

SOC 412: Advanced Qualitative Research Methods

Lehigh University, Spring 2019
Tuesdays, 10:45-1:25 PM
Linderman Library Room 402
CRN: 12537 (Credits: 3)

Professor: Danielle Lindemann
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Office: 223 Williams Hall
Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Description¹

What does it mean to do qualitative research in the social sciences, and *why* do we do it? In this graduate-level course, we will learn about qualitative sociology, its particular advantages and drawbacks, and the various techniques that fall under its umbrella. We will explore each of three major methods (ethnography, content analysis, and interviewing), in a two-week unit that begins with “how to” readings and concludes with examples of studies that have implemented that method. These studies demonstrate the applicability of our methods to a wide range of sociological subfields, including gender, race, class, sexuality, culture, and health. Each week, we will discuss the drawbacks and benefits of each method, as well as major debates surrounding its implementation and issues that may arise in the field. In the second week of each unit, students will also conduct and reflect upon research of their own. Toward the end of the course, we will touch upon additional qualitative methods, including network analysis, focus groups, and community-based participatory research. We will also tackle other relevant topics, such as research ethics, data analysis, and how to communicate one’s findings to the sociological community and broader publics.

Students will be evaluated on a variety of criteria. The course’s “mini-comp” exams are intended to help Sociology MA students think and write critically about qualitative methodology, and begin synthesizing their knowledge of theory and method in preparation for their comprehensive exams in May. (Non-Sociology students will be given questions about qualitative methods *only*.) In addition to the three research assignments, each student is required to write a proposal for an original research project in their area of interest. Finally, in-class engagement will be key to your success in this course! Each student will be expected to lead one class session, to review and report upon a book of their choosing, to present their research proposal in our final class meeting, and to come to class each week prepared to discuss the readings. This is a small, upper-level seminar, and it will not work unless we all thoroughly engage. Are you up to the challenge? Let’s get *qualitative*!

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students should be able to...

...explain why we do qualitative research; *continued*...

¹Heather Johnson, Nicole Marwell, and Ziad Munson have generously shared their own graduate-level qualitative methods syllabi, and some of their content has been incorporated into this course.

- ...identify the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative methods relative to quantitative approaches.
- ...identify and explain the general terms and procedures used for collecting qualitative data.
- ...describe and implement the techniques used in content analysis, in-depth interviewing, ethnography, and other specific qualitative methods.
- ...compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses of various qualitative methods.
- ...critically analyze contemporary examples of qualitative research.
- ...write a proposal for a sociological study utilizing at least one qualitative method; and
- ...gain an understanding of how to analyze qualitative data, communicate one's results, and present those findings to the scholarly community and beyond.

Course Materials:

All materials for this course are either hyperlinked in this document or available on Coursesite (<https://coursesite.lehigh.edu>).

Course Requirements:

See “Assignments” sheet for specific guidelines and grading criteria.

- “Practical” assignments: 10% each x 3 = 30% of final grade
- “Mini-comp” take-home exams: 10% x 2 = 20%
- Book review and presentation: 10%
- Final research proposal and presentation: 20%
- Class facilitation: 10%
- Participation: 10%

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments should be *emailed to the professor (djl315@lehigh.edu) as Word files prior to the start of class (10:45 AM EST) on the day they are due.*

Grading Scale:

- 93%-100% = A
- 90%-92% = A-
- 87%-89% = B+
- 83%-86% = B
- 80%-82% = B-
- 77%-79% = C+
- 73%-76% = C
- 70%-72% = C-
- 67%-69% = D+
- 63%-66% = D
- 60%-62% = D-
- 0%-59% = F

Late Papers:

Except in dire circumstances (*e.g.* death in the family, severe illness) late papers will **not** be accepted.

Policy on Laptops/Cell Phones:

As this is a graduate course, students are permitted to use laptops. Do not abuse this policy. Cell phone use is never permitted.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, please contact both your instructor and the Office of Academic Support Services, Williams Hall, Suite 301 (610-758-4152) as early as possible in the semester. You must have documentation from the Academic Support Services office before accommodations can be granted.

The Principles of Our Equitable Community:

Lehigh University endorses The Principles of Our Equitable Community [http://www.lehigh.edu/~inprv/initiatives/PrinciplesEquity_Sheet_v2_032212.pdf]. We expect each member of this class to acknowledge and practice these Principles. Respect for each other and for differing viewpoints is a vital component of the learning environment inside and outside the classroom.

Student Senate Statement on Academic Integrity:

“We, the Lehigh University Student Senate, as the standing representative body of all undergraduates, reaffirm the duty and obligation of students to meet and uphold the highest principles and values of personal, moral and ethical conduct. As partners in our educational community, both students and faculty share the responsibility for promoting and helping to ensure an environment of academic integrity. As such, each student is expected to complete all academic course work in accordance to the standards set forth by the faculty and in compliance with the University's Code of Conduct.”

Schedule of Assignments

(Readings should be completed prior to the class for which they are listed.)

TUESDAY, JAN. 21ST: COURSE INTRODUCTION/ADMINISTRATION

- **In-class selection of student facilitation dates**

Read for today:

- There are no readings assigned for today's class.

TUESDAY, JAN. 28TH: QUALITATIVE METHODS: WHAT AND WHY?

Read for today:

- Conley, Dalton. 2017. “Methods,” in *You May Ask Yourself: An Introduction to Thinking Like a Sociologist*, 5th Edition. New York: Norton:45-73.
- Freedman, David A. 1991. “Statistical Models and Shoe Leather,” *Sociological Methodology* 21:291-313; *continued...*
- Goodwin, Jeff, & Ruth Horowitz. 2002. “Introduction: The Methodological Strengths and Dilemmas of Qualitative Sociology.” *Qualitative Sociology* 25(1):33-47.

TUESDAY, FEB. 4TH: ETHNOGRAPHY/ PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION I

- **In-class student facilitation(s) – Discussion questions due via email prior to the start of class**

Read for today:

- Hammersly, Martyn, and Paul Atkinson. 1996. “Chapter 2: Research Design: Problems, Cases, and Samples,” In *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. New York: Routledge:23-53.
- Schatzman, Leonard & Anselm Strauss. 1973. “Chapter 1,” in *Field Research: Strategies for a Natural Sociology*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall:1-17.
- Small, Mario Luis. 2009. “‘How Many Cases Do I Need?’: On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research.” *Ethnography* 10(1):5–38.

TUESDAY, FEB. 11TH: ETHNOGRAPHY/ PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION II

- **Ethnography practical assignment due via email prior to the start of class**
- **“Mini-comp” review and question bank distributed in class today.**

Read for today:

- Desmond, Matthew. 2012. “Eviction and the Reproduction of Urban Poverty.” *American Journal of Sociology* 118(1):88-133.
- Mears, Ashley. 2015. “Working for Free in the VIP: Relational Work and the Production of Consent.” *American Sociological Review* 80(6):1099–1122.

TUESDAY, FEB. 18TH: “MINI-COMP” EXAM #1

TUESDAY, FEB. 25TH: CONTENT ANALYSIS I

- **Prior to today’s class, pick a book for your book review; we will discuss your selections in class. All books must be approved by the instructor.**
- **In-class student facilitation(s) – Discussion questions due via email prior to the start of class**

Read for today:

- Brown, Jessica. 2014. “Chapter 8: Research Using Available Data/Content Analysis,” In *The Practice of Social Research: How Social Scientists Answer Their Questions*, Shamus Khan and Dana R. Fisher, eds. New York: Oxford University Press:168-187.
- Weber, Robert Phillip. 1985. Chapters 1, 2, and 4, in *Basic Content Analysis, Second Edition*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage:9-40 & 70-77.

TUESDAY, MAR. 3RD: CONTENT ANALYSIS II

- Content analysis practical assignment due via email prior to the start of class

Read for today:

- Gans, Herbert J. 1980. Preface, Introduction, and Chapters 1 & 2 In *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*. New York: Vintage Books: xxi-xxv and 3-59 (*An oldie but a goody – and more relevant now than ever!*)
- Martin, Karin A., and Emily Kazyak. 2009. "Hetero-Romantic Love and Heterosexiness in Children's G-Rated Films." *Gender & Society* 23(3):315-336.

TUESDAY, MAR. 10TH: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

TUESDAY, MAR. 17TH: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING I

- In-class student facilitation(s) – Discussion questions due via email prior to the start of class

Read for today:

- Weiss, Robert. 1994. Chapters 1, 2, and 4 in *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press:1-38 & 61-119.
- Weiss, Robert. 2004. "In Their Own Words: Making the Most of Qualitative Interviews," *Contexts* 3/4 (Fall):44-51.

TUESDAY, MAR. 24TH: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWING II

- In-depth interviewing practical assignment due via email prior to the start of class

Read for today:

- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo and Tyrone Forman. 2000 "I'm Not a Racist But...' Mapping White College Students' Racial Ideology in the USA." *Discourse and Society* 11(1):50-85.
- Calarco, Jessica McCrory. 2014. "Coached for the Classroom: Parents' Cultural Transmission and Children's Reproduction of Educational Inequalities." *American Sociological Review* 79(5):1015-37.
- Lindemann, Danielle. 2010. "Will the Real Dominatrix Please Stand Up: Artistic Purity and Professionalism in the S&M Dungeon." *Sociological Forum* 25(3):588-606.

TUESDAY, MAR. 31ST: OTHER QUALITATIVE METHODS

- In-class student facilitation(s) – Discussion questions due via email prior to the start of class
- "Mini-comp" review and question bank distributed in class today.

Read for today:

- CBPR: Mosavel, Maghboeba, Christian Simon, Debbie van Stade, & Mara Buchbinder. 2005. "Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) in South Africa: Engaging Multiple Constituents to Shape the Research Question." *Social Science & Medicine* 61(12):2577- 2587.
- Comparative-historical research: Mahoney, James. 2004. "Comparative-Historical Methodology," *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 81-101.

- Focus groups: Morgan, David L. 1997. "Chapter 2: Focus Groups as a Qualitative Method," In *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage:7-17; *continued...*
- Network analysis: Degenne, Alain & Michael Forsé. 2000. Introduction and Chapter 1 in *Introducing Social Networks*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: pp. 1-21.

TUESDAY, APR. 7TH: "MINI-COMP" EXAM #2

TUESDAY, APR. 14TH: BOOK PRESENTATIONS / DATA ANALYSIS I

- Book review due via email prior to the start of class
- In-class student book presentations

Read for today- see next page!

- Miles, Matthew, & A. Michael Huberman. 1994. "Chapter 4: Early Steps in Analysis," in *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage:50-89.
- Saldana, Johnny. 2009. "Chapter 1: An Introduction to Codes and Coding," in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage:1-42.

TUESDAY, APR. 21ST: DATA ANALYSIS II / COMMUNICATING YOUR RESULTS

- In-class presentation from Lehigh Librarian Carrie Baldwin-SoRelle (10:45-11:45) on qualitative analysis software and the Lehigh libraries. Please bring your laptop!

Read for today:

- Becker, Howard S. 1986. Chapters 1 and 3 in *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press: pp. 1-25 & 43-67.
- Tracy, Sarah. 2013. "Chapter 14: Qualitative Methodology Matters: Exiting and Communicating Impact," In *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact, Second Edition*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell: 344-366.

TUESDAY, APR. 28TH: FINAL PROJECT PRESENTATIONS / COURSE WRAP UP

- Final research proposals due via email prior to the start of class
- Students will present their research proposals in class today
- Course wrap-up

Read for today:

- There are no readings assigned for today.

HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER! 😊