SAMPLE SYLLABUS:  
THIS SYLLABUS IS FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES ONLY. 
A FINAL SYLLABUS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa  
Department of Sociology

Sociology 609 (3 credits)  
Seminar in Qualitative Research

Instructor:  
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I  Rationale for course
This seminar will focus on designing, conducting, analyzing and interpreting data using qualitative research methods. The course will begin with an overview of the epistemology of qualitative theory and methods, followed by selection of research topics and questions, and designing a qualitative study by enhancing method-topic “fit.” The course will focus on three specific qualitative research methods: Straus, Glaser and Charmaz’s approach to grounded theory, in-depth interviewing, and community-based fieldwork. In addition, data analysis and interpretation using NVivo qualitative software will also be covered.

The standpoint of this course will include epistemological perspectives from the “borders,” which include indigenous and “insider” perspectives, i.e., when researchers study those spaces, places, histories and peoples about which they have intimate knowledge and/or experience. Critical analysis and discussion of such research concepts as “objectivity,” “generalizability,” and “reliability” will be examined through the lenses of researchers who are women, people of color, indigenous workers, the poor, lesbians and gay men, community practitioners, and others from the margins.

Each student will engage in a qualitative research project over the course of the semester that will serve as the reflexive substance to which course readings, lectures and other class content will be applied.

II  Student Learning Objectives
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
A. Demonstrate understanding of the historical, social, and political contexts upon which the research endeavor has been built
B. Describe key concepts, theories, perspectives and standpoints that inform both “conventional” and “critical” research epistemologies
C. Explain the major perspectives, concepts and methods associated with interviewing, grounded theory, and community-based field work from a qualitative approach

D. Be able to conduct preliminary data analyses using NVivo

E. Design and carry out a small scale qualitative research project

F. Show evidence of critical thinking regarding standpoints of researchers “at the margins,” such as people of color, women, LGBT, immigrants, and others who employ qualitative research methods

G. Be able to contextualize the qualitative research endeavor in the cultural, social and historical context of Hawai‘i and the Pacific basin

III. Course Texts and Readings

There are four required texts for the course, all available at the UH Bookstore and other on-line, Web booksellers.


Additional readings and handouts will be distributed in class. In Section V. Course Content and Class Schedule, reading assignments from the required texts are designated by the initials of the author’s last names e.g., “D&L,” for Denzin and Lincoln. Supplemental reading assignments are designated by author’s last name, e.g., “Smith.”

IV. Assignments and the Criteria Used in Grading

As a graduate seminar, the main focus of this course is to engage learners in complex and critical thinking about qualitative research methods. Critical dialogue is a foundation of the course in the spirit and method of Paulo Friere’s conscientization and praxis. This pedagogical approach refers to becoming fully conscious of one’s own social world, internal states, and “station” in life, and blending theory + practice → action with the goal of changing oppressive conditions in the world through the research project. We are engaged in learning through this course to better understand how the generation of knowledge, meaning-making, and exploring sociological questions occur through qualitative research epistemologies and methods.

There are three main assignments for this course. Listed below is a description of each assignment, learning objectives, and how the assignment will be evaluated.

1. Class Participation (33% of grade)

Learning objectives of assignment: To actively participate in one’s own learning; to contribute to others’ learning in the class; to show ability to think critically about diverse ways we teach and learn from each other.

Description of assignment:

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As a graduate seminar, students are expected to interact with other students, the instructor, the reading materials, guest speakers, and other learning activities in the course. Active participation includes orally joining in class discussions, sharing external information of interest relevant to the course, and assisting yourself and others to enhance the learning environment of the class.

In addition, each student will prepare to facilitate a class discussion of assigned readings at least once during the semester. There are readings assigned for each class session, from which students will select one chapter or article to discuss with the class during that session. Students should prepare a brief summary of the reading they’ve selected, along with critical questions or issues to engage the class in an interactive discussion related to the reading.

Evaluation of assignment:
Class participation will be evaluated based on meeting objectives for the assignment as listed above.

2. Qualitative Research Project (33% of grade)

Learning objectives of assignment: To practice designing and implementing a small-scale qualitative research study; to demonstrate knowledge and application of key research concepts and methods as discussed in class; to use research project as process for learning and sharing with other students in class.

Description of assignment:
All students will design and carry out a small-scale qualitative research project over the semester. Topics for the project must be approved in advance and must be realistic in scope such that it can be fully completed in one semester. The project will include all steps including generation of research topic and questions; study design, data collection, management, analysis and interpretation; final write-up of study (assignment #3 below). Students may work together on research projects, as approved by the instructor.

Students will share all aspects of their research process with peers in the class, applying concepts, lectures, readings and discussions to their projects. There are three parts to this assignment: 1) submission and approval of research proposal, 2) maintaining a journal of notes, musings, questions about your research process that will be shared in class, 3) using NVivo to analyze data collected, if appropriate to project.

Evaluation of assignment:
 Students will submit each of the three parts of this assignment at various points during the semester for review by other students and the instructor. Each of the three parts of this assignment will be worth 11% of your grade (33% total).

3. Qualitative Research Paper (34% of grade)

Learning objectives of assignment: To demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a specific topic as studied using qualitative methods; to engage in critical thinking and integration of knowledge, skills and analysis related to qualitative epistemologies and methods; to show graduate-level research and writing skills.

Description of assignment:
An integrative report of the research project carried out over the semester will be submitted as the final paper for the course. Students will be required to submit to the instructor the research proposal, preliminary findings, and outline of their final papers at different points during the semester.

All papers must be substantive, and therefore at least 15-20 pages in length not including references. References used in the paper must demonstrate in-depth research into the paper topic. Web-based sources cannot comprise the main or sole references for the paper. All papers should be written using the professional style guidelines of the student’s major discipline, such as APA, ASA or Chicago.

**Evaluation of assignment:**

Papers will be graded on meeting learning objectives for this assignment above.

V. **Special Notes:**

This course assumes that we are all adult learners in a collaborative learning environment. We ask each other to respect and be accountable to the objectives, activities and assignments established for this course, and by doing so we also ask each other to respect the “spirit” of being collaborative learners in this venture.

**Academic Conduct**

The University of Hawai`i explicitly prohibits cheating or plagiarism of any kind in the academic environment. The UH Code of Student Conduct, Section 1D. Academic Dishonesty states:

“Cheating includes but is not limited to giving or receiving unauthorized assistance during an examination; obtaining unauthorized information about an examination before it is given; submitting another’s work as one’s own; using prohibited sources of information during an examination; fabricating or falsifying data in experiments and other research; altering the record of any grade; altering answers after an examination has been submitted; falsifying any official University record; or misrepresenting of facts in order to obtain exemptions from course requirements.

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.”

Also, 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 with 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.
# Course Content and Class Schedule

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<th>Class Date</th>
<th>Class Session Content</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Introductions; overview of course; exploring research interests</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>The qualitative research project</td>
<td>D&amp;L: 1-3; S&amp;M: 1-5</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Epistemological conundrums in qualitative research</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Designing a qualitative research project</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
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<td>K&amp;B: 1, 2, 4, 5; D&amp;L: 4</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Interviewing II</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Grounded Theory I</td>
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<td>Reflections on qualitative research</td>
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<td>Week 17</td>
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SAMPLE Supplementary Authors/Articles/Chapter Readings


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