



POLI 303 Qualitative Methods

This 3-credit-hour class is being offered this fall for the first time in a couple of years, MW 3:00–4:15 p.m.

1. The class fulfills the post-328 methods requirement for all polisci majors
2. The class fulfills requirement 7.5.1 of the Research and Analysis Track, which requires you to take three courses from among experimental methods, survey research methods, game theory, and qualitative methods.
3. Anybody who wants exposure to methods outside of quantitative statistics—most undergraduates in polisci and IR write term papers attempting to use some form of qualitative methods
4. Those considering a career in law (most of your research will be qualitative in nature, and learning to deal with non-statistical evidence in a variety of forms is essential)

5. Those considering a career in political or other types of marketing (think focus groups)
6. Those considering a career in journalism (think interviewing, archives, government reports)
7. Those considering a career in the foreign service or as a policy analyst for any government entity
8. Those considering any type of career that involves research and analysis, from working for the UN or World Bank, to a host of NGOs and interest groups.

What will you learn in this course?

- A. How to develop and analyze concepts and their associated measures
- B. The ethnographic method (participant observation)
- C. How to create semi-structured interviews and perform field interviews
- D. How to locate archival material and to use them in argumentation
- E. Textual analysis of written or spoken content (content analysis)
- F. How qualitative methods enhance causal inference
- G. The counterfactual method
- H. Comparative Historical Analysis
- I. Process tracing
- J. Case study design
- K. Overall research design from a qualitative research viewpoint
- L. Research methods
- M. Analytic transparency

You will come away from this class a better thinker, a better writer, and with a better understanding of causality and supporting arguments through non-quantitative empirical data, and with a toolbox of marketable skills that will add to the statistical skills emphasized in the major. You may even come away preferring qualitative methods!

Please contact joel_selway@byu.edu with questions.