

Professor Richard Snyder
Department of Political Science
Brown University
Richard_Snyder@brown.edu

Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research

Course Design: This short graduate seminar offers an introduction to the design and implementation of social science research that deploys qualitative data and analysis in conjunction with other methods of inquiry. Starting from the premise that each research method has its strengths and weaknesses, we consider how qualitative methods can be combined productively with other methods of inquiry, including “large-N” quantitative analysis, experiments, spatial/geographic analysis, and multilevel analysis spanning different scales. The course should prove useful to students planning to utilize a variety of different kinds of research tools. Readings encompass theory, how-to, and examples drawn from political science and cognate social science disciplines.

Learning Goals and Objectives: By engaging the social science literature on qualitative and mixed methods research, and also some exemplary empirical studies that deploy these methods, students will gain a stronger understanding of strategies for data collection and analysis. They will also develop new criteria for evaluating qualitative and mixed methods studies. Moreover, students will learn how qualitative methods can be combined with other methods in mutually supportive ways that contribute to more powerful research designs, improved causal inference, and greater confidence in findings and results.

Requirements

I. *Participation:* This course is a seminar. Its success depends on students reading all the assigned work for each session and contributing actively to seminar discussion. This means you should come to class having thought enough about the readings to comment intelligently both on where you think they say something useful and where you think they are wrong or unhelpful. II. *Short Paper:* Each student will write a short paper (3-5 pages) on mixed methods. Guidelines and instructions for the paper will be handed out during the first class.

Readings

The course readings will be available electronically on-line.

1. Introduction (July 22)

Richard Snyder, “The Human Dimension of Comparative Research,” pp. 1-31 in Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder, *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.

Gerardo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen, “Research Designs,” pp. 385-95, in Kimberly Kempf-Leonard (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement* Vol. 3 (San Diego, Cal.: Academic Press, 2005).

David Collier and Colin Elman, “Qualitative and Multimethod Research.” In: *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Box-Steffensmeier et al. (2008), pp.796-813.
James Mahoney, “After KKV: The New Methodology of Qualitative Research,” *World Politics* 62:1 (January 2010), pp. 120-147.

2. Description: Concepts, Indicators, Measures (July 23)

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

John Gerring, “What Makes a Concept Good? A Criterial Framework for Understanding Concept Formation in the Social Sciences.” *Polity* 31:3 (1999), pp. 357-393.

Gerardo L. Munck and Jay Verkuilen, “Conceptualizing and Measuring Democracy: Evaluating Alternative Indices,” *Comparative Political Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 1, February 2002 5-34

Collier, LaPorte and Seawright (2010). “Typologies: Forming Concepts and Creating Categorical Variables.” In: *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Box-Steffensmeier et al., p.152-173.

Recommended:

- Robert Adcock and David Collier, “Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research.” *American Political Science Review* 95:3 (2001), pp. 529-547.

-Michael Coppedge, *Democratization and Research Methods*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012, 1-48.

-Gary Goertz, *Social Science Concepts: A User’s Guide*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (2006), pp. 6-7, Chapters 1-3 [skim the formal sections on pp. 39-44, 55-58].

-Gerardo L. Munck, *Measuring Democracy: A Bridge between Scholarship and Politics*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.

3. Explanation and Causal Inference (July 24)

Henry Brady, “Causation and Explanation in Social Science.” In: *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Box-Steffensmeier et al. (2008), pp. 217-249.

John Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press (2012), Chapter 8 (“Causal Arguments”).

Jon Elster, “A Plea for Mechanisms” in Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg, eds. *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 45-73.

Adhikari, Ani and John DeNero 2017. “Causality and Experiments.” Pp. 21-32 in *Computational and Inferential Thinking: The Foundations of Data Science*. University of California, Berkeley. <https://legacy.gitbook.com/book/ds8/textbook/details>.

Dunning, Thad 2012. *Natural experiments in the social sciences: a design-based approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. **Ch. 1.**

Recommended:

-Irving M. Copi, and Carl Cohen. “Causal Connections: Mill’s Methods of Experimental Inquiry.” In *Introduction to Logic*. London: Macmillan (1994), Chapter 12.

-Tulia Falleti and Julia Lynch. “Context and Causal Mechanisms in Political Research.” *Comparative Political Studies* 42:9 (2009), pp. 1143-1166.

-Peter Hedstrom and Richard Swedberg, eds. *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 45-73.

-Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1994), Chapter 3.

4. Unit Selection, Issues of Scale and Multilevel Research (July 25)

- Agustina Giraudy, Eduardo Moncada and Richard Snyder, “Subnational Research in Comparative Politics: Substantive, Theoretical and Methodological Contributions,” In Agustina Giraudy, Eduardo Moncada and Richard Snyder, eds., *Inside Countries: Subnational Research in Comparative Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Hillel Soifer, “Units of Analysis in Subnational Research,” In Agustina Giraudy, Eduardo Moncada and Richard Snyder, eds., *Inside Countries: Subnational Research in Comparative Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Imke Harbers and Matthew C. Ingram, “Politics in Space: Methodological Considerations for Taking Space Seriously in Subnational Research,” In Agustina Giraudy, Eduardo Moncada and Richard Snyder, eds., *Inside Countries: Subnational Research in Comparative Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Caroline Beer, “Multi-Level Causation in Gender Policy: Abortion and Violence against Women Laws in the Mexican States,” In Agustina Giraudy, Eduardo Moncada and Richard Snyder, eds., *Inside Countries: Subnational Research in Comparative Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Guillermo Trejo and Sandra Ley, “Mexico’s Drug Wars and the Remaking of Local Order: Why Criminal Organizations Murder Subnational Officials and Political Leaders,” In Agustina Giraudy, Eduardo Moncada and Richard Snyder, eds., *Inside Countries: Subnational Research in Comparative Politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

5. Mixing Methods (July 26)

- Evan Lieberman, “Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research,” *American Political Science Review* 93: 3 (August 2005), pp. 435-52.
- Kinder, Donald R. 2011. “Campbell’s Ghost.” In *Cambridge Handbook of Experimental Political Science*. Druckman, James N., Donald P. Green, James H. Kuklinski, and Arthur Lupia, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 525-529.
- Matthew A. Kocher and Nuno P. Monteiro, “Lines of Demarcation: Causation, Design-Based Inference, and Historical Research,” *Perspectives on Politics* Vol. 14/No. 4 (December 2016).
- Tariq Thachil, “Improving Surveys Through Ethnography: Insights from India’s Urban Periphery,” *Studies in Comparative International Development* 53 (July 2018): 281-299.
- Ahmed, A., & Sil, R. (2012). “When Multi-Method Research Subverts Methodological Pluralism—or, Why We Still Need Single-Method Research.” *Perspectives on Politics*, 10(4), 935-953.

Recommended:

- Michael Coppedge (1999): “Thickening Thin Concepts and Theories: Combining Large-N and Small-N in Comparative Politics.” *Comparative Politics* 31(4): 465-476.
- David Latin and James Fearon (2008): “Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods.” In: *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Box-Steffensmeier et al., p.756-776.
- Evan Lieberman, “Can the Biomedical Research Cycle be a Model for Political Science?” *Perspectives on Politics*, 14:4 (2016):1054-1066.
- Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research,” *Political Analysis* (2006) 14:227–249
- Ingo Rohlfing (2007): “What You See and What You Get: Pitfalls and Principles of Nested Analysis in Comparative Research.” *Comparative Political Studies* 41(11): 1492-1514.

-Macartan Humphreys, and Alan M. Jacobs, "Mixing Methods: A Bayesian Approach," *American Political Science Review* 109:4 (November 2015), pp. 653-673.

Recommended Further Readings on Specific Tools and Methods

Case Studies and Case Selection

Alexander George and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (2004), Chapter 1.

John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, second ed. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, (2017), Chapter 3 ("Overview of Case Selection"), skim Chapter 4 ("Descriptive Case Studies") and Chapter 5 ("Causal Case Studies").

David Collier, James Mahoney, and Jason Seawright. "Claiming Too Much: Warnings about Selection Bias" *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, second ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).

Dietrich Rueschemeyer, "Can One of a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains? In: *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, edited by Mahoney and Rueschemeyer, (2003), p. 305-336.

Recommended:

-Donald Campbell, "Degrees of Freedom and the Case Study." *Comparative Political Studies* 8 (1975), pp. 178-193.

-Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2:1 (1990), pp. 131-50.

-Dan Slater and Daniel Ziblatt. "The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46:10(2013), pp. 1301-1327.

-Sidney Tarrow. "The Strategy of Paired Comparison: Toward a Theory of Practice." *Comparative Political Studies* 43:2 (2010), pp. 230-259.

-Jack Levy, "Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25:1 (2008):1-18.

-Gary Goertz and James Mahoney, "Case Selection and Hypothesis Testing," in *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 177-191.

-John Gerring, "Overview of Case Selection," in John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 39-55.

-Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1994), Chapter 4.

The Comparative Method: Small-N Research

Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method. *APSR* 65:3(1971): 682-692.

Theda Skocpol, and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22 (1980), pp. 174-197.

Richard Locke and Kathleen Thelen, "Apples and Oranges Revisited: Contextualized Comparisons and the Study of Comparative Labor Politics," *Politics & Society* 23:3 (1995), pp. 337-367.

James Mahoney, "Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Research," *Sociological Methods and Research* Vol. 28, N° 4 (2000): 387-424.

Richard Snyder, "Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 36:1 (Spring 2001): 93-110.

Set-Theoretic Methods and Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

Ragin, Charles C. *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Thiem, Alrik, Michael Baumgartner, and Damien Bol, "Still Lost in the Translation! A Correction of Three Misunderstandings Between Configurational Comparativists and Regressional Analysts," *Comparative Political Studies* 49:6 (2016): 742-774.

Schneider, Carsten and Claudius Wagemann (2013). *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences. A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Mahoney, James (2008). "Toward a Unified Theory of Causality." *Comparative Political Studies* 41 (4-5): 412-436.

Goertz, Gary (2006). "Assessing the Trivialness, Relevance, and Relative Importance of Necessary or Sufficient Conditions in Social Science." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 41 (2): 88-109.

Process Tracing

Andrew Bennett, "Process Tracing and Causal Inference," in Henry Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, second ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), pp. 207-219.

David Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 44:4 (2011), pp. 823-830.

David Collier, "Teaching Process Tracing: Examples and Exercises."

Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Process Tracing: From Philosophical Roots to Best Practices." Chapter 1 in Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds. *Process Tracing in the Social Sciences: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (2013, Cambridge University Press).

Henry E. Brady, "Data-Set Observations versus Causal Process Observations: The 2000 U.S. Presidential Election," in Henry Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, second ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), pp. 237-242.

Recommended:

-Alexander George and Andrew Bennett. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press (2004), Chapters 3, 5, 6. [This book provides simple, straightforward instructions for process tracing in the context of case studies.]

-Collier, David, Henry E. Brady, and Jason Seawright, "Sources of Leverage in Causal Inference: Toward an Alternative View of Methodology," in Henry Brady and David Collier, eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, second ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010), pp. 161-199.

Bayesian and Set-Theoretic Approaches to Process Tracing

Bennett, Andrew, "Disciplining our Conjectures: Systematizing Process Tracing with Bayesian Analysis," Appendix in Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds., *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 276-298.

- Barrenechea, Rodrigo, and James Mahoney, "A Set-Theoretic Approach to Bayesian Process Tracing," *Sociological Methods and Research*, forthcoming.
- Fairfield, Tasha, and Andrew Charman. 2017. "Explicit Bayesian Analysis for Process Tracing: Guidelines, Opportunities, and Caveats." *Political Analysis*, forthcoming.
- Mahoney, James, Erin Kimball, and Kendra Koivu, "The Logic of Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences," *Comparative Political Studies* 42:1 (January 2009), pp. 114-146.
- Mahoney, James, "The Logic of Process Tracing Tests in the Social Sciences," *Sociological Methods and Research* 41:4 (November 2012), 566-590.

Sequential Analysis and Path Dependence

- Ruth Berins Collier and David Collier, "Framework: Critical Junctures and Historical Legacies," in *Shaping the Political Arena: Critical Junctures, the Labor Movement, and Regime Dynamics in Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 27-39.
- Giovanni Capoccia and Daniel Keleman, "The Study of Critical Junctures: Theory, Narrative, and Counterfactuals in Historical Institutionalism," *World Politics* 59 (2007): 341-369.
- Tulia G. Falleti, "A Sequential Theory of Decentralization: Latin American Cases in Comparative Perspective," *American Political Science Review* 99:3 (August 2005): 327-346.
- Tulia Falleti and James Mahoney, "The Comparative Sequential Method," in Mahoney and Thelen, eds., *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 211-239.

Recommended:

- Andrew Abbott, "On the Concept of Turning Point," in Abbott, *Time Matters: On Theory and Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 240-260.
- William Sewell, Jr., "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology," In Terrence J. McDonald, ed. *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996.
- Stephen Krasner, "Sovereignty: An Institutional Perspective," *Comparative Political Studies* 21 (1988): 66-94.
- Paul Pierson, "Positive Feedback and Path Dependence," in Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 17-53.
- James Mahoney, "Path Dependence in Historical Sociology," *Theory and Society* 29:4 (August 2000): 507-548.
- James Mahoney, "Path-Dependent Explanations of Regime Change: Central America in Comparative Perspective," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 36:1 (Spring 2001), 111-141.
- Dietrich Rueschemeyer and John D. Stephens, "Comparing Historical Sequences – A Powerful Tool for Causal Analysis," *Comparative Social Research* 17 (1997), pp. 55-72.
- Hillel Soifer, "The Causal Logic of Critical Junctures," *Comparative Political Studies* 45 (2012): 1572-1597.

Quasi-Experiments, Field and Natural Experiments

- Donald Campbell and H. Laurence Ross, "The Connecticut Crackdown on Speeding: Time-Series Data in Quasi-Experimental Analysis." *Law & Society Review* 3:1 (1968), pp. 33-54.
- Dawn Teele, "Reflections on the Ethics of Field Experiments." In Dawn Teele, ed. *Field Experiments and Their Critics: Essays on the Uses and Abuses of Experimentation in the Social Sciences*. New Haven: Yale University Press (2014): 115-140.
- Thad Dunning, "Design-Based Inference: Beyond the Pitfalls of Regression Analysis." In Henry Brady and David Collier, eds. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards* 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield (2010), Chapter 10.
- Rebecca Morton and Kenneth Williams, "Experimentation in Political Science," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Box-Steffensmeier et al. (2008), p.339-356.

- Alan Gerber and Donald Green, “Field Experiments and Natural Experiments,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*, edited by Box-Steffensmeier et al. (2008), p.357-384.
- Jared Diamond and James A. Robinson, *Natural Experiments of History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.
- Stanley Milgram, Leon Mann and Susan Harter, “The Lost-Letter Technique: A Tool of Social Research.” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 29:3 (1965), pp. 437-438.
- Daniel Posner, “The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas Are Allies in Zambia and Adversaries in Malawi.” *American Political Science Review* 98:4 (2004), pp. 529-545.
- Rose McDermott, “Experimental Methods in Political Science.” *Annual Review of Political Science* V. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews (2002), pp. 31-61.

Interviews

- Layna Mosley, ed. *Interview Research in Political Science*. Cornell University Press (2013). Introduction (Mosley), Chapters 1 (Lynch), 2 (Bleich and Pekkanen), and 11 (Leech et al).
- Joe Soss, “Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations: A Practice-Centered View of Interviewing for Interpretive Research.” Chapter 8 in Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe (2014), pp.161-182.
- Selections from interviews with leading scholars in Gerardo L. Munck and Richard Snyder, *Passion, Craft, and Method in Comparative Politics*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007.
- Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (2012), Chapters 6-9.

Recommended:

- Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 7th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon 2009), pp. 127-150.
- Jennifer Hochschild, *What’s Fair? American Beliefs about Distributive Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 15-45 and 292-308. [Nice example of a study based on in-depth interviews with non-elite respondents.]
- Richard A. Krueger, *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Sage, 2009. [Excellent how-to book on focus groups.]
- Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (1995), Chapter 6. [This is about moving from ethnographic field notes to writing, but the sample techniques apply to grounded theorizing based on interview transcripts or notes.]

Ethnography and Participant Observation

- Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books (1973), Ch 1.
- Lisa Wedeen, “Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science.” *Annual Review of Political Science* 13 (2010), pp. 255–272.
- Jessica Allina-Pisano, “How to Tell an Axe-Murderer: An Essay on Ethnography, Truth and Lies.” In Edward Schatz, ed. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2010), Chapter 3.
- Timothy Pachirat, “The Political in Political Ethnography: Dispatches from the Kill Floor.” In Edward Schatz, ed. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2010), Chapter 6.
- Richard Fenno, *Home Style: House Members in Their Districts*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company (1978), Appendix - Notes on Method: Participant Observation.

Recommended:

- Diana Kapiszewski, Lauren M. MacLean and Benjamin L. Read. *Field Research in Political Science*. New York: Cambridge University Press (2014). Chapters 1-4, 10.
- Evan Lieberman, Julia Lynch and Marc Morjé Howard. “Symposium: Field Research.” *Qualitative Methods* 2:1 (2004), pp. 2-8.
- Edward Schatz, ed. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (2010), Chapter 1, 5 and 9.
- Christopher Barrett and Jeffrey Cason. *Overseas Research: A Practical Guide*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press (1997).
- Ellen Pader, “Seeing with an Ethnographic Sensibility: Explorations Beneath the Surface of Public Policies.” In Yanow, Dvora and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, eds. *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, 2nd ed. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe (2014).
- Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (1995), Chapters 1-3 (through p. 52).