

**Sociology 537/637**  
**QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**  
**Fall 2022**  
**Wednesdays 2:00-4:50**  
**Cramer 265**

**Dr. Maura Kelly (she/her)**  
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## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will cover the process of analyzing qualitative data. It will include situating a qualitative study within the relevant literature, coding qualitative data with computer software, writing up the findings of qualitative research, and constructing arguments with qualitative data. This course will be a practical, hands-on seminar in which students complete a qualitative data analysis project using their own data from interviews, focus groups, ethnography, participant observation, or texts (students who have not collected data prior to the course will develop a content analysis project).

## **QUALITATIVE DATA SET**

For this course, you will need to have access to a qualitative data set available to analyze throughout the term. Your qualitative data set is most likely to be either interview transcripts or a set of texts for content analysis. Please check with me prior to submitting the proposal (due week two) if you are unsure if your idea will work for this course!

- For an interview data set, you will need 15-30 transcripts of interviews. Qualitative interviews are generally an average of 30-90 minutes in length.
- If you have conducted interviews for your thesis project, you will use those transcripts as your data set. Having *all* the interviews in hand at the start of fall term would be ideal, but you can complete the work needed for the course if you have at least ten interviews completed and transcribed by week five of fall term.
- For a focus group data set, you will need two or more transcripts of focus groups. Focus groups are generally about two hours in length and generally include two to twenty participants.
- Another option is to use previously collected interviews or focus groups. I have two qualitative interview data sets available: one examines sources of financial and non-financial support that impacts the success of workers in construction apprenticeships, the second focuses on mentorship on construction job sites, drawing on interviews with mentors and mentees. You can also ask other faculty if they have interviews that you could use for your course project.
- You can choose to use the news article content analysis proposal you developed in the Qualitative Methods course.
- A wide variety of other types of texts could be collected to create a data set suitable for content analysis. The number of texts needed depends on the type and length of the texts. For example, news article data sets should include 40-50 news articles. Examples of other types of texts include: organizational mission statements; organizational handbooks; texts of similar laws

across different states; written testimony; and political candidates' websites. For your project for this course, I will *not* approve projects analyzing multiple sources of data, projects assessing visual or audiovisual images, projects drawing on open ended survey questions, projects analyzing social media posts, or projects with other types of very short texts.

You will submit a research proposal describing your project prior to our second class. Proposals may require revision before final approval to go forward with the project (no point penalty if a revision is needed).

Examples of research designs in course readings with different types of qualitative data sets:

- Interviews: Welsh 2019 (week two), Norgaard and Reed 2017 (week three), Barcelos 2018 (week seven)
- Focus groups: León-Pérez et al 2021 (week eight)
- News articles: Milkie et al 2016 (week three)
- Transcripts of state legislature debate: Burke et al 2022 (week two)
- Website content: McKenzie et al 2022 (week three)

### **COVID-19 INFORMATION** Updated August 2022

*Vaccination:* Be vaccinated against COVID-19 and complete the COVID-19 vaccination attestation form. Those students with medical or nonmedical exemptions or who will not be on campus at all must complete the process described on the “COVID-19 Vaccine Exemption Request Form” to establish those exemptions.

*Masks:* PSU does not require students or faculty to wear masks in class. Students may choose to wear a mask.

#### *Student and instructor missing class*

- If you are feeling sick or have been exposed to COVID, do not come to campus.
- If you test positive for COVID, report your result to SHAC and do not come to campus.
- If you are uncomfortable with the level of risk in attending class, if you have childcare conflicts, or if you have any other reason not to attend class, do not attend class (no reason required, no questions asked).
- If you need to miss a class for any reason, please email me (24 hours in advance if possible) to let me know you will not be attending and will be completing an alternative assignment instead. I will send you the alternative assignment to make up the missed points, which you will submit with your next self-evaluation of your preparation and participation.
- If I feel sick or if I am exposed to COVID, we will not meet in person for our next class and I will notify you via PSU email about my absence and how course instruction will continue.
- I will continue to hold classes in person as long as PSU allows in person instruction and I and at least 50% of the class are able to attend class in person. If more than half of the students notify me 24 hours in advance that they will not be attending class, we will move that week's class to Zoom.
- Should it not be possible to continue to meet in person at any point in the term, we will shift to remote meetings via Zoom during the scheduled class times. To be clear, I am *not*

providing an option for remote attendance during regularly scheduled class times *unless* in-person classes are no longer possible.

*Guidance May Change:* Please note that the University rules, policies, and guidance may change at any time at the direction of the CDC, State, or County requirements. Please review the University's main [COVID-19 Response](#) webpage and look for emails from the University on these topics.

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

*QDA software:* You will need access to the qualitative data analysis (QDA) software package of your choice. I recommend ATLAS.ti, which can be accessed for free from any computer via the PSU [Virtual Computer Lab \(VLAB\)](#). You can also access ATLAS.ti from PSU on campus [computer labs](#). You can use an alternative qualitative data analysis software if you are already familiar with another package, just please check with me first to be sure that your proposed software will work for the course project.

*Device to access course documents in class:* You will need a laptop, tablet, or other device to bring to class that you can use to access Google Workspace (e.g. docs, sheets, slides) as well as the PDFs of course readings. If your portable device cannot run your qualitative data analysis software, let me know as students may access QDA software during class meetings but is not critical for our course.

*Email:* I will regularly communicate with students individually and as a class via email. My emails will be sent to your PSU email. It is your responsibility to check your PSU email daily during the school week and respond in a timely manner. In emails to me, use the email address on the first page of the syllabus. I will generally respond to email within 24 hours. Emails sent after 5:00pm on Friday will generally be answered by 5:00pm on Monday.

*Canvas:* All assignments will be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted. Points earned and written feedback for all assignments will be posted on Canvas. The required readings are available on Canvas. If you cannot access a reading through Canvas, you are responsible for navigating to the reading from the PSU library homepage.

## **POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY**

*Policy on academic honesty:* You are expected to demonstrate complete academic honesty. Please refer to the Student Conduct Code for more detailed information on PSU policies. If you use a direct quote (i.e. someone else's written or spoken words), you must include it in quotation marks. Any time you take a direct quote, as well as when you summarize or paraphrase an idea from another person, you must cite the source and include a references section at the end of the paper. Failure to cite your sources, whether intentional or not, is plagiarism. Cheating and plagiarizing will result in failing the assignment and will be reported.

*Citation style:* When you draw ideas from someone else, you need to cite the source in the text and provide a references section. For this course, appropriate citations are essential, but any style

of citation is acceptable. Note that readings listed in the syllabus and the examples below use the American Sociological Association (ASA) style. More on ASA style [here](#).

*Defining plagiarism:* According to the MLA Handbook, plagiarism is “using another person’s ideas, information or expressions without acknowledging that person’s work.”

*How to avoid plagiarizing:*

- Rule #1: If you use another person’s ideas, you must cite your source in the text (author last name and year);
- Rule #2: If you use another person’s exact words, you must put those words in quotation marks as well as cite your source in the text (author last name, year, and page number)

*Examples of appropriate citations and plagiarism*

Text from original source

- *Karen’s transgressive campiness is also manifest in her flagrant sexuality.*

Appropriate citations

- *Karen’s sexuality is transgressive and campy (Cooper 2003)*
- *The character of Karen shows “transgressive campiness” (Cooper 2003:519).*
- *Cooper stated, “Karen’s transgressive campiness is also manifest in her flagrant sexuality” (2003:519).*

Plagiarism

- *Karen’s transgressive campiness is also manifest in her flagrant sexuality.* [copy and paste, no quotation marks, no citation]
- *Karen’s transgressive campiness is shown in her flagrant sexuality.* [almost identical language, no citation]

## **GRADING POLICIES**

*Grading:* All assignments are graded on a pass/no pass basis, except for the final paper and the evaluations of class preparation and participation.

*Revising Assignments:* If assignments do not meet minimum standards (a grade of “B” or higher), you have the opportunity to revise it to receive credit (excluding weekly discussion questions and assignments due during finals week). I will indicate inadequate assignments and identify the key areas to improve in my comments on Canvas. You will have two weeks to revise and resubmit your assignment from when you receive comments via Canvas.

*Late work:* All can be submitted up to one week late with no point penalty assignments (excluding weekly discussion questions and assignments due during finals week). After one week, assignments are deducted 10% for every 24 hours late. No work accepted after Wednesday of finals week.

## **OTHER COURSE POLICIES**

*Office hours:* Office hours are by appointment in person in Cramer 217R or via Zoom. Make an appointment via [calendly.com/maura-kelly](https://calendly.com/maura-kelly)

*Course suggestion box:* I have provided an online [suggestion box](#) for students to provide anonymous feedback and ask anonymous questions at any point in the term. I will be notified via email when this form is submitted and will address any pressing issues and/or answer questions at our next class meeting. At the midpoint in the term, I will prompt you to submit feedback to the suggestion box to help improve our course for the second half of the term.

*Access and inclusion for students with disabilities:* If any aspects of instruction or course design result in barriers to your inclusion or learning, please notify me. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) provides reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the learning environment. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that may affect your work in this class and feel you need accommodations, contact the DRC to schedule an appointment and initiate a conversation about reasonable accommodations. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, [drc@pdx.edu](mailto:drc@pdx.edu), <http://www.pdx.edu/drc>. If you already have accommodations, please contact me to make sure that I have received a faculty notification letter and to discuss your accommodations.

*Title IX reporting:* As a member of the university community, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals at <http://www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help> or you may call a confidential IPV Advocate at 503-725-5672.

## **LAND AND LABOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Portland State is located on the traditional homelands of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tumwater, Watlala bands of the Chinook, the Tualatin Kalapuya, and many other indigenous nations of the Columbia River. We acknowledge the ancestors of this place and understand that we are here because of the sacrifices forced upon them. We recognize and honor the past, present, and future of these communities.

We also pause to recognize and acknowledge the labor upon which our country, state, and institution are built. We remember that our country is built on the labor of enslaved people who were abducted and brought to the U.S. and we recognize the continued contribution of their descendants. We also acknowledge labor of all immigrants, voluntary and involuntary, that contributed to the building of the country and continues within our labor force. We acknowledge that our institution relies on hourly, student, contingent, and unpaid labor and we recognize those contributions. Finally, we acknowledge the value of unpaid care-giving labor and the challenges that result from conflicts between care-giving, paid labor, school, and other commitments.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Points</i>
<b><i>Discussion questions</i></b>	Write three discussion questions for five of the ten class meetings. You can write discussion questions for additional class meetings for up to ten points of extra credit.	Weds, weekly	10
<b><i>Research proposal</i></b>	Write a research proposal. Options include: A) The thesis proposal approved by your committee; B) The news article content analysis proposal developed for Soc 592; or C) A new research proposal using texts or previously collected interview data.	Week 2 Oct 5	5
<b><i>Literature review summary table</i></b>	After identifying and skimming 10-20 empirical peer-reviewed articles (scholarly books and book chapters are also acceptable), create a table of the empirical research most similar to your current project	Week 4 Oct 19	5
<b><i>Coding memo</i></b>	After reviewing all the transcripts or texts in your qualitative data set, write a memo in your <a href="#">research journal</a> describing your initial impressions of the data and develop a coding table with initial codes and example excerpts.	Week 5 Oct 26	5
<b><i>P&amp;P for weeks 1-5</i></b>	Provide a self-evaluation of your class preparation and participation during weeks 1-5.	Week 6 Nov 2	10
<b><i>Results section outline</i></b>	Organize findings into three to five topics or themes, which will represent the subsections of the results section.	Week 7 Nov 9	10
<b><i>Results subsection</i></b>	Write the first draft of one of the subsections of the results. This will be <i>one</i> of the three to five subsections you previously outlined.	Week 8 Nov 16	10
<b><i>Methods section</i></b>	Revise the methods section from your research proposal, including adding the data analysis subsection.	Week 9 Nov 23	5
<b><i>Literature review section</i></b>	Expand the literature review section from your research proposal to frame the analysis you have conducted	Week 10 Nov 30	10
<b><i>Final paper</i></b>	Complete the 7000-9000 word manuscript, incorporating feedback provided on earlier work	Finals Dec 7	20
<b><i>P&amp;P for weeks 6-10</i></b>	Provide a self-evaluation of your class preparation and participation during weeks 6-10.	Finals Dec 7	10

Note: *All assignments are due via Canvas by 9am on the day of our class meeting* (finals week assignments are due by the end of day on Wednesday of finals week). For additional detail on assignments, see guidelines on Canvas.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1: September 28

Introduction to qualitative data analysis

### Assignments

- Discussion questions (five of ten class meetings required, additional for extra credit)

### Reading

- van den Hoonaard, Deborah K. and Elise M. Will C. van den Hoonaard. 2008. "Data Analysis" *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*
- Thomas, David. 2006. "A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data." *American Journal of Evaluation* 27: 237-246.
- Kelsy, Burke, Emily Kazzyak and Alice Miller MacPhee. 2022. "LGBT Employment Nondiscrimination: Debating Sexuality and Citizenship." *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 19(2):470-482

Week 2: October 5

The research question

### Assignments

- Research proposal
- Be sure you can open your [research journal](#) (no assignment to submit, we will be working with this in class on October 5)
- Discussion questions (five of ten class meetings required, additional for extra credit)

### Reading

- Agee, J., 2009. "Developing Qualitative Research Questions: A Reflective Process." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(4): 431-447.
- Welsh, Megan. 2019. "Conceptualizing the Personal Touch: Experiential Knowledge and Gendered Strategies in Community Supervision Work" *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 48(3): 311-338.
- McKenzie, Cameron, Nick Mulé J. and Maryam Khan. 2022. "Where is LGBTQ+ in Ontario's Health Care Policies and Programs?" *Sexuality Research & Social Policy* 19(2):610-621.

Week 3: October 12

The literature review

### Assignments

- Identify and skim 10-20 peer-reviewed articles for your lit review (no assignment due)
- Discussion questions due (five of ten class meetings required, additional for extra credit)

### Reading

- Race, Richard. 2008. "Literature review" *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*

- Milkie, Melissa A, Joanna R. Pepin, and Kathleen E. Denny. 2016. “What Kind of War? ‘Mommy Wars’ Discourse in U.S. and Canadian News, 1989-2013” *Sociological Inquiry* 86(1): 51-78.
- Norgaard, Kari Marie, and Ron Reed. 2017. “Emotional Impacts of Environmental Decline: What Can Native Cosmologies Teach Sociology about Emotions and Environmental Justice?” *Theory and Society* 46(6): 463-495.

Week 4: October 19  
Approaches to Qualitative Data Analysis

Assignments

- Finish skimming articles and read 2-3 of the articles most closely related to your project in topic and/or method (no assignment to submit)
- Lit review summary table
- Discussion questions due (five of ten class meetings required, additional for extra credit)

Reading

- Ayres, Lioness. 2008. “Thematic Analysis” *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*
- Potter, Jonathan. 2008. “Discourse Analysis” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*
- Charmaz, Kathy and Antony Bryant. 2008. “Grounded Theory” in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*
- Deterding, Nicole M. and Mary C. Waters. 2021. “Flexible Coding of In-depth Interviews: A Twenty-first-century Approach” *Sociological Methods and Research*.

Week 5: October 26  
Qualitative Data Analysis software

Assignment

- Prep data set and upload to QDA software (no assignment to submit)
- Read through all your data twice (no assignment to submit)
- Coding memo assignment: After reviewing all the transcripts or texts in your qualitative data set, write a memo in your research journal describing your initial impressions of the data and develop a coding table with five to ten initial codes and example excerpts (two to three examples per code).
- Discussion questions due (five of ten class meetings required, additional for extra credit)

Reading/viewing

- Watch either [Overview of ATLAS.ti 9 for Windows](#) or [Overview of ATLAS.ti 9 Mac](#)
- Paulus, Trena, Megan Woods, David P. Atkins, and Rob Macklin. “The Discourse of QDAS: Reporting Practices of ATLAS.ti and NVivo Users with Implications for Best Practices.” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 20(1), 35–47.



Week 6: November 2  
Organizing findings

Assignment

- Work on coding your data in QDA software (no assignment to submit)
- Class preparation and participation for weeks 1-5
- Discussion questions due (five of ten class meetings required, additional for extra credit)

Reading

- Abelson, Miriam J. 2019. Pp 1-7 in *Men in Place: Trans Masculinity, Race, and Sexuality in America*. U of Minnesota Press.
- Gascón, Luis Daniel, and Aaron Roussell. 2019. Pp 1-7 in *The Limits of Community Policing: Civilian Power and Police Accountability in Black and Brown Los Angeles*. NYU Press.
- Risman, Barbara. 2018. Pp 1-6 in *Where the Millennials Will Take Us: A New Generation Wrestles with the Gender Structure*. Oxford.
- Barcelos, Chris. 2018. "Culture, Contraception, and Colorblindness: Youth Sexual Health Promotion as a Gendered Racial Project" *Gender & Society* 32(2): 252-273.

Week 7: November 9  
Making an argument and using quotes as evidence

Assignment

- Continue coding your data in QDA software (no assignment to submit)
- Results section outline
- Discussion questions (five of ten class meetings required, additional for extra credit)

Reading

- Abend, Gabriel, Caitlin Petre, and Michael Sauder. 2013. "Styles of Causal Thought: An Empirical Investigation" *American Journal of Sociology* 119 (3): 602-654. [note: focus on the discussion of contemporary U.S. sociology, you can skip over the sections on the comparisons to older U.S. sociology and Mexican sociology]
- Review the six empirical articles from past weeks (i.e. Welsh 2019, Burke et al 2022; McKenzie et al 2022, Milkie et al 2016, Norgaard and Reed 2017; Barcelos 2018) and identify the authors' main arguments, noting how themes/variables/findings in the analysis relate to one another (no assignment to submit)

Week 8: November 16  
Qualitative analysis of focus group data

Assignment

- Finish coding your data (no assignment to submit)
- Results subsection
- Discussion questions (five of ten class meetings required, additional for extra credit)

### Reading

- Kidd, Paula and Mark Marshall. 2000. "Getting the Focus and the Group: Enhancing Analytical Rigor in Focus Group Research." *Qualitative Health Research* 10(3): 293-308.
- León-Pérez, Gabriela, Caroline Richards and Amy L. Non. 2021. "Precarious Work and Parenting Stress among Mexican Immigrant Women in the United States." *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 83(3):881-897

Week 9: November 23  
Qualitative analysis of fieldnotes

### Assignment

- Methods section
- Discussion questions (five of ten class meetings required, additional for extra credit)

### Reading

- Emerson, Robert M, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. "Chapter 6: Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Memoing" Pp. 171-199. *Writing Ethnographic Field Notes*, Second Edition. The University of Chicago Press. D2L
- Gast, Melanie Jones. 2018. "'They Give Teachers a Hard Time': Symbolic Violence and Intersections of Race and Class in Interpretations of Teacher-student Relations" *Sociological Perspectives* 61(2): 257-275.

Week 10: November 30  
Qualitative analysis of social media texts

### Assignment

- Literature review

### Reading

- Morales, Josefina Flores and Fanni Farago. 2021. "'Of Course we Need to Help the Undocumented Immigrants!': Twitter Discourse on the (Un)Deservingness of Undocumented Immigrants in the United States during the COVID-19 Pandemic." *Sociological Perspectives* 64(5):765-785.
- Brown, Adrienne R. 2022. "(Re)Constructing Community After Disaster: Survivors' use of Facebook Groups 1 Year After the Camp Fire." *Sociological Inquiry* 92(3):1196-1216.

Finals week: December 7  
No class meeting

### Assignment

- Final paper
- Class preparation and participation for weeks 6-10