



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3307G-001

Qualitative Research
Winter 2023

Thursdays, 9:30am-12:30pm, AHB-1B06

Delivery Method: in-person

Instructor: Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann

Office Hours: by appointment

Department of Sociology, Office: SSC 5430

Email: wlehmann@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, 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 2206A/B.

Unless you have either the prerequisites 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.

Anti-requisite(s): Sociology 3310F/G, Family Studies and Human Development 3230A/B, the former Sociology 3311F/G.

Course Objectives and 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.

Course Material:

No textbook is used. All readings will be made available through our OWL course site.

Communication: Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<http://owl.uwo.ca>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. You can contact me:

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

Method of Evaluation:

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

1) Content Analysis	February 9, 2023	25%
2) Ethnography	March 2, 2023	25%
3) Interview Project Term Paper	Due April 6, 2023 (last day of class)	40%
4) Group Presentation: Research Findings	April 6, 2023 (last class)	10%

Evaluation Breakdown and Detailed Information

Assignment 1) Content Analysis (25%); details provided in class and on OWL

- You will be assigned a specific content analysis question and the media to review

Due February 9, 2023; length: 7-10 pages, double spaced

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

Assignment 2) Ethnography (25%); details provided in class and on OWL

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

Due March 2, 2023; length: 7-10 pages, double spaced

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

Assignment 3) IS BASED ON A GROUP INTERVIEW PROJECT; Individual Interview Project Term Paper (40%); detailed information to be provided in class

This project is designed to give you hands-on experience in all phases of an interview-based qualitative research project. Some of this work will be done in groups; some of it will be done individually. I will provide topics in class, and you can sign up for a topic.

The exercise will require that you complete the following stages of a research project:

- 1) Design the project, including a small literature review, research questions, a discussion of ethics and an interview guideline. (group work)
- 2) Data collection: conducting interviews (each group member conducts one interview; the groups shares all the interviews for analysis)
- 3) Data analysis (both group and individual)
- 4) Writing up your findings in an individual paper.

- Use all interview transcripts from your team (not just yours), code and analyze them, and write a research report individually

Term paper due April 6, 2023 (last day of class); length: 10-15 pages double-spaced

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

Assignment 4) Interview Project Results: Group Presentation (10%)

- Combine the findings from your individual term papers to prepare a group presentation for the class
Presentation held last class, April 6, 2023

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

Student Absences:

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, you must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to your Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible. Deadline extension will be granted if your academic counsellor recommends it.

Note: missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty of Social Science Academic Counselling Office.

Important Policies

Academic Consideration for Missed Work: Students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation in order to receive accommodation for missed work worth 10% or more of the final grade in the course. All required documentation for absences must be submitted to the Academic Counselling office of a student's Home Faculty. Individual instructors are not permitted to receive documentation directly from a student, whether in support of an application for consideration on medical grounds or for other reasons.

Western's policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. The student medical certificate is available at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

Religious Accommodation: When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request accommodation for their absence in writing at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the course instructor and the Academic Counselling office of their Faculty of Registration. Please consult University's list of recognized religious holidays (updated annually) at <https://multiculturalcalendar.com/ecal/index.php?s=c-univwo>.

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.

Accessibility Options: Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). 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: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

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.

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 (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

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

Please visit the Social Science Academic Counselling webpage for information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters: [Academic Counselling - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#).

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Course Schedule

1. Introduction: January 12, 2023

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

2. Defining Qualitative Methods and Preparing for Research: January 19, 2023

- What is qualitative methods. The difference between quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Understanding the context of your project: literature reviews
- Formulating Research Questions/Objectives
- Choosing the right methodology

Reading 1: *Krahn and Taylor*

Reading 2: *Taylor and Krahn*

3. Content Analysis: January 26, 2023

- What is content analysis; how is it done?
- Hands-on work: Content analysis exercise

Reading 1: Jackson and Gee: *Look Janet, no you look John*

Reading 2: DeBenedictis et al: *#MeToo, popular feminism and the news: A content analysis of UK newspaper coverage*

4. Ethics in Qualitative Research: February 3, 2023

- Research ethics in academic and non-academic research
- Hands-on Exercise: ethics implications for your assignments (and research more generally)

Reading 1: Duncan et al: *Is my mum going to hear this? Methodological and ethical challenges in qualitative health research with young people*

Reading 2: Haggerty: *Ethics Creep*

5. Ethnography and Observational Field Work: February 9, 2023

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

Reading 1: Calarco: *"I Need Help!" Social Class and Children's Help-Seeking in Elementary School*

Reading 2: Jackson: *Situated Activities in a Dog Park*

Content analysis assignment due today

6. No class today: work on your ethnography assignments: February 16, 2023

READING WEEK; FEBRUARY 23, 2023

7. In-depth interviews: March 2, 2023

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

Reading 1: Lehmann: *Extra-credential Experiences and Social Closure*

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

8. Other forms of qualitative data collection: March 9, 2023

- Focus groups; Art based and photo solicitation, Oral histories, Virtual methods

Reading 1: van der Vaart et al: *Creative and Arts-Based Research Methods in Academic Research*

Reading 2: Raby, Lehman et al: *Reflections on Using Participant-Generated, Digital Photo-Elicitation in Research With Young Canadians About Their First Part-Time Jobs*

9. Analysis and Coding of Qualitative Data: March 16, 2023

- 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: I will provide an example of a transcript which we will use to practice coding. Read ahead of class.

10. Writing up and presenting research; and summary of learning: March 23, 2023

- Writing effective qualitative research papers and reports
- How to prepare effective presentations of your results; debriefing of project; wrap up and summary

Today's readings are examples of the differences between a scholarly article and research report from the same study:

Reading 1: Lehmann et al: *Youth apprenticeships in Canada: on their inferior status despite skilled labour shortages* (Journal Article) compared to Reading 2: Taylor et al: *High School Apprentices: Experiences and Outcomes*

11. No class today; Drop-in consultation on group projects: March 30, 2023

- I will schedule meetings with each group about their projects.

12. Group Presentations: April 6, 2023

Individual term paper due today (April 6, last day of class)

NOTE: THIS IS A TENTATIVE SCHEDULE; SOME READINGS STILL SUBJECT TO CHANGE