

POU33174 — Introduction to Qualitative Methods

Module Information	
Module Code	POU33174
Module Title	<i>Introduction to Qualitative Methods</i>
Department	<i>Political Science</i>
Year Group	<i>Junior Sophister</i>
Module Personnel	<i>Dr Matthias Dilling</i>
Academic Year	<i>2026–27</i>
Credit Weighting	<i>5 credits</i>
Semester	<i>Semester 2</i>
Contact Hours	<i>11x 2 hours of lectures per week, 5x1h tutorials</i>

Module Content	
Module Description	<i>The quest for internal validity in the social sciences points researchers toward understanding 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.</i> <i>This module introduces students to the logic of inference, concepts, techniques, and data used within qualitative methods in political science. It focuses especially on process tracing, case study designs, and using archival, interview, and ethnographic data when assessing competing explanations in within-case analyses.</i>
Module Learning Aims	<i>This module aims to introduce 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 examine empirical studies into a wide range of political phenomena and prepare their own research.</i>
Learning Outcomes	<i>On successful completion of this module students should be able to:</i>

Module Content

	• <i>Explain how qualitative methods draw inferences about political phenomena and identify for what research questions they are most suitable,</i> • <i>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,</i> • <i>Examine different types of data used in qualitative research and what researchers need to consider in terms of research ethics and integrity, and</i> • <i>Design qualitative research to investigate a research problem of their choice and evaluate pieces of evidence for their probative value.</i>
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. • Kapiscewski, Diana, Lauren MacLean, and Benjamin Read (2015) <i>Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles</i>. Cambridge University Press.

Assessment

Assessment Components	<i>2 short assignments (10%), Causal chain assignment (40%), In-person exam (50%)</i>
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Additional Information

Prerequisites	<i>None</i>
Co-requisites	<i>None</i>