

**INTERMEDIATE QUALITATIVE METHODS
(EVERYTHING IS DATA)
SOC254H1S
SUMMER 2019**

Instructor:	Jaime Nikolaou	Class:	Monday/Wednesday, 6-9pm
Office Hours:	by appointment Room 335, Sociology 725 Spadina Ave.		SS1087
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“Doing ethnography is like trying to read ... a manuscript—foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior” (Geertz 1973: 10).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In this course, we ask what it means to examine the social world through ethnography. We will answer this question by reading texts that expose us to the methodology’s guiding principles and debates. You will apply these insights to your own fieldwork, since the primary goal of this course is to give undergraduates experience doing qualitative research.

What is ethnography? Ethnography was born in anthropology but is now a staple method in sociology. Essentially, it a method of participant observation. Ethnographers get close to the people they study. They hang out and do the range of things that “natives” or “locals” of social worlds do. They jot down what they see and hear in the field, which they later expand into thick description—description, Geertz poetically forewarns, that is “full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries” about social life. Ethnography is also an umbrella method, since it utilizes many qualitative tools beyond participant observation. Ethnographers interview people in the field and analyze a host of cultural artifacts that illuminate the social conditions in which they live. Ultimately, ethnographers try to understand everyday life from locals’ perspectives and tap into sense-making and social processes that may be unconscious to them.

In this course, you will conduct ethnographic fieldwork on a social movement—a specific kind of social world—that interests you. You will do this over the semester and with peers, which will give you scaffolded and collaborative experience with participant observation, semi-structured interviewing, textual analysis and self-reflexivity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand the major principles underlying ethnographic inquiry.
- Glean methodological insight from empirical studies.
- Differentiate between the utility of observational, interview and unobtrusive data.
- Engage in ethnographic data collection and analysis.

COURSE ORGANIZATION

- **Prompts (5%)**
- **Tutorials (5%)**
- **Fieldwork (90%)**
 - o Fieldsite Observations (20%)
 - o Interview Transcript (30%)
 - o Analytic Memo (5%)
 - o Presentation (5%)
 - o Final Report (35%)

Each week, we will meet for two to three hours. Lectures will deepen your understanding of ethnographic concepts and techniques, which you will apply to your fieldwork during tutorials. Your active participation is required during both lecture and tutorial.

PROMPTS (5%)

I will end each class by asking a simple methods question to structure how you read for the following week. For example, for Week 9 I might ask: “What is reflexivity and how is Susan Krieger (1985) a reflexive observer?”. Prompts should be 400-500 words long, posted to Quercus by 4pm the day of the next class, and you will gain 0.5% for each you submit (not exceeding 5%).

TUTORIALS (5%)

Tutorials will be geared around your fieldwork projects. You will gain 0.5% for each you attend and submit work for (not exceeding 5%). Tutorials will consist of in-class writing and whole-group workshopping, which deepen your practical understanding of ethnographic data collection and analysis. Tutorial work will be graded for completion (i.e., “pass/fail”); however, we will also provide individual feedback as your fieldwork progresses.

FIELDWORK (90%)

The main goal of this course is to give students hands-on research experience. To this end, you will collect and analyze ethnographic data on a social movement that interests you. Ethnographers study all kinds of social worlds (e.g., the family, the state), and the activist sphere is no exception. Social movement studies is a vibrant field in sociology, and much of its rich empirical work is qualitative. We will read case studies on protest activity to glean methodological insight, which you will apply to your own fieldwork. Consider anything substantive that you learn about social movements to be value-added!

You may study a movement on your own or with other students, noting that all term work will be graded individually. If you work in pairs or small groups, you will have more people to bounce your fieldwork experiences off and more data to analyze. In keeping with ethnography’s goal of immersion, I encourage you to collect as much data as you can this term. Extra observations, interviews and online research will produce a fuller dataset, which will make analysis easier and more interesting.

COURSE SCHEDULE

In this course, you will read a variety of ethnographic case studies and methods articles. All of these readings are digital and posted on Quercus.

While I will make every effort to follow the schedule below, please note that it is subject to change at my discretion.

WEEK 1 (3 July) – Ethnography’s Warrants

- **Tutorial:** none
- **Readings:**
 - o van den Hoonaard, Deborah K. 2015. “Asking Questions and Identifying Goals” (pp. 12-33) in *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
 - o Goodwin, Jeff and James M. Jasper. 2015. “Editors’ Introduction” (pp. 3-7) in *The Social Movements Reader: Cases and Concepts* (3rd ed). Wiley-Blackwell.

WEEK 2 (8 July) – Participant Observation

- **Tutorial:** thick description exercise
- **Readings:**
 - o van den Hoonaard, Deborah K. 2015. “Observing Social Life through Field Research” (pp. 99-119) in *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
 - o Taylor, Verta, Leila J. Rupp and Joshua Gamson. 2004. “Performing Protest: Drag Shows as Tactical Repertoire of the Gay and Lesbian Movement.” *Authority in Contention* 25: 105-37.

WEEK 3 (10 July) – Participant Observation

- **Tutorial:** revise thick description
- **Readings:**
 - o Uldam, Julie and Patrick McCurdy. 2013. “Studying Social Movements: Challenges and Opportunities for Participant Observation.” *Sociology Compass* 7(11): 941-51.
 - o Taylor, Judith. 1998. “Feminist Tactics and Friendly Fire in the Irish Women's Movement.” *Gender & Society* 12(6): 674-91.
- **Assignment:**
 - o Fieldsite Observations (20%) due Sunday, 14 July, 11:59pm

WEEK 4 (15 July) – Unobtrusive Data

- **Tutorial:** collect data on movement's online presence
- **Readings:**
 - o Whitehead, Krista. 2010. "Hunger Hurts but Starving Works': A Case Study of Gendered Practices in the Online Pro-Eating-Disorder Community." *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 35(4): 595-626.
 - o Bonilla, Yarimar and Jonathan Rosa. 2015. "#Ferguson: Digital Protest, Hashtag Ethnography, and the Racial Politics of Social Media in the United States." *American Ethnologist* 42(1): 4-17.

WEEK 5 (17 July) – Interviews

- **Tutorial:** generate interview guide
- **Readings:**
 - o van den Hoonaard, Deborah K. 2015. "In-Depth Interviewing" (pp. 99-119) in *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer*. Oxford University Press.
 - o Heath, Melanie. 2003. "Soft-Boiled Masculinity: Renegotiating Gender and Racial Ideologies in the Promise Keeper's Movement." *Gender & Society* 17(3): 423-44.

WEEK 6 (22 July) – Interviews

- **Tutorial:** revise interview guide
- **Readings:**
 - o Hermanowicz, Joseph C. 2002. "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed." *Qualitative Sociology* 25(4): 479-99.
 - o Baily, Jessica. 2015. "Contemporary British Feminism: Opening the Door to Men?" *Social Movement Studies* 14(4): 443-58.

WEEK 7 (24 July) – Qualitative Analysis

- **Tutorial:** code dataset
- **Readings:**
 - o Charmaz, Kathy. 2012. "The Power and Potential of Grounded Theory." *Medical Sociology Online* 6(3): 1-15.
 - o Saldaña, Johnny. 2015. "An Introduction to Codes and Coding" (pp. 1-40) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage.
- **Assignment:**
 - o Interview Transcript (30%) due Sunday, 28 July, 11:59pm

WEEK 8 (29 July) – Qualitative Analysis

- **Tutorial:** code dataset
- **Readings:**
 - o Saldaña, Johnny. 2015. “Writing Analytic Memos” (pp. 41-57) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage.
 - o Twine, France Winddance. 2004. “A White Side of Black Britain: The Concept of Racial Literacy.” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27(6): 878-907.
- **Assignment:**
 - o Analytic Memo (5%) due Monday, 5 August, 11:59pm

WEEK 9 (31 July) – Reflexivity

- **Tutorial:** reflexive writing exercise
- **Readings:**
 - o Schwalbe, Michael. 1996. “The Mirrors in Men’s Faces.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 25(1): 58-82.
 - o Krieger, Susan. 1985. “Beyond ‘Subjectivity’: The Use of Self in Social Science.” *Qualitative Sociology* 8(4): 309-24.

WEEK 10 (7 August) – Open Work Session

- **Tutorial:** one-on-one consultations with Instructor and TA
- **Readings:**
 - o Pratt, Michael G. 2009. “For the Lack of a Boilerplate: Tips on Writing up Qualitative Research.” *Academy of Management Journal* 52(5): 856-62.

WEEK 11 (12 August) – Ethnographic Insights

- **Tutorial:** student presentations (5%)
- **Readings:**
 - o Kleinman, Sherryl, Martha A. Copp, and Karla A. Henderson. 1997. “Qualitatively Different: Teaching Fieldwork to Graduate Students.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 25(4): 469-99.

WEEK 12 (13 August) – Ethnographic Insights

- **Tutorial:** student presentations (5%)
- **Readings:** none
- **Assignment:**
 - o Final Report (35%) due Wednesday, 14 August, 11:59pm

COURSE POLICIES

PREREQUISITES

Be cautioned that students without the prerequisite for this course (SOC204H) can be removed from SOC254H without notice.

COMMUNICATION

Please check your UTmail+ regularly for important course information, noting that all mass emails I send will be mirrored in the “Announcements” tab on Quercus.

Individual questions are best addressed with me during class or by email. If you send an email, please include SOC254 in the subject line and expect a reply within 48 hours (excluding weekends).

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

All term work for this course should be uploaded to Quercus versus submitted in hard copy. Please submit fieldwork assignments in .doc format only and name digital files accordingly:

- Fieldsite Observations: Surname_FO.doc
- Interview Transcript: Surname_IT.doc
- Analytic Memo: Surname_AM.doc
- Final Report: Surname_FR.doc

Please bring a laptop to each class to take lecture notes, submit tutorial work, and conduct online research. If you do not own a laptop, please borrow one from a UofT library.

Turn off your cell phone during class and only use your laptop for course work—not email or social media. Unauthorized audio/video recording is prohibited.

LATE WORK

Apart for documented religious observances, late prompts and tutorial work will not be accepted.

5% will be deducted for each day (including weekends) that a fieldwork assignment is late. If you cannot submit on time due to an emergency, please email me the following documentation:

- In cases of illness, a duly completed Verification of Student Illness or Injury Form:
<http://www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca/index.php>
- In cases of personal or family crisis, a letter from your College Registrar.

REFERENCING

In this syllabus, I cite readings using American Sociological Association format. Please use ASA format when submitting term work for this course:

http://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/quick_tips_for_asa_style.pdf

ACCESSIBILITY & EQUITY

UofT is committed to accessibility and students with diverse learning styles are welcome in SOC254. If you have a disability or health consideration that requires accommodation, please approach me and/or Accessibility Services (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>) early on.

If you would like to improve your writing, many resources are available to you through the UofT Writing Centre: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/>. If you are an ESL student, please visit: <http://writing.utoronto.ca/support/english-language-support/>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and will not be tolerated. Academic integrity is vital to the well-being of the university and broader academic community, and penalties for misconduct can be severe. I encourage you to read UofT's policies on academic integrity. To get a better sense of how nuanced plagiarism can be and what its consequences are, please consult: <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>.