

**An Introduction to Qualitative Methods
Political Science 768**

Ted Hopf

**Spring 2001
Tuesdays, 330-615p**

Political Science 768

**Office Hours: Thursdays, 315-515p
2127 Derby, 2-3392, hopf.2@osu.edu**

This course is an introduction to thinking about research techniques, methodology, and epistemology. It raises issues and questions that should be thought about *before* one chooses to execute a research design on some social phenomenon.

The course has three main parts. The first part asks questions about the foundations of mainstream social and political science. The second part introduces several qualitative approaches to the social world. These include interpretivism, constructivism, ethnography, narrativity, hermeneutics, critical theory, and discursive analysis. This is a tasting menu of methods; no single approach will receive more than glancing treatment. But it should suffice to inform the third, and last, part of the course. In those weeks, the comparative case-study method is mastered and each student will be expected to apply both that method, and a combination of that method and some other qualitative method(s) to a research design derived from a list of texts.

Half the grade in the course is class participation. This involves making weekly presentations, analytical critiques of selected readings, and active contributions to discussions of readings presented by one's colleagues. The other half of the grade is derived from written exercises. The first are short critical essays on the readings; the second half is a longer paper due at the end of the term.

Books that you should purchase:

Alan F. Chalmers, *What is this thing called science?*
Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*
E.H. Carr, *What is History?*
Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, *Interpretive Social Science*

All the rest of the readings are in the departmental reading room.

March 27

Overview of coming attractions

Rethinking the Foundations of Social Science

The Destructive Powers of Theorization

April 3

Giovanni Sartori, "Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics," *APSR*, 64:4 (December 1970), 1033-53

E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, (Vintage 1961), 3-35 and 70-143

Why We Ask the Kinds of Questions We Do

Robert Pahre, "Patterns of Knowledge Communities in the Social Sciences," *Library Trends* 45:2 (Fall 1996), 204-25

Margaret R. Somers, "Where is Sociology after the Historic Turn?," in Terrence J. McDonald, ed. *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (Michigan 1996), 53-89

Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage 1979), 284-328

E.H. Carr, *What is History?*, 36-69

April 10

Does the Validity of Our Assumptions Matter?

Milton Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics," in *Essays in Positive Economics* (Chicago 1962), 3-43

Maurice Lageux, "Friedman's 'Instrumentalism' and Constructive Empiricism in Economics," *Theory and Decision* 37: 147-74, 1994

Morris P. Fiorina, "Formal Models in Political Science," *AJPS*, 19:1 (February 1975), 133-59

Doug Dion, "The Robustness of the Structure-Induced Equilibrium," *AJPS*, 36:2 (May 1992), 462-83

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and David Lalman, "Domestic Opposition and Foreign War," *APSR* 84:3 (September 1990), 747-65

Sanford Gordon and Gregory Huber, "On the Electoral Incentives of Criminal Prosecutors," March 1, 2001 ms.

Special Mystery Guest!!

How do We Know when One Theory is Better than Another?

April 17

Alan F. Chalmers, *What is this thing called science?* (Queensland 1976), 38-100

Qualitative Approaches to the Social World

What's the Difference?

Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton 1994), 3-114

"The Qualitative-Quantitative Disputation," *APSR* 89:2 (June 1995), 454-81

Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and the Statistical Worldview," *IO* 53:1 (Winter 1999), 161-90

ESSAY NUMBER ONE DUE APRIL 17

In this essay, choose any theory in political science that interests you, and/or that you know best, and that has been tested. In 5-10 pages, show how the theory necessarily destroys and distorts what it purports to explain; what its social, political, or cultural origins might be, and how these affect the kinds of problems and questions it can address, and answers it can offer; and identify the theory's assumptions, their consequences, and how or whether they are justified. Indicate what is qualitative and quantitative about the theory's methods and where it fits within Popper's marketplace of falsification, Lakatos's sociology of sticky theories, and/or Feyerabend's anarchy of intrigue.

Interpretivism**April 24**

Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, "The Interpretive Turn: A Second Look," in Rabinow and Sullivan, ed. *Interpretive Social Science* (California 1987), 1-30

Charles Taylor, "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man," in Rabinow and Sullivan, 33-81

Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (Basic 1973), 3-54

Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play," in Rabinow and Sullivan, 195-240

Constructivism and Ethnography**May 1**

Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Anchor 1966) **ALL**

May 8

Vincent Crapanzano, "Hermes's Dilemma: The Masking of Subversion in Ethnographic Description," in James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture* (California 1986), 51-76

Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography. Principles in Practice* (Routledge 1993), 23-53, 157-74, 205-38

John C. Heritage, "Ethnomethodology," in Anthony Giddens and Jonathan Turner, eds. *Social Theory Today* (Stanford 1987), 224-72

Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," *Sociological Theory* 7:1 (1989), 14-25

Craig Calhoun, "Habitus, Field, and Capital," in *Critical Social Theory*, 132-61

Jeffrey C. Alexander, "The Reality of Reduction: The Failed Synthesis of Pierre Bourdieu," in Alexander, *Fin de Siècle Social Theory* (Verso 1995), 128-217

The Linguistic Turn: Narrativity and Hermeneutics

May 15

Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Hopkins 1978), 51-80

James Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory," in *Writing Culture*, 98-121

Critical Theory

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Continuum 1993/1944), 3-42

Mitchell Dean, "Absent History and Enlightenment Dialectics," 96-119

Craig Calhoun, "Rethinking Critical Theory," in *Critical Social Theory*, 1-42

Charles Taylor, "Language and Human Nature," 215-47

Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals," *Signs* 12:4 (Summer 1987), 687-718

Roxanne Lynn Doty, "Foreign Policy as Social Construction: A Post-Positivist Analysis of U.S. Counterinsurgency Policy in the Philippines," *International Studies Quarterly* 37:3 (September 1993), 297-320

ESSAY NUMBER TWO DUE MAY 15

In this essay, choose any theory in political science, perhaps the one you elaborated in Essay One. In 5-10 pages reformulate the theory using the techniques suggested by interpretivism, constructivism, ethnography, and/or discursive analysis. Show what advantages can be expected by your respecification of that theory. What counts as an advantage, in any case?

Applying Qualitative Methods in Conventional Social Science

Qualitative Comparative Case Studies

May 22

Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune, *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*, (Wiley 1970), 3-46

David Collier, "The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change," in Dankwart A. Rustow and Kenneth Paul Erickson, eds. *Comparative Political Dynamics*, (Harper Collins 1991), 7-31

Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making," in *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations*, Vol. 2, (JAI Press 1985), 21-58

Alexander L. George, "The Causal Nexus between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behavior: The 'Operational Code' Belief System," in Leonard Falkowski, ed. *Psychological Models in International Politics* (Westview 1979), esp. 104-24

May 29-June 5

PAPER DUE JUNE 5

Choose one book from the following list, or please suggest one to me, as the ones that are listed are quite boring to me by now, and are heavily weighted toward IR. You will read and critically analyze your choice for class. Your analysis should consist of a critique of the author's use of the comparative case study method, in terms of that method, and an imaginative application of qualitative methods to a reconfigured research design. Presentations of these books, and your analytical critiques, will occur on June 5.

Helen Milner, *Resisting Protectionism*

Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive*

Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War*

Theda Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions*

D. Michael Shafer, *Deadly Paradigms*

Peter Liberman, *Does Conquest Pay?*

Jack Snyder, *Myths of Empire*

Jonathan Mercer, *Reputation and International Politics*

Andrew Bennett, *Condemned to Repetition*