Qualitative or comparative methods are conventionally understood to be responses to the "small-n" problem, ie research designs encompassing many candidate hypotheses but too few cases to employ statistical methods. The solution to this problem is for comparativists and others treating a small number of cases to mimic quantitative methods. In part, this course will take seriously this critique and proposed remedies. In our more ambitious moments, however, we will explore a series of epistemological and ontological issues that might support an alternative reading of contemporary methodological debates, one that gives far more priority to case studies in establishing adequate causal explanations. The point is not to replace one methodological dogma with another, but to open up new areas of inquiry and to defend a multiplicity of methodological options by linking each of these options to its philosophical foundation. Along the way, we will discuss more conventional issues of research design, and students are encouraged to introduce their own work into our debates. But students should be warned that the goal of the class is not to produce a recipe book of research design algorithms.

The main requirement of the course is to do the reading and come to class prepared to discuss it. The reading list is long, but we typically only read lots of short pieces or selections from longer pieces. As for written assignments, I would like students to construct their own course assignments. Ideally, you will all write a thesis prospectus or thesis chapter, one that draws liberally on issues and readings from the course. Those of you not at that stage will need to choose another assignment, such as a series of short papers; a final paper exploring in detail one of the themes of the course, a critical essay such as those by listed below in the readings for April 4 or 11--I’ll even consider assigning a midterm and final exam to students who wish to take them. The point is that your written work should ultimately help you to apply this material toward your own research.
The following books have been ordered through the UVA bookstore:

- Popper, Logic of Scientific Discovery
- Hume, Enquiry into Human Understanding
- Lieberson, Making It Count
- Ragin, Comparative Method
- Tetlock and Belkin, Counterfactual Thought Experiments
- Friedman, Rational Choice Controversy

Readings marked with an asterisk below have been placed on reserve at Clemons Library. All other readings have been xeroxed and placed in the graduate student lounge.

January 24: Introduction

January 31:


*Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* chapters II, IV, VII, and XII. Along the way, take a quick look at VI and VII: you can get their main points by reading the first and last two pages of each chapter.


February 7: Positivism


Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* chapter 1.


February 14: Quantitative Approaches to Causality Reconsidered


Stanley Lieberson, *Making it Count: The Improvement of Social Research and Theory*.


February 21: Beyond Correlations: An Introduction to Causal Realism


Russell Keat and John Urry, "Realist Philosophy of Science," in their *Social Theory as Science*, 27-45.


February 28: Causality: A Closer Look at Probability and Causal Heterogeneity


*Paul Humphreys, *The Chances of Explanation: Causal Explanation in the Social, Medical, and Physical Sciences.*


March 6: Concept Formation


Ian Hacking, "Duality," in his The Emergence of Probability, 11-17.


A. James Gregor, Interpretations of Fascism xi-xxx, 2-23.


**Recommended Examples of Conceptual Analysis**


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March 13: Spring Break

March 20: The Case for Case Studies


March 27: Mill and the Comparative Method


April 4: Critical Challenges--and Responses


David Dion, "Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study," *Comparative Politics* 30 (January 1998): 127-146.


April 11: Increasing the N


Andrew Bennett, "Lost in the Translation: Big N Misrepresentation of Case Study Research," ms.

Andrew Bennet and Alexander George, "Draft Chapter on Typological Theory," ms.

Ragin, *Comparative Method*, chapters 6-8.


April 18: Macrocausal Analysis


April 25: Microcausal Analysis

*Donald Green and Ian Shapiro, Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory: A Critique of Applications in Political Science, chapters 2 and 3.


May 2: Counterfactuals and some final thoughts

Tetlock and Belkin, Counterfactual Thought Experiments in World Politics, chapters 1, 3-6, 9-10.
