

***Advanced Qualitative Methods in Conflict Studies: Case Research and Process Analytics***

A Doctoral Course within the [Research School on Peace & Conflict](#)

**Overview:** This seminar provides an in-depth introduction to case-based methods and process analytics. We begin with some preliminaries (epistemology, ethics, transparency) and then survey key methods, including case studies and several techniques designed to capture process. The latter include interviewing, fieldwork, process tracing and practice tracing. Whenever possible, students will be introduced to both the positivist and interpretive variants of particular methods.

In the course's second part, we move from the conceptual to the applied, examining case and process methods in action - in conflict zones and post-conflict settings. Epistemology, ethics, measurement and transparency are key themes throughout. The fundamental goal is for students to acquire sufficient knowledge to be smart, epistemologically plural and rigorous users of case-based research in conflict and post-conflict settings.

**Credits:** 10 ECTS.

**Requirements:** There are two mandatory requirements; two others are optional.

**Mandatory**

**1) Active Participation in Class Discussions:** The course will be run as a seminar, where debate and discussion are the norm; for each session, written discussion questions will serve as our starting point. For this format to be successful, students need to read the seminar readings prior to our first meeting on 29 August.

**2) Preparation of Discussion Points:** For each class session, students should prepare a brief list of discussion questions and comments (3-5 in number), based on the readings. What are their strong and weak points? Their meta-theoretical, theoretical, methodological, ethical, empirical contributions/limitations? How do they relate to or build upon other readings or discussions? Your discussion questions should be uploaded to the seminar Dropbox prior to our first meeting on 29 August.

**Optional**

**1) Completion of an Analytic Essay:** If students wish to receive ECTS credit for the course, they must submit an analytic essay. You have two options. (I) Prepare an analytic review on a topic that is of special interest and is consistent with the course's purpose and theme; or (II) prepare a draft research design for a PhD project where qualitative methods and process analytics play some role. In either case, essays should be 6000-10000 words and are due by 1 December 2022. On the first day of class – Monday, 29 August - students should e-mail the instructor a 1-2 page introduction to their proposed essay. These overviews will then be discussed at one-on-one meetings on the morning of Wednesday, 31 August, 0900 - 1200, when there will be no formal class sessions.

**2) Participation in Half-Day Workshop:** On the afternoon of Wednesday, 31 August, 1330 - 1600, students will have the opportunity to attend a workshop, where, in a hands-on, group setting they will apply the case/process literature to their own PhD projects.

The workshop – while not required – is open to all course participants. If you wish to have your dissertation project and its methods discussed, please upload to the seminar Dropbox a 3-page overview, and do so by Monday, 29 August. The overview should explain and justify your choice of methods and the practical/data-related/ethical challenges you are encountering as you seek to operationalize them.

**Readings:** The following five books should be purchased.

Autesserre, Severine, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Bennett, Andrew and Jeffrey T. Checkel, Editors, *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)

Cohen, Dara Kay, *Rape during Civil War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016)

Gerring, John, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices, Second Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017)

Straus, Scott, *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership and Genocide in Modern Africa* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015)

If you do not want to purchase books, all the above volumes – except for Gerring (2017) - are available as e-books through most university library systems.

In the syllabus below, students can access journal articles through their local university libraries. By 10 August, we will upload to the seminar Dropbox a number of the readings, including pdf copies of the Bennett/Checkel and Gerring books.

## **Syllabus and Class Schedule**

### ***Day #1: Monday, 29 August***

#### **Session I (0900 – 1200): The Preliminaries – Epistemology, Ethics, Transparency**

##### **Epistemology**

della Porta, Donatella and Michael Keating, “How Many Approaches in the Social Sciences? An Epistemological Introduction,” in Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating, Editors, *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), chapter 2.

Jackson, Patrick, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and Its Implications for the Study of World Politics, Second Edition* (London: Routledge, 2016), chapters 1, 2.

## **Ethics**

Wood, Elisabeth Jean, “The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones,” *Qualitative Sociology* 29/3 (2006): 373-86.

Hoover Green, Amelia and Dara Kay Cohen, “Centering Human Subjects: The Ethics of ‘Desk Research’ on Political Violence,” *Journal of Global Security Studies* 6/2 (2021).

## **Transparency**

Jacobs, Alan, *et al*, “The Qualitative Transparency Deliberations: Insights and Implications,” *Perspectives on Politics* 19/1 (March 2021): 171-208.

Kapiszewski, Diana and Elisabeth Jean Wood, “Ethics, Epistemology, and Openness in Research with Human Participants,” *Perspectives on Politics* (FirstView – 15.03.21) (DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592720004703>)

### **Session II (1330 - 1500): Case Studies – Background and Method**

Gerring, John, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices, Second Edition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), chapters 1-3, 5, 7-8, 11.

George, Alexander and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), chapters 1, 3-5.

### **Session III (1500 - 1630): Case Studies & Process – Causal Mechanisms & Social Practices**

Hedstrom, Peter and Petri Ylikoski, “Causal Mechanisms in the Social Sciences,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010): 49–67.

Adler, Emanuel and Vincent Pouliot, “International Practices,” *International Theory* 3/1 (2011): 1-36.

Adler, Emanuel, “Practices, Background Knowledge, Communities of Practice, Social Orders,” in Emanuel Adler, *World Ordering: A Social Theory of Cognitive Evolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), Chapter 4.

## ***Day #2: Tuesday, 30 August***

### **Session IV (0900 – 1100): Process Data – The Role of Interviews & Fieldwork**

Bryman, Alan and Edward Bell, *Social Research Methods, Fourth Edition* (NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), chapter 11.

Fujii, Lee Ann, *Interviewing in Social Science Research: A Relational Approach* (London: Routledge, 2018), chapters 1-2, 4-5.

Wood, Elisabeth, “Ethnographic Research in the Shadow of Civil War,” in Elisabeth Wood,

*Insurgent Collective Action and Civil War in El Salvador* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Chapter 2.

**Session V (1100 – 1200, 1330 - 1600): Measuring Process – Process Tracing & Practice Tracing**

Bennett, Andrew and Jeffrey T. Checkel, Editors, *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), chapters 1, 7, 10.

Schwartz, Rachel and Scott Straus, “What Drives Violence against Civilians in Civil War? Evidence from Guatemala’s Conflict Archives,” *Journal of Peace Research* 55/2 (2018): 222–235.

Pouliot, Vincent, “Practice Tracing,” in Andrew Bennett and Jeffrey T. Checkel, Editors, *Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Chapter 9.

Pouliot, Vincent, *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), Introduction, Appendix.

Cornut, Jérémie and Nicolas de Zamaróczy, “How Can Documents Speak about Practices? Practice Tracing, the Wikileaks Cables, and Diplomatic Culture,” *Cooperation and Conflict* 56/3 (2021): 328-345.

Checkel, Jeffrey T. “[Process Tracing - Towards a New Research Agenda](#),” Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Political Science Association (Seattle, Washington: 29 September - 3 October 2021).

***Day #3: Wednesday, 31 August***

**Session VI (0900 - 1200): Individual Meetings on Course Essays**

**Session VII (1330 - 1600): Workshop – Methods in Action**

***Day #4: Thursday, 1 September***

**Session VIII (0900 - 1200): Case Methods and Conflict Studies - Cohen**

Cohen, Dara Kay, *Rape During Civil War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), Introduction, chapters 1-3, Conclusion.

**Session IX (1330 - 1630): Case Methods and Conflict Studies - Autesserre**

Autesserre, Severine, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), chapters 1-2, 4-5.

***Day #5: Friday, 2 September***

**Session X (0900 - 1200): Case Methods and Conflict Studies – Straus**

Straus, Scott, *Making and Unmaking Nations: War, Leadership and Genocide in Modern Africa* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), Introduction, chapters 1-5, 9, Conclusion.