

SYLLABUS

Professor: Alfred P. Montero

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesday 7:00 p.m.-8:30 p.m. (in-person)

Course Description

In this political science lab, students will examine the epistemology, history, and application of the comparative method in contemporary political science with a particular focus on the subdisciplines of comparative politics and international relations. Instruction will begin with an examination of methods of similarity and difference in paired comparisons and move to large-N comparative methods employing both qualitative and quantitative techniques.

What Is Expected of Students

This is a highly interactive lab that asks students to read, think, analyze, and orally present their ideas several times per week. After two weeks of instruction on the comparative methods of small-N and large-N studies, using both qualitative and quantitative examples, students will be presented with several, *real* pre-publication manuscripts and peer reviewer reports during the rest of the course. In all cases, the double-blind process will be maintained to protect the identity of the authors and original reviewers. These texts will form the raw materials that the course will use to apply what students are learning about research design and comparative methods in evaluations of the actual work of political scientists. These materials will be gathered from the Scholar One site of the refereed journal, *Latin American Politics and Society*, for which Prof. Montero is the Senior Editor. Students will be asked to do the work of peer reviewers as well as editors by focusing on critiques of research design and comparative method.

Materials

This course uses a variety of materials, all of which will be available on Moodle.

Grading

Assessment of students in this course will be based primarily on the extent of their participation in the lab. All students begin this course with a maximum score and must make an effort to maintain it. Evaluation will be based on the completion of tasks, including a comprehensive quiz after Week 2 that reviews the major methodological concepts and approaches discussed during the first part of the term. Weeks 3 and 4 are given over to evaluation of pre-publication manuscripts in small teams. Individual students will be asked to render critiques focused on aspects of research design and the use of the comparative method in real, professional manuscripts that have been submitted to the refereed journal, *Latin American Politics and Society* (a.k.a. *LAPS*) for which Prof. Montero is the senior

editor. Students will work with materials downloaded from Cambridge University Press' Scholar One interface for *LAPS*. Knowledge of Latin America and any other content-oriented preparation is unnecessary as our focus will be on research design and method.

Attendance is required under normal circumstances. If health prevents in-person attendance, students must contact the professor in a timely manner before the missed session to arrange for Zoom-based participation. Such students may be required to do additional work subsequently. This may include asynchronous assignments and synchronous activities such as oral exams.

Academic Misconduct

Given the fact that academe relies upon the ethical conduct of scholars, students are held to the same standards in their own work. It is assumed that a student is the author of all course work that they submit, and that all submitted work is completed in a manner ensuring that the **core intellectual substance** of the assignment is carried out by the student themselves. Use of artificial intelligence to substitute for the core intellectual substance and that is passed off as the student's own work product will constitute academic misconduct and result in immediate forfeiture of all credit on the assignment. Additionally, all acts of academic dishonesty or misconduct will be referred to the Academic Standing Committee (ASC). These principles apply to all work that is presented in *either* written or oral form during the course.

Special Needs

Carleton College is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Office of Accessibility Services (OAR) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to arrange for reasonable accommodations. If you have, or think you may have, a disability (e.g., mental health, attentional, learning, autism spectrum, chronic health, traumatic brain injury and concussions, sensory, or physical), please contact Sam Thayer, Director of OAR, to arrange a confidential evaluation. This course will implement only accommodations first approved by the OAR.

Global Trigger Warning

Manuscripts used in this course may touch upon issues, subjects, and materials that some students will find disconcerting and, perhaps, triggering. Whenever possible, I will do my best to provide forewarning, but I also ask that students communicate directly with me about any issues or subjects that are particularly concerning to them. These communications will be protected with the utmost discretion.

NOTE: Readings and activities must be completed for the dates assigned below.

Week 1: Research Design, Logics of Comparison and Theory Development

Research Design and Theory Development (Monday, January 5)

Mala Htun and Francesca R. Jensenius. 2021. "Comparative Analysis for Theory Development." In *Rethinking Comparison: Innovative Methods for Qualitative Political Inquiry*, Erica S. Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barbara Geddes. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Ch. 2, pp. 27-43.

Recommended:

Carl Hempel. 1962. "[Two Models of Scientific Explanation](#)." In *Frontiers of Science and Philosophy*, ed. R.G. Colodny. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, pp. 9-19.

John Gerring and Jason Seawright. 2022. [Finding Your Social Science Project: the Research Sandbox](#). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Comparative Logics and the Case Study (Wednesday, January 7)

John S. Mill. 1884. [A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive: Being a Connected View of the Principles of Evidence and the Methods of Scientific Investigation](#). Harlow, UK: Longmans, Green. Chapter VIII. Pp. 335-349.

Adam Przeworski and Henry Teune. 1970. *The Logic of Comparative Social Inquiry*. New York: Wiley-Interscience, Ch. 2 (pp. 31-39).

Stanley Lieberman. 1992. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases." In *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*, Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 105-118.

Recommended:

Arend Lijphart. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65:3: 682-693.

Arend Lijphart. 1975. "The Comparable Cases Strategy in Comparative Research." *Comparative Political Studies* 8:2: 133-177.

The Logic of Case Selection and Determining Scope Conditions (Friday, January 9)

Jason Seawright and John Gerring. 2008. "Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research." *Political Research Quarterly* 61:2: 294-308.

Barbara Geddes. 2003. *Paradigms and Sand Castles: Theory Building and Research Design in Comparative Politics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, Ch. 3.

Recommended:

Jason Seawright. 2016. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [Ch. 3](#).

Week 2: Setting Up Causal Inference for Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

Case Studies and the Logics of Inference (Monday, January 12)

Charles C. Ragin. 1992. "Casing' and the Process of Social Inquiry." In *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*, Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 217-225.

Joe Soss. 2021. "On Casing a Study versus Studying a Case." In *Rethinking Comparison: Innovative Methods for Qualitative Political Inquiry*, Erica S. Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jack Levy. 2008. "Case Studies: Types, Designs, and Logics of Inference." *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 25:1: 1-18.

Recommended:

Alexander George and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

John Gerring. 2017. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harry Eckstein. 1975. "Case Studies and Theory in Political Science." In *Handbook of Political Science*, Vol. 7, Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby, eds. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Comparative Cases, "Intuitive Regression," and Determinate Research Designs (Wednesday, January 14)

Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Ch. 4, pp. 115-139.

David Collier, Joe Mahoney, and Jason Seawright. 2004. "Claiming Too Much: Warnings About Selection Bias." In *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, Henry Brady and David Collier, eds. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Recommended:

Gerardo L. Munck. 2004. "Tools for Qualitative Research." In *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, Henry Brady and David Collier, eds. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Designing Social Inquiry Using Mixed Methods (Friday, January 16)

Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Ch. 3.

Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. 2012. *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Chs 7-8.

Recommended:

Jason Seawright. 2016. *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [Ch. 8](#).

Week 3: Theoretically-Motivated Hypothesis-testing: Small-N Research Designs

Pre-publication manuscripts (mss) submitted to *Latin American Politics and Society (LAPS)*. Student reviewer labs.

Week 4: Theoretically-Motivated Hypothesis-testing: Large-N Research Designs

Pre-publication manuscripts (mss) submitted to *Latin American Politics and Society (LAPS)*. Student reviewer labs.

Week 5: Student Editorial Presentations

Student reviewers submit manuscript reviews to student editors. Student editors compose decision letters using student-authored reviews. Comparison to real reviews and editorial letters.