



The University of Western Ontario
SOCIOLOGY 3307F 001
Investigating the Social World:
Qualitative Research
Fall 2023
In-Person

Instructor: Professor T.L. Adams

Office Hours: TBA

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This is a DRAFT only. Please see the course site for the final version.

Official Course Description:

Students will learn to investigate the social world using content analysis, various methods of observation, and different types of interviewing. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between epistemology and qualitative research approaches. Students will participate in research practice exercises. Ultimately, students will learn to think critically about sociological research.

Expanded 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.

Prerequisite(s): Sociology 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.

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

Course Objectives and 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 & choose a qualitative research design to address 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:

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

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.

If you need to reach me, please email me at tladams@uwo.ca.

Method of Evaluation:

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

Class attendance	All weeks	10%
In-depth interview proposal	Oct 16, 2023	15%
(Auto) Ethnography Assignment	Nov 6, 2023	25%
In-Class Content Analysis Assignment	Nov 13, 2023	15%
Interview transcription, analysis and write-up	Dec 4, 2023	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. Due October 16 2023

(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. Due Nov 6 2023

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. Due Nov 13 2023

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. Due Dec 4 2023

Class Attendance: Attendance at all 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 classes attended.

Student Absences:

You are expected to attend all scheduled classes. This said, it is understood that in extenuating circumstances you may not be able to attend. In such instances, you are asked to email prior to class to indicate your absence and the reason. Explained absences will not be counted.

If you are unable to meet a course requirement due to illness or other serious circumstances, please follow the procedures below.

Assessments worth 10% or more of the overall course grade:

For work totaling 10% or more of the final course grade, students must provide valid medical or supporting documentation to their Home Faculty Academic Counselling Office as soon as possible.

With approval from Academic Counselling, extensions will be granted. Note that for assignments that are worth 10% and more, documentation (medical or otherwise) is required, it can *only* be collected by the student's Dean's Office Academic Counselling unit, not the instructor.

Academic Policies:

Please review the Department of Sociology "[Important Academic Policies](#)" document

https://sociology.uwo.ca/undergraduate/courses/Academic_Policies.pdf for additional information regarding:

- Scholastic Offences
- Plagiarism
- Copyright

- Academic Accommodation
- Accessibility Options
- Mental Health

Course Schedule and Readings:

September 11 **Week 1: Introduction & What is Qualitative Research?**

Reading: Hesse-Biber, chapter 1

September 18 **Week 2: Different Approaches to Research, Designing Qualitative Research**

Reading: Hesse-Biber, chapter 2 & 3

September 25 **Week 3: Ethics in Research**

Reading: Hesse-Biber, chapter 4

October 2 **Week 4: In-depth interviews**

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 5

October 9 **Thanksgiving**

October 16: **Week 5: Ethnography (and Auto-Ethnography)**

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 7

** In-Depth interviewing proposal due

October 23: **Week 6: Arts-Based Research**

October 30th **Reading Week**

November 6: **Week 7: Case Studies / Institutional Ethnography / Indigenous Research**

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 8

** Ethnography assignment due

November 13: Week 8: Content Analysis

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 9 (skim)

** In-class assignment

November 20 Week 9: Analysis, Interpretation, and Writing

Reading: Hesse-Biber, Chapter 11 & 12

November 27 Week 10: Office Hours / *Work on your Final Assignment*

December 4 Week 11: Course Wrap-Up, Review, and Reflections

** Interview Assignment Due this day

2023-2024