

POP88302 — Qualitative Research Methods

Module Information	
Module Code	POP88302
Module Title	Qualitative Research Methods
Department	Political Science
Module Personnel	Dr Matthias Dilling
Academic Year	2026–27
Credit Weighting	10 credits
Semester	Semester 2
Contact Hours	2 hours of lectures + 2 hours of project meetings per week, 1.5 hours of workshops every other week

Module Content	
Module Description	The quest for internal validity in political science research points researchers toward examining causal processes within specific cases. Careful data collection and analysis within well selected cases importantly boosts the confidence we can have in our conclusions and is at the centre of qualitative research methods. This module introduces students to the logic of inference, concepts, techniques, and data when using qualitative methods in political science. It focuses especially on process tracing, different case study designs, and using archival, interview and ethnographic data when assessing competing explanations in within-case analyses and small-N comparative research.
Module Learning Aims	This module aims to introduce postgraduate students to the logic of inference, concepts, tools, and evidence used in qualitative research. It aims to empower students to use this knowledge and skills to critically evaluate political science scholarship and expand upon it by designing and conducting their own research.
Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

Module Content

	• Explain how qualitative methods draw inferences about political phenomena and examine for what research questions they are most suitable, • Describe and apply concepts and tools for the conceptualization of political outcomes and the assessment of competing explanations in single-case and small-N research, • Examine different types of data used in qualitative research and evaluate their use in existing political science scholarship, • Design and conduct qualitative research to investigate a research problem of their choice, and • Communicate their proposed and implemented research in line with professional standards.
Indicative Reading / Resources	• Goertz, Gary, and James Mahoney (2012) <i>A Tale of Two Cultures. Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences</i>. Princeton University Press. • Kreuzer, Marcus (2023) <i>The Grammar of Time: A Toolbox for Comparative Historical Analysis</i>. Cambridge University Press. • Kapiscewski, Diana, Lauren MacLean, and Benjamin Read (2015) <i>Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles</i>. Cambridge University Press.

Assessment

Assessment Components	Project meeting attendance (5%), Project diary (5%), Individual recorded presentation (25%), Group research paper (65%)
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Additional Information

Prerequisites	None
Co-requisites	None