



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3307G 001
**Investigating the Social World:
Qualitative Research**

Winter 2022

Tuesdays, 9:30 am-12:30 pm
SSC 3026

Instructor: Professor T.L. Adams

Office Hours: TBA

Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5328

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Course Description:

In this course, students will learn to investigate the social world using a variety of qualitative research approaches, such as in-depth interviewing, observation, and 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, 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 obtain some hands-on experience with qualitative research.

Prerequisites: 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.

Antirequisites: Sociology 3310F/G, 3311F/G, Family Studies and Human Development 3230A/B.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

- * 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.
- * Analyse and interpret qualitative data.

Required Text(s):

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy. 2017. *The Practice of Qualitative Research: Engaging Students in the Research Process*. Third edition. Sage Publishing.

Method of Evaluation:

Class attendance	All weeks	10%
In-depth interview proposal	Feb 8, 2022	15%
Ethnography Assignment	March 1, 2022	25%
In-Class Content Analysis Assignment	March 8, 2022	15%
Interview transcription, analysis and write-up	March 30, 2022	35%

Evaluation Details:

In-depth interview proposal: Identify a sociological problem. Identify research questions. Create a draft interview guide; Describe your recruitment strategy; produce your letter of information and consent form.

(Auto) Ethnography Assignment: Conduct an ethnography or auto-ethnography. This involves observing a site, collecting field notes, and analysing your data, or making notes on an experience that you have had personally and analysing them. Then write a brief report summarizing your observations. Answer the questions posed to you on the assignment sheet.

Content Analysis Assignment: Content will be assigned to you. Choose content to analyse and answer the questions posed to you on the assignment. We will do this during class time, but you will be given extra time to complete the assignment.

Interview transcription, analysis and write-up: Conduct an interview (over zoom, face-time, in-person or phone). Analyse the interview transcripts for themes related to your research questions, and write a brief report on your findings. Submit your transcription, your thematic coding notes, and a brief write-up on your findings.

Class Attendance: Attendance at on-line classes is expected. If you cannot attend a class due to illness or other reasons please inform Professor Adams ahead of time. With respect to class attendance you receive 1 mark for each of the 9 classes attended (weeks 2-12), and a bonus mark either for attending all 9, attending week 1, or for meeting with me briefly to discuss your research assignments.

How to Contact Me:

The best ways to contact me are through email (tladams@uwo.ca)

How to get important information:

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

Important Policies

Policies for Assignment Deadlines:

For all assignments, small extensions are available as long as you talk to me beforehand. If you miss the due date for an assignment due to illness or for any other unforeseen reasons, you must provide notification of and documentation respecting your circumstances to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor near 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, or have your grade re-weighted, depending on the circumstances. If none of these steps are followed, late marks will be deducted of 1% per day.

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).

Policy on Electronic Devices During Class

Be sure that cell phones are turned off at the beginning of class.

Standards of Professional Behaviour

It is the responsibility of all of us in this class to adhere to and promote standards of professional behaviour that support an effective learning environment:

- **Respect for others** both in and out of the classroom through words and actions (be professional, fair, and respectful in interactions with people on-line and in-person; understand and respect differences among classmates and colleagues; avoid disrupting the learning environment; respect others' expectations of confidentiality and privacy)

- **Active engagement** in learning and commitment to quality (being prepared for classes; participating and listening actively to other; using technology and social media appropriately, striving to do your best)
- **Personal integrity** (following through on commitments; doing own work).

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: counselling.ssc.uwo.ca/procedures/academic_consideration.html.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

Students who are seeking academic consideration for missed work during the semester may submit a *Self-Reported Absence (SRA)* form online provided that the absence is **48 hours or less** and the other conditions specified in the [Senate policy](#) are met. Two important exceptions to this rule: SRAs will NOT be allowed for final examinations or assessments worth more than 30% of a given course. Students whose absences are expected to last **longer than 48 hours**, or where the other conditions detailed in the policy are not met (e.g., work is worth more than 30% of the final grade, the student has already used 2 self-reported absences, the absence is during the final exam period), may receive academic consideration by submitting a [Student Medical Certificate](#) (for illness) or other appropriate documentation (for compassionate grounds) to your Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.

www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_illness.pdf

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/academics/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 (www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/) for a complete list of options how to obtain help.

Course Schedule and Readings:

January 4 Week 1: Introduction to course – Brief overview

January 11 Week 2: What is Qualitative Research? Designing Research Questions

Reading: Hesse-Biber, chapter 1

January 18 Week 3: Approaches to Qualitative Research, Designing Qualitative Research

Reading: Hesse-Biber, chapter 2 & 3

January 25 Week 4: Ethics in Research

Reading: Hesse-Biber, chapter 4

February 1 Week 5: In-depth interviews

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 5

February 8 Week 6: Ethnography (and Auto-Ethnography)

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 7

** In-Depth interviewing proposal due

February 15 Week 7: Work on your Ethnography Assignment

Feb 21-25 Reading Week

March 1 Week 8: Case Studies / Institutional Ethnography / Community Action Research

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 8

** Ethnography assignment due

March 8 **Week 9: Content Analysis**

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 9 (skim)

** In-class assignment

March 15 **Week 10: Analysis, Interpretation, and Writing**

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 11 & 12

March 22 **Week 11: No Class – Work on your Final Assignment**

March 29 **Week 12: Course Wrap-Up, Review, and Reflections**

** Interview Assignment Due this week (not necessarily in class)