

**BSSn4495:
Qualitative Research in Security Studies**

**Research Proposal Assignment:
Stage III**

This paper will be the full research proposal (including the previous two papers, edited based on feedback). It will present your main theory, a competing theory, their observable implications, the case selection strategy, and issues of data and measurement. The proposal should be about **15 double-spaced** pages in length (in 12-point Times New Roman with standard margins).

The paper should contain the following elements (see the Stage 1 and 2 assignments for further guidance on items 1-3):

1. **Intro and context:** Briefly identify the phenomenon that your theory is meant to explain.
2. **Two theories:** You will present your **primary theory** and the alternative **theory** as fully and clearly as possible, as in Stage 2.
3. **Observable implications:** As in Stage 2, taking into account comments on this part. Do your best to come up with **two additional** observable implications that provide a hoop test or smoking gun test for either theory.
4. **Case selection:** Explain the *principles* you would use to choose your case. You may identify and name a specific case that you would study and justify this choice in light of arguments from the course materials.
5. **Data and measurement:** Discuss the **challenges** of evidence and measurement that your project will confront in testing for the observable implications you have outlined. Don't list the various data sources you plan to use. Rather, discuss potential *difficulties* in finding the kinds of evidence you need to test the theories, challenges of and ambiguities in data interpretation, dilemmas of validity and reliability, and potential sources of measurement error. This might mean focusing on just two or three of the observable implications.

About assessment

One of the most important aims of this research proposal is to demonstrate your command of the course material. This means that **you want to draw explicitly and extensively on methodological concepts and arguments from the course readings**. Naturally, not everything we have discussed will be relevant to your particular research design, but as you are planning this paper, it will be useful to walk through the syllabus and your notes week-by-week to pull out those tools, arguments, and problems of inference that are of particular relevance to your project. Your proposal should offer a clear, well-organized, and thoughtful consideration of the design choices you have made, explicitly addressing potential problems or tradeoffs.