SOCIOLOGY 518: QUALITATIVE METHODS IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

FALL 2017

WEDNESDAYS 9:00 – 11:50 TORY 4-4

Department of Sociology, University of Alberta

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this graduate seminar we will explore a selection of qualitative techniques for collecting and analyzing data (methods), and the range of approaches to qualitative research (methodologies). Throughout this journey we will examine and consider the theoretical and epistemological underpinnings of qualitative research. The intent of this seminar is to develop a reflexive practice by engaging in a number of debates: truth claims based on qualitative evidence, the accountability and positionality of researchers, the complexities of ethics, the politics of representation, and the complexities of defining things like culture, experience, and validity.

In order to be successful in this seminar you must manage your time so that you regularly and consistently prepare for class readings and discussions, explore the literature (substantive and methodological) relevant to your major paper, and track, write about, and reflect on your research project (in the portfolio). Attendance in all seminars is mandatory.

Policy about course outlines can be found in §23.4(2) of the University Calendar

PREREQUISITE:

SOC 418 or the equivalent. Students are expected to have basic familiarity and experience with qualitative research methods and social theory.
READINGS

Required for course:


Recommended as Overview/Background:

Mayan, Maria J. (2009) *Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry*. Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press. [on reserve at Rutherford: GN 345 M39 2009]


Useful Selected References and Resources:


The SAGE Qualitative Research Kit (electronic books through U of A Libraries)

Some Relevant Journals:
*American Ethnologist*  
*Ethnography*  
*Journal of Qual Methods*  
*Jnl of Contemporary Ethnography*  
*Narrative Inquiry Discourse*  
*Qualitative Inquiry*  
*Qualitative Research Int’l*  
*Qualitative Sociology*  
*Visual Anthropology Review*

**GRADING & COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
Percent grades are based on holistic evaluations throughout the term. Total percent grades are cumulatively computed using a weighted calculation according to each of the below assignment descriptions. Final letter grades will determined at the end of the term after all course requirements are fulfilled, and will be allocated according to the following grade contract.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>96-100</td>
<td>A+</td>
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<td>91-95</td>
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<td>Good</td>
<td>81-85</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>Satisfactory</td>
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<td>Poor</td>
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<td>Minimal Pass</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>0-48</td>
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Please note: There is no rounding-up policy in this course. For example, a final course average of 90.2%, 90.5%, or 90.9% all receive a final % grade of 90 (not 91) and thus a letter grade of “A-”.

**Important Grading/Marking Comments**
I will provide feedback to you on all written assignments and in a timely manner. However my ability to do so depends on you handing in assignments on time. I deduct 5% for each day of a late assignment unless you and I have agreed on another course of action due to an understandable and acceptable delay. Grades will be provided to you in number form; see above for how these translate into letter grades. Your final letter grade for the course is determined by calculating the average across weighted assignments. I will only give a final course grade of ‘Incomplete’ in exceptional circumstances. Normally, if you have missing term work (i.e., in December) I will assign a letter grade based on completed assignments and note that there is missing work. Missing work must be handed in by an agreed upon date in order for the grade to be changed. Final grades will be consistent with GFC graduate marking guidelines. The following conditions apply for students requesting that their course work and final grade be re-evaluated: first, you must present an argument explaining why your work should be re-evaluated and, second, you must make your request for re-
evaluation within one week of having your grade posted.

**Seminar Ground Rules**

Seminars allow exploration and open discussion of issues and topics that may well present a problem for some students. It is important during discussions that students keep an open mind, take into account one another’s perspectives, and, if necessary, ‘agree to disagree’. All seminar participants must have courtesy and consideration for others in exchanges, however contentious and heated they may become. If I feel that these expectations have been violated the student(s) involved will be asked to leave the class.

**Student Accessibility Services:**

If you have special needs that could affect your performance in this class, please let me know during the first week of classes so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Students who require accommodations in this course due to a disability affecting mobility, vision, hearing, learning, or mental or physical health are advised to discuss their needs with Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS): Room 2-800 SUB, 780-492-3381 (ssds.ualberta.ca).

Please inform me of any special accommodations recommended by SSDS for your participation in the course. Students registered with SSDS who will be using accommodations in the classroom are required to provide me with a “Letter of Introduction” as early as possible.

**CLASS ACTIVITIES & ASSIGNMENTS**

Course Requirements & Diagrammatic Overview:

![Diagram of course requirements and activities]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Important Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. FIRST PROPOSAL</strong></td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Sept 29 by 2300, by email</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. PORTFOLIO</strong></td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>P1 due Oct 27 / P2 due Nov 24 (Comments for P1 and a final grade for P2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Interviews: Writes-ups, Transcripts, Coding, Analysis (25%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Lab Exercises (almost weekly reflection/practical activities (20%)</td>
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<td>3. Additional Research Notes and Memos (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C. FINAL PAPER</strong></td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Both papers due Dec 15 at 0900 by hard copy &amp; electronic copy by email</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Exploratory Research Report (20%)</td>
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<td>2. New Proposal (10%)</td>
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<td><strong>D. PARTICIPATION</strong></td>
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RESEARCH PROJECT

The exploratory research project is comprised of a number of interlinked components that culminate in a two-part final paper (described below). This means that in addition to completing class readings and coming to class, you will devote 3-4 hours/week** to your research project – planning and developing your research project; setting up, conducting, and analyzing interviews; conducting literature searches; and regularly writing in your portfolio.

Note: There is no formally scheduled ‘lab time’ for the course. Rather, lab time is time you spend outside of class in methodological reflection and practice, i.e., doing “Lab Exercises” (see class schedule below) and actually doing your research project.

** This time does not include transcribing – and take heed, transcribing can take up to four hours for each hour of recorded interview!

Your research project will be based mainly on semi-structured, depth interviews (usually three, depending on length; they should add up to at least three hours’ worth of interview time).

You will also have a chance (in early October) to try one appropriate and complementary second method, such as participant observation (e.g., at a public event, or online), textual analysis (e.g., of documents or images), or a visual method (such as photography or mapping).

For example...
...if you are interviewing three long-time residents about the gentrification of their neighbourhood, you might conduct participant observation at a local town hall meeting
...if you do three key informant interviews about a new policy on economic development, you might try discourse analysis on one of the core policy briefs
...if you interview five young adults about their experience in a LGBT theatre group, you might ask one of them to photo-document their experiences during one day of rehearsals (or, with permission, you could photograph them during a rehearsal).

We will treat your research projects this term as ‘exploratory’ (or ‘pilot’). Maxwell (2013) briefly describes such projects (pp. 66-), and we will discuss them in class.

4. FIRST PROPOSAL: an exploratory study (5%)
(Due Friday, September 30th, electronically)
[three pages, double spaced excluding consent form & interview guide]

In this first proposal, you should clearly and succinctly describe the exploratory study you will undertake for the class. The proposal needs to have a clear question suitable for qualitative interviewing, a clear plan for recruiting a suitable research population, and some reflection on ethics considerations specific to the project. You should briefly integrate two sorts of literature: the methodological literature on qualitative research (to justify and position your methodological approach – use class material), and current scholarly literature on the issue/topic you are studying (to justify and position your project within an academic conversation).

Given that this is an exploratory study to be conducted in a relatively short time frame, you can save a broader lit review and more in-depth methodological design for the final (revised) proposal (see below). You may have to read ahead in the readings to prepare this first proposal.
When developing your topic and question, consider Marshall and Rossmann’s (2011) questions:

- **Do-ability** (is the project feasible?)
- **Should-do-ability** (what is the potential significance? do benefits outweigh risks?)
- **Want-to-do-ability** (will it hold your interest?)

Guided by Maxwell’s (2013) advice for qualitative research design, your preliminary proposal will:

1. Briefly introduce the **scholarly and/or social interest** of this particular topic/question (so what? what are the potential goals/contributions?)
2. Pose a do-able **research question** or close-knit set of questions (what do you want to know? how does this follow from the goals/drivers of the project?):
3. Briefly situate your research question in the **relevant literature** (at least two or three key academic sources – don’t worry about a “conceptual framework” yet, unless you already have one up your sleeve)
4. Describe your **methods**, i.e., how you will go about studying your question (semi-structured interviews with what people? why those people, for this project? how will you access/recruit them?; what supplementary method do you want to try, and why? how might it be a good ‘fit’?) – refer to methods readings in the course to legitimate your choices; while you could mention the influence or relevance of one or two particular methodological strategies/approaches (such as ethnography or phenomenology) for studying this particular question, should not commit to any one approach at this stage of your exploration
5. Consider **ethics issues** of specific relevance to your project (speaks to validity)
6. Attach a) a **sample consent form for your project** and b) a **preliminary interview guide of main questions along with follow-up questions and probes** (not included in the three pages)

I will send you feedback on your proposal before the following week’s class

**B. PORTFOLIO (total 55%) – P1 due on Oct 27 in class / P2 due on Nov 24 in class**

‘Write early and write often; don’t get it right, get it written.’ (Delamont et al. 1997)

The centerpiece of the research project is your **Portfolio** (also called the **field journal** or **project notebook**). As a sort of ‘living archive’ of the project, it is a way to:

- Consistently reflect on your research practice (including through engagement with class readings and discussions!)
- Record your research activities
- Organize your data and analysis
- Develop your questions and ideas.

The Portfolio serves as the main expression of what you are doing, learning, and thinking – for you, and for me. Therefore, it MUST be kept up regularly and consistently, **from your first topic idea to the last bit of coding, and from the first topic on methodology to the last**, and it must be organized. Keeping the portfolio updated will help to keep you organized and engaged with your project!

The Portfolio includes:

- **CONSISTENT, WEEK- BY- WEEK PRACTICE AND REFLECTION**: **lab exercises** (see class schedule), **methodological and analytical memos** (including methodological puzzles and insights, emerging ideas, analytical coding schemes, engagements with class readings, etc.), and **personal**
Note: I’m aiming for quality more than quantity, but generally, your Weekly Practice and Reflection will average 2-4 pages per week.

- INTERVIEWS: interview write-ups, transcriptions, reflection, coding, and analysis
- PROJECT RELATED MATERIALS: proposal, interview guides, recruitment material, schedule/planning, etc.

Note: Given all the above requirements, good organization of the proposal is crucial!

1. Interviews – Writes-ups, Transcripts, Coding, Analysis (at least one interview in P1: all included by P2) – 25% of total Portfolio mark

*Each interview is to be transcribed (as soon as possible after the interview) and included in your portfolio (usually in a separate section). Note that when given permission to record, you are expected to transcribe verbatim all interview interactions, although you may simply reference or summarize clearly unrelated portions (such as casual conversation about the weather... unless, of course, your interview is related to that casual conversation topic)

*As you proceed, your interview transcripts will show increasing signs of coding and analysis. For P1, you will be in the very early stages of developing some themes. By P2, I expect to see that you have teased out and have applied a full coding/analytical scheme. (This is messier than it sounds, and takes several iterations.)

*Each interview will be accompanied by three short pieces of writing, which you should begin to do shortly after the interview (usually in the main section of the portfolio, since it is part of your field notes and memos):

   a) A narrative description of the context, setting, and feel of the interview (when you interview someone in a research-relevant setting, such as their workplace, your description might be a bit longer); you might want to include a visual representation of the setting
   b) A paragraph or two of methodological reflection (see MN below) on the interview: What went well/not? What did you learn about the theory and/or practice of interviewing? This could be about the setting, the interview questions, the rapport, technical/procedural insights, analytical approach, your emotional response, and/or other methodological issues... (Note: enrich your reflection through reference to course material!)
   c) A paragraph or two of analytical summary (see TAN below) of the interview: what seemed to be the key contributions of this interview toward answering your research question? What particular themes jumped out at you? what new directions in your thinking are suggested? How does it compare to earlier interview themes/findings? (Enrich your summary through reference to the topical literature you have found!)

NOTE: You will need to start making contact to set up your interviews by early October (after we have discussed ethics and protocols for 'first contact'). Do not distribute a finalized consent form to interview participants until you have received feedback on your proposal.

2. Lab Exercises (almost weekly reflection/practical activities) – 20% of total Portfolio mark

The Lab Exercises are a core piece (but not the whole!) of your ongoing Weekly Practice and Reflection activities in the Portfolio. They are meant to help you focus, to integrate class material with your project, and to kick-start your reflexive thinking. There are more formal Lab Exercises in the first half of the term than in the second half of the term. By P2, your Portfolio will weight more heavily toward interview
write-ups, coding, and analysis, and the exercises are directly related to those activities. **Note:** I expect to see continued memo writing (methodological and analytical reflections and notes – see below) throughout the term.

### 3. Additional Research Notes and Memos – 10% of total Portfolio mark

The Portfolio may have distinct, contained activities within it, but it is your regular and consistent notes and memos and ‘jottings’ that are its connective tissue. These constitute what Cheek (2004) calls the “decision trail” of the project. (And these are the sort of research notes and memos you would want to keep in any research project!)

One important part of the “decision trail” is a **date-log** of what you do, so keep a calendar for yourself: a date-log of when you did (and plan to do) what – this could be a Google calendar, or some method by which you are organizing your schedule of research-related activities, keeping track of your various recruiting contacts and efforts etc. (while keeping ethical practice in mind). You can include this in your portfolio.

**Your ongoing notes and memos about the project are of two main types:**

#### METHODOLOGICAL NOTES (MN):
Notes about the process and experience of doing qualitative research – sampling and recruitment, the experience of doing interviews, questions of power or identity, how knowledge is co-constructed, which methodological approaches are relevant or appealing and why, epistemological tensions in qualitative work, etc. As your project unfolds, these portfolio entries might end up focusing more in-depth on a couple of methodological issues that are especially salient for you in your exploratory study.  
**Note:** Even beyond the Lab Exercises, I expect you to refer to and engage with relevant class readings. This will build your ability to engage with methodological ideas and to present methodological justifications.

#### THEORETICAL/ANALYTICAL NOTES (TAN):
Notes about what you are learning about the research topic/question as you brainstorm, conduct your project, and consult the relevant literature. This is your growing body of hunches, hypotheses, connections, interpretations, and insights about the content. As your project unfolds and you develop your analysis, these portfolio entries should become more focused.  
**Note:** I expect you to refer to and converse with other scholarly work, but I do not expect a long bibliography in your Portfolio or in your final paper. The idea is to find and include key academic literature that helps you develop your analysis about the topic, and with and/or against which you can situate your project.  
**You can and should also write...**

#### PERSONAL NOTES (PN):
Your feelings about and experiences of the research, the participants, etc. Note your doubts, anxieties, pleasures, “aha” moments… (these notes are often related to MN above)

**Note:** In P1, at least, indicate which kinds of notes you are making - use the abbreviations **MN**, **TAN**, or **PN**, and/or use a different font style or whatever strategy works for you. However, observational, methodological, and analytical notes bleed into each other (more often than you might think). Do not feel
you have to always draw a clear line, especially as you move into P2. Write in ways that reflect your research experience. This also means you do not have to write in formal prose all the time. Use maps, bullet points, side boxes, etc. as useful for you. But be clear enough that I understand your points, and that you can easily retrieve information. The Portfolio is mostly a ‘backstage’ document that must, nonetheless, be useful and useable.

Note: The Portfolio will be very useful when it comes to pulling the project together and writing up your final paper. So, having a system where you have the ability to go back through your portfolio and find particular insights or references or descriptions will prove invaluable!

Note: Most page ranges given in this syllabus refer to double-spaced documents. But to save paper, you can hand in the Portfolio on single- (or 1.5-) spaced, double-sided pages (with some white space in there so I don’t lose my mind reading so many portfolios in a row!)

Note: All portfolio documents must be anonymized, in keeping with ethical research practice and as discussed in class. You can organize your portfolio however you want, as long as it is in fact organized, readable, usable, etc. No matter how it is organized, it should include:

- Main section: lab exercises + ongoing notes and memos of three kinds (MN, TAN, and PN)
- Interview transcripts + write-ups + coding/analysis (at least one in P1; all by P2)
- Appendices: research proposal; sample consent form(s) and interview guide(s), including different versions as they emerge; materials relevant to your second method (such as images or documents or observational field notes)

C. FINAL PAPER: Report and New Proposal (due Dec 13 by 0900, hard copy & electronic) - 30%

There are two final papers, and they are related to each other. The first paper formally presents the findings of your exploratory research project, providing a detailed description and analysis of your original research. The second paper is a revised and somewhat expanded version of your original proposal that builds on a key initial finding or set of findings from your exploratory project and draws on methodological knowledge from the course to propose a larger qualitative research study.

Paper 1: Exploratory Research Report: 10-12 pages (20%)

- Briefly describe and provide background to the exploratory project (question, goals, methods, relevant literature)
- Present key findings of the exploratory project, making substantial but judicial use of your evidence to support your analysis (remember that this is based mostly on interviews, but you can certainly refer as well to your trial complementary method)
- Make a preliminary argument based on your analysis (what do these findings suggest?)
- Conclude with a discussion of how your initial analysis can and should be explored further (what fruitful direction can the research take from here, using what sort of methodological approach?) – this provides a basis for your larger proposal
- Attach your final interview guide and consent form (not included in page count) as an appendix
Paper 2: New Proposal (refer to Maxwell): 5- 6 pages (10%)

- Identify and pose a research question that has emerged from the exploratory study (usually, this will be a revised and/or expanded version of your initial research question, although in some cases you will have discovered a whole new direction)
- Present the goals/contributions of the proposed project
- Place the study in the context of previous theoretical and empirical work, including key initial puzzles or patterns found in your exploratory study plus relevant scholarly theories/concepts/findings in the extant literature (aim for at least 5 or 6 references – these can include references you used in your initial proposal)
- Describe and discuss the methodological approach (drawing on the different approaches discussed in class, starting with Creswell) and methods (techniques for gathering data, including who/what/where/when you still study, and how) you will use; remember that these should clearly align with your research question, so the reader trusts that your methodological approach is robust, and is appropriate to the research questions/goals (draw on Maxwell, Creswell, and other readings from the course, and perhaps also draw on other methodological literature as appropriate to your project).

Note: It is important that you are clear about how your proposed design is derived from the methodological and substantive findings of the exploratory project
- Discuss pertinent ethics issues and how you will address them (again, refer to ethics and reflexivity literature from class, or other readings you have discovered)

CAUTIONARY NOTE: It will be tempting to analyze your evidence/data in the exploratory study with an eye to the final proposal (i.e., you might latch onto one theme early on). You can and should memo ideas for the final analysis in your research portfolio, but do not decide on what findings you will focus or how you will present them until you have completed most of your analysis in the exploratory project. You never know what surprising new theme or question or relationship might emerge as you explore the data.

Hint: If all has gone well, your Portfolio will have developed in such a way that your final paper follows fairly smoothly from it...

D. PARTICIPATION (10%)

Please come to class having thoroughly read the material (except where skimming or ‘leisurely’ reading is suggested), ready to engage in discussion. I am not giving lectures as much as we will treat our class as a ‘community of practice’ in which we seek input from each other on our research experiences and ideas. It is very important that you attend class each week. Your participation grade is based on the following aspects of the course:
Informal Interactions and Interlocutions
Please come to class prepared to discuss class readings, and to share insights and questions from your own research practice. This will require attending carefully to the Class Schedule (below), where there is direction regarding specific preparations for each class (see “Lab Exercises”).

Formal Individual “Airings”
In addition, I will set up a schedule by which each of you will once during the second half of the term bring a specific aspect of your fieldwork to formally ‘air’ with the class beginning Oct 11th. This could be a short selection from your research notes or from an interview transcript (remember, they must be anonymized!); an image or selection of text that you are analyzing; a scenario from your experience of
planning, collecting, or analyzing research data; or any other facet of your research experience.

The idea is to come with a concrete example that raises a methodological question – to use an actual struggle or puzzle or dilemma you have encountered (or might encounter) for the class to consider with you. (You could make paper copies OR present a field sample electronically OR whatever works for being able to share the particular example and your question(s) about it.) You will have 15 minutes to ‘air’: plan for 5 minutes to present the issue/example and the question(s) it raises for you, followed by 10 minutes of class response and discussion.

**HINT:** This only works if you come prepared with a) brief context/background on your project, b) a well thought-out and specific issue/problem from your research experience, and c) a specific question or questions that will spark collective discussion helpful for you and for the class. Use this opportunity to get useful feedback and to spark reflexive methodological discussion!

**Final Presentation**
In the final class you will each give a brief class presentation on the key direction and argument of your research paper (thus far), ‘how you got there’, and any remaining question(s) with which you are wrestling.
CLASS SCHEDULE AND READINGS

Note: Readings indicated with a ‘*’ are required reading for the class that day, and are key to lab assignments and your portfolio.

SEPTEMBER 6 – INTRODUCTIONS; GETTING STARTED; KEY QUESTIONS

Reading I – Intro to Qualitative Methods
NOTE: probably the most definitive overview of qualitative research, its history, its tensions

Readings II -- Two Distinct Examples of Exploratory Qualitative Research Projects [SKIM]
* Yan, Miu Chung, Shirley Chau, and Dave Sangha (2010) “An Exploratory Study of How Multiculturalism Policies are Implemented at the Grassroots Level.” Canadian Ethnic Studies 41/42(3--1): 49-75. [online]

LAB EXERCISE: Skim the two readings above (Readings II) with Denzin and Lincoln’s of qualitative research in mind; consider the (similar and/or different) methods and approaches taken by Yan et al. versus Hurdley, and how each article’s findings and arguments are conceptually framed. How do these two pieces together exemplify the range of possibilities within qualitative research? Which are you drawn to, and why? (And yes, you could start your Portfolio by writing about this.)

Note: IF you want a bit more background on qualitative research as it is distinguished from quantitative research:
SEPTEMBER 13 – RESEARCH ETHICS AND REFLEXIVITY
(Come prepared to informally discuss your initial ideas for a research topic, and ethics issues that might be pertinent to it.)

Readings
* Tri - Council Policy Statement 2 (SKIM Intro, Chs. 1- 5 & Ch. 10):
* Clark, M. Carolyn and Barbara Sharf (2007) “The Dark Side of Truth(s): Ethical Dilemmas in Researching the Personal.” Qualitative Inquiry 13(3): 399- 416. [online]

ALSO, Choose one of the following two methodological pieces to read, and examine how it extends or complicates points about ethics and/or reflexivity made in the above readings:
* Castleden, Heather, V. S. Morgan, and C. Lamb (2012) ‘‘I Spent the First Year Drinking Tea’: Exploring Canadian University Researchers’ Perspectives on Community - Based Participatory Research Involving Indigenous Peoples.” Canadian Geographer 56(2): 160-179. [online] Note: Deals with the complicated ethics in collaborative community research with Indigenous people

LAB EXERCISE: Reflect on and/or write about the ethics issues that are relevant to your topic of research AND/OR try out Maxwell’s Research Identity Memo (Exercise 2.1, p. 34).

Recommended:

Sept. 20 – Research Design, and Strategies of Inquiry/Approaches
(We will start work-shopping some of your research questions in class.)

Reading I – Designing Research

LAB EXERCISE: Revisit the two exploratory research articles from Sept. 2 (Yan et al. 2010 and Hurley 2006) and ‘apply’ Maxwell to them: What sort of purpose/goal (pp. 66-68)? What kind of research question (pp. 78-83)? What methods (pp. 90-)? What conceptual framework (Ch. 3)? OR Try Exercise 3.1 (pp. 62-63 in Maxwell)

Reading II – Approaches/Strategies [SKIM]

LAB EXERCISE: Search for a couple of articles relevant to your chosen topic that represent different qualitative “approaches” or “genres” of qualitative research as discussed by Creswell. For example, if you are studying gentrification in an immigrant neighbourhood, you might search for “urban + gentrification + immigrant + grounded theory” and then also search for “urban + gentrification + immigrant + narrative inquiry” Skim each of these articles and consider this: how does each approach to qualitative research (differently) shape the way the topic is explored and represented?

Recommended:


Dilthey, Wilhelm (1883) *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (see http://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/philosophy/works/ge/dilthey.htm)


Sept. 27 – Interviewing: Constructing, Creating, & Contextualizing Knowledge
(We will continue work-shopping a few of your draft research questions in class.)

Note: Proposal is due Sept 29 by 2300 by email.

Readings
  of A Library]

* Kvale, Steinar (2007) “Conducting an Interview” and “Interview Variations” In Doing
  Note: Social psychology approach, (but) many practical tips for actually conducting interviews.

ALSO choose one of the following that is relevant or interesting to you and come to class ready to
discuss tips and insights you gained (relative to the required readings):
  available online through U of A Library]
  Groups.” Developing Focus Group Research. London: SAGE. [on reserve in Rutherford:
  H 61.28 D48 1999]
* Brown, Lyndsay and Kevin Durrheim (2009) “Different Kinds of Knowing : Generating Qualitative
* Charmaz, Kathy (2001) “Qualitative Interviewing and Grounded Theory Analysis.” In
  Gubrium, Jaber F. and James A. Holstein, eds. Handbook of Interview Research. Thousand
  Oaks: SAGE. [electronic book available online through U of A Library]
* Gilchrist VJ, and Williams RL (1999) “Key Informant Interviews.” In Crabtree BF and Miller
  Research 10(1): 113 - 121. [online]
* Kazmer, Michelle M. and Bo Xie (2008) “Qualitative Interviewing in Internet Studies: Playing with
  the Media, Playing with the Method.” Information, Communication & Society
  11(2): 257 - 278. [online]

LAB EXERCISE: Taking tips from Warren and Kvale (and perhaps with some input from your third
chosen reading), try to draft a basic interview guide, and reflect on (write about) the challenges of
doing so (type of questions, order of questions, translating from thematic to dynamic...). Your guide
could build off of Kvale’s example 5.1.

Recommended:
Bastalich, Wendy (2009) “Reading Foucault: Genealogy and Social Science Research Methodology and
Ethics.” Sociological Research Online 14(2).
Briggs, Charles L. (2007) “Anthropology, Interviewing, and Communicability in Contemporary Society” (also,
see the COMMENTARIES!) Current Anthropology 48:4.
Students New to the Field of Qualitative Research.” The Qualitative Report 17: 1 - 10 [online]
Legard, Robin, Jill Keegan and Kit Ward (2013) “In-depth Interviews.” In J. Ritchie et al, eds. Qualitative
research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers. SAGE.


Oct 4 – Interviewing and Other Methods I: Observation, Visual, Document/Discourse

Note: bring a copy of your interview guide to class

(You should now be prepared to start contacting potential participants, aiming for a first interview by mid-October. Please do NOT set up all of your interviews in the same day or week; spread them out between mid-October and early November. And do not use your consent form or interview guide before you receive feedback from me)

Choose and read ONE set of methodology readings –skim readings in all areas to help you decide. ALSO, consider and decide which ‘other’ method you want to try for the following week!

Participant Observation

OR

Visual Methods
* Banks, Marcus (2007) “Approaches to Studying the Visual” (Ch. 3) and “Visual Methods and Field Research” (Ch. 4) Using Visual Data in Qualitative Research. Los Angeles: SAGE. [electronic book]

OR

Documents and Discourse Analysis

Recommended:
Prior, Lindsay (2004) “Documents.” In Qualitative Research Practice, Clive Seale et al., eds. SAGE.
Oct. 11 – Interviewing and Other Methods II: Observation, Visual, Document/Discourse
(First set of “airings.”)

Examples of Interviews + Another Method: as you read, assess how each article:
   a) sets up its work theoretically and methodologically,
   b) combines another method with interviewing, and
   c) uses evidence in presenting findings.
(I strove to find articles that had some thematic overlap...in this case, broadly, globalization and identities/selves/subjects...). Come to class ready to discuss the different methods (observation, visual, discourse) in relation to the use of interviewing.

* Katsiaficas, Dalal et al. (2011) “Everyday Hyphens: Exploring Youth Identities with Methodological and Analytic Pluralism.” Qualitative Research in Psychology 8:120–139. [online] [interviews + multiple elicitation techniques]


LAB EXERCISE: “Pilot” one of the second methods (observation, visual, or document/discourse analysis) by applying it to your project, and write it up in your portfolio. Choose something manageable (like observing for one hour, or photographing/mapping one space, or analyzing a relatively short document/text).

The write-up about your exploratory application of a second method (in your Portfolio) should be two or three pages, and should discuss (with reference to readings about that method):
   • What method you chose and why
   • How you went about ‘doing’ it and analyzing it (with reference to the readings from both weeks on the second method – this week and last)
   • Any initial lessons learned about using the method
   • What your initial impressionistic findings are, and (if and) how you think these could supplement your interviews

NOTE: Materials associated with the second method (e.g., a copy of the document you are analyzing; the visual material produced, the observational notes you wrote, etc.) should be included in the Portfolio when possible.
Oct. 18 – (Interview) Coding and Analysis

Readings


LAB EXERCISE: Try a basic thematic coding exercise on your first interview, and/or try doing a descriptive/topical set of codes followed by a more thematic/interpretive set. (If not for this week, then for sure by when the Portfolio is due!)

Recommended:
Oct. 25 – **Methodological Issues and Power Dynamics**
(Second set of “airings.”) (Research Portfolio P1 is due.)

*Readings*


*Recommended:*


Nov 1 – Analysis, Building Concepts, Theorizing as You Go
(Third set of “airings.”)

Readings


SEE ALSO (I will use this as a resource in class, but it is not required reading):
Nov. 8 – Approaches/Genres of Qualitative Research
(Fourth set of “airings.”)

LAB EXERCISE: Take the “situation map” of your project that you did in class last week, try a couple of different starting points, and then choose one of these pathways (the most likely one for your final paper) and write a synopsis of the argument that is emerging.

Readings

CHOOSE ONE approach/genre below to read more about and come ready to discuss in class.

NOTE: I have added Action Research and Feminist Research as choices to Creswell’s five. Remember that there are not necessarily hard and fast boundaries between the different genres/approaches (e.g., see the Harper et al. piece below on “community narrative ethnography”).

Ethnography


SPECIFIC FORMS in which you might be interested (CHOOSE ONE to REVIEW):

Case Study

NOTE: His approach is usually contrasted to that of Robert Yin. (find out the differences!)

Narrative Inquiry/Analysis

SPECIFIC FORMS in which you might be interested:

Phenomenology

RECOMMENDED BOOK/OTHER FORMS:

Grounded Theory


Action and Participatory Action Research

RECOMMENDED/OTHER FORMS:


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**Feminist Research**


Other Recommended:


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**Nov. 13 - 17 Fall Break: No seminar class**
Nov. 22 – Representation and Writing
(Fifth set of “airings.”)
Note: Research Portfolio P2 is due BY FRIDAY, NOV. 24 at 1500.)

Readings


BF 76.5 S23 2008


LAB EXERCISE (choose at least one):
1 - After you have completed your coding and analysis, try writing up a core finding in an alternative format: a short scene from a play, a poem, a first person ‘fictionalized’ account....
2 - Do some research on a journal or two in which you think it would be appropriate to publish the study you are doing for this class (were it a full-length project). Which journal(s), and why?

Recommended:
Nov. 29 – Dec. 1: Individual Meetings
Meet with Ken individually to get back your research portfolio and discuss your project (sign up in class for a date/time).

Dec. 6 – Final Presentations
Brief individual presentations on research findings and plans.

Dec 15 – FINAL PAPER DUE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15th by 0900 in the SOCIOLOGY OFFICE and email an electronic copy to Dr. Caine (kcaine@ualberta.ca)
ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students should consult the information provided by the Office of Judicial Affairs regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook and Information for Students). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

Students involved in language courses and translation courses should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” Students in language courses should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, excessive editorial and creative help in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct:

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

Please familiarize yourself with the “Don’t Cheat” sheet at:
http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/StudentAppeals/DontCheatsheet.aspx

The U of A considers plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence to be serious academic offences. Plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts and participation in an offence can be avoided if students are told what these offences are and if possible sanctions are made clear at the outset.

Instructors should understand that the principles embodied in the Code are essential to our academic purpose. For this reason, instructors will be fully supported by Departments, Faculties and the University in their endeavours to rightfully discover and pursue cases of academic dishonesty in accordance with the Code.

30.3.2(1)  **Plagiarism**
No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

30.3.2(2)  **Cheating**
30.3.2(2)a  No Student shall in the course of an examination or other similar activity, obtain or attempt to obtain information from another Student or other unauthorized source, give or attempt to
give information to another Student, or use, attempt to use or possess for the purposes of use any unauthorized material.

30.3.2(2)b  No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6(4).

30.3.2(2)c  No Student shall represent another’s substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student’s own work.

30.3.2(2)d  No Student shall submit in any course or program of study, without the written approval of the course Instructor, all or a substantial portion of any academic writing, essay, thesis, research report, project, assignment, presentation or poster for which credit has previously been obtained by the Student or which has been or is being submitted by the Student in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

30.3.2(2)e  No Student shall submit in any course or program of study any academic writing, essay, thesis, report, project, assignment, presentation or poster containing a statement of fact known by the Student to be false or a reference to a source the Student knows to contain fabricated claims (unless acknowledged by the Student), or a fabricated reference to a source.

30.3.6(4)  Misrepresentation of Facts
No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. See also 30.3.2(2) b, c, d and e.

30.3.6(5)  Participation in an Offence
No Student shall counsel or encourage or knowingly aid or assist, directly or indirectly, another person in the commission of any offence under this Code.

The Truth In Education (T*I*E) project is a campus wide educational campaign on Academic Honesty. This program was created to let people know the limits and consequences of inappropriate academic behaviour. There are helpful tips for Instructors and Students. The following procedures are drawn from the Code of Student Behaviour as approved by GFC and the Board of Governors. The guidelines summarize what instructors must do when they have reason to believe a student has plagiarized, cheated, misrepresented facts or participated in an offence.

30.5.4 Procedures for Instructors in Cases Respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour
30.5.4(1) When an Instructor believes that a Student may have committed an Inappropriate Academic Behaviour Offence [30.3.2] or that there has been Misrepresentation of Facts [30.3.6(4)] or Participation in an Offence [30.3.6(5)] in cases respecting Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in the course that he or she instructs, the Instructor will meet with the Student. Before such a meeting, the Instructor shall inform the Student of the purpose of the meeting. In the event that the Student refuses or fails to meet with the Instructor within a reasonable period of time specified by the Instructor, the Instructor shall, taking into account the available information, decide whether a report to the Dean is warranted. (CLRC 30 MAY 2002) (EXEC 7 APR 2003) (CLRC 27 NOV 2003)

30.5.4(2) If the Instructor believes there has been a violation of the Code, the Instructor shall, as soon as possible after the event occurred, report that violation to the Dean and provide a written
statement of the details of the case. The instructor may also include a recommendation for sanction. (CLRC 27 NOV 2003).

**Possible Sanctions**

One or more of the following sanctions given in 30.4.3 (2) and (3) of the Code are commonly used for plagiarism, cheating, participation in an offence, and misrepresentation of facts.

- **30.4.3(2) a.i** A mark reduction or a mark of 0 on any term work or examination for reason of Inappropriate Academic Behaviour (GFC 24 SEP 2007);
- **30.4.3(2) a.ii** Reduction of a grade in a course
- **30.4.3(2) a.iii** A grade of F for a course.
- **30.4.3(2) a.iv** A remark on a transcript of 8 (or 9 for failing graduate student grades), indicating Inappropriate Academic Behaviour in addition to 30.4.3(2)a.i, 30.4.3(2)a.ii, 30.4.3(2)a.iii

- **30.4.3(3) b** Expulsion
- **30.4.3(3) c** Suspension

The following sanctions may be used in rare cases.

- **30.4.3(3) e** Suspension of a Degree already awarded
- **30.4.3(3) f** Rescission of a Degree already awarded

**30.6.1 Initiation of an Appeal**

30.6.1(1) When a Student has been found to have committed an offence under the Code of Student Behaviour or an Applicant is found to have committed an offence under the Code of Applicant Behaviour (Section 11.8 of the GFC Policy Manual), whether or not that Student or Applicant has been given a sanction, the Student or Applicant may appeal that decision, except in the case of a decision of the Discipline Officer under 30.5.6(2)e.ii, which remains final and is not subject to appeal. In cases where a severe sanction has been recommended to the Discipline Officer, once the student receives the final decision of the Discipline Officer, the student can appeal the decisions of both Dean and the Discipline Officer at the same time. The written appeal must be presented to the Appeals Co-ordinator in the University Secretariat within 15 Working Days of the deemed receipt of the decision by the Student or Applicant. The finding that an offence has been committed, the sanction imposed or both may form the basis of appeal. The written appeal must also state the full grounds of appeal and be signed by the Appellant. The appeal shall be heard by the UAB. (CLRC 30 MAY 2002) (CLRC 25 SEP 2003) (EXEC 01 MAY 2006) (GFC 24 SEP 2007) (BEAC 17 OCT 2007)