

University of Toronto | Department of Sociology
Summer 2020
SOC254H1S- Intermediate Qualitative Methods in Sociology

Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:10 p.m. – 3:00pm
Location: Quercus – BB Collaborate

Instructor: Cinthya Guzman

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Online Office Hours: Fridays 10:00a.m- 11: 00a.m; 2:00p.m. -3:00 p.m. via BB Collaborate

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Course Description

For the last two decades, sociologists have increasingly relied on qualitative methods to guide their research. Their methods range from fieldwork, open-ended interviews, to content analysis – all of which capture the complexity of human meaning and life. In this course, we will go beyond simply introducing these various methods and instead learn how to use them for one’s own sociological inquiries. In this course, students will consider questions of ethics and the role of the researcher, giving them first-hand knowledge on the challenges that come with creating knowledge.

Given the current contexts of social distancing across Canada and in the world, we will focus on how to conduct qualitative research online during unsettled times. With the pandemic comes new societal challenges that have yet been uncovered and examined, which gives students a ripe opportunity to learn by doing innovative and important research.

Course Objectives

The course is organized in a way that encourages students to build and develop skills focused around collaborative learning, critical reading, writing, and the development of their own research projects. By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the central theoretical questions regarding qualitative research methods and its distinction from quantitative methods.
- Apply qualitative methods to everyday social phenomenon and provided a textured analysis.
- Write analytically and critically about empirical findings.
- Make and support an academic argument through use of empirical evidence.

Prerequisite:

The prerequisite for this course SOC254H1S. Students without this prerequisite will be removed from the class at any time discovered and without notice.

Accessibility needs:

If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit:

<http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility>

Description of Evaluation Components

Evaluation Component	Grade Weight	Due Date
Reflection Posts	20%	Ongoing
Research Statement & Literature Review	20%	July 16
Methods & Data Analysis	25%	August 4
The Implications of a Global Pandemic - Presentations	10%	August 13
“Putting it all together”: Final Research Paper	25%	August 17

Grading Descriptions and Late Policies

Reflection Posts (4 x through the term)

Worth 20% (5% each)

Students have to write four short reflection pieces on the following topics: i) a benefit and challenge distinct to digital qualitative methods (July 9), ii) ethical issues distinct to digital qualitative research (July 23), iii) a strength and challenge of the method you have chosen to study your topic (July 30), iv) two interesting findings from your research. (August 6). The discussion board posts are meant to favor collaborative learning. In writing them, we will engage with each other’s research projects.

Research Statement & Literature Review

Worth 20%

Students will have to describe their research problem and situate it using four to six qualitative research articles that address the same (or similar) topic. The assignment must be between 1000-1500 words. More information will be provided on Quercus.

Methods & Data Analysis

Worth 25%

Students will have to describe their data collection methods and provide an analysis of their data. Students must also submit the data they collected (if not, the assignment will not be marked). The assignment must be between 1500-2000 words. More information will be provided on Quercus.

The Implications of a Global Pandemic - Presentations

Worth 10%

Students will prepare a presentation via Prezi or PowerPoint (with voiceover) that summarizes their study and findings. The expected length is no longer than 10 minutes long. More information will be provided on Quercus.

“Putting it All Together:” Final Research Paper

Worth 25%

Students will submit a final research paper that brings together their revised research statement, literature review, methodology, and data analysis. The main additions will be the following: in their method section, a brief discussion of how their social position affected/shaped their research and a discussion/conclusion section discussing the study's research implications. The final paper must be between 4000-5000 words. More information will be provided on Quercus.

Handing in assignments: All assignments must be handed to the instructor electronically via Quercus. *The instructor and TA will NOT accept electronic copies of assignments via email.*

Deadlines: The assignments are due by class time (12:10 p.m.). Please refer to the Due Date stated on page 2 of the Syllabus. Late work will not be accepted without proper documentation (the Declaration of Absence on ACORN).

Accessibility: If you require accommodations or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

If you miss a paper deadline, do not contact the instructor or a TA unless you have followed the steps described here.

In case of illness, you must supply a completed the Declaration of Absence on ACORN.

If you are registered with Accessibility Services, your counselor will need to send an email message on your behalf (a one-week extension being the norm).

Student Responsibilities and Expectations

This class is completely online. All lectures will be provided to students via Quercus' BB Collaborate function asynchronously, so you can download lectures at your convenience. They will be made available by the date listed in the syllabus. Office hours for the TA and myself will also be held online, also using BB collaborate.

Participation: Students are expected to participate actively by 1) completing assigned readings, 2) writing the assigned discussion posts, and 3) keeping up to date on course information posted on Quercus. In all activities, students are to be respectful of fellow classmates and teaching staff.

Email Policy: I will respond to your email within two business days (48 hours, except weekends and holidays). Emails that do not follow these guidelines will not receive a response: Your use of an official U of T address is required. Please include the course code (e.g. SOC254) in the subject

line and your full name and student number in your message. Please do not send a repeat email (e.g., “did you get my email?”).

In general, please treat emails as you would any other professional communication. You should be respectful in the way you address the instructor and the TA. Email is most suitable for questions that are clear, concise, and easily answerable; if you are confused about the course material or need to discuss a concept, I strongly encourage you to instead attend office hours or make an appointment. Please read the syllabus carefully before asking a general question about the course.

HELP from your T.A.: Your T.A. will hold scheduled online office hours and respond to your emails within 48 hours. Please be judicious in your use of email. Use it only for questions that are brief and specific. Before sending a question by email, be sure to check the course outline to see if an answer is already available. Emails should not be seen as an alternative to doing the assigned reading or attending lectures.

Required Readings & Course Schedule

Required readings:

1. Klinenberg, Eric. 2015. *Heat Wave. A Social autopsy of disaster in Chicago.*
*The university bookstore will be selling hardcopies and e-books.

Supplement course readings are accessible electronically. Unless otherwise stated, course readings will be uploaded on Quercus under the Modules tab.

Course Schedule: Students are expected to complete all required readings prior to each online lecture.

Note: every attempt will be made to follow this schedule, but it is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Intermediate Qualitative Methods in Sociology

The first lecture and tutorial will be held live during class time at 12:10pm and 2:10pm on Tuesday July 7 via BB Collaborate.

The rest of the lectures will be available for download on the day they are listed here. Lectures will not be live, but rather available at your convenience to view. All other tutorials (see schedule) will be held live during class time at 12:10 p.m. to 1:00pm via BB Collaborate.

Putting on Your Researcher Hat

The pandemic hit Canada in mid-March. However, across the world, we could see the effects of the pandemic striking as early as late December. The goal of this course is for you to conduct original sociological research on the implications of the pandemic. To do so, you will design an online research project that focuses on a topic that speaks to your interest related to the pandemic.

For example, you might consider studying how newspaper articles talk about the pandemic or look at the emergence of different hashtags and how social media content has shifted since. You could also look at the implications of different responses to social distancing strategies nationally. You could also consider looking at forums that discuss the pandemic and showcase resistance to the social distancing measures. There is an abundance of avenues for you to explore; the choice is ultimately up to you. Summer class are condensed, so it is important to start thinking about your topic from day one.

Tuesday July 7. Introduction to Intermediate Qualitative Methods in A Digital Era

Live Lecture/Tutorial at 12:10pm via BB Collaborate.

Readings:

- Goodwin, Jeff, and Ruth Horowitz. (2002). "Introduction: The Methodological Strengths and Dilemmas of Qualitative Sociology." *Qualitative Sociology*, 24(1),:33-47.
- Hampton, K. N. (2017). "Studying the digital: Directions and challenges for digital methods." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 43, 167-188. Uploaded to Quercus.

Supplementary Resource: "Doing Fieldwork in a Pandemic" – Uploaded to Quercus.

Thursday July 9. Understanding Your Role as a Producer of Knowledge

***Discussion post 1 due:** According to Hampton (2017), identify a benefit and challenge of digital qualitative methods*

Readings:

- Geertz, C. 1977. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture" in *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books.
- Fine, G. 1993. "Ten Lies of Ethnography." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22(3):267-94.

Tuesday July 14. Old and New Ethics of Doing Research

Live Tutorial at 12:10p.m via BB Collaborate: "Making a (Research) Statement!"

Readings:

- Thorne, B. (1980). "'You Still Takin' Notes?' Fieldwork and Problems of Informed Consent." *Social Problems*, 27(3, Ethical Problems of Fieldwork):284-97.
- Paechter, C. (2013). Researching sensitive issues online: implications of a hybrid insider/outsider position in a retrospective ethnographic study. *Qualitative Research*, 13(1), 71-86.

Thursday July 16. Interviewing

***Assignment 1: Research Statement & Literature Review Due**

Readings:

- Lamont, M., Swidler, A. Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing. *Qualitative Sociology* 37, 153–171 (2014).
- Hermanowicz, J.C. The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed. *Qualitative Sociology* 25, 479–499 (2002)

Tuesday July 21. Observing People

Live Tutorial at 12:10p.m via BB Collaborate: “Picking the right method for the job”

Readings:

- Murthy, D. (2008). Digital ethnography: An examination of the use of new technologies for social research. *Sociology*, 42(5), 837-855.
- Lane, J. (2016). The digital street: An ethnographic study of networked street life in Harlem. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 60(1), 43-58.

Thursday July 23 Observing Things

***Discussion post 2 due:** According to Paechter (2013), what are some ethical issues distinct to digital qualitative research?

Readings:

- Jenkins, T.M. (2014) ‘Clothing norms as markers of status in a hospital setting: a Bourdieusian analysis’, *Health (United Kingdom)*, 18 (5): 526–41.
- Archer, D. Unspoken Diversity: Cultural Differences in Gestures. *Qualitative Sociology* 20, 79–105 (1997).
- Emmison, Visual Inquiry: Issues and Developments, Uploaded to Quercus

Tuesday July 28. Observing Texts

Live Tutorial at 12:10p.m via BB Collaborate: “Thinking Through the Data”

Readings:

- Stuart, F. (2020). Code of the tweet: Urban gang violence in the social media age. *Social problems*, 67(2), 191-207.
- Hughey, M.W. Show Me Your Papers! Obama’s Birth and the Whiteness of Belonging. *Qualitative Sociology* 35, 163–181 (2012).

Thursday July 30. Taking Notes

***Discussion post 3 due:** What is a strength and challenge of the method you have chosen to study your topic?

Readings:

- Saldaña, J. 2015. “An Introduction to Codes and Coding” (pp. 1-40) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage.
- Saldaña, J. 2015. “Writing Analytic Memos” (pp. 41-57) in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage.

Tuesday August 4. Making Sense of the Data

Live Tutorial at 12:10p.m via BB Collaborate: “Empirical Insights”

***Methods & Analysis Assignment Due**

Readings:

- Berezin, M. How Do We Know What We Mean? Epistemological Dilemmas in Cultural Sociology. *Qualitative Sociology* 37, 141–151 (2014)
- Charmaz, K. 2012. “The Power and Potential of Grounded Theory.” *Medical Sociology Online* 6(3): 1-15.
- Tavory, I & S. Timmermans. 2009. “Two Cases of Ethnography: Grounded Theory and the Extended Case Method.” *Ethnography* 10(3): 243-263

Thursday August 6. How to Make an Argument

***Discussion post 4 due:** Write 2 analytical memo about an interesting finding from your research.

Readings:

- Klinenberg, Eric. 2015. *Heat Wave. A Social autopsy of disaster in Chicago*. Chapters 1-3.

Tuesday August 11. Addressing the “So What” of it All

Live Tutorial at 12:10p.m via BB Collaborate: “Drawing Conclusions”

Readings:

- Klinenberg, Eric. 2015. *Heat Wave. A Social autopsy of disaster in Chicago*. Chapters 4-6.

Thursday August 13. The Implications of a Global Pandemic – Mini Presentations

***Presentation Slideshow Due**

Monday August 17. Final Research Paper

***Final Research Paper Due**