

Syllabus

Soc 7500: Advanced Qualitative Method Winter 2019

Mondays 5-7:30, State Hall 218

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Office Hours: tentatively scheduled for
Tuesdays 9:30-10:30 and by appointment

Course Description.

Social scientists use ethnographic and qualitative methods to make sense of and analyze the social world. This course is designed to familiarize doctoral and advanced master's students with the epistemological and methodological foundations of qualitative research methods. We will examine the craft of qualitative research including participant observation, ethnographic field research, in-depth interviews, comparative case studies, and read exemplars of each method. Students will also evaluate the epistemological foundations of different approaches and consider both ethical concerns of research positionality and calls on qualitative researchers for greater data transparency and reproducibility. Since students have had some initial exposure to some or all of these methods, this course will prepare students to use these methods in their own research and develop a facility by which to evaluate the qualitative work others have done. The goal is for students to become purposeful (and prolific) producers as well as a critical consumers of qualitative methods in their academic careers.

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- ✓ Understand what makes for a good “sociological puzzle,” and how to put that puzzle in dialogue with the existing literature.
- ✓ Engage with and critically assess key qualitative methods used to address sociological puzzles and social science research questions more broadly, and know how to determine which method or methods are best suited for answering a particular question.
- ✓ Develop an idea of what kinds of puzzles you might like to answer during your own career, and start designing an independent research project.
- ✓ Understand the common denominator of what makes for “good” research across the various approaches by reading exemplars of high caliber qualitative research.
- ✓ Analyze and draft critical assessments of original empirical research.

Required Texts.

Most of all the texts assigned I will upload to the “FILES” section of our course Canvas site. A few are free downloads, but require you to navigate to the download via WSU library website. You may choose to purchase the exemplar books that you will use for the book review assignment or you may check those out from the library or borrow from a colleague. We will read extensively from the following texts, which you may choose to purchase:

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.

Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. Free Press.

Brown, K. L. (2018). *Gone Home: Race and Roots through Appalachia*. UNC Press Books.

Small, M. L. (2017). *Someone to Talk to*. Oxford University Press.

Grading and Class Participation.

Your grade in this course is based on evaluation of your written work, attendance and participation in class. Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned text and assignments and bring an open mind. We will evaluate each method on its own terms before becoming critics. The quality of our conversation and dialogue each week is entirely dependent on your commitment to reading and thinking about the readings prior to in class. Please come prepared. Final course grades are assigned according to the following criteria:

Two Short Written Assignments (15% each): 30%

Final Paper/Research Proposal: 50%

Class Participation and Attendance: 20%

Grading Scale.

If at any point your performance in class drops below a B-, we will arrange a private meeting to discuss your progress in this course. The grading scale is as follows.

100% = A+ 95-99% = A 90-94% = A-
88-89% = B+ 84-87% = B 80-83% = B-
78-79% = C+ 74-77% = C 70-73% = C-
68-69% = D+ 64-67% = D 60-63% = D-
0-59% = F

Course Activities and Policies.

Student Presentations (participation)

Students will sign up to serve as discussion presenters and moderators for every week after the first week of class. These presentations will contribute to your class participation points. Attendance is expected every week.

Weekly Article Critiques (participation)

For each assigned reading, I would like you to ask yourself the following questions and answer them in your own notebook. Please bring these reflections to each class meeting for group discussion and activity. Your class contributions to weekly article/book critiques will comprise the bulk of your participation points.

1. *What research question did the study seek to address?*
2. *Why was this important?*

3. *What qualitative method/s of data collection was/were used?*
4. *If multiple methods were used, how well were these aspects integrated?*
5. *What role did the researcher play?*
6. *How did the researcher select whom to talk to, what to observe, etc.?*
7. *Evaluate the quality of any of the interview guides, coding sheets, methodological appendix presented.*
8. *How did the researcher present the data (i.e. tables, quotes, maps, data instruments)? Was it clear what source the data came from? Was the method of presentation effective? Why or why not?*
9. *Did the author directly or indirectly address any of the elements of reflexivity? Which ones? How?*
10. *Did the author directly or indirectly address any of the elements of validity? Which ones? How?*
11. *Were ethical considerations addressed? Which ones? How?*
12. *What were the strengths of this paper? How well were these methods applied?*
13. *What were the limitations of the research? Were they discussed appropriately?*
14. *How well did the conclusions match the data presented?*
15. *What are the overall merits of the study?*
16. *If you were conducting the study, what would you have done differently?*
17. *Would you use this method or methods in your own research study? Why or why not?*

Assignment 1: Journal Review

You have been asked to review a paper by the American Sociological Review. I will distribute copies of the paper for evaluation. Write a review of the paper (1-3 pages, single-spaced) and fill out the reviewer's evaluation form.

Assignment 2: Book Review

Read and evaluate two of the exemplar books assigned in class and write a book review for *Contemporary Sociology*. The book review should present the central argument of the book, but focus more extensively on the methodology used in the book, quality of data collection, conclusions drawn, and limitations the study raised for you. An example of a book review will be provided to you.

Research Prospectus Final Paper

You will plan and execute a polished draft of a research prospectus for evaluation by me and your peers. Your research design project should use qualitative research methods and take into consideration the research question, validity, ethics, and the researcher's role. You need not conduct the proposed research during the course (however, if you choose to do so over time, whether for a thesis or dissertation, I will be glad to hear of it!). The prospectus should be 15-18 pages, double spaced in a standard font with 1" margins. It is due on or before our scheduled exam date assigned by the University Registrar. The prospectus should contain the following components:

- Abstract: What you propose to do and why? (250 words – strict limit).
- Existing state of the field and contribution (background and significance): What will this study add? To be answered via a literature review. (2-3 pages).

- Research questions: What do you want to understand? For those of you who want to include a conceptual model, you may do so here. (1 page).
- Methods and protocols: What will you actually do? In this section you should detail how at least two of the data collection methods we have discussed in class may apply to your research question. (6-8 pages). The methods/protocol discussion also includes the presentation of the underlying logic:
 - Justification: Why are these methods appropriate?
 - Sampling: Which individuals, settings, documents or populations will you study? Why?
 - Access: How will you get access? Clearly detail your plan for gaining entry, contacting, and accessing your subjects.
 - Protocols: What interview guide/ethnographic field site/population will you use/observe?
- Timeline and Funding Requirements: Map out a timeline over which the data collection, analysis and results might occur. Describe the funding you would require to complete this research. Are there funding sources available? How would you acquire funding for this project, if needed? (0.5-1 page).
- Quality/Validity: Based on your proposed methods, what are the strengths for meaningfully identifying what is going on? How might data you collect from different methods support or conflict with one another? What limitations are present in your proposal? (2 pages).
- Ethical considerations: What is the level of risk from an IRB perspective? Might you do harm? Is deception involved? Will you need IRB review? (.5-1 page).
- Reflexivity/ Role of the researcher: Address reflexivity. You are the data collection instrument; what is your foundational perspective? How might that influence your data collection efforts or presentation of findings? (1 page).
- Researcher qualifications: What makes you qualified to pursue these questions? (0.5-1 page).
- References

I have no “late paper policy” since we only have three written assignments. If you need a 48 hour extension for one written assignment, please let me know ahead of time and I will grant one extension, no questions asked.

I reserve the right to amend the syllabus as needed, but will provide plenty of time for your to adjust to the change and make sure you know ahead of time. Please check the syllabus on Canvas regularly.

Please use my wayne.edu email for all course communication with the subject line: Soc 7500 and a brief description of the subject of your email so I can scan my inbox and reply quickly while filtering through other emails. Thank you.

University Policies.

Religious Holidays

Because of the extraordinary variety of religious affiliations of the University student body and staff, the Academic Calendar makes no provision for religious holidays. However, it is University policy to respect the faith and religious obligations of the individual. Students with classes or examinations that conflict with their religious observances are expected to notify their instructors well in advance so that mutually agreeable alternatives may be worked out.

Student Disabilities Services

If you have a documented disability that requires accommodations, you will need to register with Student Disability Services (SDS) for coordination of your academic accommodations. The SDS office is located in the Adamany Undergraduate Library. The SDS phone number is 313-577-3365 (TTD only). Once you have your accommodations in place, I will be glad to meet with you privately during office hours or another agreed upon time to discuss your needs. Students who are registered with the Student Disability Services and who are eligible for alternate testing accommodations such as extended test time and/or distraction-reduced environment should present the required test permits to the professor at least one week in advance of the exam. Federal law requires that a student registered with SDS is entitled to the reasonable accommodations specified in the student's accommodation letter which might include allowing the student to take the final exam on a different day than the rest of the class.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic misbehavior means any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the institution or subvert the education process. All forms of academic misbehavior are prohibited at Wayne State University, as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct. Students who commit or assist in committing dishonest acts are subject to downgrading (to a failing grade for the test, paper, or other course-related activity in question, or for the entire course) and/or additional sanctions as described in the Student Code of Conduct. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and unauthorized reuse of work product among other violations specified in the Student Code of Conduct are prohibited. I'm interested in hearing your voice. Please use it.

Course Drops and Withdrawals

In the first two weeks of the (full) term, students can drop this class and receive 100% tuition and course fee cancellation. After the end of the second week, there is no tuition or fee cancellation. Students who wish to withdraw from the class can initiate a withdrawal request in *Academica*. You will receive a transcript notation of WP (passing), WF (failing), or WN (no graded work) at the time of withdrawal. No withdrawals can be initiated after the end of the tenth week. Students enrolled in the 10th week and beyond will receive a grade. Because withdrawing from courses may have negative academic and financial consequences, students considering course withdrawal should make sure they fully understand all the consequences before taking this step. More information on this policy can be found at: <https://wayne.edu/students/register/dropping>.

Class Recordings

Students need prior written permission from the instructor before recording any portion of this class. If permission is granted, the audio and/or video recording is to be used only for the student's personal instructional use. Such recordings are not intended for a wider public audience, such as postings to the internet or sharing with others. Students registered with Student Disabilities Services (SDS) who wish to record class materials must present their specific

accommodation to the instructor, who will subsequently comply with the request unless there is some specific reason why s/he cannot, such as discussion of confidential or protected information.

Course Schedule Overview

Theory and Research Design

Interviewing

Elite interviews

Oral history narratives

Ethnography and Field Research

Grounded Theory

Extended Case Method

Case Study Method and Comparative Research

Ethical Considerations and Field Research Challenges in Qualitative Research

Week 1: Introduction to course and what makes for “good” sociological research?

Clemens, Elizabeth, Walter W. Powell, Kris McIlwaine, and Dina Okamoto. 1995. “Careers in Print: Books, Journals, and Scholarly Reputations.” *American Journal of Sociology* 101 (2): 433-494.

Pinker, Steven. 2014. “Why Academic Writing Stinks.” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Week 2: Theory and Research Design

Alford, Robert R. 1998. *The Craft of Inquiry: Theories, Methods, Evidence*. Oxford University Press. Ch1, 2, 3 and 5.

King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Ch1.

Becker, Howard S. 1998. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You’re Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Select Chapters. Ch4.

Brady and Collier. 2009. *Rethinking Social Inquiry*. Select chapters (A2,3 and D8,9)

Week 3: NO CLASS in observance of Rev Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday

Week 4: Talking to Strangers: Interviewing (I)

Robert S. Weiss. (1995) *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. Free Press. Skim Ch1 and read “Respondents: Choosing Them and Recruiting Them,” Ch. 2.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2011). *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. Sage. Select chapters. Book is available for download.

Lamont, Michèle and Ann Swidler. (2014) "Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing." *Qualitative Sociology* 37 (2): 153-171.

Exemplar: Viterna, J. S. (2006). Pulled, Pushed, and Persuaded: Explaining Women's Mobilization into the Salvadoran Guerrilla Army. *American Journal of Sociology*, 112(1), 1-45.

ASSIGNMENT 1 (Journal Review) due in class. Print copies only please so that I made provide you marginalia comments.

Week 5: Exemplars

Michele Lamont. (2002) *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. Read the introduction, the methodological appendices and choose 2-3 additional empirical chapters.

Small, M. L. (2017). *Someone to Talk to*. Oxford University Press. Read the introduction, the methodological appendix and choose 2 additional empirical chapters.

Recommended additional readings:

Aberbach, J. D., & Rockman, B. A. (2002). Conducting and coding elite interviews. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 35(4), 673-676.

Goldstein, K. (2002). Getting in the door: Sampling and completing elite interviews. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 35(4), 669-672.

Viterna, J. (2013). *Women in War: The Micro-Processes of Mobilization in El Salvador*. Oxford University Press.

Week 6: Oral History Narratives (Interviewing II)

Perks, R., & Thomson, A. (2015). *The Oral History Reader*. Routledge. Chapters 2, 4, skim 12, 13, and skim 27 and 28. (available for download after requesting permission on the source website)

Exemplar: Brown, K. L. (2018). *Gone Home: Race and Roots through Appalachia*. UNC Press Books.

Week 7: Ethnographic Methods and Field Research (Ethnography I)

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.

Duneier, Mitchell. "How Not to Lie with Ethnography." *Sociological Methodology*. Vol 41, no. 1(August 2011) pages 1–11.

Katz, Jack. (2001). "From How to Why," *Ethnography* 2(4). (part I)

Exemplar 1: Pattillo, Mary E. "Sweet Mothers and Gangbangers: Managing Crime in a Black Middle Class Neighborhood." *Social Forces* 76:747-774.

Recommended Readings

Rios, Victor M. 2015. "Decolonizing the White Space in Urban Ethnography." *City & Community* 14:258-261.

Desmond – Evicted "About this project"

Mustafa Emirbayer, "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 103 (1997): 281-317.

Andrew Abbott, "Of Time and Space," *Social Forces* 75 (1997): 1149-82.

Week 8: Grounded Theory (Ethnography II)

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage Publications. (select chapters)

Stefan Timmermans and Iddo Tavory, "Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis." *Sociological Theory* 30(3) 167–186

Katz, Jack. (2002). "From How to Why," *Ethnography* 3(1). (part II)

Exemplars: Choose **one** of the following for review and in-class discussion

- 1) Mitchell Duneier, *Sidewalk: Introduction; Part One; Appendix*.
- 2) Matthew Desmond. (2007). *On the Fireline: Introduction; chs. 1-2, 6-7; Conclusion*.

Recommended Readings

Straus, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. "Grounded Theory Methodology," pp158-183 in *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* / editors, Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage, c1998

Week 9: Ethnography Exemplars (III)

[Choose two books to read and discuss in class]

Hoang, Kimberly Kay. (2015). *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work*. Berkeley: University of California.

Rios, Victor. (2011) *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York University Press.

Kahn, Shamus Rahman. (2011). *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite*. Princeton University Press.

Mears, A. (2011). *Pricing Beauty: The Making of a Fashion Model*. University of California Press

Smith, R. (2006). *Mexican New York: Transnational Lives of New Immigrants*. University of California Press.

Levitt, P. (2001). *The Transnational Villagers*. University of California Press.

ASSIGNMENT 2 (Book Review) due in class. Print copies only please so that I made provide you marginalia comments.

Week 10: Extended Case Method

Becker (eds). 1992. What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry. Cambridge University Press.

Burawoy, Michael. (1998) "The Extended Case Method." *Sociological Theory* 16 (1): 4-33.

Mario Small. (2009) "How Many Cases Do I Need? On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research." *Ethnography* 10 (1): 5-38.*

Iddo Tavory and Stefan Timmermans. (2009) "Two Cases of Ethnography: Grounded Theory and the Extended Case Method." *Ethnography* 10 (3): 243-263.

Exemplar: Lee, C. K. (2018). *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor, and Foreign Investment in Africa*. University of Chicago Press. (select chapters)

Week 11: Case Study Method and Comparative Research

Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for?. *American Political Science Review*, 98(2), 341-354.

Collier, D. (2011). Understanding Process Tracing. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 44(4), 823-830. (short article)

Mahoney, James. 2000. "Strategies of Causal Inference in Small-N Analysis," *Sociological Methods and Research* 28(4): 387-424.

Lieberson, Stanley. 1991. "Small Ns and Big Conclusions – An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases." *Social Forces* 70: 307-320. (please skim this article to understand main argument)

Exemplars: Choose **one** of the following for in-class discussion

- 1) Fourcade-Gourinchas, Marion and Babb, Sarah L. 2002. "The Rebirth of the Liberal Creed: Paths to Neoliberalism in Four Countries." *American Journal of Sociology* 108(3):533- 79.
- 2) Parkinson, S. E. (2013). Organizing Rebellion: Rethinking High-Risk Mobilization and Social Networks in War. *American Political Science Review*, 107(3), 418-432.

Suggested additional readings and exemplars of the method:

Gerring, John. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*. Cambridge University Press.

George, A. L., Bennett, A., Lynn-Jones, S. M., & Miller, S. E. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. MIT Press.

Mahoney, James and Gary Goertz. 2004. "The Possibility Principle: Choosing Negative Cases in Qualitative Research," *American Political Science Review* 98:4

Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th edition). Sage Publications.

Ragin, Charles. 1987. *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Pages 85-163.

Week 13: Ethics and Reflexivity

Alice Goffman. (2009). "On the Run," *American Sociological Review* (74) and/or her book (select chapters uploaded to Canvas) Read also her critics and the replies to her critics.

Sudhir Venkatesh. *Gang Leader for a Day* Read (select chapters uploaded to Canvas) Read also his critics and his reply to his critics.

Week 14: Challenges of Field Research and Data Access and Research Transparency

Review the following two websites and familiarize yourself with DART and critics of DART.

- 1) <https://www.dartstatement.org/> 2) <https://dialogueondart.org/>

Wood, E. J. (2006). The ethical challenges of field research in conflict zones. *Qualitative sociology*, 29(3), 373-386.

Week 15: Student Presentations of Research Proposal

Additional Qualitative Methods Texts:

Additional resources to consult for the research process and sociological methods:

Small, Mario Luis. (2011). How to conduct a mixed methods study: Recent trends in a rapidly growing literature. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37.

Seawright, Jason. (2016). *Multi-Method Social Science: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Tools*. Cambridge University Press.

Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage publications.

Becker, Howard S. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Becker, Howard S. 1998. *Tricks of the trade: How to think about your research while you're doing it*. University of Chicago Press.

Chambliss, Daniel F., and Russell K. Schutt. 2006. *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*. 2nd Edition. Pine Forge Press/Sage Publications.

Creswell, John W. 2006. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. Second Edition. Sage Publications. [Paperback] ISBN: 978-1412916073.

Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) 2000. *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Holstein, James and Jabere Gubrium. 1995. *The Active Interview*. (Qualitative Research Methods, Series #37). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hill, Michael Ray. 1993. *Archival Strategies and Techniques* (Qualitative Research Methods Series 31). Sage Publications.

Johnson, William A., Jr., Richard P. Rettig, Gregory M. Scott, and Stephen M. Garrison. 2006. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual*. (5th edition). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Luker, Kristin. 2010. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: research in an age of info-glut*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Lofland, John and Lyn H. Lofland. 2005. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. 3rd edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Maxwell, Joseph A. 2004. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (2nd edition). Sage Publications.

Neuman, Lawrence W. 2009. *Social Research Methods*. 6th Edition. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Saldanna, Johnny. 2009. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage Publications.

Strunk, William Jr., and E.B. White. 1959. *The Elements of Style*. New York: Macmillian.

Wolcott, Harry F. 2008. *Writing Up Qualitative Research* (3rd edition). Sage Publications.