Course Description

This course introduces students to qualitative research methods in political science. It will address debates within the discipline and theoretical foundations for qualitative research, as well as introduce students to various kinds of qualitative research techniques.

Course Requirements

The course seeks to teach students how to engage in ‘problem-driven’ research through two related sets of course assignments:

1) Weekly notes for class discussion (35%) in which students reflect on ways that they might apply the approaches and methods in the readings to their own particular research projects. These notes will not be handed in, but will serve as a basis for collective brainstorming in class. Students will be assessed on their own work, as well as on their contributions to the discussion of other students’ work.

2) A seminar paper (65%) in which students write up a draft methods section or chapter of their dissertations. As most students will not yet be at the dissertation stage, this will involve discussion of a hypothetical research project, but hopefully one that students plan to pursue in the future. Deadlines: September 26 for a short topic description and December 18 for the final paper.

Required Texts

All of the readings will be available on ERes (password “methods”), with the exception of six books that are available for purchase at the campus bookstore:


**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**September 5: Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods**

No assigned reading – discussion of course aims and introduction to qualitative research methods.

**DEBATES IN THE DISCIPLINE**

**September 12: Quantitative versus Qualitative Methods**


*Suggestions for further reading:*


September 19: Perspectives on Criteria for Qualitative Analysis


Suggestions for further reading:


September 26: Method- versus Problem-Driven Research


*Suggestions for further reading:*


**THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

**October 3: Case Selection**


*Suggestions for further reading:*


**October 10: Concept Formation**


Suggestions for further reading:


October 17: Causality and Causal Mechanisms


Suggestions for further reading:


**October 24: Temporality**


*Suggestions for further reading:*


**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TECHNIQUES**

**October 31: Interviewing**


*Suggestions for further reading:*


**November 7: Archival Research**


**November 9: Practical Issues in Field Research**

Please note that this is a rescheduled class that will substitute for the missed class on November 14. It will be approximately two hours long. The exact time and location will be announced early in the semester to accommodate students' schedules.


**Suggestions for further reading:**


**November 14: NO CLASS**

**November 21: Qualitative Comparative Analysis**


**Suggestions for further reading:**


**November 28: Narrative and Sequence Analysis**


*Suggestions for further reading:*


**December 5: Discourse and Content Analysis**


And one of the following:


Suggestions for further reading:
