

Version 1 (as of August 22)
Sociology 609 Seminar: Qualitative Research
Thursdays 12:00-2:30, Sakamaki B 309

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Course description

This graduate level course provides an overview of qualitative methods typically used in sociology. The course will familiarize students with different techniques of qualitative data gathering such as interviewing and ethnography. How to analyze the data that you have gathered will also be discussed. In addition to techniques of data gathering, students will gain understanding of different epistemologies and methodologies that underpin diverse research traditions, such as positivist and feminist epistemologies. The course will also cover issues related to ethics in social research.

Each week, readings strive to provide students with two types of readings. First is the methodological discussion that elaborates on debates in the field. Second is an example of a method/methodology in sociological research, helping students to see how method/methodology actually works in real work. This could be a section in a monograph that focuses on methods that the author used, or empirical chapter or a journal article. These are helpful in seeing how authors apply particular methods and how they justify the choice of the method and how they articulate the broad literature with a particular dataset.

Almost every week has a writing assignment. These are meant to help students move along in their own research projects. In addition to learning about methods and methodologies, these assignments provide hands-on experience with processes and techniques of social science research.

The course aspires to be a space where students can work and share their projects. Students enrolled in this class are expected to have a research project that is related to your career in graduate school. It could be a journal article, dissertation proposal, or a chapter in a dissertation.

Each class meeting will have two components. First section is devoted to understanding the literature and key theoretical debates based on the assigned readings. Second section is for students to discuss their work. Typically this section centers on the writing assignment for the week. Students share what they wrote for the assignment and help each other improve the assignments. In addition, students can use this time to check in with each other, sharing concerns and challenges in research process and offering suggestions and support.

Student learning objectives

- to gain deep understanding of epistemological debates on social science methods
- to understand what makes a good research question and how to put that question into conversation with the existing literature
- to gain a sense of a range of methods used by sociologists and to be able to discern the fit between a research question and a method
- to develop an idea of your own research and method
- to acquire skills in utilizing interview and ethnography and in analyzing the acquired data
- to make some progress on your own research project, such as dissertation proposal or a journal article that you are working on

Assigned readings

Although I highly recommend that you purchase the books that I use in this class, all the readings are available online (either through the UHM library website or through Laulima- check under “resources”).

Course Schedule

1. Introduction (August 23)

Lofland, John, David Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. (2006). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observations and Analysis* (2006) Belmont: Wadsworth. “Starting where you are” (p. 9- 14).

Sign up for which day you would like to lead class discussion.

2. Epistemology, methodology, and method (August 30)

Creswell, John W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. “Philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks”

Sprague, Joey. 2005. *Feminist methodologies for critical researchers: bridging differences*. Chapter 1 and 2

Hesse-Biber, Sarlene N. Patricia Leavy, and Michelle L. Yaiser (2003). *Feminist Perspectives in Social Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. “Feminist approaches to research as a process: reconceptualizing epistemology, methodology, and method”

Tuhiwai, Smith (2013). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books. “chapter 9: “responding to the imperatives of an indigenous agenda: a case study of Maori” (The book is accessible through the library website).

Assignment #1 Due in class.

3. Participatory research (September 6)

Wallerstein, Nina and Bonnie Duran (2008). “the theoretical, historical, and practice roots of CBPR” in *Community Based Participatory Research for Health* (eds). Minkler, Meredith and Nina Wallerstein. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons. Chapter 2. (The book is available from the library website).

Farquhar, S. A. and Steve Wang. (2008). “Methodological and ethical considerations in community-driven environmental justice research” in *Community Based Participatory Research for Health* (eds). Minkler, Meredith and Nina Wallerstein. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons. P. 221-241 (The book is available from the library website).

Wang, Caroline C. (2008) “Using photovoice as a participatory assessment and issue selection tool: a case study with the homeless in Ann Arbor” in *Community Based Participatory Research for Health* (eds). Minkler, Meredith and Nina Wallerstein. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons. P. 179-200. (The book is available from the library website).

Example: Bell, Shannon Elizabeth. 2013. *Our Roots Run Deep as Ironweed: Appalachian Women and the Fight for Environmental Justice*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2013. Please access the ebook via library website.

Assignment #2 Due in class.

4. Literature review (September 13)

Lichtman, Marilyn (2014). *Qualitative Research for the Social Sciences*. London: Sage Publications. Chapter 9 “A review of a research literature”.

Stake, Robert E. (2010). *Qualitative Research : Studying How Things Work*. London: Gilford Publishing. Chapter 6 “Review of Literature: Zooming to See the Problem.” (The book is available via library website).

Machi, Lawrence and Brenda McEvoy (2016). *The Literature Review: Six Steps to Success*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. “Step three: search the literature”

Packer, Nancy Haddleston and John Timpane. 1997. *Writing Worth Reading: The Critical Process*. Boston: Bedford. P. 353-372 “limiting your area of research”

Clark, Irene. L. *Writing the Successful Thesis and Dissertation*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education. P. 105-115.

Example: Dillaway, H. 2005. “Menopause is the ‘good old’: women’ thoughts about reproductive aging.” *Gender and Society* 19 (3): 398-417. (Pay attention to how she summarizes the existing literature and how she relates it to her own research and interview data)

Assignment #3 Due in class.

5. Designing the study (September 20)

Luker, Kristin (2010). *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-glut*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Chapter 4 “what is this a case of, anyway?” and chapter 6 “On sampling, operationalization, and generalization”

Silverman, David (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (Third Ed). London: Sage. Chapter 1 “beginning research”

Richards, Lyn. (2017). *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*. Los Angeles: Sage. Chapter 1 “Setting up your project”

Example: Desmond, Matthew (2016). *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Broadway Books. “About this project”

Assignment #4 Due in class.

6. Ethics (September 27)

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene N. “Chapter 3: The Ethics of Social Research”

Bell, Linda. (2014). “Ethics and feminist research” in *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. (ed) Sharlene N. Hesse-Biber. London: Sage.

Halse, Christine and Anne Honey. 2005. “Unraveling ethics: illuminating the moral dilemmas of research ethics.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 30 (4): 2141-2162

Also check out UH Manoa’s website on human subject protection <http://www.hawaii/edu/irb/index.htm>

Assignment #5 Due in class.

7. Grounded theory and extended case method (October 4)

Creswell, John W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. "Grounded theory research" (p. 83-90 and appendix D)

Tavory, Iddo, and Stefan Timmermans (2009). "Two cases of ethnography: Grounded theory and the extended case method." *Ethnography* 10 (3) : 243-263.

Burawoy, M. (2009). *The Extended Case Method: Four Countries, Four Decades, Four Great Transformations, and One Theoretical Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press. "introduction" (the entire book is available from the library).

Lichterman, P. "seeing structure happen" in *Methods of Social Movement Research* edited by Bert Klandermans, Suzanne Staggenborg. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Example: Alkon, Alison Hope, and Teresa Marie Mares. "Food sovereignty in US food movements: Radical visions and neoliberal constraints." *Agriculture and Human Values* 29.3 (2012): 347-359.

Assignment # 6 Due in class

8. Ethnography (October 11)

Kahn, Shamus. "Field observation: ethnography" in *The Practice of Research: How Social Scientists Answer Their Questions* (2014) (eds.) Shamus Khan and Dana R. Fisher. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. P. 90-108.

Silverman, David (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (Third Ed). London: Sage. Chapter 3 "Ethnography and observation"

"Evaluating data sites" (p. 15- 32) in *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observations and Analysis* (2006) John Lofland, David Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Schwedler, Jullian 2006. "The third gender: western female researchers in the Middle East?" *Political Science and Politics*. No. 3

Naples, Nancy. 2003. "Standpoint analysis and reflective practice" in *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Activist Research*. Routledge.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter TBA.

Assignment #7 Due in class

9. Interviewing (October 18)

Silverman, David (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (Third Ed). London: Sage. Chapter 4 "interviews"

Fisher, Dana R. "field interviewing" in *The Practice of Research: How Social Scientists Answer Their Questions* (2014) (eds.) Shamus Khan and Dana R. Fisher. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. P. 109-126.

Blee, K. and Verta Taylor. (2002). "Semi-structured interviewing in social movement research" in *Methods of Social Movement Research* edited by Bert Klandermans, Suzanne Staggenborg. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Sprague, Joey. 2005. *Feminist methodologies for critical researchers: bridging differences*. Chapter 5

Anderson, K. and Dana Jack (1991) "Learning to Listen" in *Women's Words* (eds) Sherna Gluck and Daphne Patai. Routledge New York.

Assignment # 8 Due in class.

10. Focus group interview (October 25)

Hennink, Monique M. (2014). *Focus Group Discussions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 1 "introducing focus group discussions"

Chapter 2 "Designing and conducting focus group research"

Wilkinson, Sue.2004. "Focus groups: a feminist method" in *Feminist Perspectives in Social Research* (eds) Hesse-Bilber, Sharlene and M. Yaisen. Oxford University Press.

Munday, J. (2014). "The practice of feminist focus groups" in *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. (ed) Sharlene N. Hesse-Biber. London: Sage.

Example: Rubin, Lisa R., Carol J. Nemeroff, and Nancy Felipe Russo. "Exploring feminist women's body consciousness." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 28.1 (2004): 27-37.

Assignment #9 Due in class.

11. Content Analysis (November 1)

Silverman, David (2006). *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (Third Ed). London: Sage. Chapter 5 "texts"

Brown, Jessica. "Content Analysis" in *The Practice of Research: How Social Scientists Answer Their Questions* (2014) (eds.) Shamus Khan and Dana R. Fisher. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. p. 168-187

Gibbs, Graham R. (2007). *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. "Chapter 4 Thematic coding and categorizing" p. 38-55.

Andersson, Kjerstin. "Constructing young masculinity: A case study of heroic discourse on violence." *Discourse & Society* 19.2 (2008): 139-161.

12. Narrative analysis (November 8)

Riesmann, K. Narrative Analysis. Selected chapters.

Gibbs, Graham R. (2007). *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. "Chapter 5: Analyzing biographies and narratives"

Creswell, John W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. P. 70-75 and Appendix B

Example: Creswell, John W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Appendix B

Assignment #10 (Draft) due in class

13. Cultural materials (November 15)

McIntosh, H. and Lisa Cuklanz. (2014). “Feminist media research” in *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer*. (ed) Sharlene N. Hesse-Biber. London: Sage.

Spencer, S., (2011). *Visual Research Methods in the Social Sciences: Awakening Visions*. London: Routledge. “Visualizing identity”

Example: Dworkin, S. 2009. “What kinds of subjects and objects?: gender, consumer culture, and convergence” and “Size matters: male body panic and the Third Wave ‘crisis of masculinity’ in *Body Panic : Gender, Health, and the Selling of Fitness*. New York: New York University Press.

Assignment #10 due in class

14. Writing up (November 29)

Watts, Michael. “The holy grail: in pursuit of the dissertation proposal.”

Member, Pam (2003). “NSF grant reviewer tells all” *Science* <http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2003/04/nsf-grant-reviewer-tells-all>

Lofland, John, David Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. (2006). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observations and Analysis* (2006) Belmont: Wadsworth. “chapter 8: Arousing interest”

Lofland, John, David Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. (2006). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observations and Analysis* (2006) Belmont: Wadsworth. “Chapter 10: Writing analysis” .

Allison Tong, Peter Sainsbury, Jonathan Craig; Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups, *International Journal for Quality in Health Care*, Volume 19, Issue 6, 1 December 2007, Pages 349–357. Accessible at <https://academic.oup.com/intqhc/article/19/6/349/1791966>. (Also see the checklist on Laulima).

Example: Look at research proposal examples here <https://iis.berkeley.edu/node/426>

Assignment #11 (Draft) due in class

15. Final day of class (December 6)

Assignment #11 due in class

Assignments

1. Your journey
 - a. This is a paper about your biography, intellectual curiosity, and your research project. Who are you? How has your personal history and connections to the world around you shape your path to graduate school and the research project? What are the social worlds that you navigate in your daily life? What are the issues and ideas that you find particularly resonating? How do you articulate the emotional engagement that you have with your research project?
 - b. Single-spaced, 1-2 pages.
2. Method
 - a. Find one highly cited book/journal article on the topic of your research. (You can find the citations by going into ISI Web of Knowledge). Choose the most favorite one and summarize it in one paragraph the following.
 - b. What is the research question? What is the method? How would you describe its methodology?
 - c. Single-spaced, 1-2 page.
3. Method reflection
 - a. Pick one qualitative research project by another researcher that is highly cited on your research topic.
 - b. What is the research question? What is the gap in knowledge that the research is trying to fill? Was it justifiable that the researcher did a qualitative research? Why? What was the method of study and how was it justified over other methods? Would you have done the research differently? (by asking a different question/adopting a different method)
 - c. Additionally, find three studies that cite this study. Describe how the other authors situate (or “map”) this particular study.
 - d. Single-spaced, 4-5 pages.
4. Search Log and Literature review
 - a. Search for the literature on your research topic. Keep the search log (template will be provided).
 - b. Come up with the list of 25 academic books/articles. Cut and paste their bibliographic information.
 - c. Create either “author map” or “core idea map” (see Machi and McEvoy).
 - d. Be ready to explain it in class.
5. Interview consent form
 - a. Following a model that is provided by the instructor, create your own interview consent form (if conducting an interview in a different language other than English, also provide the version in that language).
 - b. Single space, 1-2 pages.
6. Research statement
 - a. Building on your literature review, write about your research question and how it is related to the existing literature. Justify your choice of method(s) and data. Elaborate on how your research will contribute to the literature.
 - b. Single space, 5-10 pages.
7. Field notes
 - a. Throughout the semester, you should try to go to a “field” of your choice that is related to your project. Try to take notes whenever you are there.
 - b. Following the assigned readings, submit field notes for a particular day.
 - c. Single space, 5-8 pages.
8. Interview guide
 - a. Identify the interview topic and interviewee and justify your selection in relation to the literature. Also consider the interviewer-interviewee relationship.
 - b. In addition, provide the list of interview questions and elaborate on your strategy.
 - c. 3-5 pages.
9. Interview transcript
 - a. Conduct one face-to-face inter view and record it after securing permission from your interviewee.

- b. Transcribe verbatim one interview (45 min- 1 hour).
10. Analysis of interview
- a. Analyze the interview transcript for themes and concepts. Write up in relation to the existing literature and your particular research question.
 - b. Single space, 5-10 pages.
11. Annotated draft of a professional product of your choice
- a. This is a flexible assignment that you should utilize to fit your needs.
 - b. Consult the instructor in terms of the length of paper and the format.
12. Leading a class discussion
- a. Students should sign up for a date when they take a facilitating role in class discussion. By Wednesday 5 pm HST, the discussion leader should email the class his/her discussion questions.
 - b. Discussion questions need to be
 - i. At least 4 questions
 - ii. Draw tightly from the assigned readings and cite them
 - iii. Analytical than factual, thought-provoking and engaging.