

**ADVANCED QUALITATIVE METHODS**  
**SOC498H1F**  
**Fall 2022**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**University of Toronto**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Jaime Nikolaou	<b>Seminar:</b>	Tuesdays, 3-6pm
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“COVID-19 is not just a medical pandemic; it is a social event that is disrupting our social order.”  
(Teti, Schatz and Liebenberg 2020:2)

“I’ve been thinking about the virtual classroom. It seems like the perfect moment to scrap the existing syllabus and teach the moment. No matter the course topic, I can see how plagues, pandemics, and healthcare could become the meat of the lesson.”  
(Anne Fausto-Sterling, Twitter)

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The central goal of this course is to give fourth-year students with a vested interest in qualitative methods more hands-on research experience. To this end, you will apply your sociological imagination to COVID-19 and study the pandemic in ways that qualitatively compel you. Your exploratory research project will develop over 12 weeks, guided by weekly workshops and recently-published empirical work that showcases how qualitative scholars are studying COVID-19 and innovating data collection techniques in response to lockdown measures.

**EVALUATION**

Each week, we will meet in-person for two to three hours. Since this is a small specialist seminar, class will open with collaborative discussion of the assigned readings, which will deepen your understanding and appreciation of qualitative epistemology. From there, we will move to workshops, where you will apply these techniques to refine your ongoing research projects. Due to the collaborative nature of this course, your active participation is required each week.

**PROMPTS (10%)**

At the end of each class, I will pose a methods question to structure your reading for the coming week. Prompts should be 400-500 words long and posted to Quercus by 2pm the following Tuesday. These posts will be graded pass/fail and you will gain 0.5% for each quality submission (not exceeding 5%). You can gain an additional 0.5% by sharing your insights in class.

## RESEARCH PROJECT

This course invites you to ask and (preliminarily) answer a sociological question related to COVID-19. This project will develop over the whole semester, scaffolded by workshops and assignments that build upon each other and total 90% of your final mark. You may design and carry out this research on your own or with others, noting that all term work will be graded individually. Brief descriptions of the core components of the Research Project are outlined below, with detailed instructions to follow.

### WORKSHOPS (25%)

Workshops in this course are meant to foster your sociological imagination about COVID-19, and sharpen your practical skills in qualitative research design, data collection, and analysis. Ten workshops are scheduled for this term (excluding Week 1 and 6), and they will consist of in-class writing, whole-group presentations, and one-on-one consultations. Submissions will vary in content, length, and weight; however, this work will always begin in-class and be due by 3pm the following Monday. I will provide individualized feedback on all workshop submissions, which you can and should adapt for use in the Take-Home Test and Preliminary Research Report. Though weighted low individually, workshops are essential to this course and you will struggle to progress if you do not submit for them on a weekly basis.

### TAKE-HOME TEST (25%)

On 18 October, we will not meet in-person. Instead, you will write a take-home “test” – a mock ethics application on some social aspect of COVID-19 that you plan to study qualitatively. To prepare, it is imperative that you craft a clear research question and know which qualitative techniques fit and compel you. You will have six weeks to arrive at these decisions, aided by in-class workshops and course readings that showcase qualitative innovation in response to social distancing measures. You will receive detailed feedback on your mock ethics application, which also functions as a research proposal for the remainder of your term work, by 25 October. Pending my and/or departmental approval, you can begin collecting data to answer your research question, which should be completed by the end of Reading Week.

### PRELIMINARY RESEARCH REPORT (40%)

When we return from Reading Week, you will have crafted an exploratory research question about COVID-19 and collected some qualitative data to answer it. Over the last third of the course, you will code your data, write memos, weave your emergent findings in relation to existing studies, and share your research process and preliminary findings with the class. You will then repackage all this hard work into 12-14 pages of sociological sensemaking via the Preliminary Research Report, which is due 20 December and worth 40% of your final mark.

## READING SCHEDULE

In this course, you will read a mix of qualitative methods articles and empirical studies related to COVID-19. All these readings are digital and posted on Quercus. While I will make every effort to follow the schedule below, please note that it is subject to change at my discretion.

### **WEEK 1 (13 September): Qualitative Inquiry and COVID-19**

Connell, Raewyn. 2020. "COVID-19/Sociology." *Journal of Sociology*:1-7.

Reid, Colleen, Lorraine Greaves, and Sandra Kirby. 2017. "How? Research Methods" (Chapter 6) in *Experience, Research, Social Change: Critical Methods*. University of Toronto Press.

Teti, Michelle, Enid Schatz, and Linda Liebenberg. 2020. "Methods in the Time of COVID-19: The Vital Role of Qualitative Methods." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 19:1-5.

### **WEEK 2 (20 September): Interviews**

Brown, Sienna et al. 2021. "A Qualitative Exploration of the Impact of COVID-19 on Individuals with Eating Disorders in the UK." *Appetite*, 156:1-9.

Hertz, Rosanna, Jane Mattes, and Alexandria Shook. 2020. "When Paid Work Invades the Family: Single Mothers in the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Journal of Family Issues*:1-27.

Pyrooz, David C. et al. 2020. "Views on COVID-19 from Inside Prison: Perspectives of High Security Prisoners". *Justice Evaluation Journal*:1-13.

### **WEEK 3 (27 September): Observation**

Alcadipani, Rafael et al. 2020. "Street-Level Bureaucrats under COVID-19: Police Officers' Responses in Constrained Settings". *Administrative Theory & Praxis*:1-10.

Fine, Gary Alan and Corey M. Abramson. 2020. "Ethnography in the Time of COVID-19: Vectors and the Vulnerable". *Ethnografia e Ricerca Qualitativa (Special Issue)*:1-8.

Katila, Julia, Yumei Gan, and Marjorie H. Goodwin. 2020. "Interaction Rituals and 'Social Distancing': New Haptic Trajectories and Touching from a Distance in the Time of COVID-19". *Discourse Studies*, 22(4):418-40.

### **WEEK 4 (4 October): Unobtrusive and Archival Data**

Bolsover, Gillian. 2020. "Black Lives Matter Discourse on US Social Media during COVID-19: Polarised Positions Enacted in a New Event". *Centre for Democratic Engagement*:1-10.

MacDonald, Shana. 2020. "What Do You (Really) Meme? Pandemic Memes as Social Political Repositories". *Leisure Sciences*:1-10.

Mukherjee, Utsa. 2020. "Rainbows, Teddy Bears and 'Others': The Cultural Politics of Children's Leisure amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic". *Leisure Sciences*:1-8.

### **WEEK 5 (11 October): Ethics & Research Design**

Freitas-Jesus, Juliana et al. 2020. "The Experience of Women Infected by COVID-19 during Pregnancy in Brazil: A Qualitative Study Protocol". *Reproductive Health*, 17:1-8.

Reid, Colleen, Lorraine Greaves, and Sandra Kirby. 2017. "Being a Researcher: Locating Yourself and Research Ethics" (Chapter 3) and "What? The Research Question and Establishing Writing and Organizational Processes" (Chapter 4) in *Experience, Research, Social Change: Critical Methods*. University of Toronto Press.

### **WEEK 6 (18 October): Take-Home Test**

### **WEEK 7 (25 October): Data Collection**

Reid, Colleen et al. 2017. "Collecting, Organizing, and Managing Data" (Chapter 8) and "Who, Where, and When? Sampling and Finalizing the Research Proposal and Ethics Forms" (Chapter 7).

### **WEEK 8 (1 November): Data Analysis**

Charmaz, Kathy. 2012. "The Power and Potential of Grounded Theory". *Medical Sociology Online*, 6(3):1-15.

Reid, Colleen et al. 2017. "Analyzing Data" (Chapter 9).

### **NO CLASS (8 November): Reading Week**

### **WEEK 9 (15 November): Engaging the Literature**

Dunne, Ciarán. 2011. "The Place of the Literature Review in Grounded Theory Research". *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 14(2):111-24.

Reid, Colleen et al. 2017. "Why? The Literature Review" (Chapter 5).

### **WEEK 10 (22 November): Reflexivity**

Cherneski, J. 2020. "Evidence-Loving Rock Star Chief Medical Officers: Female Leadership amidst COVID-19 in Canada". *Gender, Work & Organization*, 27(5):900-13.

Collet, Jessica, Lisa Walker, and Alison Biachi. 2020 "Is it Really Okay to Feel Not Okay? Reflections from Three Scholars of Emotion." *ASA Footnotes (Special Issue): Sociologists and Sociology during COVID-19*, 48(3):35.

González-Calvo, Gustavo. 2020. "Narrative Reflections on Masculinity and Fatherhood during COVID-19 Confinement in Spain." *Societies*, 10(2):1-14.

Simmons, Amy L. 2020. "COVID-19 and Social Distancing: A Snippet View of the Autistic Social World." *Disability & Society*, 35(6):1007-11.

### **WEEK 11 (29 November): Sharing Findings**

Pratt, Michael G. 2009. "For the Lack of a Boilerplate: Tips on Writing Up Qualitative Research". *Academy of Management Journal*, 52(2):856-82.

Reid, Colleen et al. 2017. "Writing the Report" (Chapter 5).

### **WEEK 12 (6 December): Qualitative Insights on COVID-19**

Grimwood, Bryan S.R. 2020. "On Not Knowing: COVID-19 and Decolonizing Leisure Research". *Leisure Sciences*:1-7.

Kleinman, Sherryl, Martha A. Copp, and Karla A. Henderson. 1997. "Qualitatively Different: Teaching Fieldwork to Graduate Students". *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 25(4):469-99.

<b>COURSE POLICIES</b>
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### **PREREQUISITES**

The prerequisite to take this course is 1.0 SOC at the 300 level, plus SOC254H1. Please note that students without these requirements will be removed when discovered and without notice.

### **ONLINE COMMUNICATION & USE OF TECHNOLOGY**

Please check the Announcements tab on Quercus regularly for important course information. Individual queries are best addressed with me via email or in-person after class. Include SOC498 in the subject line when emailing and expect a reply within 48 hours (excluding weekends).

Unauthorized audio/video recording during class is strictly prohibited.

### **ACCESSIBILITY & EQUITY**

UofT is committed to ensuring equity and accessibility, and students with diverse learning styles are welcome in this course. If you have a disability or medical condition that requires accommodation, please approach me and/or Accessibility Services early in the semester.

The ability to read critically, write clearly and authoritatively, and listen and speak collaboratively and constructively will serve you well in this course. If you want to work on these academic skills outside this course, I encourage you to utilize the UofT Writing Centre (<https://writing.utoronto.ca/>), which offers many online and in-person resources for domestic and international students.

## **REFERENCING & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

In this syllabus, I cite course material in ASA (American Sociological Association) style, which you should also use to format your SOC498 term work and which is summarized here: [https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick\\_Tips\\_for\\_AS\\_A\\_Style.pdf](https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_AS_A_Style.pdf). Please also install Mendeley – a free citation management program you can use to store and annotate course readings, as well as search for empirical work related to your research project.

Academic integrity is vital to well-being of the university and academy, and plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course. To understand how nuanced plagiarism can be, as well as the severity of its consequences, please consult: <https://advice.writing.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/how-not-to-plagiarize.pdf>.

## **LATE OR MISSED TERM WORK**

Late Prompts and Workshop submissions will not be accepted. If you submit the Preliminary Research Report late, 5% per day (including weekends) will be deducted from your overall mark. If you cannot submit the assignment on time or miss the Take-Home Test due to a personal emergency, please have your College Registrar email me. In the case of illness, you can email me and declare your absence on ACORN.