Fall 2021

Qualitative Methods: Research Design, Data Collection, and Analysis (Wednesdays 1:00-3:00 pm EST)
Professor Lauren M. MacLean, macleanl@indiana.edu

Course Description:
This course is an introduction to the principles and practices of qualitative research design, data collection, and data analysis. The seminar exposes students to a variety of qualitative research methods from a range of epistemological perspectives. The readings include general treatments of qualitative methodology as well as pieces of research that illustrate the use of these methods. In addition to the reading, students will practice these methodological techniques (e.g., conducting interviews) during class in small groups and outside of class as the basis for three short papers.

The course begins with discussion of the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research, scrutinizing the ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying scientific inquiry and methodological choice. We will then examine the logic of research design, the nature of causal explanation, and the challenges of conceptualization. The course will focus on the following qualitative methods in detail: comparative historical analysis, qualitative interviewing, focus groups, ethnography and participant observation, and discourse/content analysis. We will discuss the similarities and differences between interpretivist and positivist qualitative approaches throughout the course. Special attention will be dedicated to the ethics of qualitative research and the design and implementation of field research.

This course will be valuable for graduate students in political science, public policy, and other social sciences who are considering using qualitative methods in their research. The course also welcomes graduate students who are seeking an introduction to qualitative methods in order to be able to read, digest, and evaluate scholarship using them.

Game Theory and Political Analysis (Mondays 3:30-5:25 CST)
Professor Andrew Kydd, kydd@wisc.edu

This course is an introduction to game theory in political science. The focus will be on learning the methodology, but applications from American politics, comparative politics, political theory and international relations will be examined throughout the course, reflecting the prevalence of similar strategic issues across subfields. Topics will include utility theory, normal form games, extensive form games, repeated games, incomplete information, and social choice theory. Grades will be based on problem sets, a midterm and a final.

Textbook will be Tadelis, Game Theory: An Introduction, Princeton, 2013.

Spring 2022

Introduction to Text and Images as Data
Professor Nora Webb Williams, nww3@illinois.edu

This course provides a broad introduction to the principles and tools of large-scale text and image analysis from a political science perspective. No prior experience with text or image data is required, though experience with R is assumed. The course will offer students the opportunity to work with Python. Topics include maintaining a qualitative sensibility when approaching "big" data, web scraping, supervised and

unsupervised learning, sentiment analysis, word embeddings, automatic translation, dependency parsing, event detection, object and facial detection/recognition, color analysis, cloud computing, AI ethics, and more.

Fall 2022

Causal Mechanisms
Professor Bear Braumoeller, Braumoeller.1@osu.edu

Models and causal mechanisms are at the heart of what we do as social scientists, but we devote remarkably little time to understanding them. If you ask a job candidate what model of the political process is at the heart of his or her work, the answer, likely as not, will be a linear-additive statistical model, a game tree, possibly a highly simplistic causal diagram... or just outright evasion. The goal of this course, therefore, is to introduce students to a variety of models and causal mechanisms from the applied literature in the social sciences. Our goal will be to learn about different causal mechanisms by which outcomes are produced and to explore and produce models that incorporate one or more of those mechanisms. Much of the work will be quantitative in nature, not because of the aesthetic beauty of the Greek alphabet, but because one of the virtues of formalization is that it forces the author to make mechanisms explicit. That said, students will often find that understanding the math will be superfluous for our purposes given that the authors must also explain themselves in English.

Spring 2023

Time Series Analysis
Professors Janet Box-Steffensmeier, John Freeman, and Jon Pevehouse, box-steffensmeier.1@osu.edu, freeman@umn.edu, jcpevehouse@wisc.edu

This course studies statistical techniques used to analyze social processes occurring through time. We begin by discussing social problems that are inherently dynamic in nature and also how time series are measured. We then review the calculus of finite differences. We move next to the study stationary ARMA models, "reduced form" methods (granger causality and vector autogression), unit root tests, near-integration, fractional integration, cointegration, and error correction models. Time series regression is briefly discussed. We address not only how to construct these models but also how to use time series models in social science analyses.