



PROGRAM AND READING LIST

**University of Bergen, Department of Administration and Organization Theory
Ph.D. course
Introduction to Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)**

**Bergen, 20th – 24th of May 2019
ECTS: 10 (full) or 3 (partial)**

Content:

This course has been designed to introduce participants to Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). QCA is a synthetic method that has become increasingly common in mixed and multi-method research and across a variety of disciplines including, political science, political economy, environmental studies, sociology, public administration and organization and management studies. This course has three main goals. The first goal is to provide a historical overview of the method. The second goal is to lay the foundation for understanding this set-theoretic methodological approach and the benefits of incorporating such approaches. The final goal of this research is to illustrate possible applications of QCA across small to medium-N case studies and studies using comparative analysis that might otherwise only be studied using quantitative approaches.

Course Program:

Day 1: What is QCA: History and Potential

This session begins with an overview of the QCA approach, how it was developed and the basic strengths and weaknesses of this approach.

- Ragin, Charles C. (2008): *Redesigning social inquiry*. Chicago: Chicago University Press: Ch. 1-3.
- Marx, Axel, Benoît Rihoux and Charles Ragin (2014): The origins, development, and application of Qualitative Comparative Analysis: The first 25 years. *European Political Science Review* 6 (1): 115-142.
- Thiem, Alrik (2017): Conducting configurational comparative research with Qualitative Comparative Analysis. *American Journal of Evaluation* 38 (3): 420-433.

Day 2: Introduction to Set-Theoretic Methods

Day two introduces set-theoretic methods, including dichotomous and fuzzy sets in case based research. Key topics include case selection principles, concept formation, data aggregation, triangulation and the treatment of causality in synthetic and mixed method approaches.

- Ragin, Charles C. (2008): *Redesigning social inquiry*. Chicago: Chicago University Press: Chap. 4-5.
- Goertz, Gary, and James Mahoney (2012) *A Tale of Two Cultures: Qualitative and Quantitative Research in the Social Sciences*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Most, Benjamin A. and Harvey Starr (1989): *Inquiry, Logic, and International Politics*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press: chap. 3.

Day 3: Elements of QCA

Here we aim to familiarizing students with the basic concepts of the underlying methodological perspective including: conditions of necessity and sufficiency, formal logic and Boolean algebra.

- Thiem, Alrik (2016): Standards of good practice and the methodology of necessary conditions in qualitative comparative analysis. *Political Analysis* 24 (4): 478.
- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chap. 2.
- Baumgartner, Michael (2015): Parsimony and causality. *Quality & Quantity* 49 (2): 839-856.

Day 4: Boolean Logic and Truth Tables

From there, we move to the logic and analysis of truth tables and discuss the most important problems that emerge when this analytical tool is used for exploring social science data.

- Ragin, Charles C. (2008): *Redesigning social inquiry*. Chicago: Chicago University Press: Chap. 7.
- Schneider, Carsten Q. and Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-theoretic methods for the social sciences. A guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: chap. 5-7.
- Ragin, Charles C. (2006): Set relations in social research: Evaluating their consistency and coverage. *Political Analysis* 14 (3): 291-310.

Day 5: Mixed and Multi-method Applications using QCA

This final session will be used to demonstrate and explore various mixed and multi method research designs and applications using QCA.

Multi Methods: QCA and Case Study Designs

- Gerring, John (2012) *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Collier, David and Colin Elman (2010) "Qualitative and Multimethod Research: Organizations, Publications, and Reflections on Integration." In *The Oxford Handbook on Political Methodology*. Janet M. Box-Steffensmeier, Henry E. Brady, and David Collier, eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 779-795.
- Bennett, Andrew et al (2007) "Symposium: Multi-Method Work, Dispatches from the Front Lines" *Qualitative Methods: Newsletter of the American Political Science Association Organized Section on Qualitative Methods* 5 (1): 9-27.

Mixed Methods: QCA and Regression Approaches:

- Thiem, Alrik, Michael Baumgartner and Damien Bol (2016): Still lost in translation! A correction of three misunderstandings between configurational comparativists and regression analysts. *Comparative Political Studies* 49 (6): 742-774.

Lecturer: Prof. Tabitha M. Benney, PhD

- Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Utah
- Research Fellow, Earth System Governance (ESG) Project
- Affiliated Faculty, Center on Global Change and Sustainability, University of Utah
- Affiliated Researcher, Evolving Securities Initiative (ESI), The Griffith Criminology Institute and the Global Risk Governance Programme, University of Cape Town.
- Affiliated Faculty, Environment and Sustainability Program, University of Utah

Biography for Dr. Tabitha Benney, PhD: Prof Benney is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and affiliated faculty in the Environmental and Sustainability Studies Program and the Center on Global Change and Sustainability at the University of Utah. She is also a Research Fellow for the Earth System Governance (ESG) Network and the Co-Chair of the Scholars Strategy Network's Utah Chapter. In addition, from 2002-2007, she worked in the Policy and Global Affairs Division of the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS).

Dr. Benney teaches in the fields of International Relations, International and Comparative Political Economy, Energy and Environmental Politics and Research Methods. Her work has been published in *The Review of International Political Economy*, *The Routledge Handbook on Ethics*, *The World Financial Review* and *Wiley's Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*. Her book entitled, *Making Environmental Markets Work: The Varieties of Capitalism in Emerging Economies* (Routledge Press) was published in December 2014 and was released in paperback in January 2017. Dr. Benney is also co-editor and author in the forthcoming volume on *Agency in Earth System Governance Research* (Cambridge Press, 2019). In addition, Dr. Benney he has received numerous awards, fellowships and grants including, the Interdisciplinary Research Pilot Program (IRPP) Grant, the Louis G. Lancaster's International Relations Award, the University of Utah Teaching Fellowship and, most recently, an International Studies Association (ISA) Catalytic Research Workshop Grant.

EDUCATION

PhD, Political Science, University of California, Santa Barbara (2013)

- International Political Economy (IR), Environmental Politics and Research Methods
- Committee:
 - Dr. Benjamin J. Cohen (Chair), Louis G. Lancaster Professor of International Political Economy, Department of Political Science, UCSB (<http://www.polsci.ucsb.edu/people/benjamin-j-cohen>)
 - Dr. Oran Young (Field Advisor), Distinguished Professor, Institutional and International Governance, Bren School, UCSB (https://www.bren.ucsb.edu/people/Faculty/oran_young.htm)
 - Dr. Simone Pulver, Associate Professor, Environmental Studies Department, UCSB (<http://www.es.ucsb.edu/people/simone-pulver>)

- Dr. John Foran, Professor, Department of Sociology, UCSB,
<http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/john-foran>

MA, International Affairs - Georgetown University, Washington, DC (2007, magna cum laude)
BSFS, Foreign Service, Georgetown University, Washington, DC (2001, cum laude)

COMPARATIVE AND QCA TRAINING

- Studied Comparative Research Methods – Dr. Kathleen Bruhn
(<http://www.polsci.ucsb.edu/people/kathleen-bruhn>)
- Trained in QCA by Dr. John Foran (<http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/john-foran>)
- Studied networked and dynamic modeling with Dr. Noah Friedkin
(<http://www.soc.ucsb.edu/faculty/friedkin/>)
- QCA and set theoretic methods training with Dr. Charles Ragin
(<http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~cragin/cragin/>)

Course Assessment: The pass/fail grade for this course is based on the following:

- **Discussion and participation (minimum participation 80 % of seminars)**
- **Approved Proposal Overview (1000 words)**
- **Final Research Paper (5000-6000 words)**

Discussion and participation: This course requires students to present their work, critique the work of their peers and actively discuss and participate in class. Subsequently, your attendance, preparation for and participation in class is essential.

Proposal Overview: The proposed research overview assignment is due on the first day of class. I am happy to help you narrow down your topic over email in advance. The proposal overview should be 1000 words and include the research question and how you plan to justify the importance of this research. In addition, for this assignment you must identify a grant, research or fellowship project, prospectus, conference paper or other project to aim towards for your final assignment. Be sure your research question is appropriate for your chosen proposal goal. Please include the call or instructions for the project you will be producing and a copy of your CV with this assignment. **All formal assignments require citations and references.**

Final Research Paper: The final written product for this course is a research paper proposal that sets out a research question and design using the QCA approach. The paper will expect you to defend the importance of your research, explain why QCA or a related method is beneficial for this research and addresses how the research will be conducted. Ideally, the paper produced for this course will serve as a dissertation proposal (to be modified with your committee) and/or to be a stepping stone toward a paper for a scholarly conference, fellowship or grant. The paper is due on the final day of the course. All good research proposals generally cover the following items:

1. **The Puzzle:** What is the topic you hope to address and why is it interesting?

2. **The Literature Review:** What have other people written about this? What debates exist in the literature and what no conclusions have others reached? Be sure to include at least 10-20 sources relevant to your final research question.
3. **Research Design:** What is the process or approach to research?
4. **Hypotheses:** Based on this background, what question do you hope to investigate?
5. **Data and Methods:** How will you study your question? What are your DVs and IVs? How will you measure and operationalize these variables? What cases will you use for your research and why? What method will you use for your research and why is it most appropriate? What timeframe will you use for your research?
6. **Implications:** What might your findings imply for policy or other kinds of questions?