Tuesday, 11:10am-1pm

Instructor: Dr. Jan Doering
- Email: jan.doering@utoronto.ca
- Office hours: Tuesdays, 2:30-3:30pm. Room 17126 (17th floor), 700 University Ave. Please sign up online to avoid lines and let me know you are coming: https://calendly.com/jandoering. You can choose to attend in-person or via Zoom.

Teaching assistants:
- Ash Catonio. Email: ash.catonio@mail.utoronto.ca
- Elliot Fonarev. Email: elliot.fonarev@mail.utoronto.ca
- Rebecca Nachtigall. Email: rebecca.nachtigall@mail.utoronto.ca

Tutorials:
- You must enroll in one of the following tutorials. Tutorials do not take place every week. See the course schedule further below.
  - TUT0201 (Elliot Fonarev): Thursday, 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM
  - TUT0301 (Ash Catonio): Friday, 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
  - TUT5301 (Rebecca Nachtigall): Thursday 5:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Course Description
The use of qualitative methods is rooted in the fact that humans inhabit cultural worlds of language, symbols, and meanings that they actively interpret and influence. Using qualitative methods can illuminate how people understand their lives and societies and how such understandings shape their emotions, behavior, and relationships. This course introduces students to the theory and use of qualitative methods in sociology, including participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and qualitative document and image analysis. In addition to learning about the foundations of qualitative methodology, students will conduct collaborative empirical exercises in groups.

Learning Goals
After completing this course, you should:
- know the theoretical foundations and methodological practices that constitute the basics of qualitative research.
- understand why social scientists conduct qualitative research.
- be able to prepare and conduct in-depth interviews and participant observation.
- be able to analyze interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and pre-existing documents and images to uncover human interpretations/meanings and their social implications.
- be able to distinguish good from bad qualitative research

Readings
All readings will be made available through Quercus. We will sometimes work with the readings in class. I may also ask you to read additional materials during class time. Please bring a laptop or tablet to class that enables you to access those materials.

### Assignments and Grading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date/due date</th>
<th>Grade weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm test</td>
<td>October 24</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final in-class test</td>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group-based fieldwork assignments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation summary report</td>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview summary report</td>
<td>November 24</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work peer evaluation</td>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Midterm test (30%)**
The midterm will take place in class on Tuesday, October 24 (week 7). It will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. If you have to miss the midterm test and provide acceptable documentation (see below), I will shift the midterm’s grade weight onto the final test. Since the final test is cumulative and tests the entire course material, it is in your interest to take the midterm test if at all possible.

**Final in-class test (25%)**
The in-class final test will take place on Tuesday, December 5 (week 12). It will consist of multiple choice and short answer questions. The type of accommodation I provide in case of acceptably excused student absences may include a make-up test, an oral test, and/or a term paper. It is in your interest to take the final test if at all possible.

**Group-based fieldwork assignments (35%)**
You will be asked to complete two group-based fieldwork assignments together with two or three other students. Assignments to groups will be strictly random—no reassignments will be made under any circumstances. From the start, take a productive role in your group (even if others do not) and do everything you can to build a collegial work environment with your fellow students.

1) **Participant observation exercise (17.5%)**. Together with your group members, I will ask you to conduct several participant observations in a public setting in the Toronto metropolitan area. The exercise entails conducting the observations, writing up fieldnotes, and submitting an observation summary report (one per group). Detailed instructions will be provided in the week 4 lab session. The observation summary report will be due three weeks later (on Friday, October 27) on Quercus.
2) Interview exercise (17.5%). Each student will be asked to conduct one in-depth interview. The exercise requires creating an interview guide, recruiting participants, conducting a recorded interview, and submitting an interview summary report (one per group). Detailed instructions will be provided in the week 6 lab session. The interview summary report will be due four weeks later (on Friday, November 24) on Quercus.

**Group work peer evaluation (10%)**

To encourage everyone’s participation in the group-based fieldwork assignments, you will have the opportunity to evaluate your group members’ contribution by the end of the course. Each student’s peer evaluation grade will be computed as the simple average of the peer evaluations they receive and will constitute 10% of the overall course grade. Do not complain to me about your peer evaluation grade—I will not alter it. It is up to you to establish positive relationships with your fellow students. Please note that submitting your peer evaluation grades is mandatory and late submissions will not be accepted. If you do not submit a complete evaluation for all your group members by the deadline (December 6), you will receive a zero for own participation grade, independent of the grades your group members may have given you.

**Missed Tests or Assignment Deadlines**

- Students who miss a test or are late in submitting an assignment for medical reasons need to email the instructor (not the TA) and also declare their absence on the system (ACORN) as soon as possible. Because of Covid-19, students do NOT need to submit the usual documentation, i.e., medical notes or the Verification of Illness forms.
- Students who miss a test or are late in submitting an assignment for other reasons, such as family emergencies or other personal reasons, should request their College Registrar to email the instructor as soon as possible.

**Course Policies**

- The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another’s differences. The University of Toronto does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.
- You are expected to consult the syllabus for relevant information if have questions about assignments and other course-related matters. If you email with questions that reading the syllabus would resolve, the instructor and teaching assistant(s) reserve the right to ignore your email.
- Kindly note that course lectures will be recorded to make the course more accessible to everyone. In coming to lectures, you agree to be recorded.
- As the instructor for this course, I strive to provide an accessible learning environment. If you have a consideration that may require accommodations, please contact Accessibility Services: [https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as](https://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as), 416-978-8060, or [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca). Feel free to approach me as well if you believe I can improve your learning experience.
Accommodations for religious holy days: The University provides reasonable accommodation for students who observe religious holy days other than those already accommodated by ordinary scheduling and statutory holidays. Please alert me as soon as possible about religious observances and anticipated absences that may interfere with assignments and other course requirements.

There is no attendance requirement for this course. It is up to you to decide whether you want to come to class. However, note that tests and exercises will cover not only the readings but may also include in-class information and materials. Moreover, if you decide to come to class, make sure to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the course meeting. If you can, please bring a laptop or table to access readings and materials I might share with you.

Do everything you can to meet assignment deadlines. Late assignments will incur a late penalty of 10% for any 24-hour period that has begun after the submission deadline. For example, an assignment that is one hour late will receive a 10% penalty, while an assignment that is 25 hours late will receive a 20% grade penalty.

If you believe an assignment was graded incorrectly or unfairly, you may submit a regrade request. Before contacting me (the instructor), you must wait until three days have passed since the grade was shared with you. Write a memo in which you describe and justify your grade complaint and email it to me. I will regrade the entire assignment, not just specific parts or issues you may have flagged. Your grade may go up or down as a result.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following procedures outlined in the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters. You are expected to inform yourself about academic integrity. For general information, see https://www.academicintegrity.utoronto.ca/. If you have additional questions or concerns about what constitutes appropriate academic behaviour or appropriate research and citation methods, please reach out to me.

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps for assignments in this course, including tools like ChatGPT and other AI writing or coding assistants, is prohibited.

Normally, students may be required to submit their course essays to the University’s plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool’s reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University’s use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation web site (https://uoft.me/pdt-faq). Students not wishing their assignment to be submitted through Ouriginal will not be assessed unless a student instead provides, along with their work, sufficient secondary material (e.g., reading notes, outlines of the paper, rough drafts of the final draft, etc.) to establish that the paper they submit is truly their own.

Schedule
Week 1. Tuesday, September 12. Course overview
Week 2. Tuesday, September 19. Introduction to qualitative methods

Week 3. Tuesday, September 26. What is the point of qualitative research?

Week 4. Tuesday, October 3. Participant observation and ethnography (1)
- Readings
- Tutorial meeting: participant observation exercise will be introduced

Week 5. Tuesday, October 10. Participant observation and ethnography (2)
- Tutorial meeting: support session/Q&A for participant observation exercise

Week 6. Tuesday, October 17. In-depth interviewing
- Readings
- Tutorial meeting: interview exercise will be introduced; midterm test Q&A
Week 7. Tuesday, October 24. Tuesday, October 17. **Midterm test.**

Week 8. Tuesday, October 31. The ethics and politics of qualitative research

- Readings

- Tutorial meeting: support session/Q&A for interview exercise

Tuesday, November 7. Fall break: NO CLASS.

Week 9. Tuesday, November 14. Analyzing Qualitative Data


Week 11. Tuesday, November 28. Assessing the quality of qualitative research.

- Readings

- Tutorial meeting: final exam test Q&A

Week 12. Tuesday, December 5. **Final test.**