

University of Toronto | Department of Sociology
Fall 2023
SOC204H1F - L0201
Introduction to Qualitative Methods in Sociology

Location: Thursdays 1:10pm -3:00pm

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Statement of Acknowledgement

We acknowledge this sacred land on which the University of Toronto operates. It has been a site of human activity for 15,000 years. This land is the territory of the Huron Wendat and Petun First Nations, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. The territory was the subject of the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and Confederacy of the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory. [Council of Aboriginal Initiatives, 2014]

1. Course Overview

This course offers an engaging introduction to the methods and concepts of qualitative research within the field of sociology. Through exploring theoretical debates, methodological approaches to data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations, students will develop a solid foundation in qualitative research practices.

Throughout the course, students will critically examine the art of qualitative research and evaluate its significance for sociological inquiry. They will delve into the complexities of conducting qualitative research ethically and grapple with the personal and ethical dilemmas inherent in this type of research. By reading and analyzing exemplary qualitative studies, students will explore the possibilities and limitations of various methods, including interviews, ethnography, content and discourse analysis, and focus groups.

A key emphasis of the course is on experiential learning. Through a series of in-class exercises, students will acquire practical skills in qualitative research. They will learn how to develop an interview guide, complete an ethics protocol, master the basics of coding and memo writing, prepare for fieldwork, and utilize qualitative analysis software. Moreover, students will have the opportunity to engage in their own research projects, enabling them to gain firsthand experience in conducting interviews, being interviewed, and collecting ethnographic data. Ultimately, students will engage in sociological sensemaking, applying their acquired knowledge and skills to make sense of the data they have collected.

2. Learning Objectives

At the end of the course, you will be able to:

- 1) Understand the fundamental principles and concepts of qualitative research within the field of sociology.
- 2) Identify and assess the strengths and limitations of different qualitative research methods, including interviews, ethnography, content and discourse analysis, and focus groups.
- 3) Demonstrate knowledge of ethical considerations and dilemmas related to qualitative research and apply ethical guidelines in the design and implementation of research projects.
- 4) Develop practical skills in qualitative data collection, including designing interview guides and conducting interviews or collecting ethnographic data.
- 5) Apply coding or thematic analysis techniques to analyze and interpret qualitative data.
- 6) Critically analyze and evaluate published qualitative studies, identifying research designs, data collection methods, and analytical approaches employed.

3. Prerequisites

SOC100H1 + SOC150H1.

4. Method of Delivery

The class will be delivered in-person on a weekly basis. We will have tutorials 6 times over the course of the term (Sept 11, Sept 25, Oct 9, Oct 16, Oct 23, Nov 13). Please see the registrar timetable for exact dates and times for both the lecture and tutorial sessions. Please note that with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, lectures and tutorials may be moved online.

Students Must Enroll in any of the following tutorials:

TUT0101	Monday	11-12pm
TUT5101	Monday	5-6pm
TUT5201	Monday	6-7pm

5. Course Policies

Quercus will be an important resource during this class. Lecture slides will be posted on Quercus as well as the assigned reading links. Finally, the primary means of communication in the course is the announcement function on Quercus. In other words, you need to make sure you check Quercus often and, at least, once per week.

Lectures and Tutorials: You MUST review all the lectures and tutorials to do well in this course. Students are responsible for being aware of what is said in lectures and tutorials (including administrative announcements) as well as for the content presented during lectures and tutorials.

Classroom Etiquette: Please note that noise can carry easily in classrooms. Accordingly, every student has a role to play to make sure the lecture is a conducive environment for learning. You

should be mindful of your noise level. Do not distract other students. Keep verbal exchanges with friends few and at the level of a murmur.

Equity and respect: As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course. I want to be promptly alerted of any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive for all. Discrimination, harassment, and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Gender-inclusive language: Respectful classroom etiquette includes using gender-inclusive language. Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender, affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.

Generative AI: University policy on academic dishonesty must be strictly followed and cheating will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., a grade of zero on a test or assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: ‘Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty’), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. You should familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto’s Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>).

Emails: Email should NOT be the primary means through which you have questions answered in the course. If you have questions, you should check the syllabus, the frequently asked questions documents, and the administrative slides in each lecture first. If your question is not covered by these documents, then you should seek to attend Professor and/or TA office hours where you can get an answer immediately. If your question is of a personal or private nature, and/or it is not answered through the above channels then you can email the Professors your question using our course email (TBD). For emails, please follow the below procedures:

- For security reasons, you MUST use your university-associated email.
- Please also follow appropriate etiquette for our professional context—have an appropriate opening (ex: Hi, Good morning) and closing (ex: Thank-you, Sincerely), use proper spelling and grammar, and avoid using acronyms (ex: ttyl, fwiw, imo, asap, etc.).
- Emails will typically be answered within 48 business hours (i.e., not including weekends), but the more emails we get the longer it will take (hence why it is important to check the syllabus/slides/FAQ sheets and to try to attend office hours instead if possible).

Ouriginal: Sometimes, students will be required to submit their assignments 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 website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

For some of your assignments, we will be using the software Ouriginal. It uses text-matching technology as a method to uphold the University's high academic integrity standards to detect any potential plagiarism. Ouriginal is integrated into Quercus. For the assignments set up to use Ouriginal, the software will review your paper when you upload it to Quercus. To learn more about Ouriginal's privacy policy please review its Privacy Policy.

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.

Make-up Tests: We offer make-up tests ONLY in the following circumstances:

- (1) Due to illness in which case your absence must be declared on Acorn and email to the professor must be sent on the day of the illness.
- (2) Due to unexpected extenuating circumstances such as a family or non-illness- related personal emergency in which case you must contact your college registrar and have them email the Professors to confirm the circumstance.
- (3) Due to having another course test within 24 hours of the SOC204 test in which case you must provide the course syllabus of the conflicting test (to confirm their test time) as well as proof of enrollment in that course via an Acorn screenshot.

We will provide a link to a registration form for the make-up immediately after the midterm is completed. You must fill out this form and upload your documents there to be eligible for the makeup. PLEASE NOTE: You do not need to email us to let us know that you will be taking the make-up, the form is all that is required.

Failure to take the make-up for any reason results in the weight of that term test shifting to the Final Exam.

Late Policy: 5 % percent off per day, up to 5 days.

6. Student Resources

Accessibility Accommodations: If you have a disability or health consideration that may require accommodations, Accessibility Services is your home base for support. It is important to contact the office as soon as possible so that accommodations for your needs are in place before classes start. All information about your disability is confidential and won't be shared with units outside of Accessibility Services without your consent. Accessibility services can be contacted by email (www.accessibility.utoronto.ca) or alternatively you can reach them by phone at 416-978-8060. If you require accommodation, please forward the instructor your AS letter of Academic Accommodation as soon as possible. If you require accommodation for writing quizzes, tests, or the final assessment you MUST register with Accommodated Testing Services.

Illness-Related Accommodations: Students who miss the test or are late in submitting an assignment for medical reasons, need to email the instructors and also declare their absence on the system (ACORN).

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.

Other Accommodations: Your college registrar's office is there to support you in the event of an illness, personal, or family-related emergency, or issue that is hindering your success as a student. If there is an ongoing issue that hinders your studies, please contact your registrar as they will be able to connect you with appropriate resources and supports and can provide documentation to your instructors that will aid in receiving accommodations.

Free Mental Health and Other Support: UofT's My Student Support Program (My SSP) provides students with real-time and/or appointment-based confidential, 24-hour support for any school, health, or general life concern at no cost.

Technical and Software Requirements: You will need to access PowerPoint (.ppt), Word (.doc, .docx), and Acrobat (.pdf) files for this course. Please note that as university of Toronto students, you have access to the Microsoft Office 365 through your email account. You will also need access to Zoom for office hours.

7. Grading Components

Grading Components	Due Date	Weight
Tutorial Exercises	Multiple Dates	2*6 = 10% (1 dropped)
Research Statement	Sept 21	10%
Ethnography Practicum	Oct 5	20%
Interview Practicum	Nov 2	20%
Content Analysis Practicum	Nov 23	20%
Final Test	Nov 30	20%

8. Course Materials

- 1) Deborah van den Hoonaard (2019) *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer*, Third Edition. Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

The book is available for purchase new, used, digitally, or loaned through the library (UofT and Public).

10. Lectures and Reading Schedule:

Lecture	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment/Test	Tutorial
1	Sept 7	Introduction to Qualitative	Hoonaard (Ch 1);		No

		e Methods			
2	Sep t 14	Asking Questions and Designin g Research Projects	Hoonard (Ch 2-3);	Tutorial Exercise	Yes: on Mond ay
3	Sep t 21	Ethics and Qualitativ e Research	Hoonard (Ch 4);	Research Statement Due	No
4	Sep t 28	Doing Ethnogra phy	Hoonard (Ch 5);	Tutorial Exercise	Yes: on Mond ay
5	Oct 5	Doing Qualitativ e Interview s	Hoonard (Ch 6);	Ethnography Practicum Due Tutorial Exercise	Yes: on Mond ay
6	Oct 12	Doing Focus Groups	Hoonard (Ch 7);		No
7	Oct 19	Doing Content Analysis	Hoonard (Ch 8);	Tutorial Exercise	Yes: on Mond ay
8	Oct 26	Analyzin g your Data	Hoonard (Ch 9);	Tutorial Exercise	Yes: on Mond ay
9	No v 2	Wrapping up your Research	Hoonard (Ch 10);	Interview Practicum Due	No
	<i>Reading Week</i>				
10	No v 16	Connecti ng to Research	Holdsworth, C. (2006). 'Don't you Think you're Missing Out, Living at Home?' Student Experiences and Residential Transitions. The Sociological Review, 54(3), 495–519.	Tutorial Exercise	Yes: on Mond ay

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			org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2006.00627.x Maunder, R.E., Cunliffe, M., Galvin, J. <i>et al.</i> Listening to student voices: student researchers exploring undergraduate experiences of university transition. <i>High Educ</i> 66 , 139–152 (2013). https://doi-org.myaccess.library.utoronto.ca/10.1007/s10734-012-9595-3		
11	No v 23	Conclusions		Content Analysis Practicum Due	No
12	No v 30	<i>Final Test</i>			No