

**University of Toronto | Department of Sociology**  
**Winter 2025**  
**SOC254H1: Intermediate Qualitative Methods in Sociology**

Class meets Tuesdays, 11:10 am-1pm  
Location: See ACORN

Tutorials: Thursdays 11 am-12pm / 1pm-2pm / 3pm-4pm / 5pm-6pm – see ACORN for locations

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Instructor: Hammad Khan  
Email: [Hammad.khan@utoronto.ca](mailto:Hammad.khan@utoronto.ca)  
Office hours: Fridays 3-5pm (and by appointment)

Teaching Assistants: TBA  
Email: TBA  
Office Hours: TBA

<b>Course Description</b>
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How do we talk to people and tell their stories? How do we ensure these stories have sociological relevance? Increasing communication technologies means people who have access to these technologies are able to engage with each other with ease. You may have heard the phrase, “according to a recent study...” in your favourite podcast, without thinking much about its implications. This course will help make sense of how qualitative research is conducted, and how we can communicate our research in academia. This course will help you understand the difference between findings from one study, and holistic knowledge in the social sciences. Students will use qualitative research methods like interviews, ethnographies, and content analysis to produce original qualitative research on their topic of choice (within the spectrum of provided sociological areas).

Specifically, this course encourages students to build and develop skills focused around qualitative research methodologies through collaborative learning and storytelling. This also involves a focus on critical reading and writing, eventually culminating in the development of students’ own research projects. Essentially, students in this course will learn how to use qualitative research methodologies to tell sociologically significant stories, grounded in appropriate histories and literature. Their research and stories will focus on an approved topic in the area of social inequality.

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Ask good questions that can be answered through qualitative research.
- Tell sociologically significant stories through qualitative research methodologies.
- Contextualize these stories in their appropriate histories and relevant literature.

Apply qualitative methods to everyday social phenomena and provide a textured analysis.

Describe the central theoretical questions regarding qualitative research methods and its distinction from quantitative methods.

Write analytically and critically about empirical findings.

Make and support an academic argument through use of empirical evidence.

*Prerequisite:*

The prerequisite to take SOC254H1S is successful completion of SOC204H1. Students without prerequisites will be removed from the class at any time discovered and without notice.

Assessment Details
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Evaluation Component	Weight	Due Date
Participation	10%	Ongoing
Research Statement & Literature Review	15%	28-Jan
Ethnography Assignment (Coded Observation Notes & Analytical Memo)	15%	11-Feb
Interview Assignment (2 Coded Transcripts & Analytical Memo)	20%	04-Mar
Reflection	10%	25-Mar
Final Research Paper	30%	01-Apr

***Participation: 10%***

Students are required to attend all lectures and tutorial sessions. Attendance will be taken during all tutorials. Participation will be assessed holistically across tutorials and lectures.

***Research Statement & Literature Review: 15%***

*1000-1500 Words*

Students will have to describe their research problem and situate it using four to six qualitative research articles that address the same (or similar) topic. Students will be asked to present this through a ‘synthesis’ of these articles. This element will be discussed in greater detail during lectures and tutorials. The assignment must be between 1000- 1500 words. More information will be provided on Quercus.

***Ethnography Assignment: 15%***

For this assignment, students will be asked to conduct participant observation in a public place that relates to their research question. Students will write fieldnotes recording their observation as the first part of this assignment. The second part will ask students to analyze these fieldnotes and produce an analytical memo that highlights emerging themes from their observations. More details will be provided during lecture and tutorials, and through Quercus.

***Interview Assignment: 20%***

This assignment will be similar to the ethnography assignment. However, instead of observations, students will conduct *two* interviews with interlocutors that fit the context of their research project. Students will then code and analyze these interviews and write an analytical memo as they did with the ethnography assignment. Memos for the interview assignment should also incorporate themes that were prevalent in the ethnography assignment.

Important: I highly encourage students to start planning for their interviews much earlier in the semester. This includes both recruitment, techniques, possible themes, potential directions etc. More details on these will be discussed in lectures and tutorials.

### ***Reflection: 10%***

*750-1200 Words*

In this assignment, you are asked to reflect holistically on the course. Students will be required to reflect on ideas, debates, techniques, and all other topics discussed in the course with specificity. This would include a discussion of all elements including lectures, readings, and tutorials. Students are also asked to reflect on their own research process throughout the course.

### ***Final Paper: 30%***

*4000-5000 Words*

The final paper will be the cumulative result of your hard work in the semester. This paper will present your research, organized in a way that mirrors standard academic journals. Although part of the exercise is to familiarize students with academic writing, this assignment will also include room for some creative liberties, particularly around storytelling. The final paper will not only present your work and situate it in its relevant literature and history, it will also provide you with an opportunity to do so using a narrative. Think about the story you want to tell about your interlocutors, and how you want to present that as one that is sociologically significant. The assignment will be discussed in much more detail during the term.

#### *Brief Overview of Important Components:*

*Introduction:* Section introducing your topic, your research question/line of inquiry, and its sociological significance. This section should also include a roadmap for what's to come in the paper, and set up the reader for what they are about to read.

*Literature:* This section asks you to situate your research in relevant literature and history. This will make more sense as we progress in the term. Essentially, you are asked to find *5 relevant journal articles* that address your topic, and research inquiry (the more specific the better). There will be a lecture and tutorial session on literature reviews, and how to synthesize literature during the term. You may use an edited version of your previous literature review assignment for this section.

*Methods:* In this section you will discuss your methodological approach. This includes data collection, analysis, memos, ethics, and other important aspects of methodology that will be discussed in the course.

Findings: Here, you will present your findings and analysis of the data collected. Previous assignments on coding will help you develop this section. This section will make the crux of your final paper.

Conclusion and Discussion: In this section you will not only conclude and summarize your research (story), you will also present the sociological significance of your findings. This should include a brief discussion of all relevant areas like history, policy, general implications, and any other you may deem necessary.

### Late Assignments

- In order not to be considered late, assignments must be submitted by the due date listed on the syllabus. *You are expected to keep a back-up copy of your assignment in case it is lost.*
- Late assignments must be submitted to the instructor via Quercus and through email.
- Late assignments for reasons that are within your control will be penalized 5% marks per day. The penalty will run from the day the assignment was due until the day it is submitted to the instructor via Quercus, and through email.
- Assignments that are more than 3 days late for reasons within your control will not be accepted.
- The penalty period includes weekends and holidays.

### Missed deadlines and tests:

Students who miss a paper deadline or a test will receive a mark of zero for that paper or test unless the reason is a circumstance beyond their control. **Within three days** of missing a paper deadline or test, students must send the instructor a request for consideration. Students must document their request with **one of the following:**

- Absence declaration via ACORN
- U of T Verification of Illness or Injury Form
- College Registrar's letter (e.g., in case of personal/family crisis or emergency)
- Letter of Academic Accommodation from Accessibility Services

Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor.

### Student Responsibilities and Expectations

Students are expected to participate actively by 1) completing assigned readings, 2) actively participating in class discussions (including lectures and tutorials), and 3) keeping up to date on course information posted on Quercus. In all activities, students are to be respectful of fellow classmates and teaching staff.

### Email Policy:

I will respond to your email within two business days (48 hours, except weekends and holidays). Emails that do not follow the following guidelines will not receive a response:

Your use of an official U of T address is required. Please include the course code (e.g. SOC254) in the subject line and your full name and student number in your message. Please do not send a repeat email (e.g., “did you get my email?”). In general, please treat emails as you would any other professional communication. You should be respectful in the way you address the instructor and the TA. Email is most suitable for questions that are clear, concise, and easily answerable; if you are confused about the course material or need to discuss a concept, please attend office hours or make an appointment with a member of the teaching team instead. Please read the syllabus carefully before asking a general question about the course. Questions pertaining to details that can be answered through the syllabus will also not be answered.

**Teaching Assistant’s Help:**

Your T.A.(s) will hold scheduled online office hours and respond to your emails within 48 hours. Please be thoughtful in your use of emails. Use it only for questions that are brief and specific. To reiterate, questions that have been addressed in the syllabus will not be answered. Thus, please be sure to check the course outline to see if an answer is already available before sending a question by email.

*Emails should not be viewed as an alternative to doing the assigned reading or attending lectures and tutorials.*

### Accessibility Statement

The University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the University’s courses and programs.

*Accessibility needs:*

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit:

<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

### Course Schedule

Students are expected to complete all required readings prior to each lecture, and to have finished necessary preparations before each tutorial section

Note: Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

January 7  
Introductions and Thinking Qualitatively in Research

Readings:

Goodwin, Jeff, and Ruth Horowitz. (2002). "Introduction: The Methodological Strengths and Dilemmas of Qualitative Sociology." *Qualitative Sociology*, 24(1),:33-47.

January 14  
Storytelling & Nonbelonging:

Readings:

Geertz, C. 1977. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Polletta, Francesca, Pang Ching Bobby Chen, Beth Gharrity Gardner, and Alice Motes. "The sociology of storytelling." *Annual review of sociology* 37, no. 1 (2011): 109-130.

King, Thomas. *The truth about stories: A native narrative*. House of Anansi, 2003.; Provided Sections

Korteweg, Anna, and Gökce Yurdakul. "Non-Belonging: borders, boundaries, and bodies at the interface of migration and citizenship studies." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 50, no. 2 (2024): 293-316.

Supplementary:

Susan Sontag on Storytelling:

<https://www.themarginalian.org/2015/03/30/susan-sontag-writing-storytelling-at-the-same-time/>

January 21  
Synthesis in Research and Stories: Literature Reviews

Readings:

Knopf, Jeffrey W. "Doing a literature review." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39, no. 1 (2006): 127-132.

Paré, Guy, and Spyros Kitsiou. "Methods for literature reviews." In *Handbook of eHealth evaluation: An evidence-based approach*. University of Victoria, 2017.

January 28  
Ethics

Readings:

Allen, Charlotte. 1997. Spies Like Us. When Sociologists Deceive their Subjects. *Lingua Franca*. 7(9) 31.

<http://linguafranca.mirror.theinfo.org/9711/9711.allen.html>

Humphreys, Laud. 1970. *Tearoom Trade*. London: Duckworth

<https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2013/GEN107/um/HUMPHREYS.pdf>

Supplementary:

Jane Elliot (Blue Eyed, Brown Eyed Experiment)

<https://www.npr.org/sections/live-updates-protests-for-racial-justice/2020/07/08/888846330/we-are-repeating-discrimination-experiment-every-day-educator-says>

**Due: Research Statement and Literature Reviews**

February 4  
Ethnography

Readings:

Conley, Dalton. *Honky*. Univ of California Press, 2023.; 2 Chapters

Kitzis, S. 2023. Incarcerated Bodies – Embodied Autoethnography in Prison. *The Qualitative Report*. Vol 28.

Ethnographic Refusal: [https://pages.ucsd.edu/~rfrank/class\\_web/ES-270/SimpsonJunctures9.pdf](https://pages.ucsd.edu/~rfrank/class_web/ES-270/SimpsonJunctures9.pdf)

February 11  
Data Coding and Analytical Memos

Readings:

Saldaña, J. 2015. “An Introduction to Codes and Coding” (pp. 1-40) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage.

Saldaña, J. 2015. “Writing Analytic Memos” (pp. 41-57) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage.

**Due: Ethnography Assignment**

February 18

Reading Week – No Lecture and No Tutorials

February 25  
Interviews

## Readings:

Atkinson, Paul, and Amanda Coffey. "Revisiting the relationship between participant observation and interviewing." *Postmodern interviewing* (2003): 108-122.

Maghbouleh, Neda. "From white to what? MENA and Iranian American non-white reflected race." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 43, no. 4 (2020): 613-631.

Agyekum, Boadi, Pius Siakwah, and John Kwame Boateng. "Immigration, education, sense of community and mental well-being: The case of visible minority immigrants in Canada." *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 14, no. 2 (2021): 222-236.

March 4 Content/ Discourse Analysis
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## Readings:

Stuart, F. (2020). Code of the tweet: Urban gang violence in the social media age. *Social problems*, 67(2), 191-207.

Hughey, M.W. Show Me Your Papers! Obama's Birth and the Whiteness of Belonging. *Qualitative Sociology* 35, 163–181 (2012).

Tungohan, Ethel, and Jon Careless. "Tolerated, threatening and celebrated: How Canadian news media frames temporary migrant workers." *International Migration* 61, no. 4 (2023): 120-138.

## Supplementary:

Roychoudhury, D. et. al. 2023. Police Violence in Black and White: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Newspaper Reporting on the Police Killings of Clifford Glover.... *Du Boise Review*. 20.

Elrick, Jennifer. "Bureaucratic implementation practices and the making of Canada's merit-based immigration policy." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 48, no. 1 (2022): 110-128.

## **Due: Interview Assignment**

March 11 Inclusive Framing in Research
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## Readings:

Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. *Black feminist thought: knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. New York: Routledge.



Selod, Saher. 2019. "Gendered racialization: Muslim American men and women's encounters with racialized surveillance." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*

March 18  
Reflexivity

Readings:

Doucet, Andrea. 2008. "'From Her Side of the Gossamer Wall(s)?: Reflexivity and Relational Knowing." *Qualitative Sociology* 31:73-87.

Ellingson, Laura L. 1998. "'Then You Know How I Feel': Empathy, Identification, and Reflexivity in Fieldwork." *Qualitative Inquiry* 4(4):492-514.

March 25  
Final Paper Workshop

No Readings

**Due: Reflections**

April 1  
Putting It All Together

Conley, Dalton. *Honky*. Univ of California Press, 2023.; Final Chapter

King, Thomas. *The truth about stories: A native narrative*. House of Anansi, 2003.; Final Chapter

Editing Workshop During Second Half

**Due: Final Research Papers (By the end of day)**