

SOC 6712H (Qualitative Methods I)

Professor Ashley Rubin
University of Toronto

Winter 2019

Course Info

Class Time:	Th, 10:00-12:00 PM	Class Location:	Rm. 240/Seminar Room
Professor:	Ashley Rubin	Email:	ashley.rubin@utoronto.ca
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This course is shaped around five major goals: (1) crafting a strong research design, (2) collecting qualitative data, (3) analyzing qualitative data, (4) assessing qualitative scholarship, and (5) ultimately understanding when and for what purposes qualitative methods are appropriate. No single qualitative methodology is preeminent (indeed, multi-methodological work is encouraged), but we will focus primarily on interview and ethnographic, historical/archival, and comparative methods as applied to case studies, typologies, and other designs. We will examine these methods with respect to both theory generation and theory testing, including causal inference. As an interdisciplinary course, it draws from anthropology, criminology, history, political science, and sociology. Typically, the course will often draw on examples from the study of social control (broadly defined), specifically the experience and construction of social control, though the lessons are generalizable to other topics of interest. It is expected that students will complete the class with a firm understanding of what we mean by qualitative methods and what qualitative methods can accomplish and a basic understanding of how to design a study and collect and analyze qualitative data. There will be no lab component or particular software required.

1 Assignments

- **Critical Book Review (15%).** Choose one book from the list below (sign-up sheet provided in provided in Week 2) and write a 1,000 to 1,500–word critical review. Like a regular (publishable) book review, this review should summarize the book’s thesis and supporting arguments (this may include chapter summaries) and a critique (usually focusing on one to three problems with the book). Unlike a regular (publishable) book review, the review will include a careful discussion of the data and method(s) used by the book and assess their applicability to the research question as well as the author’s analysis. The due date will depend upon the book selected. However, they must be emailed to Prof. Rubin AND TA Guzman by 11:59 PM the Sunday evening prior to class for the relevant week so she can post them to blackboard and everyone has time to review these prior to class. Note: Before writing your review or even reading your selected book, read through a few book reviews from your favorite journal (my favorites are *Theoretical Criminology*, *Punishment & Society*, *Law & Society*, or *Law & Social Inquiry*) to get a sense of their structure.

- **Precís (15%).** In the course of the semester, students should prepare a precís, or short summary, for each of three readings of their choice (three precís total) from a selection of the required and recommended readings. (Note that given the ratio of students to readings some readings may be reviewed by more than one student. With prior permission, a student may select one of the books from the list provided to take the place of two precís and provide a double-length precís.) By “short,” I mean 1-1.5 single-spaced pages in 12pt Times New Roman with 1” (2.54cm) margins. A sign-up sheet will be circulated in Week 2. They must be emailed to Prof. Rubin AND TA Guzman by 11:59 PM the Sunday evening prior to class so she can post them to blackboard and everyone has time to review these prior to class. Each precís should include (a) the citation, (b) a summary of the author’s argument and the author’s data and methods, and (c) a critique (both positive and negative assessments) and/or a discussion of how the work exists in conversation with other key readings. If there is something distinctive about their approach or methodological weaknesses or innovations that they do discuss, this is worth including.) These are useful devices for preparing for one’s exams or when writing articles.
- **Midterm Exam (35%).** The midterm will test students’ knowledge of material from Units I and II. In addition to questions about why and when we should use qualitative methods, it will include questions about research design and data collection. Students will be given a one-week window to take the test; once they begin the test, however, they must not spend more than eight hours (documented accommodations excepted). The material will cover weeks 1 through 6.
- **Final Paper (35%).** 25-30 (double-spaced, 12pt, Times New Roman) pages. Students will be provided with the prompt after the midterm. The prompt will require students to rely on material discussed both before and after the midterm. While students are invited to bring in outside readings, the final paper will not require independent research but should engage with the material discussed in class. A list of relevant sources for the final paper prompt will be provided to supplement the required and recommended course readings.

PENALTIES FOR LATENESS

I will not accept late work without appropriate medical documentation (documentation should be provided according to university policy). I will only grant extensions for medical emergencies, provided the student requesting an extension provides medical documentation at least 24 hours before any deadline/due date.

2 Required Texts

The required reading will come from the following four books and from articles posted to the Blackboard course website.

- Luker, Kristin. 2008. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-Glut*. Harvard University Press. ISBN 9780674048218
- Henry E. Brady and David Collier, Eds., *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. 2nd Edition. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc. ISBN: 9781442203430
- Emerson, Robert M., ed. 2001. *Contemporary Field Research: Perspectives and Formulations* (2nd edition). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press. ISBN: 9781577661856
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226206837

- Goffman, A. (2014). *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN: 9780226275406

3 Recommended Texts: Additional Guides to Qualitative Methods

- Lofland, John, David A. Snow, Leon Anderson and Lyn H. Lofland. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis* (4th Edition). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. *This book is out of print, but several used versions are available on Amazon.*
- Alexander George and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. The MIT Press.
- Charles C. Ragin. 2008. *Redesigning Social Inquiry: Fuzzy Sets and Beyond*. University of Chicago Press.
- James Mahoney and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, eds. 2003. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stephen L. Morgan, Christopher Winship. 2007. *Counterfactuals and Causal Inference: Methods and Principles for Social Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2012). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage.

4 Books Analyzing Social Control and Other Social Phenomena Using Qualitative Methods

Note: Some of these books include mixed or multi-methods approaches (e.g., in addition to interviewing live subjects, relying on oral histories or textual documents, etc., they also quantitatively analyze surveys or other quantitative datasets).

Classics, Mostly in Urban Sociology

- Anderson, Elijah. 1999. *The Code of the Street: Decency, Violence, and the Moral Life of the Inner-city*. New York: Norton.
- Bourgois, Philippe. 1993. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. Penguin.
- Duneier, Mitchell. 1999. *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux
- Humphreys, Laud. 1975. *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal sex in public places*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Klinenberg, Eric. 2002. *Heatwave: A Social Autopsy of a Disaster in Chicago*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Liebow, Elliot. 2003. *Tally's Corner: A Study of Negro Streetcorner Men*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Newman, Katherine. 1999. *No Shame in my Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City*. New York: Vintage.

- Skocpol, T. (1979). *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China*. Cambridge University Press
- Stack, Carol. 1983. *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York: Basic.
- Wacquant, Loic. 2006. *Body and Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer*. New York: Oxford.
- Whyte, William. 1993. *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

On Policing, Processing, and Getting By

- Beckett, K. and Herbert, S. (2011). *Banished: The New Social Control In Urban America*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Rios, V. M. (2011). *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*. New York: New York University Press
- Contreras, R. (2012). *The Stickup Kids: Race, Drugs, Violence, and the American Dream*. University of California Press
- Lee, J. (2016). *Blowin' Up: Rap Dreams in South Central*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Flores, J. (2016). *Caught up: Girls, surveillance, and wraparound incarceration*. University of California Press
- Epp, C. R., Maynard-Moody, S., and Haider-Markel, D. P. (2014). *Pulled Over: How Police Stops Define Race and Citizenship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Stuart, F. (2016). *Down, Out, and Under Arrest: Policing and Everyday Life in Skid Row*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Maynard-Moody, S. and Musheno, M. (2003). *Cops, Teachers, Counselors: Stories from the Front Lines of Public Service*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Feeley, M. M. (1983). *Court Reform on Trial: Why Simple Solutions Fail*. New York: Basic Books
- Haney, L. (2010). *Offending Women: Power, Punishment, and the Regulation of Desire*. University of California Press

On Prison

- Kruttschnitt, C. and Gartner, R. (2005). *Marking Time in the Golden State: Women's Imprisonment in California*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Calavita, K. and Jenness, V. (2015). *Appealing to Justice: Prisoner Grievances, Rights, and Carceral Logic*. UC Press
- Irwin, J. (2009). *Lifers: Seeking Redemption in Prison*. Taylor & Francis
- Hannah-Moffat, K. (2001). *Punishment in Disguise: Penal Governance and Canadian Women's Imprisonment*. University of Toronto Press
- Useem, B. and Kimball, P. (1989). *States of Siege: U.S. Prison Riots, 1971–1986*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Comfort, M. (2008). *Doing Time Together: Love and Family in the Shadow of the Prison*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press
- Haney, L. (2010). *Offending Women: Power, Punishment, and the Regulation of Desire*. University of California Press

On Penal Policy/Trends

- Ignatieff, M. (1978). *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750-1850*. New York: Pantheon Books
- Leon, C. (2011). *Sex Fiends, Perverts, and Pedophiles: Understanding Sex Crime Policy in America*. New York: New York University Press
- Beckett, K. (1997). *Making Crime Pay: Law and Order in Contemporary American Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Gottschalk, M. (2006). *The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America*. New York: Cambridge University Press

5 Class Topics, Dates, and Reading Assignments

Reading assignments should be completed by the class for which they are assigned. Readings will consist of methodological literature (including articles and book chapters), empirical literature that uses qualitative or mixed/multi-method approaches, and readings evaluating the state of qualitative methods (generally or a particular example) in the field. Different reading techniques will be required for each type of reading. The texts will vary from textbook-like writing to methodological arguments to reflections on the experience of doing qualitative methods (esp. fieldwork). How quickly or thoroughly you read these pieces depends on your own approach to graduate seminars. Throughout the semester, we will read several empirical pieces as examples of qualitative research (various approaches to social control). Pay attention to the methods and how they are used, but know enough about the theory and research question to consider the evaluate the methodology.

UNIT I. MOTIVATION

1. **Introduction: What are Qualitative Methods? (1/10)** What are some examples of qualitative data and qualitative methods? What do qualitative methods help us to understand that quantitative methods cannot?

- *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences* (Luker), Ch. 1 (Salsa Dancing? In the Social Sciences?) and 2 (What's It All About?)
- * (In this and future weeks, do the exercises at the end of each chapter, but do not turn them in. Keep them for your own records.)
- Beckett, K. and Herbert, S. (2010). Penal boundaries: Banishment and the expansion of punishment. *Law & Social Inquiry*, 35(1):1–38 [{Link}](#)
- Rhodes, L. A. (2002). Psychopathy and the face of control in supermax. *Ethnography*, 3(4):442–466 [{Link}](#)

2. **The Other Two Solitudes: Quantitative v. Qualitative Methods (1/17)** Why use qualitative methods? What sorts of research questions lend themselves best to qualitative methods? When are qualitative (and mixed methods) appropriate? What are some metrics of quantitative research that are inappropriate (misguided) for evaluating qualitative methods? Which metrics are appropriate? What are the major features of the quant-qual divide? What is a good division of labor between the two approaches? What are some standard (accurate or misguided) critiques of qualitative methods by quantitative scholars? How do you defend against them?

Sign-up sheet for critical book review distributed at the beginning of class

- *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences* (Luker), Ch. 3 (An Ode to Canonical Social Science)
- *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (Brady and Collier), Intro, Ch. 1, Ch. 2 (pp. 1-64)
- *Contemporary Field Research* (Emerson), Ch. 13

UNIT II. GETTING STARTED AND DOING THE WORK

3. **Research Design: What is the Research Question? (1/24)** How do you get started? In some sense, this week we will continue themes from earlier about what sorts of questions are appropriately answered using qualitative methods. But we will also talk about how to figure out what a good question is and how to make sure other people will care about it. Finally, we will begin our discussion of how to you design a study that allows you to answer that question.

- *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences* (Luker), Ch. 4 (What Is This a Case of, Anyway?), 5 (Reviewing the Literature), & Appendix 1 (What to Do If You Don't Have a Case)

Recommended Reading:

- *Analyzing Social Settings* (Loftland, Snow, Anderson, and Loftland), Ch. 8

4. **Research Design: Sample/Site Selection (1/31).** When is random selection a good idea and when is it a terrible idea? What are the different types of sample selection techniques? What factors should motivate this decision? How do you reach hard-to-find populations? How do you get access to your site?

- *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences* (Luker), Ch. 6 (On Sampling, Operationalization, and Generalization) and 7 (Getting Down to the Nitty-Gritty)
- Preface and Ch. 1 in Snow, D. and Anderson, L. (1993). *Down on Their Luck*. Berkeley: University of California Press (Available on Blackboard)
- *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (George and Bennett), Ch. 3-4 (pp. 67-88) (Available on Blackboard)

Recommended Reading:

- *Analyzing Social Settings* (Loftland, Snow, Anderson, and Loftland), Ch. 1-3

5. **Data Collection: Ethnography and Interviewing Techniques I (2/7).** Drawing primarily on insights from anthropology and sociology, we explore the techniques for the most well-known of qualitative methods: interviewing and ethnographies. We will cover many issues: interview questions, interviewing dynamics, writing field notes, memoing, triangulation, saturation, thick description, and reflexivity.

- *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences* (Luker), Ch. 8 (Field (and Other) Methods)
- *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw), Ch. 1-5

Recommended Reading:

- *Analyzing Social Settings* (Loftland, Snow, Anderson, and Loftland), Ch. 4-5

6. **Data Collection: Ethnography and Interviewing Techniques II (2/14).** This class continues our discussion from the previous week, but focuses more on issues of positionality, the interplay between interviewer and subject identity.

Take-home MIDTERM EXAM distributed in PM after class

- *Contemporary Field Research* (Emerson), Ch. 5, 6, 7, 9, 11
- Jenness, V. (2011). Getting to know ‘the girls’ in an ‘alpha-male community’: Notes on fieldwork on transgender inmates in California prisons. In Fenstermaker, S. and Jones, N., editors, *Sociologists Backstage: Answers to 10 Questions About What They Do* (Available on Blackboard)
- Goodman, P. (2011). From ‘observation dude’ to ‘an observational study’: Gaining access and conducting research inside a paramilitary organization. *Canadian journal of law and society*, 26:599–605 {[Link](#)}
- Contreras, R. (2012). *The Stickup Kids: Race, Drugs, Violence, and the American Dream*. University of California Press, Introduction.
- Huang, Mingwei. 2016. Vulnerable Observers: Notes on Fieldwork and Rape. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. {[Link](#)}

Recommended Reading:

- Becker, H. S. (1958). Problems of inference and proof in participant observation. *American Sociological Review*, 23(6):652–660

– **Reading Week!** [Feb. 19-23]

7. **Historical and Archival Methods, Historiography, and Oral Histories—Data Collection and Analysis (2/28).** Historians are not known for discussing research methods; indeed, historiography, the method of history, means something different than what we expect as social scientists. Fortunately, political scientists are much more explicit about their methodological approach and toolkit; for this we read Thelen, which is also used by Schoenfeld and Rubin. In addition to reviewing how “real” (i.e., disciplinary) historians do research and how political scientists and political sociologists have developed historical methods, we examine how political scientists, sociologists, and criminologists use history for a variety of purposes. These studies (Schoenfeld, Rubin, Koehler, and Gartner et al.) each explicitly discuss their data collection and/or methodology.

Take-home MIDTERM EXAM due at the beginning of class

Take-home FINAL PAPER distributed at the end of class (due in Week 12)

Begin reading Goffman, *On the Run*

- *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences* (Luker), Ch. 9 (Historical-Comparative Methods)
- Short *Chronicle* archives workflow article ([Link](#))
- “Historiography” (pp. 327–345) in Fischer, D. H. (1995). *Paul Revere’s Ride*. Oxford University Press (Available on Blackboard)

- “A Note on the Sources” (pp. 119–126) in Hirsch, A. J. (1992). *The Rise of the Penitentiary: Prisons and Punishment in Early America*. New Haven: Yale University Press (Available on Blackboard)
- Thelen, K. (2003). How institutions evolve: Insights from comparative historical analysis. In Mahoney, J. and Rueschemeyer, D., editors, *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, page 208240. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (Available on Blackboard)
- * *The following offer a variety of historical approaches—read them quickly, looking less for their overall contribution to theory than their use/deployment of historical methods. What is the method in each? How does it respond to the research questions? What are the limitations of the method?*
- Schoenfeld, H. (2010). Mass incarceration and the paradox of prison conditions litigation. *Law & Society Review*, 44(3-4):731–768 {[Link](#)}
- Rubin, A. T. (2016). Penal change as penal layering: A case study of proto-prison adoption and capital punishment reduction, 1785–1822. *Punishment & Society*, 18(4):420–441 {[Link](#)}
- Koehler, J. (2015). Development and fracture of a discipline: Legacies of the school of criminology at Berkeley. *Criminology*, 53(4):513–544 {[Link](#)}
- Gartner, R., Doob, A. N., and Zimring, F. E. (2011). The past as prologue? *Criminology & Public Policy*, 10(2):291–325 {[Link](#)}

UNIT III. ANALYZING DATA

8. **Data Analysis: Grounded Theory and Content Analysis (3/7).** What do you do with the data once you collect it? In this class, we discuss a common approach to qualitative analysis (grounded theory) as well as the nitty gritty of what the most common qualitative analytical technique (content analysis). In particular, we will discuss the mechanics of (open and focused) coding, which forms the building blocks of much sociological qualitative research.
- *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences* (Luker), Ch. 10 (Data Reduction and Analysis)
 - *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw), Ch. 6
 - *Contemporary Field Research* (Emerson), Ch. 14-15 (skim Ch. 13 that we read previously)
- Recommended Reading:**

- *Analyzing Social Settings* (Loftland, Snow, Anderson, and Loftland), Ch. 9
9. **Data Analysis: Techniques for Causal Inference from Political Science (3/14).** We will discuss Process Tracing, Case Study Analysis, Counterfactuals, Necessary v. Sufficiency (and 2x2 tables), Causal Process Observations, and (briefly) Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). We will continue these topics into the following week. (For more like this, attend the two-week summer program at Syracuse U., IQMR.) *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (Brady and Collier) establishes the outlines of these methods; the excerpt from my dissertation illustrates some of these techniques, especially counterfactuals and something resembling process tracing, with respect to analyzing prison history.
- *Rethinking Social Inquiry* (Brady and Collier), Ch. 9-12 (incl. Intro to Part II), (pp. 161-244)

- Preface (xi-xiii) and Extract from Ch. 3 (pp. 57-66) in Rubin, A. T. (2013). *Institutionalizing the Pennsylvania System: Organizational Exceptionalism, Administrative Support, and Eastern State Penitentiary, 1829–1875*. PhD thesis, U.C. Berkeley (Available on Blackboard)
10. **Data Analysis: Case Studies and Typologies (3/21)**. Continuing the insights from the prior two weeks, we examine two analytical techniques used by both political scientists and sociologists. Again, we will review a few illustrations of these methods to see their practical application in studying social control.
- Ch. 1 (pp. 3–36), “Case Studies and Theory Development,” in George, A. and Bennett, A. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. The MIT Press (Available on Blackboard)
 - Mahoney, J. (2000). Strategies of causal inference in small-n analysis. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 28(4):387–424 {[Link](#)}
 - Ch. 2 in Snow, D. and Anderson, L. (1993). *Down on Their Luck*. Berkeley: University of California Press (Available on Blackboard)

Recommended Reading:

- *Analyzing Social Settings* (Loftland, Snow, Anderson, and Loftland), Ch. 6-7

UNIT IV. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

11. **Ethics (3/28)**. Although an undercurrent in some previous weeks, we now turn explicitly to the role of ethics in qualitative and multi-method research. We focus in particular on the cautionary tale of Richard Leo. We also discuss issues arising regarding the REB (or the American version, the Institutional Review Board) and broader concerns regarding in-prison research in particular to extrapolate to other areas of social inquiry.
- Leo, R. A. (1996). Inside the interrogation room. *The Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 86(2):266–303 {[Link](#)}
 - *Contemporary Field Research* (Emerson), Ch. 12
 - Palys, T., & Lowman, J. (2000). Ethical and Legal Strategies for Protecting Confidential Research Information. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 15(1), 39-80.
 - Feeley, M. M. (2007). Legality, social research, and the challenge of institutional review boards. *Law & Society Review*, 41(4):757–776 {[Link](#)}
 - Heimer, C. A. and Petty, J. (2010). Bureaucratic ethics: IRBs and the legal regulation of human subjects research. *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, 6(1):601–626 {[Link](#)}

Recommended Reading:

- Martel, J. (2004). Policing criminological knowledge: The hazards of qualitative research on women in prison. *Theoretical Criminology*, 8(2):157–189

12. **Effective Writing and Representation of Data (4/4).** Unlike quantitative studies, qualitative research does not entail a specific recipe for writing an article or book chapter. Instead, there are a great variety of ways to present one's data. These disparate approaches reflect disciplinary differences and journal preferences, but they also reflect the uniqueness of the data. In addition to reading about the mechanics, we will review several examples of great writing.

FINAL PAPER due by Friday 5 PM

- *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences* (Luker), Ch. 11 (Living Your Life as a Salsa-Dancing Social Scientist)
- *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes* (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw), Ch. 7-8
- *Contemporary Field Research* (Emerson), Ch. 1-2
- Introduction (pp. 1-13) from McLennan, R. M. (2008). *The Crisis of Imprisonment: Protest, Politics, and the Making of the American Penal State, 1776–1941*. New York: Cambridge University Press (Available on Blackboard)
- Morrill, C. (1991). Conflict management, honor, and organizational change. *American Journal of Sociology*, 97(3):585–621 {[Link](#)}

Recommended Reading:

- *Analyzing Social Settings* (Loftland, Snow, Anderson, and Loftland), Ch. 10