



**Western University**  
**SOCIOLOGY 3307G – 002**  
**Investigating the Social World:**  
**Qualitative Research**

**Winter 2018/19**

**Thursday, 9:30am-12:30pm, SSC 3010**

**Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann**

Office Hours: by appointment  
Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5430  
Email: [wlehmann@uwo.ca](mailto:wlehmann@uwo.ca)

**Teaching Assistant:**

TBD

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**Course Description**

In this course, students will learn to investigate the social world using a variety of qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviewing, observation, or content analysis. Students will explore the principles underlying qualitative inquiry and acquire a general understanding of the theoretical positions that underlie qualitative methodology. Through lectures, readings, guest 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)***

Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. The 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)**

No textbook will be used. Articles are assigned weekly and will be posted on OWL.

### **Method of Evaluation**

• Interview Project Proposal & Presentation	Due January 31, 2019	10%
• Ethnography Assignment	Due: February 14, 2019	20%
• Content Analysis In-Class Exercise	March 7, 2019	10%
• In-class quiz/test of learning	March 14, 2019	10%
• Interview Project & Term paper	Due March 28, 2019	40%
• Group Presentation: Research	April 4, 2019	10%

### ***Evaluation Breakdown (detailed information provided in class)***

#### ***Interview Project Proposal (10%); one submission per group; all group members receive the same mark***

- You have to submit a proposal for your group's interview project
- The proposal needs to include the following:
  - A short literature review giving the context of the study. This should be no more than 1-2 pages and include at least 3 references to studies on your topic.
  - A set of research question you will answer with your project.
  - A description of your sample and your recruitment strategy.
  - Your letter of information and consent form.
  - A first draft of your interview guide.

***Due: January 31, 2019***

***Note: as this is a group proposal, late assignments will not be accepted***

#### ***Ethnography Exercise (20%); detailed information provided in class***

- Spend some time observing a specific site; collect field notes.
- Write a short essay describing your observations, and the challenges of being an observer

***Report/Essay due February 14, 2019; length: 7-10 pages, double spaced***

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

#### ***In-Class Content Analysis Exercise (10%); March 7, 2019***

- In class, we will together begin work on a content analysis of a document or set of documents
- You will then be asked to continue the analysis on your own as per the instructions provided
- More information will be given in advance of the class

***In-Class Quiz and Test of Learning (10%); March 14, 2019***

- At the beginning of class, you will be given a short test of key concepts learned throughout the term
- The test will be 30 minutes long and contain short answer questions

***Interview Project and Term Paper (40%); detailed information to be provided in class***

- In a small group, decide on a research topic that studies the student experience at Western
- Each member conducts one interview with a participant
- Transcribe your interview and share with the other members on your team
- Use all interview transcripts from your team to write a research report individually

***Term paper due March 28, 2019; length: 10-15 pages double-spaced***

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

***Group Presentation on Research (10%)***

- Combine the findings from your individual term papers to prepare a group presentation for the class
- Presentation held last class, April 4, 2019***

**Contact Information**

***Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann***

- In person: by appointment in SSC 5430
- By telephone: 519-661-2111 x85385
- By email: [wlehmann@uwo.ca](mailto:wlehmann@uwo.ca)

***Teaching Assistant: TBD***

**How to Get Important Information**

Make sure to check the course OWL site regularly for course updates, cancellations, and other course-related postings.

## **Important Policies**

### ***Policies for Assignment Deadlines:***

If you miss the due date for an assignment due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification of and documentation for the reasons for your circumstances to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date of the exam or on the date the assignment is due. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor's documentation, you will be allowed to hand in your assignment at a later date.

### ***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:***

Students may be required to submit their assignments to turnitin.com on the class WebCT website after they are completed. These papers will be subject to submission for textual originality.

### ***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](http://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](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](http://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](http://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](http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html)) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

### ***Compassionate Grounds***

***Serious Illness of a Family Member:*** Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a medical certificate from the family member's physician to your home faculty's Academic Counseling office.

***In Case of a Death:*** Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a copy of the newspaper notice, death certificate or documentation provided by the funeral director to your home faculty's Academic Counseling office.

### ***Grade Guidelines***

The Department of Sociology has grade distribution guidelines that all instructors are required to follow. For Sociology courses at the 3000 level, class averages must be in the range of 70-74%.

### ***Course Attendance Requirements:***

With the exception of legitimate medical/personal excuses (documentation required to be submitted) students are expected to attend at least 80% of the class meetings for this course. A passing grade in the course cannot be obtained without meeting this attendance requirement.

## Course Schedule

(Note: readings subject to change)

### 1. Introduction: January 10, 2019

- Introduction to the course: content, assignments, expectations
- Discussion of major assignment project; formation of groups.

Optional Reading: Perry: *Beginning Anew: Doing Qualitative Research*

### 2. Preparing for Research: Developing a Research Proposal, Choosing Methodologies and Research Questions: January 17, 2019

- Understanding the context of your project: literature reviews
- Formulating Research Questions and choosing the right methodology

Reading 1: Agee: *Developing Qualitative Research Questions: A reflective process*

Reading 2: Clark: *We're Over-researched Here: Exploring Accounts of Research Fatigue within Qualitative Research Engagements*

### 3. Ethics in Qualitative Research: January 24, 2019

- Research ethics and guidelines (Western Policies)
- Hands-on Exercise: ethics implications for your team project; Letter of Information and Consent Form

Reading 1: Haggerty: *Ethics Creep: Governing Social Science Research in the Name of Ethics*

Reading 2: Duncan et al: *Is my mum going to hear this? Methodological and ethical challenges in qualitative health research with young people*

### 4. Research proposal presentations: January 31 2019

*Research Proposals Due Today*

### 5. Ethnography and Observational Field Work: February 7, 2019

- Sampling and techniques of ethnographic research
- Ethics in ethnographic research
- Hands-on exercise; field notes

Reading 1: McCormack and Anderson: *It's Just Not Acceptable Anymore*

Reading 2: Thompson: *Hanging Tongues*

### 6. In-Depth Interviewing: February 14 2019

- Developing interview guides & strategies and techniques for successful interviews
- Interview exercise in class

Reading 1: Hermanowicz: *The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed*

Reading 2: Lehmann: *Extra-credential experiences and social closure*

*Ethnography exercise essay due today*

## **READING WEEK; FEBRUARY 21, 2019**

### **7. Other interviewing options: focus groups and photo elicitation: February 27 2019**

- How and when to use focus groups and photo elicitation
- Challenges and advantages of focus groups and photo elicitation
- Hands-on exercises in class

Reading 1: Young et al.: *Drinking like a guy*

Reading 2: Allen: *'Picture this': using photo-methods in research on sexualities and schooling*

### **8. Content Analysis: March 7, 2019**

- What is content analysis; how is it done?
- Use of art, photos and other visual data for qualitative research
- Hands-on work: Content analysis exercise

Reading 1: Davidson: *University Corporatization Shift*

Reading 2: Jackson and Gee: *Look Janet, no you look John*

***In-class assignment to be completed***

### **9. Test of Learning and Analysis and Coding of Qualitative Data: March 14, 2019**

- ***Short quiz at beginning of class***
- Transcribing, coding, organizing and interpreting data
- Hands-on work in class: Coding exercise

Reading 1: Saldana: *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers (Chapter 1)*

Reading 2: Mullins & Preyde: *The lived experience of students with an invisible disability*

### **10. Writing up results and project consultations: March 21, 2019**

- More on coding and analyzing
- Writing effective qualitative research papers and reports

Reading 1: van den Hoonaard: *Qualitative Research in Action (Chapter 8: Writing up Qualitative Research)*

Reading 2: Wang: *Challenges of Learning to Write Qualitative Research: Students' Voices*

### **11. Presenting research; and summary of learning: March 28, 2019**

- How to prepare effective presentations of your results; debriefing of project; wrap up and summary

***Papers Due in class***

### **12. Group Presentations: April 4, 2019**