Contemporary Political Analysis

An Introduction to Qualitative Methods

Ted Hopf

Winter 2000

Mondays and Wednesdays, 330-515p

Political Science 768

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, Noon-115p

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THIS SYLLABUS IS PROVISIONAL, BUT HIGHLY SUGGESTIVE

PLEASE XEROX AND RETURN.

This course is an introduction to thinking about research techniques, methodology, and epistemology. It raises issues and questions that should be thought about before one chooses to execute a research design on some social phenomenon.

The course has three main parts. The first part asks questions about the foundations of mainstream social and political science. The second part introduces several qualitative approaches to the social world. These include interpretivism, constructivism, ethnography, narrativity, hermeneutics, and critical theory. This is a tasting menu of methods; no single approach will receive more than glancing treatment. But it should suffice to inform the third, and last, part of the course. In those weeks, the comparative case-study method is mastered and each student will be expected to apply both that method, and a combination of that method and some other qualitative method(s) to a research design derived from a list of texts.

Half the grade in the course is class participation. This involves making weekly presentations, analytical critiques, of selected readings and active contributions to discussions of readings presented by one’s colleagues. The other half of the grade is derived from written exercises. The first are short critical essays on the readings; the second half is a longer paper due at the end of the term.

All readings are on reserve.

Books that you should purchase, and that have been ordered by the usual suspects:

Daniel Little, Varieties of Social Explanation

Alan F. Chalmers, What is this thing called science?

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, Designing Social Inquiry

E.H. Carr, What is History?
Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method*

Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science*

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish. Birth of the Prison*

January 3

Overview of coming attractions

**Rethinking the Foundations of Social Science**

*The Destructive Powers of Theorization*

January 5


E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, (Vintage 1961), 3-35 and 70-143


**Why We Ask the Kinds of Questions We Do**

January 10

Robert Pahre, "Patterns of Knowledge Communities in the Social Sciences," *Library Trends* 45:2 (Fall 1996), 204-25

Margaret R. Somers, "Where is Sociology after the Historic Turn?," in Terrence J. McDonald, ed. *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (Michigan 1996), 53-90


E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, 36-69

**Does the Validity of Our Assumptions Matter?**

January 12


Doug Dion, "The Robustness of the Structure-Induced Equilibrium," AJPS, 36:2 (May 1992), 462-83

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, "Domestic Opposition and Foreign War," APSR 84:3 (September 1990), 747-65

How do We Know when One Theory is Better than Another?

January 17 and 19

Alan F. Chalmers, What is this thing called science? (Queensland 1976), 38-100


Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago 1970) v-91 and 144-59

Paul Feyerabend, Against Method, 3d ed. (Verso 1993), 1-23, 54-76, 103-22, 147-58

Qualitative Approaches to the Social World

What’s the Difference?

January 24


"The Qualitative-Quantitative Disputation," APSR 89:2 (June 1995), 454-81


Interpretivism

January 26 and 31

Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, "The Interpretive Turn: A Second Look," in Rabinow and Sullivan, ed. Interpretive Social Science (California 1987), 1-30

Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," in Rabinow and Sullivan, 33-81

Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play," in Rabinert and Sullivan, 195-240

Mikhail Bakhtin, "Language of the Marketplace" and "Rabelais’s Images and His Time," in Rabelais and his World (MIT 1965), 145-95 and 437-74

Constructivism and Ethnography
February 2 and 7


Craig Calhoun, "Habitus, Field, and Capital," in *Critical Social Theory*, 132-61


*The Linguistic Turn: Narrativity and Hermeneutics*

February 9

Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Hopkins 1978), 51-80

James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," in *Writing Culture*, 98-121


(Mayb Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics, and Practice* (Penn 1983),

*Critical Theory*

February 14

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Continuum 1993/1944), 3-42

Craig Calhoun, "Rethinking Critical Theory," in *Critical Social Theory*, 1-42

Axel Honneth, "Critical Theory," in *Social Theory Today*, 347-82

Joan Acker, Kate Barry, and Johanna Esseveld, "Objectivity and Truth," in Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook, eds. *Beyond Methodology* (Indiana 1991), 133-53

Seyla Benhabib, "Epistemologies of Postmodernity: A Rejoinder to Jean-Francois Lyotard," *New German Critique* 33:2 (Fall 1984), 103-26

*Discursive Power*

February 16, 21, and 23

Michel Foucault, *Arachaeology of Knowledge and Discourse on Language*, (Pantheon 1972), 3-30, 215-37


Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," *Signs* 12:4 (Summer 1987), 687-718

**Applying Qualitative Methods in Conventional Social Science**

**Qualitative Comparative Case Studies**

**February 28 and March 1**

Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," *APSR* 65:3, (September 1971), 682-93


**March 6-15**

Choose one book from the following list, or suggest one to me, that you will read and critically analyze for class. Your analysis should consist of a critique of the author’s use of the comparative case study method, and an imaginative application of qualitative methods to a reconfigured research design. Presentations of these books, and your analytical critiques, will occur over the balance of the classes remaining.

Helen Milner, *Resisting Protectionism*

Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive*

Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War*

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*

D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms*

Peter Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay?*
Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire*

Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics*

Andrew Bennett, *Condemned to Repetition*