

**IPSA Antalya Summer School 2024**  
**Counterfactual Analysis in Qualitative Methods**  
*Tentative Course Syllabus*

**Course Instructor:**

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**Course Description:**

This advanced-level course explores the counterfactual approach to causality within social sciences and aims to introduce graduate students the foundational premises of how to construct valid, historically-grounded arguments in their research projects. In a nutshell, a counterfactual logic of causal inference refers to employing “what if?” questions to the hypotheses we are testing in an endeavor to reach a better causal explanation of the social phenomena we seek to understand. In this respect, in this course, we will first focus on establishing the ties between the more familiar research methods of comparative historical analysis, case study and process tracing with the less familiar counterfactual theories of causation. Second, we will investigate whether such a counterfactual thinking in social sciences generates any pitfalls, or not. Third, we will examine each participant’s research proposal through the lenses of counterfactual manner of thinking, and help them how they can improve their research projects. After completing this course, it is aimed that, the students will i) acquire the relevant skills to get engaged with the social scientific literature that endeavors to construct casual explanations; and ii) design an explanatory framework that asks both “why?” and “why not?” questions for what they seek to understand and explain, alongside with how to cope with possible causal inferential problems they may encounter in their research projects.

**Course Format and Schedule:**

This is a five-day long, intensive and highly interactive advanced-level course. From Monday to Friday, we will have four-hour long meetings, each divided into morning and afternoon sessions. For the first four days, the instructor will deliver lectures in the mornings, while the class discussion over assigned readings will take place in the afternoons. Friday sessions are organized as workshop meetings, in which the research projects of those students who would like to get a detailed feedback on their work will be thoroughly discussed.

1<sup>st</sup> Day (Monday):

- “Facts” and Counterfactuals | Preliminary Premises and Foundational Principles of Counterfactual Thinking
  - Counterfactual Logic of Causal Inference
  - Its Strengths and Pitfalls

2<sup>nd</sup> Day (Tuesday):

- Counterfactual Analysis in Case Study Methods

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Day (Wednesday):

- Counterfactual Analysis in Process-Tracing Methods

### 4<sup>th</sup> Day (Thursday):

- Counterfactual Analysis in (Comparative) Historical Methods

### 5<sup>th</sup> Day (Friday):

- Workshop for Student Projects

### **Readings:**

Below is a selected short list of recommended readings:

- Mahoney, J., & Barrenechea, R. (2019). The logic of counterfactual analysis in case-study explanation. *The British journal of sociology*, 70(1), 306-338.
- Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2019). *Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines*. University of Michigan Press.
- Gerring, J. (2017). *Case study research: Principles and practices*. Cambridge university press.
- Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2016). *Causal case study methods: Foundations and guidelines for comparing, matching, and tracing*. University of Michigan Press.
- Morgan, S. L., & Winship, C. (2015). *Counterfactuals and causal inference*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bennett, A., & Checkel, J. T. (Eds.). (2015). *Process tracing: Process Tracing: From Metaphor to Analytic Tool*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mahoney, J., & Thelen, K. (Eds.). (2015). *Advances in comparative-historical analysis*. Cambridge University Press.
- Goertz, G., & Mahoney, J. (2012). *A Tale of Two Cultures*. Princeton University Press.
- Harvey, F. P. (2011). *Explaining the Iraq War: counterfactual theory, logic and evidence*. Cambridge University Press.
- Brady, H. E., & Collier, D. (Eds.). (2010). *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Lebow, R. N. (2010). *Forbidden Fruit: Counterfactuals and International Relations*. Princeton University Press.
- Ragin, C. C. (2009). *Redesigning Social Inquiry*. University of Chicago Press.
- Pearl, J. (2009). *Causality: Models, Reasoning and Inference*. Cambridge University Press.
- Durand, R., & Vaara, E. (2009). Causation, counterfactuals, and competitive advantage. *Strategic Management Journal*, 30(12), 1245-1264.
- Capoccia, G., & Kelemen, R. D. (2007). The study of critical junctures: Theory, narrative, and counterfactuals in historical institutionalism. *World politics*, 59(3), 341-369.
- Goertz, G., & Levy, J. S. (2007). *Explaining war and peace: Case Studies and Necessary Condition Counterfactuals*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- King, G., & Zeng, L. (2007). When can history be our guide? The pitfalls of counterfactual inference. *International Studies Quarterly*, 51(1), 183-210.
- King, G., & Zeng, L. (2006). The dangers of extreme counterfactuals. *Political analysis*, 14(2), 131-159.

- Tetlock, P. E., Lebow, R. N., & Parker, G. (Eds.). (2006). *Unmaking the West: "What-if" scenarios that rewrite world history*. University of Michigan Press.
- George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. MIT Press.
- Mahoney, J., & Rueschemeyer, D. (2003). *Comparative historical analysis in the social sciences*. Cambridge University Press.
- Tetlock, P. E., & Lebow, R. N. (2001). Poking counterfactual holes in covering laws: Cognitive styles and historical reasoning. *American Political Science Review*, 95(4), 829-843.
- Lebow, R. N. (2000). What's so different about a counterfactual?. *World politics*, 52(4), 550-585.
- Tetlock, P. E., & Belkin, A. (Eds.). (1996). *Counterfactual thought experiments in world politics: Logical, methodological, and psychological perspectives*. Princeton University Press.
- King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton university press.
- Fearon, J. D. (1991). Counterfactuals and hypothesis testing in political science. *World politics*, 43(2), 169-195.