



Syllabus PhD in Politics

Year of Offer	2024-2025 – fsecond year
Study Course	PhD Research in Politics
Teaching/Module	Applied Qualitative Methods
Teaching Period	First/second Semester
Professors	Kristina Stoeckl and Mark Thatcher
Course Year	2024-2025
Field	SPS/04 SCIENZA POLITICA
CFU	5
Total Hours of Frontal Instruction	20

Tipo Testo	Testo in Italiano/Inglese
OBIETTIVI/LEARNING GOALS	<p>The aim of methods training in the PhD course is to a) make you firm in the methodological approach you employ in your PhD research and make you aware of the limits of your approach, b) make you conversant with a number of methods relevant in the discipline to prepare you for a future research. This course in the second year of your Phd is meant to allow you to go deeper in your methodological reflection and think about the application in practice of qualitative methods. The course has three main goals:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Applying methods: every student in the course presents <u>two</u> alternative qualitative methods that they are applying or could apply in their thesis. This will allow discussion directly linked to your thesis, as it will help you think about the methods you are using and those you are not using and why.2. Assessing methods: each of you presents <u>two</u> articles that apply qualitative methodology and assesses the efficacy of the method and of the presentation of the method. Ideally, one of the articles should have a strong methods section (“best practice”), the other could be more open to criticism on methodological grounds (“bad practice”).3. Writing methods: when discussing the best and bad practice articles, we will pay particular attention to the language in which methods sections in qualitative research papers are written. We will create a document on Luiss Learn to keep track of language, style, modes to use literature etc. that you can then use when writing your own methods section. <p>Start from the list of qualitative methods that we studied in the first year and use the slides and reading material created by you on Luiss Learn to prepare your presentations. The course has 10 sessions. We have one introductory and one wrapping-up session. 3 sessions will be dedicated to the discussion of best and bad practice articles, 5 sessions (one for each of you) to present your real and hypothetical method. Everyone should be prepared to present two times throughout the semester:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Present the assessment of a praiseworthy qualitative methods research article (“best practice”) and a not-so-convincing qualitative methods research article (“bad practice“)2. Present your method in the thesis (even if not qualitative), your “real” method; and a hypothetical method, a qualitative method that you could use for your research. Please self-organise the allocation so that each session is covered.
RISULTATI DI APPRENDIMENTO ATTESI/ INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Conoscenza e comprensione/ knowledge and understanding: Understanding of the application of different qualitative methods of research in the social and political sciences.</p>



Capacità di applicare conoscenza e comprensione/ applying knowledge and understanding:

Ability to apply in practice qualitative methods to empirical material in political science.

Autonomia di giudizio/ making judgements:

Ability to judge strengths and weaknesses of the application in practice different forms of qualitative research with regard to one's research project.

Abilità comunicative/ communication skills:

Ability to make oral and written presentations and to express methodological arguments in peer discussion.

Capacità di apprendimento/ learning skills:

Capacity to identify and analyse the application of qualitative research in the social and political sciences.

Prerequisiti / Entry Requirements

Successful completion of the first-year courses of the PhD in Politics.

Contenuti Del Corso / Course Content

1. Session 1 (MT & KSt) 10/10

Introductory session

2. Session 2 (KS) 17/10

Presentation of a best and bad practice articles: *KSt, person 1*
 Stoeckl, Kristina (2024). *Materializing difference: the affirmation of two rival church identities in Ukraine* (draft of a research article to be submitted to *Religion*)
 Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), 837-851. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410383121>

3. Session 3 (KS) 24/10

Presentation of a best and bad practice articles: *person 2, person 3*
Select from these suggested articles (but you can also bring your own articles):
 Giorgi, A. (2021). Religious feminists and the intersectional feminist movements: Insights from a case study. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 28(2), 244-259. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506820931134>
 Asmussen, Kelly J., and John W. Creswell. "Campus Response to a Student Gunman." *The Journal of Higher Education* 66, no. 5 (1995): 575-91. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2943937>

4. Session 4 (MT) 31/10

Presentation of a best and bad practice articles: *person 4, person 5*
Select from these suggested articles (but you can also bring your own articles):
 Haenfler, R. (2004). Rethinking Subcultural Resistance: Core Values of the Straight Edge Movement. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 33(4), 406-436. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241603259809>
 Cohen, A.L. (2019), The Motivations for Food Exchanges in the Lives of Rural Older Adults. *Rural Sociology*, 84: 148-167. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ruso.12217>

5. Session 5 (MT) 7/11

Presentation of the real thesis and hypothetical qualitative thesis method: *person 1*

Readings for sessions 5 to 9: Generally, draw on the literature that we discussed last semester and select the one most applicable to your (real and hypothetical) method. Also use the slides prepared by your peers.

INTERVIEWS

Kapiszewski D, MacLean LM, Read BL. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge University Press; 2015.

- Chapter 6: "Interviews, oral history, and focus groups"
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Trainor, Audrey, A. Interview research, in: Trainor A. and Graue, E. *Reviewing Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences*. Taylor and Francis, 2013, chapter 9.

Bogner, A, The theory-generating Expert Interview: Epistemological Interest, Forms of Knowledge, Interaction, *Interviewing experts*, ed. A Bogner, B Littig, W Menz. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009, 43-81.

Witzel A, Reiter H. *The problem-centered interview*. Sage, 2012.

6. Session 6 (KS) 14/11

Presentation of the real thesis and hypothetical qualitative thesis method:

ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACHES:

Bray, Z. (2008). „Ethnographic Approaches“, in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences*, Della Porta, D., and M. Keating (eds.). Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Kapizewski, D. et al. (2015). *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

Rubin, A. T. (2021). *Rocking Qualitative Social Science. An Irreverent Guide to Rigorous Research*. Stanford University Press: Stanford.

7. Session 7 (MT) 21/11

Presentation of the real thesis and hypothetical qualitative thesis method:

PROCESS TRACING

Bennett, A and Checkel, J (eds) 2015, Process Tracing: From metaphor to analytical tool, CUP esp chs 1, 2 and 4 chapter 3, 10

Ricks, J and Liu, A (2018), Process tracing research designs: a practical guide, PS Oct 2018: 842-846

Alan Jacobs (2016), 'Introduction: Mechanisms and Process Tracing', *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research*, Spring/Fall 2016, available at

<https://zenodo.org/record/823307#.XbbwPtUo82w>

Derek Beach (2016), 'What Are We Actually Tracing? Process Tracing and the Benefits of Conceptualizing Causal Mechanisms as Systems' *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research*, Spring/Fall 2016, available at <https://zenodo.org/record/823306#.Xbb2ldUo82w> or longer version, Derek Beach (2016) It's all about mechanisms – what process tracing case studies should be tracing, *New Political Economy*, 21:5, 463-472

Adrian Kay and Phillip Baker, What Can Causal Process Tracing Offer to Policy Studies? A Review of the Literature, *Policy Studies Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 1-21

Peter A Hall, 'Politics as a process structured in space and time' in O. Fioretos, T Falleti and A Sheingate (eds) (2016), *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Institutionalism* (Oxford: OUP

Special issue of *New Political Economy* 2016 21(5), especially pieces by Trampusch and Palier and Falleti

8. Session 8 (KS) 28/11



Presentation of the real thesis and hypothetical qualitative thesis method:

CONCEPTS AND TYPOLOGIES:

Della Porta D, Keating M, eds. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. Cambridge University Press; 2008.

- Chapter 10: Peter Mair "Concept and concept formation"

G. Sartori. 'Concept Misinformation in Comparative Politics'. *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4. (Dec. 1970), pp 1033-1053 (Available on JSTOR).

John Gerring (2012). 'Mere Description'. *British Journal of Political Science*, 42, pp 721-74.

Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, (The MIT Press, 2005), chapter 11.

David Collier, Jody LaPorte and Jason Seawright, "Putting Typologies to Work: Concept Formation, Measurement, and Analytic Rigor," *Political Research Quarterly*, 2012, Vol. 65 No. 1, pp. 217-232.

9. Session 9 (MT) 5/12

Presentation of the real thesis and hypothetical qualitative thesis method:

CASE-STUDIES

Della Porta D, Keating M, eds. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. Cambridge University Press; 2008.

- Chapter 12: Pascal Venesson "Case studies and process tracing: theories and practices"

A George and A Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, CUP chs 1, 3, 4-6.

Eckstein, H (1975), 'Case studies and theory in political science', in F Greenstein and Polsby, N (eds), *Handbook of Political Science* vol 7

Gerring, J, (2004) 'What is a case study and what is it good for?', *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 341-54

10. Session 10 (KS) 12/12

Wrapping up session

*Testi Di Riferimento /
Reference Books*

In terms of readings, we

- A) build on the literature we used in the spring semester. Therefore, no new readings are implied, but we expect you to go back to the qualitative methods literature we examined in the qualitative methods course.
- B) draw on new "best practice" and "bad practice" research articles. We have suggested a list of articles that use qualitative methods, but feel free to bring articles that you are reading for your thesis.

*Metodologie Didattiche/
Teaching Method*

*Modalità di verifica e di accertamento dell'apprendimento/
Detailed Description of Assessment Method*

You are expected to attend and actively participate in sessions of the course. In case you cannot attend a particular session for a valid reason (such as illness), please inform the course coordinator via email at the earliest opportunity. In case you do not sufficiently attend the sessions, you will be invited to discuss your attendance with the coordinator of the PhD programme (who may determine that you have failed the course and will need to repeat it in the following year).

You will be assessed on the presentations and on the written paper, which should be:

- A) The first draft of your methods section if you use qualitative methods in your thesis
OR
- B) (If your thesis is quantitative) A summary of the hypothetical qualitative method that you could use, including a reflection on potential benefits and limitations.

The final course grade will be expressed in thirtieths (/30). A pass mark will be attained with a minimum

Mark of 18/30, while the maximum mark will be 30/30 com laude.
