

# THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

**Department of Political Science  
Political Science 509  
Winter 1999  
Seminar on the Comparative Case Study Method  
Stephen Walt/John Mearsheimer**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course examines the case study method for doing social science. The strengths and weaknesses of this approach will be considered, with particular attention placed on the mechanics of doing case studies.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Every student is expected to do all the reading and attend all the class meetings. Each student is also expected to participate in seminar discussions. Grades will be based on classroom participation (25%), and three five page papers (25% each).

The papers will be due at the beginning of class on February 17, February 24, and March 3, and will discuss the specific book assigned for those class meetings. Each paper should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, and utilize a standard size font.

The following books are available for purchase at the Seminary Coop Bookstore:

Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, Designing Social Inquiry (Princeton).

Robert D. Putnam et. al., Making Democracy Work (Princeton).

Stephen Van Evera, Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science (Cornell)

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **1. January 6: Organizational Meeting and Introduction**

### **2. January 13: Basic Epistemological Issues**

A. Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, "The Interpretive Turn: A Second Look," in Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan, eds., Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 1-30.

B. Max Weber, "'Objectivity' in Social Science and Social Policy," in Weber, The Methodology of the Social Sciences, ed. E. Shils and H. Finch, (New York: Free Press, 1949), pp. 49-112.

C. Milton Friedman, "The Methodology of Positive Economics," in Friedman, Essays in Positive Economics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 3-43.

D. Carl G. Hempel, Philosophy of Natural Science (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1966), chaps. 1-3, 5-6.

E. Imre Lakatos, "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes," in I. Lakatos and A. Musgrave, Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 91-196.

F. Stephen Van Evera, "Hypotheses, Laws and Theories," in S. Van Evera, Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science (Ithaca; Cornell University Press, 1997), pp. 7-48.

### **3. January 20: Where Do Good Questions Come From? Where Are Good Answers Found?**

A. Stephen Van Evera, "What is a Political Science Dissertation?" in Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science, pp. 89-96.

B. Stephen Jay Gould, "Why Darwin?," New York Review of Books, April 4, 1996, pp. 10-14.

C. Stephen Walt, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," International Studies Quarterly 35, No. 2 (June 1991), pp. 211-239.

D. Carl Brauer, "More Scholars Should Venture Forth to Confront, Enlighten, or Change the World," Chronicle of Higher Education, March 14, 1990.

E. C. Wright Mills, "On Intellectual Craftsmanship," from The Sociological Imagination, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 195-226.

F. Robert K. Merton, "The Bearing of Empirical Research on Sociological Theory," in Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, (New York: Free Press, 1968), chap. 5.

G. P. Feyerabend, "How to Defend Society Against Science," in I. Hacking, Scientific Revolutions (New York: Oxford, 1981), pp. 156-67.

H. "The Role of Theory in Comparative Politics: A Symposium," World Politics 48, No. 1 (October 1995).

### **4. January 27: Case Studies and Theory-I**

A. Arthur L. Stinchcombe, Constructing Social Theories, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), chapters 1-2.

B. John Stuart Mill, "Two Methods of Comparison," in A. Etzioni and F. Dubow, eds., Comparative Perspectives: Theories and Methods, (Boston: Little Brown, 1970).

C. Harry Eckstein, "Case Study and Theory in Political Science," in F. Greenstein and N. Polsby, eds., Handbook of Political Science, Vol. 7: Strategies of Inquiry, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975).

D. Arend Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method," American Political Science Review 65, No. 3 (September 1971), pp. 682-93.

E. Bruce Russett, "International Behavior Research: Case Studies and Cumulation," in Russett, ed., Power and Community in World Politics (San Francisco: Freeman, 1974), chap. 1.

### **5. February 3: Case Studies and Theory-II**

A. David Collier, "The Comparative Method: Two Decades of Change," in D.A. Rustow and Kenneth Paul, eds., Comparative Political Dynamics: Global Research Perspectives (New York: Harper/Collins, 1991), pp. 71-31.

B. Alexander George, "Case Studies and Theory Development: The Method of Structured, Focused Comparison," in P.G. Lauren, Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory, and Policy (New York: Free Press, 1979), pp. 43-68.

C. Alexander L. George and Timothy J. McKeown, "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision-Making," in R. F. Coulam and R. A. Smith, eds., Advances in Information Processing in Organizations, Vol. 2 (Greenwich: JAI Press, 1985), pp. 21-58.

D. Stephen Van Evera, "What are Case Studies? How Should They Be Performed?" in Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science, pp. 49-88.

### **6. February 10: Case Studies and Theory-III.**

A. Theda Skocpol, "Emerging Agendas and Recurrent Strategies in Historical Sociology," in Skocpol, ed., Vision and Method in Historical Sociology (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 356-91.

B. Theda Skocpol and Margaret Somers, "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry," in Comparative Studies in Society and History 22, No. 2 (1980), pp. 174-97.

C. Charles Ragin, "Comparative Sociology and the Comparative Method," International Journal of Comparative Sociology, 22, Nos. 1-2 (March-June 1981), pp. 102-120.

D. Jerald Hage, "Theoretical Decision Rules for Selecting Research Designs," Sociological Methods and Research 4, No. 2 (November 1975), pp. 131-165.

## **7. February 17: Critiques and Rejoinders**

A. Barbara Geddes, "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics," Political Analysis, Vol. 2 (1990).

B. Christopher Achen and Duncan Snidal, "Rational Deterrence Theory and Comparative Case Studies," World Politics 41, No. 2 (January 1989), pp. 143-169.

C. Olav Njolstad, "Learning from History?: Case Studies and the Limits to Theory-Building," in Nils Peter Gleditsch and Olav Njolstad, eds., Arms Races: Technological and Political Dynamics (London: Sage, 1990), pp. 220-246.

D. John H. Goldthorpe, "Current Issues in Comparative Macrosociology: A Debate on Methodological Issues," Comparative Sociological Research 16 (1997), pp. 1-26.

E. Charles Tilly, "Means and Ends of Comparison in Macrosociology," Comparative Sociological Research 16 (1997), pp. 43-54.

F. Douglas Dion, "Evidence and Inference in the Comparative Case Study," Comparative Politics 30, No. 2 (January 1998), pp. 127-146.

G. David Collier and James Mahoney, "Insights and Pitfalls: Selection Bias in Qualitative Research," World Politics 49, No. 1 (October 1996).

## **8. February 24: Doing Case Studies-I [PAPER #1 DUE]**

A. Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

## **9. March 3: Doing Case Studies-II [PAPER #2 DUE]**

A. Robert D. Putnam et al, Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

## **10. March 10: Doing Case Studies-III [PAPER #3 DUE]**

A. Hein Goemans, "Domestic Politics and the Causes of War Termination: The Fate of Leaders and The First World War." (Unpublished book ms., 1998)