



Western University
SOCIOLOGY 3307G – 001
Investigating the Social World:
Qualitative Research
Winter 2017
Monday, 1:30pm-4:30pm, SSC 3014

Instructor: Dr. Stephen Lin
Office Hours: By Appointment
Department of Sociology, SSC 5209

Email: clin64@uwo.ca

Teaching Assistant: Megan MacCormac
Office Hours: By Appointment
Department of Sociology, SSC 5436

Email: mmaccor2@uwo.ca

Course Description

In this course, students will learn to investigate the social world using a variety of qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviewing, participant observation, or content analysis. In so doing, students will explore the principles underlying qualitative inquiry and acquire a general understanding of the numerous theoretical positions that underlie qualitative methodology. Through lectures, readings, group presentations, and hands-on research activities, students will explore different ways of investigating the social world in a scientific but non-statistical way that gives voice to the people we are studying. The ultimate goal is to let students experience the ways that qualitative sociologists do research. We will therefore emphasize applied aspects of qualitative research.

Prerequisite(s):

Enrollment in Honors Specialization or Honors Double Major in the Department of Sociology with a minimum grade of 60% in both Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites. If you do not have the requisites for this course, and you do not have written special permission from your Dean to enrol in this course, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Antirequisite(s)

Sociology 3310F/G, 3311F/G.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Evaluate different research methods, and their usage.
- Formulate research questions and choose a qualitative research design to examine those questions.
- Understand and meet the ethical standards for conducting research with human subjects.
- Design and carry out a research project, including conducting in-depth interviews, ethnographic field observations, and content analysis.
- Analyze and interpret qualitative data.
- Write an effective research report.
- Prepare an effective oral presentation that presents key information in a narrow time frame.

Required Text(s)

Van den Hoonaard, D.K. (2014). *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer*. (2nd Edition). Oxford University Press.

Additional articles are assigned in some weeks weekly and can be accessed from OWL.

Method of Evaluation

Content Analysis (Due on February 6, By Noon)	15%
Ethnography / Fieldwork Assignment (Due on March 20, By 11:59pm)	25%
Group Seminar Presentation (Starting from January 16)	20%
Class Participation & Weekly Summary	15%
Final Exam (During April Exam Period – 3 hours)	25%

Evaluation Breakdown (detailed information provided in class)

Content Analysis Exercise (15%)

- You will be asked to choose one advertisement from selected themes.
- Analyze the content of the chosen advertisement according to a set of questions.

Due on February 6, 2017, by 11:59pm; length: 4 pages double-spaced

Note: late assignments will be docked 5% per day, unless accommodation has been given

Ethnography/ Fieldwork Assignment (25%)

- Spend some time observing a specific site; collect field notes.
- Write a short report describing your observations, and the challenges of being an observer
- See details in the assignment instruction sheet (available on OWL)

Due on March 20, 2017 by 11:59pm; length: 7 pages max., double spaced

Note: late assignments will be docked 5% per day, unless you have my permission for late submission.

Group Presentation (20%) – Minimum 1 hour

Starting from **January 16**, the first half of the class will be a seminar presentation led by three students. This will involve a presentation that briefly summarizes the major points of the readings for that week, and raises issues/debates for discussion during class. Presenters will be responsible for guiding class discussion. This means that you must prepare a number of questions throughout your seminar presentation. You are also expected to bring in additional relevant academic articles to support and enhance your presentation. Finally, your group will provide some hands-on learning activities, so your fellow classmates can practice what they have learned from you. In order to do well on this group presentation, you must integrate the reading material with the general theme on qualitative research methods. Be creative!! I encourage you to use multi-media (e.g., magazine articles, video clips or photos) to make your presentation appealing (**Note: After your group presentation, please email me your PowerPoint slides**)

Class Participation & Weekly Summary (15%)

Students are expected to attend every class meeting having thoughtfully completed the readings and be prepared to participate actively in discussion. Starting from Week 3 (January 16), students have to submit a **one-page, single-spaced** summary based on the assigned reading. The weekly summary is due in class (every Monday).

Final Examination (25%)

- This **3-hour** final exam will cover all the materials in this course.
- You will be given **a set of essay questions** in which you will be asked to define all the concepts you use and critically address important themes or arguments asked from the questions.
- You are expected to use all the reading and lecture materials to demonstrate your answers.
- There is no need to use external references in this exam.

How to get important information:

Sakai OWL (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) will be used to post course information, content, and important instructions regarding deadlines, expectations, requirements, etc. It is expected that you check OWL regularly to ensure that you are kept up to date on new and revised course content.

Important Policies

A Note on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence (the Scholastic Offence Policy can be viewed in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Policies on Examinations

You may not use any electronic devices during examinations. Computer marked multiple-choice tests/exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating

Policy on Laptops and other Electronics/Phones in Class:

Laptops are permitted in class but if it is observed that students are on social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, they will be told to close the lid and they will not be permitted to use it for the remainder of the class. Be sure that all cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Students must see the Academic Counsellor and submit all required documentation in order to be approved for certain accommodation:

http://counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/medical_accommodation.html

Accessibility Options:

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 519 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. Information regarding accommodation of exams is available on the Registrar's website:

www.registrar.uwo.ca/examinations/accommodated_exams.html

Scholastic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following web site: www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Mental Health

Students who are in **emotional/mental distress** should refer to Mental Health@Western (http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Week	Date	Topic/Assignment	Assigned Readings
1	January 9	Introduction to the course Forming a Group (3 students)	Van Den Hoonaard, Ch. 1
2	January 11	Designing a Qualitative Study	Van Den Hoonaard, Ch.2 & 3
3	January 16	Content Analysis	Van Den Hoonaard, Ch. 7 Alexander (2003)
4	January 23	Discourse Analysis Critical Discourse Analysis	Van Dijk (1993) Phillips & Jorgensen (2002)
5	January 30	Observational/ Ethnographic Research	Van Den Hoonaard, Ch. 5 Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (1995)
6	February 6	Fieldwork Exercise (No Class) **Content Analysis Assignment Due by 11:59pm (Online Dropbox submission)	No Reading
7	February 13	In-Depth Interviewing	Van Den Hoonaard, Ch. 6 Hesse-Biber (2014)
8	February 20	Reading Break (No Class)	No Reading
9	February 27	New Directions in Qualitative Research	Van Den Hoonaard, Ch. 8 Harrison (2002)
10	March 6	Rigor in Qualitative Research	Sandelowski (1993)

		Sampling in Qualitative Research	Luborsky & Rubinstein (1995)
11	March 13	Grounded Theory	Charmaz (2014)
12	March 20	Analyzing Qualitative Data **Ethnography Assignment Due by 11:59pm (Online Dropbox submission)	Van Den Hoonaard, Ch. 9 LeCompte (2000)
13	March 27	Focus Groups	Madriz (2000) Carey (1994)
14	April 3	Ethics in Qualitative Research	Van Den Hoonaard, Ch. 4 Laud (1970)