Qualitative Research Methods
POLI 7964

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Spring, 2009
M, 9:10-12:00
Office Hours:
Monday 2-4 PM

The central goal of this course is to familiarize students with a range of qualitative research methods, and prepare them to design and critique qualitative analysis. It is divided into two parts. The first part (Weeks 2-5) focuses on recent methodological writings, and the second part (Weeks 6-10) on five exemplary works, which are helpful to illustrate methodological issues. The course assumes no prior background in qualitative methodology.

Course Requirements

Course grades will be determined in the following manner:

- Presentation of discussion questions 30%
- Research design paper 70%

Students are expected to complete and synthesize readings in advance, attend all classes, and regularly participate in class discussions. Each student is required to prepare some thoughtful questions for discuss for two classes in the semester. The questions should be circulated to the class via email by 4:30 PM on the day before the class (Sunday).

Students are also required to write and present a research design paper of 6,000-12,000 words. It should be circulated to the class three days before the presentation.

Readings

The following books are available for purchase in the LSU bookstore:
The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies by Charles Ragin, University of California Press, 1987
Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards by David Collier and Henry E. Brady, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004
Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences by Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, The MIT Press, 2005
States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China by Theda Skocpol, Cambridge University Press, 1979
Capitalist Development and Democracy by Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber Stephens, and John D. Stephens, University Of Chicago Press, 1992
Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America by Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley, Princeton University Press, 1993

Class Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week 1 (Jan 12): Introduction; Organization of the course; No required reading
Week 2 (Jan 26): Variable-Oriented vs. Case-Oriented Research
The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies by Charles Ragin
Week 3 (Feb 2): The New Orthodoxy
Designing Social Inquiry by Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba
Week 4 (Feb 9): The Debates
Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards by David Collier and Henry E. Brady
Week 5 (Feb 16): Nuts and Bolts
Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences by Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett
Week 6 (Mar 2): Political Ethnography
Contentious Lives: Two Argentine Women, Two Protests, and the Quest for Recognition by Javier Auyero
Week 7 (Mar 9): Small-N (1)
States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China
by Theda Skocpol

Week 8 (Mar 16): Small-N (2)
Making Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa by
Anthony W. Marx

Week 9 (Mar 23): Medium-N (1)
Capitalist Development and Democracy by Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Evelyne Huber
Stephens, and John D. Stephens

Week 10 (Mar 30): Medium-N (2)
Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America by Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley

Week 11, 12 (Apr 13, 20): Presentations
Week 13 (Apr 27): Final Review