

SOSC5170
Qualitative Research Methods
Spring 2024

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Class Hour: Thursday 9:00am-11:50am
Location: CYTG003

Objectives:

This course aims to familiarize postgraduate students with a variety of qualitative methods, including ethnography, interviews, and mixed methods. We'll also look at different approaches to help you refine your research tools and think through methods. Emphasis will be placed on both theory and practices. The chance to conduct preliminary interviews and ethnographic fieldwork will be available to students. Students are also encouraged to bring their own research projects to the class and solicit peer feedback. Guest lectures will also be offered so that students can learn more about how researchers actually conduct qualitative research in the field.

Requirements

1. Attend all class meetings and participate in discussion (20%)
2. Submit 2 questions for discussion (due every Sunday night) and serve as discussion leader for one week's readings (20%)
3. Conduct preliminary fieldwork for discussion (10%); 1-page project note
4. Research proposal due end of semester (50%) due May 17th

Participation in the Seminar: The structure of this course is that of a seminar, which thrives on the involvement and proactive contributions from all participants. It's important to note that the value of these contributions will be judged on not only their quantity but also quality.

Readings

Feb 1st, Week 1st

Intro to Qualitative World

- Sun, Ping. 2019. "Your Order, Their Labor: An Exploration of Algorithms and Laboring on Food Delivery Platforms in China." *Chinese Journal of Communication* 12(3):308–23.

Guest Lecture: Sun Ping

Feb 8th, Week 2nd

Focus group and Interviews

- Morgan, D. L. (1996). Focus groups. *Annual review of sociology*, 22(1), 129-152.

Feb 15th, Week 3rd

In-depth interviews

- Joseph C. Hermanowicz, "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed," *Qualitative Sociology*, 25(4), 2002.
- Elliot Mishler, "The Joint Construction of Meaning," in *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Harvard, 1986, pp. 52-65.

Feb 22nd, Week 4th

Ethnography: Why, What, and How?

- Howard Becker, "How I Learned What a Crock Was" *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22(1): 28-35.
- Colin Jerolmack and Shamus Khan, "Talk is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy" *Sociological Methods and Research* 43(2): 178-209, 2014.

Guest Lecture: Tactics and Tips Before and During Fieldwork by Dr. Huang Jingyang

Feb 29th, Week 5th

Speaking to the Classic: Chicago-school Urban Ethnography

- Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent*. (Chicago, 1979). Selective Chapter (Introduction and Chapter 5)
- Forrest Stuart, *Down, Out and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. (Available online UST Library) Selective Chapter (TBA)

March 7th, Week 6th

Getting Your Feet Wet

Field trip: Chungking Mansions by Jeffrey Andrews

March 14th, Week 7th

Field notes & Archival Research

- Robert Emerson et al., *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago, 2011. Chs 2-3.
- "Robert Blauner, ""Problems of Editing 'First-Person' Sociology,"" *Qualitative*

Sociology 10(1): 46-64, 1987."

Ongoing Research Sharing: Zhang Delin

March 21st, Week 8th

Extended Case Method and alternatives

- Michael Burawoy, "The Extended Case Method" in *Ethnography Unbound*. California, 1991.
- Ching Kwan Lee and Yonghong Zhang, "The Power of Instability: Unraveling the Microfoundation of China's Bargained Authoritarianism," *American Journal of Sociology* 118: 1475-1508, 2013.

April 11th, Week 10th

Theoretical Sampling

- Barney Glaser and Anslem Strauss, "Theoretical Sampling" in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1967.
- Mario Small, "How Many Cases Do I Need?" *Ethnography* 10(1): 5-38, 2009.

April 18th, Week 11th

Online ethnography and oral history

- Christin, Angèle. 2020. "Algorithmic Ethnography, during and after COVID-19." *Communication and the Public* 5(3-4):108-11.
- Tunçalp, Deniz, and Patrick L. Lê. 2014. "(Re)Locating Boundaries: A Systematic Review of Online Ethnography" edited by P. Linda Rouleau, Dr Mark de Rond and Professor Geneviève Musca. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography* 3(1):59-79.

April 25th, Week 12th

Ethical Conduct and Alternative Ethnographic Approach

- Newman, Katherine S. 2002. "Qualitative Research on the Frontlines of Controversy," *Sociological Methods and Research* 31(2): 123-130.
- Troy Duster et al., "Field Work and the Protection of Human Subjects," *The American Sociologist* 14: 136-142, 1979.
- English version: *Self as Method: Thinking Through China and the World* by Xinag Biao and Wu Qi
- Chinese version: 把自己作为方法 (项飙; 吴琦)

May 2nd, Week 13th

Mixed methods

- Mele, V., & Belardinelli, P. (2019). Mixed Methods in Public Administration Research: Selecting, Sequencing, and Connecting. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 29(2), 334–347.
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2003). Major issues and controversies in the use of mixed methods in the social and behavioral sciences. *Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Research*, 1, 13–50.
- Luo, W., Zheng, W., & Long, Y. (2022). Relational Work and its Pitfalls: Nonprofits' Participation in Government-Sponsored Voluntary Accreditation. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, muac010 (Selective)

Thu, May 9th, Week 14th

Student Presentation

**The syllabus is subject to change.

Research Paper Requirement:

Research proposal: This short proposal (1-2 pages, double-spaced) will introduce your research question. Explain why the topic is of interest to you and why you think qualitative interviews, or focus group, or ethnography are the best approach to researching it.

Literature review: Identify at least 10 books or articles that are relevant for your research question and how they speak to one another.

(This assignment is a building block for the elaboration of a more developed and comprehensive literature review that will be part of your final paper, the latter of which will need to draw on at least 20 academic sources.)

Draft of interview questions: You will hand in a draft of your interview questions. Bring a copy to class to share, discuss, and receive feedback on. Part of this assignment is to meet with me during special office hours to discuss your questions once you've received my comments on them.

CITI course: These are training modules completed online. For this class, you will complete the social and behavior research course - which should take 3-4 hours online. More instructions to follow.

Transcription of an interview: Transcribe an entire interview, word for word. This can easily take several hours, depending on how long the interview goes. Bring a copy to class. We will discuss some of your results, reflections, and insights, and make suggestions to each other about how to improve.

Preliminary coding assignment: On that transcript itself, identify codes, as well as themes, that are emerging from your interview data. More instructions to follow.

Analytical memo: After completing, transcribing, and coding several interviews, please write a two to three page (double-spaced) analysis of promising themes, processes, patterns, etc. This will, hopefully, become a piece of your final paper.

Presentation: You will give a short presentation that: states your research question, your methodology, some of the themes that have emerged from coding, and some of your analysis.

Final paper: The final product from your research project will be a complete paper that includes an introduction, a literature review, a methods section, a data analysis/findings section, and a conclusion. It should be between 15-20 double-spaced pages (12-point front, 1 inch margins).

