**Qualitative Methods Outline**

**University of Management and Technology, course outline, Spring 2022**

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**Course Description:**

How do we go about pursuing interesting and important questions in political science? In the course of this semester, we will examine a number of different ways to address this question. We start by discussing basic format of a research paper, citation format, and issues surrounding plagiarism. We move on to basic building blocks of social science research, including how to ask useful questions, how to generate hypotheses, and how to test them. We will take a brief look at quantitative political science research, and then contrast this approach, and its underlying assumptions, with various qualitative research methods, including historical archival research, ethnography, and interviewing. Students will complete small research projects using each of these methods in order to apply knowledge gained from class and reading material.

**Learning Objectives:**

* Learn how to structure and start writing a research paper
* Use appropriate citation format
* Ask interesting, relevant, and important questions related to the political world
* Comprehend the difference between quantitative, qualitative, and interpretive methodologies
* Define concepts clearly and concisely and come up with appropriate measures for them
* Understand how to construct case studies and controlled comparisons
* Appreciate concepts and issues involved in comparative historical research
* Examine the underlying differences between qualitative and interpretive approaches to political research
* Carry out smaller historical archival, ethnographic, in-depth interviewing research projects

**Course Requirements:**

* **Attendance and Participation Requirement for Final Exam**

I expect respectful, interested, and active participation of everyone in class, as we aim to spend a good chunk of our time in class discussion. If you want to achieve satisfactory marks in this class, you will have to attend the class. Absences can ONLY be excused in the event of an emergency or medical reasons. A doctor’s note is REQUIRED if you wish to be excused for sickness. Please let me know well in advance if you are unable to come for an excusable reason. I should note that you will not be able to sit for the final exam if your attendance is below 80% for the semester. Too late arrivals count the same as one absence.

* **4 Reading Response Papers (30%)**

It is expected that students will come to class prepared and ready to engage in meaningful discussion. In order to do so, however, you will have to do the reading assignments. Therefore, you will be required to write 2-3 pages in response to a few questions I will assign before classes. I do not want you to summarize the readings in these response papers, but want you to think through them deeply before class.

* **Mid-term and Final Exam (30%)**

Format to be determined.

* **Final Project (40%)**

You will be required to complete a final research paper using one of the qualitative methods that we will be discussing in class. In this case, you will be required to come up with a useful research question and propose initial hypotheses, to complete a literature review on your subject, to create a doable research design, and then to use either archival research, ethnography, or interviewing to test your proposed research design. Remember, you will have to carry out the research yourself, instead of relying on available secondary research. This means you will choose a particular archival site or archival data source, a place or location, or a group of people, as your research target. As a result, you should keep your research design as small, modest and brief as possible given the restricted nature of a one-semester class. Especially if you plan to use ethnographic or interview-based methods, you should center your question on Lahore, or one particular site or group of people within Lahore. The final product will have to have a length of at least 3000 words.

**Course Schedule:**

* Introduction: What is Political Science?
* Module 1: Basics: How to Write a Paper (the rest of the class will be focused on how to write a research paper)
	+ Structure of research papers: Read **Leeds “Writing a Research Paper for a Graduate Seminar in Political Science”**
	+ Bibliography and Citation Format: Read **APSA citation style**
	+ Plagiarism: Read Plagiarism Presentation

**Due: Response Paper 1**

* Module 2: Introduction to Political Science Research (come up with same exercises)
	+ Developing Interesting Research Questions; Read **Snyder “Creative Hypothesis Generating in Comparative Research**
	+ What are Variables? What are Hypotheses? What are Theories? Read: **Van Evera: “Hypotheses, Laws, Theories: A User’s Guide”**

**Due: Response Paper 2;**

* Module 3: Introduction to Basic Logics of Research: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Interpretive Approaches
	+ Concept Formation, Measurement, and Hypothesis Testing in Quantitative Research; Research:Read: **Fearon/Laitin: “Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War”**
	+ Quantitative versus Qualitative Research; Read: **Goertz/Mahoney: “Causes-of-Effects versus Effects-of-Causes”**
	+ Interpretivism; Read: **Yanow: “Interpretive Empirical Political Science: What Makes This Not a Subfield of Qualitative Methods”**

**Due: Response Paper 3/Research Question/Hypothesis**

* Module 4: Basic Qualitative Research Designs:
	+ Research Design I: The Case Study; Read: **Van Evera “What are Case Studies”; George and Bennett “How to do Case Studies”**
	+ Research Design II: The Controlled Comparison in Political Science; Read:**Ziblatt and Slater “The Enduring Indispensability of the Controlled Comparison”**

**Due: Response Paper 4/**

**Mid-term Exam (provisionally, March 18th)**

* Module 5: Comparative Historical Analysis
	+ Logic of Comparative Historical Analysis: What are Critical Junctures, what is Path Dependency? Read: **Mahoney (2001) “Path-Dependent Explanations of Regime Change: Central America in Comparative Perspective”**
	+ Practical Issues Issues and Problems in Archival Research: Read: **Newsletter of the ASA Comparative and Historical Sociology (2008) “From the Archives”**

**Due: Response Paper 5; Literature Review**

* Module 6: Interviewing
	+ Introduction to In-Depth Interviewing in Political Science; Read: **Weiss: “Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Method Studies”**

**Due: Response Paper 6/Research Design**

* Module 7: Introduction to Qualitative Approach: Ethnography
	+ Basic Introduction to Political Ethnography; Read: **Wedeen (2010) “Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science”**
	+ Participant-Observation and Relations of Power in the daily lives of immigrant laborers in the US; Read: **Pachirat (2009) “The Political in Political Ethnography: Dispatches from the Kill Floor”**
* Module 8: Completion and Presentation of Final Research Paper
	+ Paper Presentations: May 11th and May 13th

**Due: Final Exam: TBD**