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)

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

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


Assignment #1 Due in class.

3. Participatory research (September 6)


Assignment #2 Due in class.
4. Literature review (September 13)


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)


Assignment #4 Due in class.

6. Ethics (September 27)

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


Also check out UH Manoa’s website on human subject protection [http://www.hawaii.edu/irb/index.htm](http://www.hawaii.edu/irb/index.htm)
Assignment #5 Due in class.

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


Assignment # 6 Due in class

8. **Ethnography (October 11)**


Assignment #7 Due in class

9. **Interviewing (October 18)**


Assignment # 8 Due in class.

### 10. Focus group interview (October 25)
Chapter 2 “Designing and conducting focus group research”


Assignment #9 Due in class.

### 11. Content Analysis (November 1)


### 12. Narrative analysis (November 8)
Riesmann, K. Narrative Analysis. Selected chapters.


Assignment #10 (Draft) due in class

13. Cultural materials  (November 15)


Assignment #10 due in class

14. Writing up (November 29)


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


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?

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?

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 interview 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.