POS 7707 - ADV QUALITATIVE METHODS

Section: 0001

College of Sciences

School of Politics, Security, and Intl Affairs

Course Information

Term: Fall 2025
Class Meeting Days: T
Class Meeting Time: 12:00PM - 02:50PM
Class Meeting Location: HPH O305G
Modality: P
Credit Hours: 3.00

Instructor Information

Name: Thomas Dolan
Title: Associate Professor
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Office Hours
Monday, Wednesday 3-4:30
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Course Description

POS 7707 COS-POLS 3(3,0)Advanced Qualitative Methods in Political Research: PR: Admission to Political Science Ph.D. or C.I. Advanced qualitative methods employed in political science research, including case studies, the logic of comparison, and archival and interview-based research. Odd Spring.

Advanced Qualitative Methods is designed to enable PhD level students to use qualitative/case study methods effectively in their research. To this end it addresses the inferential logic of case studies, concept and measurement design, case selection, methods of data collection, and the presentation of qualitative data. Through this course, students will become better at critiquing others' qualitative research and more able to conduct high-quality qualitative research of their own.

Course readings are focused on understanding the theoretical and practical issues involved in designing inferentially effective case studies. Accordingly, students should read and consider all assigned texts prior to coming to class, and be prepared to discuss them. Out-of-class assignments are designed to help students to gain experience with the process of doing qualitative research and the resources available to them.

Student Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will:

- Develop fundamental skills for asking research questions, conceptualizing research, and designing valid qualitative tests of their hypotheses.
- Understand methods for effectively devising and implementing comparative, process tracing, and interpretive methods
- Be prepared to generate, evaluate, and present qualitative evidence from a variety of sources, including historical/archival materials and fieldwork (including interviews).
- Be able to effectively evaluate qualitative research

Required Course Materials and Resources

Designing Social Inquiry

Authors: Gary King et al.

Causal Case Study Methods.

Authors: Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen

Case Study Research

Authors: John Gerring

Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles

Authors: Diana Kapiszewski, et al.

Course Assessment and Grading Procedure

Assignments

Academic Activity Quiz
All students will complete the academic activity quiz by 22 August.

Mini-research designs, 5% each, total 20%
Each student will submit 4 mini-research designs. Each design should be not more than 1 page (single spaced, if needed) and make use of a bullet format. Each design should follow the template on webcourses, with a statement of the question, the motivation for the paper, a theoretical intuition, a hypothesis, and a description of the methodology to be used. All designs must use a qualitative or case-based methodology relevant to the course.

Archives Assignment 10%
Complete the tasks outlined in the assignment on webcourses and the last page of this syllabus.

CITI training, 2%
All students will complete UCF's CITI training (Human Subjects Protection – Group 2: Social/Behavioral Research). Credit is given when instructor is provided with documentation.

Overall Participation—10%
Includes informed and thoughtful participation in course seminars and completion of ungraded tasks

Term Paper (Proposal, 3%; Literature Review, 5%; Presentation, 5%; Paper, 30%) total: 43%
25 pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font).
The term paper will identify a research question, review relevant literature, articulate a theory and hypothesis, and then test the theory using qualitative methods. Evidence should be include at least one of the following: archival materials (with additional secondary historical sources); interpretivist methods); or interview-based "fieldwork" evidence.

Essay Exam—15%
Students will complete an essay exam, both to assess knowledge from the course and aid their preparations for the program exam in qualitative methods.

Grading Scale

Grades

A 93 or better	High-quality professional work
A- 90-92.99	Professional work

B+ 88-89.99	Good work but not quite professional-level work; contains clear weaknesses
B 83-86.99	Quality is acceptable, but has serious weaknesses
B- 80-82.99	Quality is marginally acceptable
C 70-79.99	Quality is problematic
D 60-69.99	Quality is not acceptable for graduate work
F 59.99 or below	Fail

Note that per CGS policies, in graduate courses, a C is considered to be an unsatisfactory grade.

Policies for Course Grade

Grading
Grades are assigned to both individual pieces of work and cumulatively. The grade scale I use for both is below (note that "g" refers to the numerical grade you receive). I do not usually curve grades, but reserve the right to do so if I deem it necessary. All material is graded on its own terms, rather than through comparison with other students' work.

Late Papers

Assignments are to be turned in by class time on the day they are due. They should be in hard copy unless unforeseen circumstances prevent printing them in or handing them in a timely manner. For every 24 hours that pass thereafter, 5% of credit is lost, to a maximum of 40% lost. Exceptions related to university activities, religious holidays, and for other reasons should be requested before assignments are due.

Attendance
As a rule students are expected to attend each meeting of the course in person. However, the instructor is willing to accommodate periodic participation via zoom, especially when students are feeling ill or have legitimate needs to travel. Students are asked to make these requests at least 2 hours before the start of class.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

A statement and two observations about AI

AI tools are permitted exclusively for proofreading. If the instructor determines that it is more than likely the case that an assignment was substantially produced using AI methods (including platforms like chat gtp), the instructor may grade the assignment as a 0. However, the instructor has found that these platforms, as a rule, produce poorly written and poorly conceived work, and that assignments produced using AI, even if not detected as such, may receive quite poor grades *on their merits alone*. More generally, even if you 'get away' with having passed off AI generated text as your own, doing so may have its own negative natural consequences in the long term regardless of what happens in the course.

Disability Access & Accommodations

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing equal access to all students with disabilities (ADHD, learning disabilities, Autism, chronic medical conditions, physical disabilities, etc.). To receive consideration for reasonable disability-related course accommodations, disabled students must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and complete the steps required for SAS to review accommodation requests. More information can be found on the UCF Student Accessibility Services website under the Start Here tab or by contacting SAS directly (Ferrell Commons 185; sas@ucf.edu; Phone - 407-823-2371).

Approved accommodations are shared with course instructors via the SAS Course Accessibility Letter. Implementing certain accommodations may require discussion about specific considerations of the course design, course learning objectives, and the individual academic and course challenges experienced by the student. While students with disabilities or chronic health needs are also encouraged to discuss any course concerns with professors in addition to contacting SAS, professors are not required to facilitate disability-related adjustments to the course unless the professor has received a Course Accessibility Letter from SAS that outlines approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

Students should familiarize themselves with UCF's Code of Conduct at Student Conduct and Integrity Office. According to Section 1, "Academic Misconduct," students are prohibited from engaging in:

1. Academic misconduct is defined as any submitted work or behavior that obstructs the instructor of record's ability to accurately assess the student's understanding or completion of course materials or degree requirements (e.g., assignment, quiz, and/or exam). Examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to:

plagiarism, unauthorized assistance to complete an academic exercise; unauthorized communication with others during an examination, course assignment, or project; falsifying or misrepresenting academic work; providing misleading information to create a personal advantage to complete course/degree requirements; or multiple submission(s) of academic work without permission of the instructor of record.

2. Any student who knowingly helps another violate academic behavior standards is also in violation of the standards.
3. Commercial Use of Academic Material. Selling of course material to another person and/or uploading course material to a third-party vendor without authorization or without the express permission of the University and the instructor of record. Course materials include but are not limited to class notes, the instructor of record's slide deck, tests, quizzes, labs, instruction sheets, homework, study guides, and handouts.
4. Soliciting assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements. The solicitation of assistance with an assignment, lab, quiz, test, paper, etc., without authorization of the instructor of record or designee is prohibited. This includes but is not limited to asking for answers to a quiz, trading answers, or offering to pay another to complete an assignment. It is considered Academic Misconduct to solicit assistance with academic coursework and/or degree requirements, even if the solicitation did not yield actual assistance (for example, if there was no response to the solicitation).

Responses to Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, or Cheating

Students should also familiarize themselves with the procedures for academic misconduct in UCF's student handbook, The Golden Rule. UCF faculty members have a responsibility for students' education and the value of a UCF degree, and so seek to prevent unethical behavior and respond to academic misconduct when necessary. Penalties for violating rules, policies, and instructions within this course can range from a zero on the exercise to an "F" letter grade in the course. In addition, an Academic Misconduct report could be filed with the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity, which could lead to disciplinary warning, disciplinary probation, or deferred suspension or separation from the University through suspension, dismissal, or expulsion with the addition of a "Z" designation on one's transcript.

Being found in violation of academic conduct standards could result in a student having to disclose such behavior on a graduate school application, being removed from a leadership position within a student organization, the recipient of scholarships, participation in University activities such as study abroad, internships, etc.

Let's avoid all of this by demonstrating values of honesty, trust, and integrity. No grade is worth compromising your integrity and moving your moral compass. Stay true to doing the right thing: take the zero, not a shortcut.

Title IX

Title IX prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at Let's Be Clear and UCF Cares.

For more information on access and community engagement, Title IX, accessibility, or UCF's complaint processes contact:

- Title IX – ONAC – Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance & askanadvocate@ucf.edu
- Disability Accommodation – Student Accessibility Services – Student Accessibility Services & sas@ucf.edu
- Access and Community Engagement (including the Ginsberg Center for Inclusion and Community Engagement, Military and Veteran Student Success, and HSI Initiatives)
- UCF Compliance and Ethics Office – Compliance, Ethics, and Risk Office & complianceandethics@ucf.edu
- The Ombuds Office is a safe place to discuss concerns.

Reporting an Incident or Issue

If you believe you have experienced discrimination by any faculty or staff member, contact the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance via the ONAC

website or at 407-823-1336. You can also choose to report using the UCF Integrity Line either anonymously or as yourself at 1-855-877-6049 or by using the online form. UCF cares about you and takes every report seriously. For more information see the Reporting an Incident or Issue Webpage.

Class Schedule

19 August: What are we doing here?
Cassandra Emmons and Andrew Moravcsik, Graduate Qualitative Methods Training in Political Science. *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 2019.

26 August: Exploring Recent Qualitative Work (Articles)
Pal Roren, The Belligerent Bear, *International Security*, 2023.
Caitlin Talmadge, Lisa Michelini, and Vipin Narang. When Actions Speak Louder than Words. *International Security* 2024
Paul Williams, How Peacekeepers Fight. *Security Studies*, 2023.
Hassner, Ron. The Cost of Torture: Evidence from the Spanish Inquisition. *Security Studies*, 1-36
Don Casler and Tyler Jost. Lost in Transmission. *International Security*, 2025.

2 September: Exploring Recent Qualitative Work (Books*)
MRD 1 Due
Chad Nelson, *Revolutionary Contagion and International Politics*, Oxford, 2022. Chapters 1, 2, and 6.
Eric Grynaviski, *America's Middlemen*. Cambridge, 2018. Introduction, Ch. 1, 4, 8.
Robin Markwica, *Emotional Choices*. Oxford, 2018. Ch. 1, 2, 5.
Sebastian Schmidt, *Armed Guests*, Oxford, 2020, 1, 2, 3, 6
**all are available online via the library website*

9 September: Causation, Models, and Theories
MRD 2 Due
Kenneth Clark and David Primo, Modernizing Political Science: A Model-Based Approach. *Perspectives on Politics*, 2007
James Mahoney et at., 2009. "The Logic of Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences," *Comparative Political Studies*.
Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen, Selection (Ch 2-3) from *Causal Case Study Methods*.
Stefano Guzzini, A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations, *European Journal of International Relations*, 2000
Ludvig Norman, Rethinking Causal Explanation in Interpretive Studies, *European Journal of International Relations,* 2021

Recommended
Burke Johnson, Federica Russo, Judith Schoonenboom, Causation in Mixed Methods Research, *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 2017.

Symposium on Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies, *Qualitative and Multimethod Research*, 2017
Elizabeth Stanley and James Sawyer, The Equifinality of War Termination, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2009.
Imre Lakotos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programs," in *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*.
Eric Grynaviski, Contrasts, Counterfactuals, and Causes. *European Journal of International Relations,* 2012
Clifford Geertz, Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture
John Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, Free Press 1997
Ingo Rohlfing and Christina Zuber, Check Your Truth Conditions! Clarifying the Relationship between Theories of Causation and Social Science Methods for Causal Inference, *Sociological Methods & Research*, 2019
Colin Elman, 2005, "Explanatory Typologies in Qualitative Studies of International Politics," *International Organization*.

16 September: Concepts and Measures
MRD 3 Due
Adcock, Robert and David Collier. 2001. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research." *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 3: 529-546.
Gary Goetz, *Social Science Concepts*, Ch. 2-3
Giovanni Sartori, "Comparing and Mis-comparing," 1991, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*.
Paul Pierson, "Big, Slow Moving, and…Invisible," from *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*.
Beach and Pedersen, *Causal Case Study Methods,* Ch. 4-5
Recommended:
Mortiz Graefrath and Marcel Jahn. Concepts in Context: Ontological Coherence in Political Science Research. *Philosophy of Social Science*, 2025.

23 September: Case Studies, Case Selection, and the Comparative Method
MRD 4 Due
John Gerring, *Case Study Research*, 2007 Ch 1-6.
Aaron Rapport, "Hard Thinking about Hard and Easy Cases in Security Studies," *Security Studies*, 2015 (24:3)
Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen, *Causal Case Study Methods*, Ch 6 and 7

Recommended:
Symposium on Veil of Ignorance Process Tracing*, Qualitative and Multi-Method Research Fall,* 2020
Symposium on Rethinking Comparison, *Qualitative and Multi-Method Research,* 2018
Symposium: Case Selection, Case Studies, and Causal Inference, Fall 2008, *Qualitative and Multi-method Research.*
Evan Liberman, Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research*, American Political Science Review* 2005
Robin Wagner-Pacifici, *What is an Event?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017.
Dietrich Rueschemeyer*,* Can one of a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains? Ch. 9 in *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*.

30 September: Process Tracing
Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey Checkel, *Process Tracing,* ch. 1, 2, 5, 6, 10
Derek Beach, It's All About Mechanisms: What Process-Tracing Case Studies Should be Tracing, *New Political Economy*, 2016.
Ezequiel Gonzalez-Ocantos and Jody LaPorte, Process Tracing and the Problem of Missing Data, *Sociological Methods and Research*, 2019

Recommended:
Rosa Runhardt. Concrete Counterfactual Tests for Process Tracing. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 2024
Rosa Runhardt. Evidential Pluralism and Epistemic Reliability in Political Science. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 2021.
Andrew Bennett, Andrew Charman, and Tasha Fairfield, Understanding Bayesianism: Fundamentals for Process Tracers, *Political Analysis*, 2022
Process Tracing: A Symposium, *Security Studies*, 2015 (24:2)
Peter Lorentzen, et al. Qualtiative Investigation of Theoretical Models: The Value of Process Tracing, *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 2017.
Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen, *Process Tracing Methods*, University of Michigan Press 2013.
Symposium on Counterfactual Analysis in Security Studies, *Security Studies*, 2015 (24:3)
Philip E. Tetlock and Geoffrey Parker, 2006,"Counterfactual Thought Experiments: Why We Can't Live without Them and How We Must Learn to Live with Them." in *Unmaking the West,* University of Michigan Press
Tasha Fairfield and Andrew Charman, A Dialogue with the Data; The Bayesian Foundation of Iterative Research in Qualitative Social Science, *Perspectives on Politics*, 2019
Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen, Selecting Appropriate Cases When Tracing Causal Mechanisms, *Sociological Methods & Research*, 2018
Ingo Rohlfing and Carsten Schneider, Improving Research on Necessary Conditions, *Political Research Quarterly,* 2013
Macartan Humphreys and Alan Jacobs, Mixing Methods: A Bayesian Approach, *American Political Science Review*, 2015.
Sherry Zaks, Updating Bayesian(s): A Critical Evaluation of Bayesian Process Tracing, *Political Analysis*, 2021.
Sherry Zaks, Relationships Among Rivals: A Framework for Analyzing Contending Hypotheses in Process Tracing, *Political Analysis*, 2017.
Jack Levy, "Counterfactuals, Causal Inference, and Historical Analysis," *Security Studies*, 2015 (24:3)

7 October: KKV and the Quantitative Template
Term Paper Proposal Due
Gary King et al., *Designing Social inquiry*, Princeton University Press 1994.
Derek Beach and Rasmus Pedersen, *Causal Case Study Methods*, ch. 6

14 October: Money || Archival Pragmatics
Archival Assignment Due
Term Paper Literature Review Due

Marc Tractenberg, 2006. *The Craft of International History*, Chapters 4-5.
*Prior to class, students will create a Pivot Profile
*Prior to class, students will identify at least two separate external funding sources appropriate to their research interests.

21 October: Archives and History
Literature Review due
Christopher Darnton, "The Provenance Problem," *American Political Science Review* 2021
Christopher Darnton, "Archives and Inference," *International Security* 2017.
Moller, Jorgen and Svend-Erik Skaaning. 2021. The Ulysses Principle : A Criterial Framework for Reducing Bias when Enlisting the Work of Historians. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 50 :1, 103-34.
Ian Lutsick, History, Historiography, and Political Science, *American Political Science Review*, 1996.
Ciaran Trace, "What is Recorded is Never Simply What Happened," *Archival Science* 2002.
Verne Harris, The Archival Sliver, *Archival Science* 2002.

Recommended
Ben Fincham, Jonathan Scourfield and Susanne Langer, 2008. "The Impact of Working With Disturbing Secondary Data: Reading Suicide Files in a Corner's Office. *Qualitative Health Research*.
James Robins, Can Historians Be Traumatized by History? *New Republic*, 2021.
Emmanuel Chevet. 2011. "Gendarmerie et Maquis Sous L'Occupation en France (1943-44): Force est Faiblesse." *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains.* 242: 121-39.
Ann Laura Stoler, Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance*, Archival Science* 2002
Matthew Hull, Documents and Bureaucracy, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 2012.
Tamy Guberek and Margaret Hedstrom, On or Off the Record? Detecting Patterns of Silence about Death in Guatemala's National Police Archive, *Archival Science* 2017.
Liaia Balcells, Cristopher Sullivan. New Findings from Conflict Archives, *Journal of Peace Research* 2018.

28 October: Interpretivism
Vincent Pouliot, "Practice Tracing," in Bennett and Checkel, *Process Tracing*, ch 9.
Lisa Weeden, 2010, "Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science*
Teun van Dijk, 1993, "Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis," *Discourse and Society*.
Selection from Ted Hopf, 2002, *Social Construction of International Politics*
Selection from Lisa Weeden, 2008, *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power, and Performance*.

Recommended:
Erica Simmons and Nicholas Smith, The Case for Comparative Ethnography, *Comparative Politics*, 2019.
Symposium: Interpretivism, 2003, *Qualitative Methods*

Jan Kubik, 2009 ”Ethonographic Innovations in the Study of Post-Communism,” *Qualitative and Multi-method Research*.

4 November: Field work (including the Ethics thereof)
CITI training due
Diana Kapiszewski, et al., *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*, ch. 1-6
UCF Requirements for fieldwork abroad (travel, IRB)

Recommended:
Brian Rathbun, 2008, “Interviewing and Qualitative Field Methods,” *Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*.
“Symposium: Fieldwork in Political Science” April 2014, *PS: Political Science and Politics*
Layna Mosley, 2013, *Interview Research in Political Science,* Cornell University Press.
Elisabeth Wood, 2009, “Field Research,” *Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics.*
“Symposium: Interview Methods in Political Science.” 2002. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35, no. 4: 663-688.
Anastasia Shesterinina Ethics, Empathy, and Fear in Research on Violent Conflict *Journal of Peace Research,* 2018.
Ezgi Irgil et al., Field Research: A Guide, *International Studies Review*, 2021.
Recommended:
Eric Schoon, Fieldwork Disrupted. *Sociological Methods & Research.* 2025.

12 November: No Class—Veterans Day

18 November: Presentations

25 November: More on Fieldwork
Term Papers Due
Diana Kapiszewski, et al., *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*, ch. 7-11

Miroslav Shapovalov, *Between Fighting and Serving*, UCF Dissertation 2021, Chapter 4.
Mario Luis Small and Jessica McCrory Calarco. *Quantitative Literacy*, California. 2022. Introduction, Ch 1, 2, 3, 5.

Recommended:
Symposium on “When Locals Say You’re Wrong: Member Checking and Political Science*, Qualitative and Multi-Method Research,* 2020

2 December: Essay Exam Question Due

Deployed Active-Duty Military Students

Students who are deployed active-duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make arrangements.

Campus Safety

At UCF's Public Safety and Police, safety is the top priority. Emergencies on campus are rare, but if one should arise, it's important to be familiar with some basic safety and security concepts.

- In an emergency, always dial 911.
- Every UCF Classroom has an Emergency Procedure Guide posted on a wall near the door, which will show you how to respond to a variety of situations. This guide can also be found found online here.
- In the event of an active threat, remember **AVOID**, **DENY**, **DEFEND**. Choose the best course of action and act immediately. Watch the video here to learn more.
    - **AVOID**. Pay attention to your surroundings and have an exit plan. Get as much distance and as many barriers between you and the threat as quickly as possible.
    - **DENY**. When avoiding is difficult or impossible, deny the threat access to you and your space. Lockdown by creating barriers, turning the lights off and remaining quiet and out of sight. Make sure your cell phone is silenced, but do not turn it off.
    - **DEFEND**. When you are unable to put distance between yourself and the threat, be prepared to protect yourself. Commit to your actions, be aggressive and do not fight fairly. Do whatever it takes to survive.
- For emergencies on campus, UCF will utilize the UCF Alert system. All UCF students, faculty, and staff are automatically enrolled to receive these email and text alerts, however, it's a good idea to frequently ensure your contact information is up to date.

Financial Aid Accountability

All instructors/faculty are required to document students' academic activity at the beginning of each course. In order to document that you began this course, please complete this activity by the end of the first week of classes or as soon as possible after adding the course. Failure to do so may result in a delay in the disbursement of your financial aid.