

**JSIS 595/LAW B 554/SOC555:  
QUALITATIVE CASE-BASED RESEARCH METHODS  
T (Th) 10:30-12:20, LAW 207**

Prof. Steven Pfaff  
Savery 230  
Tel. 616-9377  
Email: [pfaff@uw.edu](mailto:pfaff@uw.edu)  
Office hour: T 9:00-10:20 and by appointment

This course is an introduction to the concepts and practices that inform case-based research methods in the social sciences. Case-based research exemplifies the productive exchange between the methodology of general social science and specific, contextualized research. Case-based methods are regularly employed in fields including international studies, comparative politics, policy studies, comparative/historical sociology, and area studies. We will review the basic concepts and practices in case-based research methods and also consider debates as to the role of theory in research, the drawing of general inferences and the assessment of causality in case studies. The second part of the course focuses on interview techniques and content analysis which are frequently used in case-based research.

**Assignments:**

In addition to course readings, students are required to turn in 2 critical briefs on assigned texts *of your own choosing* and one on Ziblatt's *Structuring the State*, for a total of 3 briefs.

*Critical Briefs:* In this course you will be asked to write 3 critical briefs on reading assignments. These papers should be about 5 pages in length and should be brought with you to seminar. They should include a statement of the methodological issues or problems being addressed by the readings; a brief summary of core arguments or the case for the method, what the reading(s) has to say on how you should do case-based work; i.e., what does the reading teach us about issues related to *theory, method* and *evidence*? Make sure you include a reflection on this approach's advantages and disadvantages for the research that you are undertaking.

**Readings:**

- John Gerring. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Henry Brady and David Collier. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010.
- James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Eds. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. New York: Cambridge Press, 2003.
- Layna Mosley, Ed. *Interview Research in Political Science*. New York: Cornell University Press, 2013.

- Daniel Ziblatt. *Structuring the State: The Formation of Italy and Germany and the Puzzle of Federalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.

## **SCHEDULE**

### **January 5 Introduction to case-based research**

#### **Readings:**

pp. 1-15 in Gerring, *Case-Study Research*.

pp. 1-10 in Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.

also review general issues in Gerring, *Social Science Methodology*, Introduction (pp. 1-25).

### **January 7: Tutorial required for JSIS students**

### **January 12: What are cases and what do we do with them?**

#### **Readings:**

pp. 17-63 in Gerring, *Case-Study Research*.

pp. 161-99 in Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.

### **January 14: QUAL Session 5: Applied Case Studies in Atlas.ti (CSSCR Classroom Lab, Savery 121)**

### **January 19: Selecting and evaluating the validity of cases**

#### **Reading:**

pp. 86-170 in Gerring, *Case-Study Research*.

### **January 21: Individual Tutorials - JSIS Students Only**

### **January 26: Internal validity and causal assessment**

#### **Reading:**

pp. 172-210 in Gerring, *Case-Study Research*.

pp. 201-4; 207-19 in Brady and Collier, *Rethinking Social Inquiry*.

### **January 28: QUAL Session 6: Applied Case Studies in Atlas.ti (CSSCR Classroom Lab, Savery 121)**

### **February 2: Theory-driven historical comparisons**

#### **Reading:**

Mahoney, James and Dietrich Rueschemeyer. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Read Chapter 1 (Introduction) and Section II, and your choice of either Section I or III.

### **February 4: Individual Tutorial—JSIS Students Only**

### **February 9: Tools for case-based research: Qualitative Interviews I**

#### **Reading:**

L. Mosley, Ed, *Interview Research in Political Science* (Cornell University Press, 2013). Read Mosley, Intro.; Lynch, Chapter 1; Bleich & Pekkanen, Chapter 4.

**February 11: QUAL Session 7: Applied Case Studies in Atlas.ti** (CSSCR Classroom Lab, Savery 121)

**February 16: Tools for case-based research: Qualitative Interviews II**

**Readings:**

Mosley, *Interview Research in Political Science*; read Martin, Chapter 5; Cammet, Chapter 6; Gallagher, Chapter 8.

**February 18: Individual Tutorial—JSIS Students Only**

**February 23:** *No Class Meeting*

**February 25: QUAL Session 8: Applied Case Studies in Atlas.ti** (CSSCR Classroom Lab, Savery 121)

**March 1: Tools for case-based research: Content Analysis**

**Readings:**

Krippendorff, *Content Analysis*, Chap. 2 (pdf); Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis* Chaps. 1, 2 (pdfs); Hsieh & Shannon “Three approaches to qualitative content analysis” (pdf).

**March 3: Individual Tutorial—JSIS Students Only**

**March 8: Dissecting a case-based study and Review of the Course**

Daniel Ziblatt, *Structuring the State*.

**March 10: Individual Tutorial—JSIS Students Only**