

Master in Political Ecology
Academic year: 2018-2019

CASE STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN AND Q METHODOLOGY

Instructors:

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Objectives

The purpose of this module is to familiarize students with principles and techniques of qualitative social research. The course will be divided in two parts. The first (4 hours, Diego Andreucci) will provide an introduction to basic principles of social research design and qualitative investigative methods, focusing specifically on the case study method and its application to the investigation of concrete social situations. The second part of the course (6 hours, Christos Zografos), will introduce Q methodology and explain how it can be used to explore conflicting views in collective decision-making processes. One class will focus on explaining the method, its steps/process, and what it serves, and another class will illustrate key applications and empirical case examples using Q methodology.

Structure

The course includes two 2-hour classes, and two 3-hour classes. Each class will involve a mixing of teaching, discussion and group work. To participate in class, you should have read the readings carefully in advance. Without this preparation, you will not be able to follow the class, and what you will get out of it will be limited. Instructors will assume that students have done the readings, and may ask related questions during the class.

All articles and reading material for the class are uploaded in a special Dropbox folder (link: xxx) and will stay there up to three months after the end of the class, after which it will be deleted. You don't need to buy books, go to the library or download anything.

Evaluation

The results of one of the group projects developed in the module Methodological Applications for Action-Research will be presented in a poster format during the last class of the module, which will simulate an academic mini-congress. In this way, part of the evaluation will consist of students talking in public and explaining their cases, putting in practice another skill fostered in the master: oral presentation in public. The evaluation will be carried out by four lecturers of the module. Guidelines for the evaluation will be available at the beginning of the module.

Program outline

1. Principles of research design (Diego Andreucci)

16/10

Booth, Wayne C., G.G. Colomb and J.M. Williams. 2003. *The Craft of Research*, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, selected chapters.

Watts, M., 2001. In Search of the Holy Grail: Projects, Proposals and Research Design, But Mostly about Why Writing a Dissertation Proposal is So Difficult. *University of California*

2. Case study methods (Diego Andreucci)

23/10

Yin, R. 2008. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage, selected chapters.

Burawoy, M. 1988 The extended case method. *Sociological Theory*, 16 (1), pp. 4-33

3. (3-hours class) – Q methodology: the method (Christos Zografos)

Barry, J. and Proops, J., 1999. Seeking sustainability discourses with Q methodology. *Ecological economics*, 28(3), pp.337-345.

Van Exel, J. and De Graaf, G., 2005. Q methodology: A sneak preview. *Retrieved January, 24*, p.2009.

Additional reading:

Durning, D., 1999. The transition from traditional to postpositivist policy analysis: A role for Q-methodology. *Journal of policy analysis and management*, pp.389-410.

4. (3-hours class) – Applications in Q methodology (Christos Zografos)

Baker, R.M., 2006. Economic rationality and health and lifestyle choices for people with diabetes. *Social Science & Medicine*, 63(9), pp.2341-2353.

Robbins, P., 2006. The politics of barstool biology: environmental knowledge and power in greater Northern Yellowstone. *Geoforum*, 37(2), pp.185-199.

Additional reading:

Zografos, C., 2007. Rurality discourses and the role of the social enterprise in regenerating rural Scotland. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 23(1), pp.38-51.