Researching International Politics: Qualitative Methods (JPM629)

Summer semester 2024/2025   6 ECTS

Mondays 15:30-16:50

The course is mandatory for the students of the following programmes:

Bezpečnostní studia

Mezinárodní vztahy

Master in International Relations (MAIN)

Master in International Security Studies (MISS)

Lecturers

doc. Vít Střítecký, vit.stritecky@fsv.cuni.cz

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Dr. Kristian Földes, kristian.foldes@fsv.cuni.cz

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vit.stritecky@fsv.cuni.cz

Office hours (Vít Střítecký)

https://konzultace.fsv.cuni.cz/

Course Description

The course will take place on a weekly basis (80-minute-long session each week).

The course aims at introducing the fundamentals of research strategies and methodologies traditionally applied in International Relations and Security Studies. The primary objective of the course is to gain familiarity with the character of qualitative research, principles of its research design and some of the core methodologies, methods and techniques that can be

applied to investigate social phenomena qualitatively. Particular emphasis is placed on acquiring sufficient understanding of the logic of qualitative research design with the aim to promote students' independence when navigating the diverse terrain of qualitative methodologies, but especially when applying the knowledge gained throughout the course to make competent and confident methodological choices in their Master's dissertations.

Teaching Methods

The course is run on Moodle, the e-learning system of Charles University. All materials will be available there and you should enrol into the course in Moodle as soon as possible. To enrol, or to access Moodle site any time later, go to the course Moodle site (see the full link below). Please note that Moodle is not a substitute for the SIS system. It is a content management system, not the official University system for course registration. To take part in the course you need to be enrolled in both SIS and Moodle.

The full Moodle link to the course is: https://dl1.cuni.cz/course/view.php?id=8558

Course Requirements

For a successful completion of the course students are required to complete the assigned tasks primarily through Moodle. For a successful completion of these tasks, regular attendance at lectures is encouraged even though not obligatory. Failure to meet the assignment submission deadline will be excused on grounds of medical reasons (documented by a medical certificate prior to the submission deadline), in such a case the specific assignment can be rescheduled. The assignments will be graded along the Grading Scale presented below. The individual assignments, their dates and deadlines, and final grade contributions are as follows:

Take-home Assignments

> **Literature Review** (30%): Students will be asked to select one research problem/question from the stated three research areas in each (IR and SS) and write a brief literature review organized in a chronological, thematic, debate, etc. style introduced in the Week 4 lecture. Detailed instructions and requirements for this assignment will be posted in Moodle.
>
> **Start date:** 17 March
>
> **Deadline:** 31 March

Qualitative Data Analysis Exercise (30%): Students will choose from three datasets provided, each tailored to International Relations/Security Studies (IR/SS). They will write a short report (1-2 pages) on their approach to analyzing the selected dataset, considering its unique characteristics. The report should outline the qualitative analysis method they would employ, how they plan to execute this method, and present preliminary thematic analysis results. This exercise aims to demonstrate students' ability to identify appropriate qualitative analysis strategies and apply them to extract meaningful insights from the data. Detailed instructions and requirements for this assignment will be posted in Moodle.

Start date: 14 April

Deadline: 28 April

Methodological Reconstruction (30%): Students are expected to select one of the assigned articles and write one piece of methodological reconstruction structured according to rubrics. Detailed instructions and requirements, including the articles, will be posted in Moodle.

Start date: 28 April

Deadline: 12 May

MA Dissertation Registration: During the semester, students should start considering the topic of their MA dissertation. They should consult it with a potential supervisor. While developing this relation, students should make sure that their supervisor will register their MA dissertation topic in the SIS by 15th June.

The supervisors will ask the students to formulate the project of their MA dissertation. The project should be finalized and uploaded to the SIS by the supervisor by the end of September. There is a template for the dissertation project that will be uploaded to the SIS. This procedure is not related to the assessment process in this course. The course is generally meant to contribute to students' ability to submit a coherent piece of MA research.

Start date: 19 February

Deadline: 15 June

Grading Scale

General Grade	Grade Specification	Percentage
A - excellent	Excellent upper (1)	100 – 96
	Excellent lower (2)	95 - 91
B – very good	Very good upper (1)	90 - 86
	Very good lower (2)	85 – 81
C - good	Good upper (1)	80 – 76
	Good lower (2)	75 – 71
D - satisfactory	Satisfactory upper (1)	70 – 66
	Satisfactory lower (2)	65 – 61
E - sufficient	Sufficient upper (1)	60 - 56
	Sufficient lower (2)	55 - 51
F - fail		50 - 0

Course Policies

General Regulations: The *Code of Study and Examination of Charles University in Prague* provides the general framework of study rules at the university. According to art. 6, par. 17 of this Code, "a student may not take any examination in any subject entered in his study plan more than three times, i.e. he shall have the right to two resit dates; no extraordinary resit date shall be permitted. (…) If a student fails to appear for an examination on the date for which he has enrolled without duly excusing himself, he shall not be marked; the provision of neither this nor of the first sentence shall constitute the right to arrange for a special examination date."

Academic Integrity: Any written assignment composed by the student shall be an original piece. The practices of plagiarism, defined by the *Dean's Provision no. 18/2015*, are seen as "a major violation of the rules   of academic ethics" and "will be penalized in accordance with Disciplinarian Regulations of the faculty." All your assignments are automatically run in the Turnitin plagiarism detection service system upon the submission of your assignment.

Grading and Feedback: Given the high number of students on this course, grading of the individual assignments is typically done at the upper limit of the period stipulated by Charles

University, which is two weeks after submission (*Code of Study and Examination Charles University in Prague*, Article 8, para 10). Therefore, we would like to ask you for patience and not reach out to the lecturer responsible for the grading if you do not see your grade in Moodle before this period has elapsed.

Academic Accommodations: If you have a documented disability and wish to discuss academic accommodations, contact Vít Střítecký during the first week of the semester.

Principles of Communication: Many of us are dealing with additional stress and anxiety. Please know that we want to do everything we can to support you. To do this, though, we need to know about any problem that you might have to keep up with the course when the problem starts. We do not need to know any details. Letting us know sooner rather than later, though, is key. We are in a much better position to help if you tell us when the problem arises.

Simultaneously, we are always ready to answer all your **questions** related to the course and especially its subject area to enhance your learning experience. However, on your part, **you are responsible for reading the syllabus and Moodle** course site carefully and internalize both as a kind of road map that successfully navigates your way through the course. Therefore, no queries that can be answered by just reading the syllabus or the different sections on the Moodle site (namely the Q&A section), will be replied to by the lecturers. Please consult these two essential information sources first before reaching out to us by email or in person during our office hours.

Other Policies: In order to ensure the privacy and personal data protection of the students as well as the lecturers, the course participants are **not allowed** to make audio or video **recordings** of the classes. If you are in need of special accommodations due to your disability, audio recordings of the lectures can be negotiated on an individual basis.

Structure of the Course

Week 1 (17 FEB)

    Introductory Lecture (Střítecký): Structure of the course, assignments, MA dissertation registration process. This lecture will introduce the assessment matrix that

will be used by the reviewers to evaluate your MA dissertation. The general philosophy as well as specific sections of the matrix will be explained. The matrix reflects the overall requirements of a quality research and thus should serve as the guideline for writing. The lecture will also introduce the MA dissertation project.

Week 2 (24 FEB) NO CLASS

Week 3 (3 MAR)

Basics of Qualitative Research Design (Střítecký)**:** Assembling fundamental components of qualitative research design in IR and Security Studies from scratch (identifying research problems and phrasing research questions; data collection and data analysis; triangulation; research objectives and contribution; research ethics; citation standards).

Compulsory Reading (37pp):

- Lamont, Christopher K. 2015. *Research Methods in International Relations*. Los Angeles: Sage, 37-62 (Chapter 2).
- Maxwell, Joseph A. 2012. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Los Angeles: Sage, 78-90 (Chapter 4).

Recommended Reading (24pp):

- Barkin, Samuel. 2008. "'Qualitative' Methods?" In *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, edited by Agata Klotz and Deepa Prakash, 211-220. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tracy, Sarah J. 2013. *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 21-36 (Chapter 2)

Week 4 (10 MAR)

Epistemology and Ontology (Tesař): This lecture will introduce the philosophical underpinnings of different methodological approaches in social sciences.

Compulsory Reading (40pp):

- Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2011. *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations. Philosophy of Science and its Implications for the Study of World Politics*. London and New York: Routledge. (Chapters 1 and 2)

Week 5 (17 MAR)

Communicating with Theories: Literature Review (Střítecký): Integrating theoretical and conceptual framework: communicating with theories; analytical approaches to writing a literature review as a tool for incorporating theories and concepts into your research.

Compulsory Reading (35pp):

- Lamont, Christopher K. 2015. *Research Methods in International Relations*. Los Angeles: Sage, 79-92 (Chapter 4).

- Randolph, Justus. 2009. "A Guide to Writing the Dissertation Literature Review." *Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation* 14(1): 13.

- Silverman, David, and Amir Marvasti. 2008. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. Los Angeles: Sage, 365-373 (Chapter 21).

Week 6 (24 MAR)

Basics of Qualitative Case Studies (Střítecký): Introduction to the fundamentals of case study design, typology, paradigmatic approaches, interactions and overlaps with other qualitative methods.

Compulsory Reading (59pp):

- Gray, David E. 2004. *Doing Research in the Real World*. Los Angeles: Sage, 123-151 (Chapter 6 Designing Case Studies).

- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 355-356, 388-389, 405-406, 415-422 (Appendix with Case Study applications).

- Yazan, Bedrettine. 2015. "Three Approaches to Case Study Methods in Education: Yin, Merriam, and Stake". *The Qualitative Report* 20(2), 134-152.

Recommended Reading (19pp):

Gerring, John. 2005. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. CUP, 17-36 (Chapter 2)

Week 7 (31 MAR)

Explanatory Case Studies – Focus on Qualitative Causation (Střítecký): Tracking causal mechanisms in a qualitative style, analysing causality within cases – methods of process tracing and congruence analysis.

Compulsory Reading (60pp):

- Evangelista, Matthew. 2015. Explaining the Cold War's End: Process Tracing All the Way Down? In *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*, edited by Bennett, Andrew and Jeffrey T. Checkel. Cambridge: CUP, 153-185 (Chapter 6).
- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 226-254 (Chapter 9 The Congruence Method).

Week 8 (7 APR)

Qualitative Content Analysis and Thematic Analysis (Földes): 'Basic', interpretive and qualitative approaches to content analysis; specifics of thematic analysis; application of the logic of induction, deduction and abduction; principles of coding and software-aided QCA.

Compulsory Reading (46pp):

- Drisko, James W. and Tina Maschi. 2016. Content Analysis. New York: Oxford University Press, 1-8 (Introduction), 81-119 (Chapter 4).

Recommended Reading (25pp):

- Swain, Jon. 2018. *A Hybrid Approach to Thematic Analysis in Qualitative Research: Using a Practical Example*. In *SAGE Research Methods Cases*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Week 9 (14 APR)

Discourse Analysis (Földes): An introduction to the principles of discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis with focus on their application.

Compulsory Reading (38pp):

- van Dijk, Teun A. 2009. Critical Discourse Studies: A Sociocognitive Approach. In Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis, edited by Wodak, Ruth and Michael Meyer, 80-102. Los Angeles: Sage, 80-102 (Chapter 3).

- Neumann, Iver B. 2008. Discourse Analysis. In *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, edited by Agata Klotz and Deepa Prakash, 61-77. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 61-77 (Chapter 5).

Week 10 (21 APR) EASTER BREAK

Week 11 (28 APR)

Visual Analysis (Tesař): Going beyond text-based approaches, this lecture will discuss visual methodologies in the study of international politics and security.

Compulsory Reading (55pp):
- Bleiker, Roland. 2018. 'Mapping Visual Global Politics.' In *Visual Global Politics*, edited by Roland Bleiker, 1–29. Abingdon; New York: Routledge.
- Schlag, Gabi. 2016. 'Imagining Security: A Visual Methodology for Security Studies'. In *Transformations of Security Studies: Dialogues, Diversity and Discipline*, edited by Gabi Schlag, Julian Junk, and Christopher Daase, 173–89. London and New York: Routledge.
- Robinson NT. 2014. Have you won the war on terror? Military videogames and the state of American exceptionalism. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies* 43(2): 450-470

Week 12 (5 MAY)

Engaging AI/LLM I (Střítecký): Advances in AI, particularly large language models (LLMs) will fundamentally affect social science research. The last two sessions will introduce the technology and offer practical insights into LLMs' landscape. Last but not least the ethical standards connected with academic practice will be highlighted.

Compulsory Reading:
- Grossmann, Igor et al. (2023). AI and the transformation of social science research. *Science*, Vol 380, Issue 6650, pp. 1108-1109
- Valdenegro, Daniel (2023). A Large Language Models Digest For Social Scientists. preprint https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/m74vs

Week 13 (12 MAY)

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Compulsory Reading:

- Grossmann, Igor et al. (2023). AI and the transformation of social science research. *Science*, Vol 380, Issue 6650, pp. 1108-1109

- Valdenegro, Daniel (2023). A Large Language Models Digest For Social Scientists. preprint https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/m74vs

Further Bibliography

- Babbie, Earl. 2007. *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth.

- Beach, Derek, and Rasmus B. Pedersen. 2016: *Causal Case Study Methods, Foundations and Guidelines for Comparing, Matching, and Tracing*. University of Michigan Press.

- Brinkmann, Svend. 2013. *Qualitative Interviewing*. Oxford: Oxford university press.

- Bryant, Antony, and Kathy Charmaz. 2019. *The SAGE Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

- Burnham, Peter et al. 2008. *Research Methods in Politics*. Houndmills – New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Charmaz, Kathy. 2014. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. 2nd edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.

- Christensen, Maya Mynster. 2017. "Shadow Soldiering: Shifting Constellations and Permeable Boundaries in "Private" Security Contracting." *Conflict and Society* 3(1), 24-41.

- Collier, David, and John Gerring. 2009. *Concepts and Method in Social Science: The Tradition of Giovanni   Sartori*. New York: Routledge.

- Creswell, John W. 2003. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Creswell, John W. 2002. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Creswell, John W. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE.

- Cronin-Furman, Kate, and Milli Lake. 2018. "Ethics Abroad: Fieldwork in Fragile and Violent Contexts." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 51 (3). Cambridge University Press: 607–14. doi:10.1017/S1049096518000379.

- Denzin, Norman K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. 2000. Handbook of Qualitative Research. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Drulák, Petr et al. 2008. *Jak zkoumat politiku. Kvalitativní metodologie v politologii a mezinárodních vztazích*. Praha: Portál.

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

- Gerring, John. 2001. *Social Science Methodology: A Criterial Framework*. Cambridge: CUP.

- Gerring, John. 2017. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge: CUP.

- Given, Lisa M. 2008. The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. Volume I+II.

- Goertz, Gary. 2006. *Social Science Concepts: A User's Guide.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Gray, David E. 2009. *Doing Research in the Real World*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

- Hendl, Jan. 2005. *Kvalitativní výzkum: základní metody a aplikace*. Praha: Portál.

- Hollis, Martin and Steve Smith. 1991. *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Johnson, Janet Buttolph, Reynolds, Henry T., and Jason D. Mycoff. 2015. *Political Science Research Methods*. Washington: CQ Press.

- King, Garry, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

- Klandermans, Bert, and Suzanne Staggenborg. 2002. *Methods of Social Movement Research*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Kozinets, Robert V. 2019. *Netnography: The Essential Guide to Qualitative Social Media Research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

- Maxwell, Joseph Alex. 2013. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Mc Cluskey, Emma, and Constadina Charalambous, eds. 2021. *Security, Ethnography and Discourse: Transdisciplinary Encounters*. London and New York: Routledge.
- McNabb, David E. 2004. *Research Methods for Political Science: Quantitative and Qualitative Methods*. New York: M.E.Sharpe,
- Milliken, Jennifer. 1999. "The Study of Discourse in IR: A Critique of Research and Methods." *European Journal of IR* 5(2): 225-254.
- Paulus, Trena M., and Jessica N. Lester. 2021. *Doing Qualitative Research in a Digital World*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Tracy, Sarah J. 2013. *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Van Audenhove Leo., and Karen Donders. 2019. Talking to People III: Expert Interviews and Elite Interviews. In Van den Bulck H., Puppis M., Donders K., Van Audenhove L., (eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Methods for Media Policy Research*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-16065-4_10
- van Dijk, Teun. 1993. Principles of Critical Discourse Analysis, *Discourse & Society* 4, no. 2: 249–83. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002006.
- Van Evera, Stephen. 1997. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Villegas, Dino. 2020. Political Netnography: A Method for Studying Power and Ideology in Social Media. In *Netnography Unlimited* (pp. 100-115). London and New York: Routledge.
- Vrasti, Wanda. 2008. "The Strange Case of Ethnography and International Relations." *Millennium* 37(2), 279-301.
- Yin, Robert K. 2018. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 6th Edition. Los Angeles: Sage.

Websites:

https://www.methodspace.com/ (by SAGE Publishing)

https://www.e-ir.info/2021/09/25/qualitative-quantitative-and-mixed-methods-approaches/ (E-International Relations)

Video Tutorials:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqHnHG5X2PXCsCMyN3_EzugAF7GKN2poQ (Fundamentals of Qualitative Research Methods by Yale University)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKCOLKADo2Q&t=52s (How to Identify a Research Gap?)

Podcasts:

https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/qualitative-conversations/id1324213425 (Qualitative Conversations)