

## SOC 609, E-SYLLABUS AND COURSE OUTLINE

### SOCIOLOGY 609, SEMINAR IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Class meets Fridays, 12 noon to 2:30 p.m.  
Instructor: Michael Weinstein, Ph.D.,  
Associate Professor of Sociology  
Office: Saunders Hall 239  
Phone: 956-8413 (leave messages after four rings)  
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Office hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:30 to 2:45, and by  
appointment; please feel free to call.

\*We will attempt to hold the class meetings in Saunders Hall, close to home to encourage attendance at Sociology Department events scheduled for Fridays, 2:30 to 4.

The new catalog description: Advanced seminar on conducting field work in natural social settings with emphasis on qualitative techniques, political and ethical considerations, data management and assessment, interpretation and reflexive writing.  
Prerequisite: SOC 478 or consent of instructor

Texts: Lofland, John; David Snow; Leon Anderson; and Lyn Lofland, Analyzing Social Settings, 4th ed., Wadsworth, 2006  
Whyte, William Foote, Learning From the Field, Sage, 1984  
Emerson, Robert, Contemporary Field Research, 2nd ed., Waveland, 2001  
Burawoy, Michael, et al., Ethnography Unbound, U of Cal, 1991  
Whyte, William Foote, Street Corner Society, 4th ed., U of Chicago, 1993  
Burawoy, Michael, et al. Global Ethnography, U of Cal, 2000

Qualitative methods have a long and rich history in the discipline of sociology, which we will review. In preparation for the course, students are asked to read two of the most widely used (and very practical) reference texts, the Loflands' handbook and Whyte's Learning From the Field. This advanced seminar will build on the basic issues and exercises of SOC 478, the undergraduate course in field research (see that course description). The seminar will then proceed in terms of the career priorities of the members, with the group constituted as a collegial research team working on somehow related theme

Throughout the semester, we will discuss students' ongoing field research in relation to the interplay between institutions and social actors, and how individuals, in turn, negotiate their everyday lives. Each student will be expected to write weekly theoretical or methodological memos, and field notes or interview transcripts, culminating in a seminar paper due two weeks before the end of the semester.

As primarily inductive, field researchers confront a myriad of "problems," from practical to political to conceptual, and new ones arise to confront even the most experienced veterans. The seminar will serve as context for helping one another deal with whatever is problematic. We will review and discuss various techniques and strategies, handbooks and literature; epistemology and theory, especially groundedness and reality construction; field relations and membership roles, ethical and political issues; analysis and reflexivity, the nature of science and humanist sociology, and anything else anyone finds useful or relevant.

We may be joined regularly or occasionally by advanced undergraduates, graduate students who have been through this course before, and faculty who are working in their own "fields." Seminar members should always ask about unexplained visitors, although the instructor will be the official gatekeeper. The door will be closed. Again note that the course meets just prior to Sociology Department meeting/colloquium time, Fridays, 2:30 to 4, and we expect to piggyback on those activities.

#### SOCIOLOGY 609, PLAN FOR THE SEMESTER

This is a first draft; We'll fill in more as we go. Each meeting should have two or three different activities/topics: latest thoughts/problems from everyone as we construct an agenda, a little presentation by Weinstein, a student presentation from the texts--say a Burawoy or Emerson chapter. From mid-semester, participants will be presenting seminar papers, at various stages of completion. The course may be confusing: make sense of it.

Week 1, WRITE CLASS NOTES! Introductions; a little interview exercise (turn in exercise field notes by next Tuesday  
MW: The miscellaneous components of qualitative sociology, field research, ethnography (sociological and anthropological), the naturalistic approach, the sociology of everyday life.

Week 2, Having 'read' both Burawoy books and Emerson, choose a chapter/reading from each for later presentation to the seminar.

MW: Documentation techniques, the production of field notes, interview records, and the nature of data.

A little small group exercise (turn in exercise field notes by next Tuesday).

Week 3, MW: The social construction of reality.

MW: Some advice: connect to the latest discussion, join ASA and subscribe to Contemporary Sociology.

Week 4, MW: Humanist sociology and reflexivity

Propose Seminar Paper I

Week 5, MW: Lots of literature, new handbooks and texts

Week 6, MW: Garfinkel's ethnomethodology, Glazer's and Straus's grounded theory, Burawoy's extended cases, the Loflands' topics and questions.

Attend the Annual Meeting of the Hawaii Sociological Association; write field notes!

Week 7, MW: The history and epistemology of fieldwork roles

Week 8, Seminar Paper I due (using data from the exercises and HSA?) to be read/skimmed by everyone else. MW: Community Studies

Week 9, MW: William Foote Whyte

Week 10, MW: What's going on in sociology, where we fit/fight.

Week 11

Week 12

Week 13

Week 14, Seminar Paper II is due, to be read and commented on by everyone else.

Week 15

Week 16

**KOKUA ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability is invited to contact me privately. I would be happy to work with you, and the KOKUA Program (Office for Students with Disabilities) to ensure reasonable accommodations in my course. KOKUA can be reached at (808) 956-7511 or (808) 956-7612 (voice/text) in room 013 of the Queen Lili'uokalani Center for Student Services.

**PLAGIARISM ANNOUNCEMENT:** The following definition of plagiarism comes from the UH-Manoa Student Conduct Code:

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual's work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another's idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student's language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or "drylabbing," which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms. From the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Student Conduct Code (1992), p. 6.

It is ultimately each student's responsibility to learn about plagiarism and how to avoid it. Ignorance of the rules, saying "I forgot about that" or "I made a mistake" are not considered valid excuses when it comes to plagiarism.

**REGARDING THIS SYLLABUS ON THE WEB:** Students: Please be advised that this syllabus is provided for informational purposes only. **YOU SHOULD NOT PURCHASE ANY BOOKS OR MATERIALS ON THE BASIS OF THIS SYLLABUS AS IT MAY CHANGE PRIOR TO THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS.** Please wait until the first day of instruction at which time you will be given the final version of the syllabus.