

University of Toronto | Department of Sociology

Winter 2024

SOC254H1S – Intermediate Qualitative Methods in Sociology

Tuesdays 3:10pm – 5:00pm
Location: Available on Acorn

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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 Description

How do we use data to tell stories?

Social scientists use a variety of data sources to make sense of our social world; some sources are better than others at capturing specific phenomena. For instance, interviewing is a qualitative method used for learning about people's motivations, attitudes, feelings, and their lived experiences. Ethnography is another approach, immersing researchers in the daily lives of subjects to gain a deep, nuanced understanding of cultural and social processes. Content analysis allows for the systematic examination of communication forms like media content, written works, or artifacts, providing insights into patterns, themes, and representations within texts that inform societal norms and values.

This course will teach students how to conduct qualitative research using a method that speaks best to their research aims and objectives. We will work through the research process cycle, from formulating research questions to collecting and analyzing data, and finally to presenting compelling findings. By exploring a range of qualitative methods, including interviewing, ethnography, and content analysis, students will learn how to select the approach that most effectively addresses their research goals.

Students will engage with the practicalities of designing a study, understanding the ethical considerations, and applying methodological principles to gather rich, qualitative data. The course will emphasize the importance of reflexivity and the iterative nature of qualitative research, allowing students to adapt and refine their methods as their understanding deepens through the research journey.

Course Objectives

The course is organized in a way that encourages students to build and develop skills focused on collaborative learning, critical reading, writing, different qualitative methods, and the formation of arguments.

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

- Evaluate and discuss a number of foundational texts on qualitative methodology.
- Conduct qualitative interviews
- Write analytically and critically using data gathered by the student.
- Make and support an academic argument through use of evidence.

Prerequisite:

The prerequisite to take SOC254H1F is SOC204H.

Accessibility needs:

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

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

Tutorials: Students **must enroll in one of TUT0101, TUT0201, TUT0301, TUT0401.**

Description of Evaluation Components

Evaluation Component	Grade Weight	Due Date
In-Person Tutorials/Attendance	10%	Ongoing
Research Statement & Literature Review	25%	Jan 30
Coding Document	15%	Mar12
Methods & Data Analysis	25%	Mar 12
“Putting it all together”: Final Research Paper	25%	Apr 9

Grading Descriptions

In-Person Tutorials/Attendance

Worth 10%

Students MUST attend tutorials in order to participate in the exercise. Attendance will be taken.

Research Statement & Literature Review

Worth 25%

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. The assignment must be between 1000-1500 words. More information will be provided on Quercus.

Methods & Data Analysis

Worth 25%

Students will have to describe their data collection methods and provide an analysis of their data. Students must also submit the data they collected (if not, the assignment will not be marked). The assignment must be between 1500-2000 words. More information will be provided on Quercus.

Coding Exercise

Worth 15%

Using at least three (out of six) of their own transcripts, students will conduct an (open and focused) coding exercise. They will also write an analytical memo that will work as the preliminary basis of their final research assignment. More information will be provided on Quercus.

“Putting it All Together:” Final Research Paper

Worth 25%

Students will submit a final research paper that brings together their revised research statement, literature review, methodology, and data analysis. The main additions will be the following: in their method section, a brief discussion of how their social position affected/shaped their research and a discussion/conclusion section discussing the study’s research implications. The final paper must be between 5000-6000 words. More information will be provided on Quercus.

Course Policies

Method of Delivery

The class will be delivered in-person on a weekly basis. We will have in-person tutorials 6 times over the course of the term. Students must attend tutorials to do the exercise and receive attendance participation. Please see the timetable for exact dates and times for both the lecture and tutorial sessions.

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.

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

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) or provide us with an illness verification form.

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.

Required Readings & Course Schedule

Required readings:

Lareau, A (2021). *Listening to People*. University of Chicago Press.

Supplement course readings are accessible electronically. Unless otherwise stated, course readings will be uploaded on Quercus under the Modules tab.

Course Schedule: Students are expected to complete all required readings prior to each lecture. Note: every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Tuesday Jan 9. Introduction - "Let's Talk About Love"

Readings:

1. <https://thesociologicalreview.org/collections/interviews/the-sociology-of-love/>

Lecture Activity: Brainstorm ideas for potential research projects on "Love."

Tuesday Jan 16. The Emergent Nature of the Research Process

Readings:

1. Lareau: Introduction
2. Lareau: Chapter 2

Tutorial Exercise 1: What Type of Love Do You Want to Talk About?

Tuesday Jan 23. The Early Steps in A Study: Research Questions & Design

Readings:

1. Carter, J. (2013). The Curious Absence of Love Stories in Women's Talk. *The Sociological Review*, 61(4), 728–744. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.12082>
2. <https://www.everydaysociologyblog.com/2019/02/how-and-why-to-write-a-literature-review.html>
3. <https://guides.lib.berkeley.edu/c.php?g=935472&p=6811882>

Tutorial Exercise 2: “Making a (Research) Statement!”

Tuesday Jan 30. Ethical Considerations

Readings:

1. [Lareau: Appendix - Managing the IRB Process](#)
2. [Review Course Ethics Protocol](#)

Lecture Activity: Drafting your Recruitment Flyer

Research Statement & Literature Review Due

Tuesday Feb 6. Talking to People

Readings:

1. [Lareau: Chapter 3 -5](#)
2. [Small & Calarco: Chapter 1](#)

Tutorial Exercise 3: Formulating Study Plans

Broader Activity: Recruitment has started

Tuesday Feb 13. Observing Places

Readings:

1. [Lareau: Chapter 6 – 7](#)
2. [Small & Calarco: Chapter 2](#)

Broader Activity: Data Collection

Tuesday Feb 20 – Reading Week

No Readings:

Broader Activity: Data Collection

Tuesday Feb 27. Observing Texts

Readings:

1. <https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=61>
2. https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~yanz/Content_analysis.pdf
3. [Small & Calarco: Chapter 4](#)

Tutorial Exercise 4: Prepping for Analysis

Tuesday Mar 5. Taking Notes

Readings:

1. Saldaña, J. 2015. “An Introduction to Codes and Coding” (pp. 1-40) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage.
2. Saldaña, J. 2015. “Writing Analytic Memos” (pp. 41-57) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage.

Tutorial Exercise 5: Developing Themes

Tuesday Mar 12. Making Sense of the Data

Readings:

1. Timmermans & Tavory: Chapter 5-6

***Methods & Analysis Assignment Due**

***Coding Document Due**

Tuesday Mar 19. How to Make an Argument

Readings:

1. Lareau: Chapter 8
2. Timmermans & Tavory: Chapter 7

Tutorial Exercise 6: What is this a case of?

Tuesday Mar 26. Addressing the “So What” of it All

Readings:

1. Lareau: Chapter 9

Tuesday Apr 2. From Talk on Love to Cultural Repertoires

Readings:

1. Swidler: Chapters 3-5

Suggested Readings:

2. Swidler: Chapters 6-8

*** Final Research Paper Due April 9**