

Sociology 592
QUALITATIVE METHODS
Spring 2023
Wednesday 2:00-4:50
Cramer 265

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of qualitative research in sociology, including the contribution of qualitative research, qualitative research design, best practices for high quality research, and research ethics. It covers a variety of methods for collecting qualitative data, such as qualitative content analysis, ethnography or participant observation, interviews, and focus groups.

BASIC NEEDS

Basic needs: It can be challenging to do your best in class if you have trouble meeting basic needs like safe shelter, sleep, and nutrition. Resource centers across campus are here to provide assistance, referrals, and support. Please contact anyone on this list for assistance: [Basic Needs Hub](#), [Portland State Food Pantry](#), [C.A.R.E. Team](#), [Student Health and Counseling](#).

Think SHAC First! [The Center for Student Health & Counseling \(SHAC\)](#) provides high quality, accessible, [medical](#), [counseling](#), [dental](#), and [health promotion services](#) to all PSU students taking 5+ credit hours, regardless of the type of insurance coverage. Office visits at SHAC are FREE! Students taking 1+ credit hours can access [SHAC Dental Services](#). SHAC has an incredible staff of health care professionals who are dedicated to keeping you healthy so you can stay in the classroom and focus on learning. For a full list of services and more information visit pdx.edu/health-counseling. 503.725.2800 | 1880 SW 6th Ave. Portland UCB Suite 200 | pdx.edu/health-counseling

Mental Health Emergencies: If you are having a mental health emergency and need to speak with someone immediately, come in to SHAC at ANY time during SHAC [hours of operation](#). After hours and weekends call the Multnomah County Crisis Line 503.988.4888 or use the 24/7 [mySSP mental health support resource](#) 866.743.7732.

ABSENCE POLICY

My expectation is that you do *not* come to class if you have tested positive for COVID or are otherwise sick. There are also many other reasons you may not be able to come to class. For all absences, I expect you to let me know via email you will not be attending a class meeting (in advance if possible), but no explanation is needed and no questions about the reason for your absence will be asked.

COVID-19 AND ILLNESS INFORMATION Updated March 2023

Note: The vaccination policy is the only PSU COVID-19 policy still in place. I will encourage, but not require, students to follow CDC recommendations. Overall, I expect each student will use their best judgment about their own situation.

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 faculty or students to wear masks in class. Students may choose to wear a mask. I will wear a mask as long as at least one student chooses to wear a mask.
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that if you are *recovering from COVID-19*, you should wear a mask through day ten (days one through five you should isolate at home). Note that “day zero” is the date you first had symptoms or a positive COVID test, whichever was first.
- The CDC recommends that anyone *exposed to COVID-19* wear a mask around others for ten days from the date of exposure.
- For those *recovering from other illnesses that may be contagious* (negative COVID-19 test), I encourage students to wear a mask until all symptoms resolve (this is not required).

Students missing class

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommends that if you test positive for COVID-19, you should stay home at least until day five or until your symptoms improve, whichever is later. Note that day zero is the date you first had symptoms or a positive COVID test, whichever is first.
- For all illnesses, I encourage students to stay home when they are potentially contagious and/or too unwell to come to class.

Instructor missing class

- If I am potentially contagious and/or too unwell to come to class, I will not come to campus. I will notify you via PSU email about my absence and how course instruction will continue.
- 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

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

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: Any citation style is acceptable. When you draw ideas from someone else, you need to cite the source in the text and provide 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 (full credit) or no pass (no credit) basis, except for the final research proposal and the self-evaluations of class preparation and participation.

Revising Assignments: If an assignment does not meet minimum standards and earns a no pass grade, you have the opportunity to revise it to receive a passing grade (excluding weekly discussion questions and final proposals). I will indicate any inadequate assignment 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 two weeks late with no point penalty assignments (excluding weekly discussion questions and assignments due during finals week). No work accepted after two weeks or the end of finals week (whichever comes first).

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

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, <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.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Due Date</i>	<i>Points</i>
<i>Discussion questions</i>	Write three discussion questions for five of the ten class meetings. You can write discussion questions for additional class meetings for extra credit.	Weds, weekly	10
<i>Empirical examples</i>	Identify three recent peer-reviewed articles using different qualitative methods.	April 12	5
<i>Ethnography Field Notes</i>	Identify a site for field research from meetup.com. Visit your field site and write up field notes.	April 12	10
<i>Ethnography Proposal</i>	Design an ethnography based on your initial field site observations and write a research proposal.	April 19	10
<i>Human Subjects training</i>	Complete the CITI training at http://www.citiprogram.org/ . If you have previously completed the CITI training, you do not need to do it again, just submit your certificate of completion to receive credit.	April 26	5
<i>Friendship interview</i>	Work in groups in class to develop a research question and an interview guide on the topic of friendship. Pair up with a student from another group to interview each other outside of class.	May 10	5
<i>Class preparation and participation for weeks 1-5</i>	Reflect on your class preparation and participation during weeks 1-5.	May 10	10
<i>Interview Proposal</i>	Design an interview study and write a research proposal, including an interview guide.	May 17	10
<i>Pilot Interview</i>	Conduct one pilot interview to test the interview guide.	May 24	5
<i>Qualitative Content Analysis Proposal</i>	Design a qualitative content analysis study of a topic covered in the news and write a research proposal.	May 31	10
<i>Final Research Proposal</i>	Write a research proposal for a qualitative research project. This proposal may be for either your qualitative thesis or dissertation or for your project for Qualitative Data Analysis.	June 18	10
<i>Class preparation and participation for weeks 6-10</i>	Provide a self-evaluation of your class preparation and participation during weeks 6-10.	June 18	10

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 April 5 **NO CLASS MEETING**

Ethnography and Participant Observation I

Reading (complete prior to ethnography field site visit)

- Watch [welcome video](#)
- Silverman, R and K. Patterson. 2015. "Qualitative Research for Students and Professionals" Pp 1-22 in *Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development*.
- O'Reilly, Karen. 2012. "Where to Begin" Pp 28-61 in *Ethnographic Methods*.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. "At the Desk, Creating Scenes on a Page" Pp 45-87 in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*.

Week 2 April 12

Ethnography and Participant Observation II

Assignment

- Discussion questions (submit for five of the ten class meetings)
- Ethnography field notes
- Empirical examples

Reading

- Reyes Victoria. 2020. "Ethnographic Toolkit: Strategic Positionality and Researchers' Visible and Invisible Tools in Field Research" *Ethnography* 21(2) 220–240.
- Musto, Michela. 2019. "Brilliant or Bad: The Gendered Social Construction of Exceptionalism in Early Adolescence." *American Sociological Review* 84(3):369-393.
- Lorenzen, Janet A., and Emily Drew. 2023 "“We Need Communities of Color”: How Coalitions Can Move from Climate Action to Climate Justice." *Social Justice Research* 1-29.

Week 3 April 19

Qualitative Research Design

Assignment

- Discussion questions (submit for five of the ten class meetings)
- Ethnography proposal

Reading

- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. "Research through Imperial Eyes" Pp 92-115 and "Colonizing Knowledges" Pp 117-143 in *Decolonizing Methodologies*
- Lareau, Annette. 2012. "Using the Terms Hypothesis and Variable for Qualitative Work: A Critical Reflection." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74(4): 671-677.
- Hamilton Jill B. 2020. "Rigor in Qualitative Methods: An Evaluation of Strategies Among Underrepresented Rural Communities." *Qualitative Health Research*. 30(2):196-204.

- Murphy, Alexandra K., Colin Jerolmack, and DeAnna Smith. 2021. "Ethnography, Data Transparency, and the Information Age." *Annual Review of Sociology* 47: 41-61.

Week 4 April 26
Ethics in Qualitative Research

Assignment

- Discussion questions (submit for five of the ten class meetings)
- Human subjects training

Reading

- Strohm Kitchener, Karen and Richard F. Kitchener. 2013. "Social Science Research Ethics: Historical and Philosophical Issues" Pp 2-22 in *The Handbook of Social Research Ethics*
- Thomas, Veronica. 2013. "Critical Race Theory: Ethics and Dimensions of Diversity in Research" Pp 2-19 in *The Handbook of Social Research Ethics*
- Jones, Chenelle A. 2021. "Moving Beyond Hollow Words: Strategic Approaches to Foster Inclusivity and Make Black Lives Truly Matter in Research" *Black Lives Matter in Research* 57:59 [Note: Keynote starts at about the seven minute mark]

Week 5 May 3
Interviewing I

Assignment

- Discussion questions (submit for five of the ten class meetings)

Reading

- Baker, Sarah Elsie and Rosalind Edwards, eds. 2012 *How Many Qualitative Interviews is Enough? Expert Voices and Early Career Reflections on Sampling and Cases in Qualitative Research* [Note: Read Baker and Edwards (Pp 3-6) Adler & Adler (Pp. 8-11), Brannen (Pp. 16-17), Bryman (Pp. 18-20), Charmaz (Pp. 21-22), and Doucet (Pp. 25-26)]
- Rubin, Herbert and Irene Rubin. 2011. "Design: Choosing Topics and Anticipating Data Analysis" Pp 2-19 in *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*.
- Student selected empirical article on interviewing

Week 6 May 10
Interviewing II

Assignment

- Discussion questions (submit for five of the ten class meetings)
- Self-evaluation of class preparation and participation for weeks 1-5
- Friendship interview

Reading

- Rubin, Herbert and Irene Rubin. 2011. "The Responsive Interview as an Extended Conversation" Pp 2-18 And "Structuring the Interview" Pp 2-19 in *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*.

- Student selected empirical article on interviewing
- Student selected empirical article on interviewing

Week 7 May 17

Focus groups

Assignment

- Discussion questions (submit for five of the ten class meetings)
- Interview proposal

Reading due

- Acocella, Ivana. 2012. "The Focus Groups in Social Research: Advantages and Disadvantages" *Quality and Quantity* 46:1125–1136.
- Student selected empirical article on focus groups
- Student selected empirical article on focus groups

Week 8 May 24

Content Analysis

Assignment

- Discussion questions (submit for five of the ten class meetings)
- Pilot interview

Reading

- Schreier, Margrit. 2013. "Qualitative Content Analysis" Pp 2-19 in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*.
- Student selected empirical article on content analysis
- Student selected empirical article on content analysis

Week 9 May 31

Institutional Ethnography

Assignment

- Discussion questions (submit for five of the ten class meetings)
- Qualitative content analysis proposal

Reading

- Smith, Dorothy. 2005. "Introduction" Pp 1-4 in *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People*.
- Devault, Marjorie L. and Lisa McCoy. 2006. "Institutional Ethnography: Using Interview to Investigate Ruling Relations" Pp 15-44 in *Institutional Ethnography as Practice*.
- Student selected empirical article on institutional ethnography
- Student selected empirical article on institutional ethnography

Week 10 June 7

Community Based Research

Assignment

- Discussion questions (submit for five of the ten class meetings)

Reading

- Hartmann, Douglas. 2022. "Community-Engaged Research: What It Is and Why It Matters" *Footnotes* 50(1).
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 2012. "Articulating an Indigenous Research Agenda" Pp 145-161 in *Decolonizing Methodologies*.
- Student selected empirical article on community-based research

Finals week NO CLASS MEETING

All assignments for the course must be submitted by Sunday June 18 at 11:59pm.

Assignment

- Research proposal
- Self-evaluation of class preparation and participation for weeks 6-10

FURTHER READING ON QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Note: SOC 592 Qualitative Methods is the first course in a two-course series. The second course in the series is SOC 537 Qualitative Data Analysis. If you will not be able to take the second course, below are some readings to help you prepare on your own for qualitative data analysis.

Readings

- 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.
- Deterding, Nicole M., and Mary C. Waters. 2021. "Flexible Coding of In-Depth Interviews: A Twenty-First-Century Approach." *Sociological Methods & Research* 50(2): 708-739.
- 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*
- Gibbs, Graham G. 2013. "Using Software in Qualitative Analysis" Pp 277-294 in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*.
- Abend, Gabriel, Caitlin Petre, and Michael Sauder. 2013. "Styles of Causal Thought: An Empirical Investigation" *American Journal of Sociology* 119 (3): 602-654.
- Agee, J., 2009. "Developing Qualitative Research Questions: A Reflective Process." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 22(4): 431-447.

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.