

Syllabus of APSA MENA Qualitative Methods Training Camp

Qualitative Methods for the Social Sciences

Day 1: Qualitative Political Science and Knowledge Production

9:00-10:30 - Session one: Intro and basics

- Greetings/Intro
- Scientific method/discussion of goals of causality (compared with description)
- Asking a good research question (e.g., one that is empirically investigable using qualitative methods/evidence)
- Defining, conceptualizing, and operationalizing independent/dependent variables
- Devising hypotheses/rival hypotheses
- Logic of necessary conditions; necessary and sufficient conditions, necessary but not sufficient; sufficient but not necessary, insufficient and unnecessary, mutually exclusive categories, mutually exhaustive categories
- Discuss differences in aims/objectives of qualitative and quantitative research (drawing on selections from Goertz and Mahoney's *A Tale of Two Cultures*)

Required readings:

Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. 2012. *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 1-50 (chapters 1-3).

Break: 10:30-10:45

10:45-12:15 - Session two: Comparative Historical Analysis (CHA)

- Mill's methods
 - Logic of inference using most similar systems (method of difference) design vs. most different systems design (method of agreement). Discuss exemplars of both:
 - Most similar systems - Mounira Charrad's *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001)
 - Most different systems - Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)
- Less common CHA research designs:
 - Parallel Demonstration of Theory Research Design.
 - Sofia Fenner's *Shouting in a Cage: Political Life After Authoritarian Co-optation in North Africa* (2023)

Required readings:

Mounira Charrad's *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 1-13.

Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), xi-43.

Skocpol and Somer, "The uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1980), pp. 174-187

Mounira Charrad, "Waves of Comparative and Historical Sociology," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 351-354 (stop reading at "The Concept of Modernity" subheading)

Sofia Fenner's *Shouting in a Cage: Political Life After Authoritarian Co-optation in North Africa* (2023), pp.1-13.

12:15-1:30 Lunch

1:30 - 3:00: Session three - Case Selection

- Case selection rationale crucial case logic (least likely/most likely cases; tough test)
- Multi-case comparative designs vs. single case vs. subnational comparison case
- Explaining deviant cases that contradict your theory (Skocpol, 1982).
- Designing 2x2 matrices (for organizing independent/dependent variables and for identifying and categorizing your population cases)
- Counterfactual cases and counterfactual analysis

Required readings:

Ali Kadrid. "Introduction," *The Cordon Sanitaire: A Single Law Governing Development in East Asia and the Arab World* (Springer: 2017), pp. 1-38.

Theda Skocpol. "Rentier State and Shi'a Islam in the Iranian Revolution." *Theory and Society* 11(3)(1982): 265-283.

Recommended:

Richard Snyder. 2001. "Scaling Down: The Subnational Comparative Method," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, pp. 93-110.

3:00-4:00: Optional Office Hours at Café Hafa

Participants are invited to sign up for optional office hours with a co-leader. These 15-minute sessions provide an opportunity to seek clarifications on any workshop materials, methodologies, or tools discussed. You may also utilize this time to discuss and receive feedback on a current research project.

Sign-up sheet:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ugch7YcAbG3OqMEpEAPn088ZW6rltryM3QzQxEB9Ei8/edit#gid=0>

Please sign up for only one slot initially to allow all participants an opportunity to meet with a co-leader. If a slot continues to be available, you may sign up for it right before the scheduled time

Day 2: Qualitative Methods in Practice

9:00-10:30 - Session four: Causal Diagrams

- Discussion of how to make causal diagrams
- Students build causal diagrams trying to replicate Brownlee's and Waldner's arguments, then are shown the real causal diagram from the books.

Required readings:

Jason Brownlee's *Authoritarianism in the Age of Democratization* (Cambridge: 2007), pp. Intro and Chapter 4

David Waldner's *State Building and Late Development* (Cambridge: 1999), pp. ix-51

Break: 10:30-10:45

10:45-12:15 - Session five: History and process tracing

- Intro to Process tracing. Readings from George and Bennett, Colin Elman, David Collier, and others on process tracing
- value of sequencing in historically-based explanations

Required readings:

James Mahoney. 2015. "Process Tracing and Historical Explanation," *Security Studies* 24(2): 200-218.

Recommended:

Nina Tannenwald. 2005. "Stigmatizing the Bomb: Origins of the Nuclear Taboo," *International Security*, pp. 5-49

12:15-1:30 Lunch

1:30 - 3:00:Session six: Interviewing

- Qualitative interviewing techniques
 - Structured interviews vs. semi structured interviews
 - Snow-ball sampling; follow-on interviews
 - Interview triangulation
 - Practice interview practicum (students practice interviewing each other)

- Ethnography and participant-observation

Required readings:

Zoe Bray. 2012. “Ethnographic Approaches” p. 296-315 in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences*. Edited by Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating.

Zaynab El Bernoussi. 2021. “Introduction” specifically from p.11 “Argument and Contribution” in *Dignity in the Egyptian Revolution*.

3:00-4:00: Office Hours at Tangier American Legation Museum

Sign-up sheet:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Ugch7YcAbG3OqMEpEAPn088ZW6rltryM3QzQxEB9Ei8/edit#gid=0>

Day 3: Honing and Publishing Current Research

9:00-10:30 - Session seven: Connecting with the literature

- Reverse engineering discussion of recent qualitative article
- demystifying peer review process

Required readings:

Jason Brownlee. 2024. “Foreign-Imposed Regime Change and the American War in Afghanistan,” *Political Science Quarterly* (online first), pp. 1-25.

Revise and resubmission correspondence between Brownlee and editorial board.

Break: 10:30-10:45

10:45-12:15 - Session eight: Backcasting and Archival research practicum

- Backcasting group exercise (exploratory scenario analysis)
- Discussion of relationship between backcasting and process tracing
- archival sources/archival research technology\managing archival sources.
 - archival research practicum and demonstration in TALIM archives using the expatriate newspaper sources.

Required readings:

Karl Dreborg. 1996. “Essence of Backcasting,” *Futures*, pp. 813-828. (skim read for the general idea)

Required Viewing: Archival Research Advice for Grad Students with Erik Sand hosted by Phil Haun
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoMftN9tg4A>

Review backcasting chart and sequential logic diagram to prepare for group exercise

12:15-1:30 Lunch

1:30 - 3:00 - Session nine: Conclusion and Professionalization

- The research, funding, and publishing landscape
- Ethics and logistics of fieldwork (including current regional-political context)
- Professional networking, conferences, major organizations (APSA, MESA, POMEPS)

Anonymous evaluation survey to participants.