: Concepts and Measurement**

Sartori, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics." *American Political Science Review* 64(4): 1033-1053. (read mainly 1033-1046). [ARES].

Sartori, Giovanni. 1984. "Guidelines for Conceptual Analysis." In Sartori, Giovanni. ed. *Social Science Concepts: A Systematic Analysis*. Beverly Hills, Sage Publication: 15-85. [ARES].

Collier, David, and J.E. Mahon. 1993. "Conceptual "Stretching" Revisited: Adapting Categories in Comparative Analysis," *American Political Science Review* 87(4): 845-855. [Available online].

Bernhard, Michael, Ömer Faruk Örsün, and Reşat Bayer. 2017. "Democratization in Conflict Research: How Conceptualization Affects Operationalization and Testing Outcomes," *International Interactions* 43(6): 941-966. [Available online].

### **February 4: The Comparative Method**

Mill, John Stuart. *A System and Logic, Ratiocinative, and Inductive*. Chapter VII. Of the Four Methods of Experimental Inquiry: 418-441. (pdf version. <https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/26495>).

Sartori, Giovanni. 1991. "Comparing and Miscomparing." *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 3(3): 243-257. [ARES].

James Mahoney. 1999. "Nominal, Ordinal, and Narrative Appraisal in Macrocausal Analysis," *American Journal of Sociology* 104(4): 1154-96. [ARES].

### **February 11: Research 1.**

Presentation of research topics in class.

### **February 18: Further Comparison**

Simmons, Erica, and Nicholas Smith. 2021. *Rethinking Comparison: Innovative Methods for Qualitative Political Inquiry*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 1-63. [Available online].

Slater, Dan, and Daniel Ziblatt. 2013. "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46(10): 1301–1327. [Available online].

Snyder, Richard 2001. "Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 36(1): 93-100. [Available online].

Tarrow, Sidney. 2010. "The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice." *Comparative Political Studies* 43:2: 230-259. [Available online].

**February 25: Case Selection Design.**

Przeworski, Adam, and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York, Wiley-Interscience: 31-46, Chapter 2: Research Designs. [ARES].

Geddes, Barbara. 2003. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get." *Paradigms and Sandcastles*. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press: 89-130. [ARES].

Collier, David, and James Mahoney. 1996. "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research". *World Politics* 49(1): 56-91. [ARES].

**March 4: Process Tracing**

Büthe, Tim. 2002. "Taking Temporality Seriously: Modeling History and the Use of Narratives as Evidence." *American Political Science Review* 96(3): 481-493. [ARES].

Trampusch, Christine, and Bruno Palier. 2016. "Between X and Y: How Process Tracing Contributes to Opening the Black Box of Causality," *New Political Economy* 21(5): 437-454. [Available online].

Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel. 2014. "Process tracing: From philosophical roots to best practices." In *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool. Strategies for Social Inquiry*, Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel, eds. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 3-38. [Available online].

Waldner, David. 2014. "What makes process tracing good? Causal mechanisms, causal inference, and the completeness standard in comparative politics." In *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool. Strategies for Social Inquiry*, Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel, eds. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 126-152. [Available online].

Zaks, Sherry. 2017. "Relationships Among Rivals (RAR): A Framework for Analyzing Contending Hypotheses in Process Tracing." *Political Analysis* 25(3): 344-362. [ARES].

**March 11: Research 2**

Presentation of research project outline in class.

**Spring Break**

**March 25: Interpretive Methods**

Kubik, Jan. 2009. "Ethnography of politics: Foundations, applications, prospects." In *Political ethnography: What immersion contributes to the study of power*, Edward Schatz, ed. Chicago, University of Chicago Press: 25-52. [Available online].

Wedeen, Lisa. 2010. "Reflections on ethnographic work in political science." *Annual Review of Political Science* 13(1): 255-272. [ARES].

Bevir, Mark, and Asaf Kedar. 2008. "Concept Formation in Political Science: An Anti-Naturalist Critique of Qualitative Methodology," *Perspectives on Politics* 6(3): 503-517. [Available online].

Lawler, Jennifer, and David Waldner, D. 2023. "Interpretivism versus Positivism in an Age of Causal Inference." In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Political Science*, Harold Kincaid and Jeroen Van Bouwel, eds. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 221-242. [ARES].

#### **April 1: Nested Analysis, Mixed, and Multi-Method Research**

Tarrow, Sidney. 2019. "Comparison, Triangulation, and Embedding Research in History: A Methodological Self-Analysis," *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology/Bulletin de Méthodologie Sociologique* 141(1): 7-29. [ARES].

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

Laitin, David and James Fearon. 2008. "Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods." *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*. Oxford, Oxford University Press: 756-776. [ARES, Available online].

Dunning, Thad. 2014. "Improving process tracing: The case of multi-method research." In *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool. Strategies for Social Inquiry*, Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel, eds. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press: 211-236. [Available online].

Ahmed, Amel, and Rudra Sil. 2012. "When Multi-Method Research Subverts Methodological Pluralism—or, Why We Still Need Single-Method Research," *Perspectives on Politics* 10(4): 935-953 [Available online, ARES].

#### **April 18: No Class**

Research time, individual meeting to discuss progress upon request.

#### **April 15: Research Presentations**

#### **April 22: Research Presentations**

#### **Final Papers Due: April 29, 2025**