



Module Title: Qualitative Research Methods

Module Code: POP88212

Module Name: Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods

- **ECTS Weighting: 10 ECTS**
- **Semester/Term Taught: Hilary Term**
- **Contact Hours: 11x2h core sessions, 10X1.5h tutorials**
- **Module Personnel: Dr Matthias Dilling**

Module Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

- Explain how qualitative methods draw inferences about political phenomena and for what research questions they are most suitable,
- Describe and apply concepts and tools for the assessment of competing explanations in single-case and small-N research,
- Outline and appraise strategies to select cases for qualitative research,
- Examine different types of data used in qualitative research and what researchers need to consider in terms of research ethics and integrity,
- Critically review and assess empirical studies that use a qualitative or mixed-methods research design,
- Formulate a qualitative research design to investigate a research problem of their choice within the guidelines of an assignment prompt,
- Design and implement a process tracing analysis to evaluate individual pieces of evidence for their probative value in the light of competing explanations, and
- Justify their assessments and research strategy by drawing on both methodological and applied social science literature.

Module Learning Aims

This module introduces 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 and evaluate empirical research into a wide range of political phenomena and to design and conduct their own research.

Module Content

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.



This module aims to introduce students to the logic of inference, concepts, techniques, and data used within qualitative methods in political science. It covers themes like ontology, process tracing, small-N comparisons, and using archival, interview, and ethnographic data when assessing competing explanations in within-case analyses. The format includes 11 core sessions that combine lecture- and seminar-style elements and 10 tutorials to link the covered material to research practice.

Recommended Reading List (TBC):

- Goertz, Gary, and James Mahoney (2012) *A Tale of Two Cultures. Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kreuzer, Marcus (2023) *The Grammar of Time: A Toolbox for Comparative Historical Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kapiscewski, Diana, Lauren MacLean, and Benjamin Read (2015) *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Seawright, Jason (2016) *Multi-Method Social Science. Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Module Pre-Requisite

None

Module Co-Requisite

None

Assessment Details

- Book review (10%)
- Draft causal chain (20%)
- Research design and process tracing essay (70%)

Module Website

Not yet available (please note that I have not started at Trinity yet and therefore do not have access to Blackboard).