

Introduction to Qualitative Methods in Sociology

SOC204H1F Section L5101

Fall 2017

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Judy Beglaubter

Time: Wednesdays, 6-8 PM

Location: RW 117 – Ramsey Wright Laboratories

Office: Room 335, 725 Spadina Avenue TA:

Hours: Wednesdays, 5-6

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The focus of this course is to introduce students to a variety of qualitative data sources, methods, and analyses techniques used in the social sciences. Underlying these aspects of qualitative research will be discussions and questions of theory, methodology, rationale, epistemology, ethics, and the role of the researcher. While qualitative methods and analysis are often presented as the antithesis to quantitative approaches, this course will reveal that such rigid distinctions are never so simply applied. Rather qualitative inquiry will be understood as an ongoing and manifold dialogue between theoretical concerns and empirical evidence.

With this in mind, the course will stress experiential learning wherever possible and a significant portion of students' grades will be derived from their own small-scale observational studies. After an introduction to the values behind, and meanings of, *good* qualitative research, the first half of the course will guide students through the processes required for their research projects: preparing for the field, producing what anthropologist Clifford Geertz describes as "thick description," and engaging in sociological sense-making through coding and memo-ing. With an empirical foundation in place, we will then return to the possibilities and limits of other qualitative research methods. Throughout the course, the emphasis will be in on creating an atmosphere where ideas are exchanged and research experiences are shared. The goal of this course is to collaboratively develop a thorough understanding of qualitative research, as well as encourage reflection about the process of inquiry itself.

Pre-Requisite:

The prerequisite to take this course is **1.0 SOC FCE at the 100 level**. Students without this prerequisite will be removed at any time discovered and without notice.

Required Texts:

- Van den Hoonaard, Deborah K. 2015. Qualitative Research in Action, 2nd Edition. Oxford
- See Blackboard for other required readings available electronically

Evaluation:

1. Observation Approval – 5% *Pass/Fail Due: September 27th
Students will write a 1-page proposal for their in-field observation assignment discussing research site, methods, logistics and ethical considerations. You cannot begin your in-field observations without the instructor passing your proposal.
2. Research Proposal – 15% Due: October 11th
Students will propose a topic for their final qualitative research project which will address questions concerning research problem, question(s), methods, population, and sampling. A brief literature review must be included. 4-5 pages.
3. Fieldnotes – 3 x 5% = 15% Due: October 25th
Students will write 3 sets of fieldnotes based on their in-field observations, including reflective and analytic notes. 1-2 pages each.
4. Coding – 2 x 7.5% = 15% Due: November 15th
Students will submit two coding samples. The first should demonstrate open coding, while the second will be a longer memo where data are compared, contrasted, and theorized. 2-3 pages each.
5. Final Research Paper – 25% Due: December 6th
Students will prepare a detailed research report on their topic, building off and integrating earlier assignments. Must include an introduction, literature review, methods section, findings, and conclusion. 10-12 pages.
6. Exam – 25% Exam Period

Note: These dates are fixed and non-negotiable - Plan your schedule around them

Course Requirements:

Assignments

The major assignment for this course is your independent research project. There are **five (5) components** of the project that you will hand in at different stages of the research process (see deadlines above). These assignments are **cumulative**, in that you are expected to read and incorporate feedback on your previous assignments into future assignments, as applicable.

Details for these assignments will be provided in class. Assignments must be **submitted both: 1) via Blackboard before class and 2) in hard copy at the beginning of class, on the due date.** For more details on accommodation/late policies, please see the Course Policies section below

Final Exam

There will be a **final exam** worth 25% of your final grade **covering all course material** discussed this term during the final exam period (date to be announced). For more details on make-up exams, please see the Course Policies section below.

Course Schedule:

NB: Every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it may be changed at the discretion of the instructor

Class 1 September 13 th	Introduction to Course & Qualitative Social Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 1: Introduction • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 2: Asking Questions and Identifying Goals
September 20 th	No Lecture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TA Meetings
Class 2 September 27 th	Research Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 3: Strategies for Designing Research • <u>Blackboard</u>: Goodwin, J & R. Horowitz. 2002. "The Methodological Strengths and Dilemmas of Qualitative Sociology." <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> 25: 33—47 • <u>Due: Observation Approvals</u>
Class 3 October 4 th	Ethics & Writing Basics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 4: Ethics on the Ground • <u>Blackboard</u>: Fine, G. 1993. "Ten Lies of Ethnography: Moral Dilemmas of Field Research." <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 22: 267-294 • <u>Blackboard</u>: "How Not to Plagiarize." www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources
Class 4 October 11 th	Observation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 5: Observing Social Life • <u>Blackboard</u>: Whyte, W. F. 1955. "On the Evolution of Street Corner Society." In <i>Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press • <u>Blackboard</u>: Atkinson, P. & A. Coffey. 2002. "Revisiting the Relationship Between Participant Observation and Interviewing". In J. F. Gubrium and J. A. Holstein (Eds). <i>Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method</i> (pp. 801-814). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. • <u>Due: Research Proposals</u>
Class 5 October 18 th	Writing Fieldnotes & Beyond <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Blackboard</u>: Emerson, R.M., R.I. Fretz & L.L. Shaw. 1995. "Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research." In <i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes</i>. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. • <u>Blackboard</u>: Katz, Jack. 2002. "From how to why: On luminous description and causal inference in Ethnography (part 2)." <i>Ethnography</i> 3(1): 63-90

<p>Class 6 October 25th</p>	<p>Coding & Sense-making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 9: Trust the Process • <u>Blackboard</u>: Charmaz, K. 2002. "Discovering Chronic Illness: Using Grounded Theory." <i>Social Science & Medicine</i> 30: 1161-1172 • <u>Due: Fieldnotes</u>
<p>Class 7 November 1st</p>	<p>Reporting Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 10: Writing Up Qualitative Research • <u>Blackboard</u>: Newman, K. S. & M. M. Chin. 2003. "High Stakes: Time Poverty, Testing, and the Children of the Working Poor." <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> 26(1): 3-34 • <u>Blackboard</u>: Bourgois, P. 1998. "The Moral Economies of Homeless Heroin Addicts: Confronting Ethnography, HIV Risk, and Everyday Violence in San Francisco Shooting Encampments." <i>Substance Use & Misuse</i> 33(11): 2323-2351
<p>November 7th</p>	<p>Reading Week</p>
<p>Class 8 November 15th</p>	<p>Interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 6: In-depth Interviewing • <u>Blackboard</u>: Rubin, L. B. 1976. 'Marriage: The Dream and the Reality – The Beginning Years.' In <i>Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working Class Family</i>. New York: Basic Books • <u>Blackboard</u>: DeVault, M. L. 2002. "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis." Pp. 88-111 in <i>Qualitative research methods</i>: Blackwell Publishers • <u>Due: Analysis</u>
<p>Class 9 November 22nd</p>	<p>Focus Groups & Participatory Action Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Blackboard</u>: Lehoux, Poland & Daudelin. 2006. "Focus Group Research and the 'Patient's View'." <i>Social Science & Medicine</i> 63: 2091-2104 • <u>Blackboard</u>: Couch, S.R. 2004. "A Tale of Three Discourses: Doing Action Research in a Research Methods Class." <i>Social Problems</i> 51(1): 146-153

<p>Class 10 November 29th</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unobtrusive & Other Methods • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 7: Unobtrusive Research • Van den Hoonaard, Chapter 8: New Directions in Qualitative Research • <u>Blackboard</u>: Carney, N. 2016. "All Lives Matter, but so Does Race: Black Lives Matter and the Evolving Role of Social Media." <i>Humanity & Society</i> 40(2): 180-199 • <u>Blackboard</u>: Borland, K. 1991. "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research." In S.B. Gluck & D. Patai (Eds.) <i>Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History</i>. NY: Routledge
<p>Class 11 December 6th</p>	<p>Wrap Up & Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Blackboard</u>: Krieger, S. 1985. "Beyond Subjectivity: The Use of the Self in Social Science." <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> 8(4): 309-324 • Duneier, M. 2002. "What Kind of Combat Sport is Sociology?" <i>AJS</i> 107(6): 1551-1576 • <u>Due: Final Research Papers</u>

Course Policies:

Attendance

Students are responsible for attending every lecture. I strongly recommend that you read the required material before coming to class – you will better understand both the lecture and the readings if you do. Missing a class means you will likely miss important information necessary for the completion of assignments and the opportunity for feedback on your progress.

Classroom Etiquette

Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Laptop usage is allowed, but should be used for notes only. Other uses will result in the student being required to turn off the laptop. Videotaping and recording lectures is strictly forbidden without written permission.

Electronic Communication and Electronic Learning Technology

Email communication is rapid, convenient, and efficient – and you are encouraged to use it to enhance your learning and experience in the course – according to the following rules:

- Emails from students will generally be answered within 48 hours of receipt.
- Assignments will not be accepted via email. See above for how to submit them.
- All course communication should be conducted through your utoronto account, include the course code in the subject line, and be signed with your full name and student number.
- Treat emails as you would any other professional communication: Proofread and use appropriate language.
- Email communication is appropriate for asking brief, clarifying questions about course material or assignments. Lengthier questions regarding in-depth explanation of course materials or assignments should be asked during office hours.

Late Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the specified date, in hard copy. **Late assignments will be penalized 5% per 24 hour period.** The penalty will run from the **time** the assignment was due until the day it is submitted to the instructor – in person or via Blackboard – not the department office staff, to other instructors, or by email. The penalty period **includes weekends and holidays.** Assignments that are more than 8 days late will not be accepted. Accommodations can be provided for reasons beyond the student’s control. Excuses such as “too much work”, technology failure, attending a wedding, family vacation, or not adding the class in time will not be considered to be beyond a student’s control. To request accommodation for a late assignment you must contact the instructor and follow these steps:

- In case of **illness**, you must supply a completed **Verification of Student Illness** or Injury form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca). A doctor’s note is not acceptable. The form must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work
- If a **personal or family crisis** prevents you from meeting a deadline, you must get a letter from your college registrar (it is a good idea anyway to advise your college registrar if a crisis is interfering with your studies). The letter must be placed in a sealed envelope, addressed to the instructor, and submitted with your work
- Time-stamp and drop off a hard copy in the **2nd year drop box** - room 225 at the Sociology department (725 Spadina Ave.) Late assignments will not be accepted by email

Missed Exam

Students are expected to write their examinations as scheduled. Only in cases of documented debilitating illness or legitimate conflict should a student request a deferral of a final examination, through their College Registrar. Students who are too ill and/or incapacitated at the time of the examinations should petition to defer the examination they are unable to attend due to their medical condition. Petitions based on travel, employment, or personal plans will not be considered as students are expected to make themselves available during the published Examination Period to write final examinations. Students who have missed an examination and are requesting a deferral must submit a petition no later than one week after the end of the examination period through their college registrar.

Grade Appeals

Instructors and teaching assistants take the marking of assignments very seriously, and work diligently to be fair, consistent, and accurate. Nonetheless, mistakes and oversights occasionally happen. If you believe that to be the case, you must adhere to the following steps:

1. Wait at least 24 hours after receiving your mark
2. Carefully re-read your assignment, all assignment guidelines and marking schemes and the grader’s comments
3. Address your concerns with the TA within 2 weeks
4. Should you wish to further contest a grade, you need to indicate in a typed document submitted to the instructor along with the original assignment (with marker’s comments) why you think the grade was inappropriate. Upon re-grade your mark may go down, stay the same, or go up.

Academic Integrity

According to Section B of the University of Toronto's *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.utoronto.ca/govcncl/pap/policies/behaveac.html>) which all students are expected to know and respect, it is an offence for students to:

- To use someone else's ideas or words in their own work without acknowledging that they are not their own with a citation and quotation marks, i.e. to commit plagiarism
- To include false, misleading or concocted citations in their work
- To obtain or provide unauthorized assistance on any assignment
- To falsify or alter any documentation required by the University

There are other offences covered, but these are the most common. Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. Students who commit an academic offence face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly: practices acceptable in high school may prove unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the "Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters" in the Calendar of the Faculty of Arts and Science for more information on penalties and risks.

Writing Assistance

For online advice regarding writing issues, see: www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice. For individualized support and assistance with writing, please contact one of the University of Toronto writing centres to make an appointment see: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/learning>.

Accessibility

We take seriously our obligation to make all courses as welcoming and accessible as feasible for students with diverse needs. If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Equity & Diversity

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual 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 and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.