

`Soc 607 Spring, 2017  
Wednesday, 3-5:30 p.m.  
Bus. Ad E202

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## **Seminar in Qualitative Content Analysis**

### ***Course Description***

This is a hands-on course in qualitative content analysis. It will cover a range of ways to analyze the content of qualitative data, both by hand and with the aid of computer software. Content analysis stands at the intersection of qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology. It begins with qualitative data, but often transforms the data into coded form for quantitative analysis. We will cover a range of approaches, with emphasis on making use of readily available general purpose software and free or readily available specialized software applications.

Students should come to the course with a qualitative content analysis project in mind, preferably one for which an appropriate and available data source has already been identified. The data source might be any kind of “text” (including visual images or other multimedia forms), in any language you can read, which you can treat as a body of data for systematic sociological analysis. You will work with your data throughout the course and produce a seminar paper in two drafts. If your data are from a larger project, you may need to work with a small subset in order to complete the seminar paper for the course. There will also be required class exercises so that you can try out various approaches that may not be appropriate for your particular data and project.

Because you will need to work on your project during the class, you should plan to bring a laptop to the class each week (with a USB flash drive for backup). We will be using MS Word, Excel, and Access. If you do not have that software on your computer, you will need to get it.

### ***Course Goals***

You will learn the following in this course:

1. the basic principles and procedures of qualitative content analysis in sociology, including the need for appropriate sampling and systematic data analysis in order to produce results that meet accepted sociological standards of reliability and validity;
2. how to devise a sampling strategy that will maximize the potential of your data analysis while remaining feasible in terms of time and effort;
3. the difference between tables in a text program, spreadsheets, statistical analysis programs using flat file formats, relational database programs, and dedicated CAQDAS programs, and which is most appropriate for particular tasks;
4. how to do both deductive and inductive coding of qualitative data systematically and flexibly, using appropriate tools;
5. how to use general purpose text (MSWord), database (MSAccess), and image organizing software as tools for various aspects of data processing, coding, and analysis;
6. how to compare these general purpose tools to expensive dedicated CAQDAS packages and make informed decisions about which to use;
7. how to use other readily available software to extend the analysis, such as mapping concepts and relationships, and analyzing sequential or spatial patterns;
8. how to move coded data between programs easily in order to do more elaborate charting or quantitative analysis in Excel, SPSS, network analysis software, or GIS software;
9. how to plan and carry out a qualitative content analysis research project using appropriate software tools;
10. how to write an article-length sociological research paper based on qualitative content analysis of a particular body of data.

Course SLOs: This course will develop your understanding of content analysis (a sociological research method that is both qualitative and quantitative) and how to apply it to a specific research project; it will develop your ability to analyze data and write a data-based research report; and it will develop your ability to report your research findings orally.

### ***Texts and Required Software***

Margrit Schreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*. Sage Publications, Inc., 2012.

The materials will be posted on Laulima or may be a coursepack at Professional Image (CP)

Microsoft Office Pro PC version **that includes Access**. If you are a Mac user, you will either need a virtual PC program so that the Access program will run on your computer, or if you have a newer (Intel) Mac with a big hard drive, you can partition the hard drive and install Windows and MS Office in a new partition. Access is NOT available in the Mac versions of Office, and the alternatives for Mac are not robust enough for what we will be doing, so don't even think about it. The Bookstore offers a 4 year Office 365 package license for \$79.95 that is good for two installations, and the PC version ONLY includes Access. Bookstore price is the same as Amazon's for that version. I will have assignment instructions for Access 2007 that also work for 2010. If you happen to have Access 2003 already available on your laptop, I do have older instructions that will work for that version.

You may want to purchase a manual for MS Access, but wait to do so until after the first class.

### ***Weekly Schedule***

#### **January 11 Introduction and Initial Class Exercise on Range of Uses of Content Analysis**

##### **Powerpoint: QCA#1 What is Qualitative Content Analysis?**

##### **Handouts to download:**

- Managing your work for the QCA seminar
- Assignment #1 Planning Your Research Project
- Existing Research Class Activity

##### **Class Activity: Research using content analysis**

Follow the instructions for Existing Research Class Activity

For class discussion:

- How is content analysis being used, based on class activity
- What you plan to do
- What you will need for the course

##### **Homework Assignment: Assignment #1 Research Plan Assignment**

#### **January 18 Different Approaches to Content Analysis**

##### **Reading for this class:**

- Weber, Robert Philip, *Basic Content Analysis*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences Series, A Sage University Paper. Thousand Oaks, CA: 1990., pp. 9-49. (CP)
- Hesse-Biber, Sharlene and Patricia Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2005, pp. 279-340. (CP)
- Lewins, Ann and Christina Silver, *Using Software in Qualitative Research, a Step-by-Step Guide*. Los Angeles and London: Sage Publication, Inc., 2007, pp. 6-15. (CP)

Shreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*, chapters 1-3, pp. 1-57.

Reading Questions: How do the views of content analysis in these articles differ? What elements are similar? Extract some basic principles of content analysis to discuss in class. How is content analysis related to the broader field of computer-aided qualitative analysis that uses CAQDAS software? Can you begin to locate your proposed research project within this arena?

**Assignments DUE:**

1. homework portion of initial class exercise.
2. **Assignment I.** Select project and complete first parts of assignment worksheet to turn in. Go as far as you can on the worksheet (I, II, maybe III), and identify areas where you need further discussion or knowledge in order to proceed.

**Powerpoints:**

**QCA#2 Sampling and Units of analysis**

**QCA #3 Starting to Manage Data for Content Analysis**

**Handouts to download:**

**Six Ways to Mark Text in Word**

**Assignment #3, Starting to Work with Texts**

**Class Activity: Using Word to mark up documents**

Use any Word document already on your computer, but be sure to make a separate copy!

**Homework:**

**Assignment #2,** Fill in more of Research Project Plan (III, IV) Develop a basic data plan for your project that describes the data source, parameters, sampling procedures and unit of analysis for the content analysis.

**Assignment #3,** instructions on handout

For class discussion:

Basic components of content analysis

How content analysis is currently being used in sociology (results of homework exercise)

Initial discussion of each person's project and data source

Forms of data and what you can do with them.

When and how to sample.

Units of Analysis for content analysis projects

What kinds of content analysis do you think your material will support?

When might it be useful to use CAQDAS software and when not?

**January 25 Conceptual Aspects of Coding Qualitative Data**

**Reading for this class:**

Shreier, *Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice*, chapters 4-6, pp. 58-125.

Lewins, Ann and Christina Silver, *Using Software in Qualitative Research, a Step-by-Step Guide*. Los Angeles and London: Sage Publication, Inc., 2007, pp. 81-90. (CP)

Christensen, Wendy, and Myra Marx Ferree, "Cowboy of the World? Gender Discourse and the Iraq War Debate" in Gilda Zwerman and Patricia Steinhoff, eds., *Special Issue on Political Violence, Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 31 #3, September 2008, pp. 287-306. (CP)

Robinson, Laura, "the Moral Accounting of Terrorism: Competing Interpretations of September 11, 2001" in Gilda Zwerman and Patricia Steinhoff, eds., *Special Issue on Political Violence, Qualitative Sociology*, Vol. 31 #3, September 2008, pp.271-285. (CP)

**Class Discussion:**

How do Schreier and Lewins and Silver help you prepare to code your data?  
What can we learn about systematic qualitative content analysis from the two case studies?

**Assignments Due for Class:**

1. Assignment II Due for Class: Using the Research Project Plan worksheet, develop a basic data plan for your project and do a brief write-up of the data source, data parameters, sampling procedure if needed, and identify the basic unit(s) of analysis. Fill in the relevant parts of your worksheet and be prepared to report in class as well as hand in the latest version of your worksheet.
2. Assignment III Due for Class: Bring in 3 or more examples of your data source in their naturally occurring form. If they need to be transformed to be usable, try out the possible transformations and bring these examples to class along with the originals. Note how much time it takes you to do the transformation. If the data are already in computerized form, bring both the files and a printout, and try marking up the text in Word (on a copy!). Get familiar with your examples so you can see what sorts of information they contain.

**Powerpoint: QCA#4 Basic Concept of Data Coding****Handout to download: Assignment#4: Starting to Code Data****Class Activity:** Begin Assignment #4 with index cards on sample data**February 1 Developing a Coding and Recording System**

Reading for this class:

Alexander, Michael, Microsoft Access 2007 Data Analysis. Indianapolis, IN: Wiley Publishing Inc., pp. 3-50. (CP)

Assignments Due for Class:

1. Preliminary Coding. Use your sample cases to do preliminary coding and try different methods following instructions in the assignment #4 handout. Bring your Excel spreadsheet and coding examples to class and be prepared to analyze and discuss the process you used and the kinds of coding you did.
2. Be sure you have MS Access on the laptop you bring to class. Open it and play with it a little as you read the Alexander chapter.
3. Go to a big bookstore (such as Barnes and Noble) and in the computer section, look through the various MS Access manuals. Look at the level of detail and the style of explanation. If you like having a manual for new software, buy the most appropriate one for the version of Access you are using. Be careful, because there are differences between Access 2003 and Access 2007 and having a manual for the wrong version will drive you crazy. Access 2010 is very similar to 2007. You can also check out the online help support that is available within Access and see if that will be sufficient. If you purchase a manual, bring it to class (after reading the basic information about data types and tables so you are ready to start working in Access).

**Powerpoint: QCA#5 Understanding Relational Databases****Handout to Download:****Assignment #5: Getting Started in Access****Class Activity: Begin making your own database by converting your Excel spreadsheet****February 8 Making Your Access Database Work to Streamline Coding**

Assignment Due for Class:

Bring in the initial stages of your Access database on your laptop, following the instructions

in the assignment sheet and handout. We will work on your database in class and develop forms for data entry. Bring in some of your data so you can get started on real coding.

**Class Demo: Interactive demo instead of a Powerpoint**

**Handouts to Download:**

**How to Make a Data Entry Form in Access**

**Assignment #6 Main Coding Assignment**

**Class Activity:** Start making a data entry form for your database

**Assignments:** Main Coding Assignment for next 3 weeks

Review and update your research project plan

**February 15 Analyzing Content Data**

**Powerpoint:** QCA#6 Using Queries in Access

**Handout to download:** Making and Using Queries in Access

**Class Activity:** Try some queries in your database

**Workshop session to deal with any data or coding problems**

Assignments Due for Class:

1. Bring in your database and any problems you are having with it.
2. Turn in your updated Research Project Plan with all the parts you now can complete.

**February 22 Lab session in class to work on your project and deal with problems**

Assignments Due for Class:

1. Bring in your database and any problems you are having with it.
2. Short class discussion about coding problems and ways to resolve them

**March 1 Writing a Content Analysis Paper**

**Powerpoint:** QCA#7 Doing Qualitative Analysis with Content Data

**Handout to download:** Basic Outline for a Content Analysis Paper

**Class Activity:** Workshop session on individual problems

**Class discussion on getting from data to research paper**

Assignments Due for Class:

1. Bring in your database and any problems you are having with it.
2. Find and read three published sociological articles that relate directly to your project in some way and use them to begin shaping your research paper. Add them to your Research Project Plan and be prepared to tell us in class how they relate to your paper conceptually or methodologically. You may want to go back to your initial search for content analysis articles or repeat it now that you know what you are doing in your own project.

**March 8 Using Access Data for Quantitative Analysis**

**Interactive Presentation**

**Handout to download:** Using Access, Excel, and SPSS for Quantitative Analysis

**Class Activity:**

1. what you can do IN Access
2. exporting and importing numeric data using Access queries

Lab session in class to work on your project and prepare for draft writeup

1. Bring in your database and any problems you are having with it.
2. Discuss any problems with how to write up your preliminary analysis

**March 15 Instructor out of town Class to be made up in exam period**

**March 22 Special Methods I: Event Analysis & Event History Analysis of Newspaper data**

\*\*First draft of paper due in class.

**Powerpoint: QCA#8 Protest Event Analysis and Related Topics**

**Handout to be developed**

**Class Activity:** Workshop to resolve problems in your project  
Discussion of applicability of these methods

**March 29 Spring vacation**

**April 5 Special Methods II: Event Sequence Analysis and Narrative Analysis methods**

**Powerpoint: QCA#9 Narrative and Sequential Approaches**

**Handout to be developed**

**Class Activity:** Workshop to resolve problems in your project  
Discussion of applicability of these methods

**April 12 Special Methods III: Network Relations and Network Analysis Methods**

**Powerpoint: QCA#10 Network Analysis**

**Handout to be developed**

**Class Activity:** Workshop to resolve problems in your project  
Discussion of applicability of these methods

**April 19 Special Methods IV: Conceptual and Spatial Mapping Methods**

**Powerpoint: QCA#11 Spatial Analysis Using Content Analysis Data**

**Handout to be developed**

**Class Activity:** Workshop to resolve problems in your project  
Discussion of applicability of these methods

**April 26 Student presentations in class**

**May 3 Student presentations in class, Final Draft of Research Paper Due**