



**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
ST. AUGUSTINE**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES

Academic Year – 2017-2018

Course Title: Qualitative Methods in Sociological Research
Course Code: SOCI 2006
Level: Second-year
Length: One semester
Credits: Three (3)
Pre-requisite(s): SOCI 1002 or SOCI 1000

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In order to make informed decisions about the world and the people in it, social science researchers must learn the ways of qualitative data in order to collect, analyse, and understand the everyday quality of people's experiences. Qualitative research gives voice to cultural and historical realities. From their analysis of data, qualitative researchers produce insights to better understand the how and why's of human behaviour and experiences. In order to make informed decisions based on evidence and insights decision-makers in society rely on qualitative researchers to help them better understand groups and individuals. Thus qualitative research is about people, and working with people to better understand them.

As James P. Spradley notes of qualitative research,

“I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?”

Qualitative research encompasses a collection of methods, assumptions and worldviews. They produce knowledge about human experiences of the world and those insights are generally used to improve the quality of people's life experiences. Never underestimate the potential power of qualitative research to make the world a better and fairer place for all. Qualitative research is also used outside of social justice projects like sociology and anthropology, by many disciplines tied to neoliberal capitalism accumulation such as psychology, public relations, and marketing in order to better understand how to market products and manipulate consumers into buying items they do not need. This course is most interested in teaching around how to use qualitative research for social justice, but it will touch on some aspects of qualitative research as market research.

RATIONALE

This course will introduce and familiarise sociology students, and other social science and humanities students to the basic principles, ideas and steps behind qualitative research and the ethics around conducting qualitative research. Using real-life examples of qualitative research conducted in the Caribbean and hands on activities via a short qualitative research project to show novice researchers how to collect, analyse, and understand qualitative data, the course sets out to answer these core questions:

- What is data and what makes it qualitative?
- What makes the Caribbean research space unique?
- How do I choose a topic to research?
- How do I collect data?
- What is data analysis?
- What is the relationship between data and theory?
- What's a theme and where do themes come from?
- What is an insight?

GOALS/AIMS

The general objectives for this course are to:

- 1) Expose students to a variety of qualitative research methods
- 2) Familiarise students to the assumptions and logic of qualitative methods in sociological research
- 3) Teach students how to design a qualitative research study and how to ask/answer qualitative research questions
- 4) Get students to interpret and analyse qualitative data
- 5) Encourage students to see qualitative methods as important modes of socio-cultural observation and analysis
- 6) Promote critical thinking amongst students about their own biases
- 7) Make students aware of the importance of empathy in recording and documenting culture

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the course students will be able to:

- 1) Describe a variety of qualitative methods and research designs
- 2) Describe what is a research question
- 3) Discuss the ethics of qualitative research
- 4) Explain what is the difference between qualitative and quantitative sociological research
- 5) Explain how to conduct basic coding and thematic analysis of qualitative data
- 6) Plan their own qualitative research project
- 7) Explain and discuss why qualitative methods are important tools of sociological research

LECTURER INFORMATION

Name of Lecturer: Dr Dylan Kerrigan
Office address and phone: FSS 224A / 662 2002 ext. 83061
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Office hours: 2-4pm Mondays
Communication policy: Via email, office hours or apt by arrangement

Tutor: Ms Fareena Alladin
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Office address: FSS 107 Room 8
Office hours: 3:00-4:00pm Fridays

COURSE CONTENT (The major concepts that will be addressed in this course)

1. Data
2. Qualitative Research Design
3. Sampling
4. Literature Review
5. Data Analysis
6. Ethics
7. Ethnography
8. Interviews
9. Focus Groups
10. Coding and Thematic Analysis

COURSE ASSESSMENT

The forms of assessment for this course are:

- Tutorial Attendance 10%
(**Miss more than 2 tutorials and you will start to lose marks**)
- Summary Report 25%
- Exam 65%

Summary Report Instructions:

Step 1) Choose an over-arching subject or “field” for your report from one of these three topics:

1) Food

2) Sport

3) Social Media

Step 2) Choose a research question and research design

Step 3) Identify 3 potential persons to interview in order to collect data around your research questions

Step 4) Collect your data (both observational data and interview data must be collected)

Step 5) Analyse your data

Step 6) Produce a 12-15 page written report and hand it in by Apr 20

COURSE CALENDAR

Week 1 Jan 23: Introductions

Who am I, who are you, what is this class about? Overview of syllabus, readings, and assignments. Tips for doing well. Advice for successful reading practice.

SECTION 1 – Getting Started:

Week 2 Jan 30: Getting started in qualitative research.

- What is the nature of data?
- What are different data types in sociology?
- Why is Data Management important?
- How to conceptualize qualitative research.
- The case of inductive reasoning

Key Readings:

- Tracy, Sarah J. 2010. ‘Qualitative Quality: Eight “Big Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research’. *Qualitative Inquiry* 16: 837-852 (**Available on mylearning**).

Supplemental:

- Silverman, David. 2010. *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. London: SAGE Publications. Chapter 1 and 2. (**HM571 S53 2001**)
- Kerrigan, Dylan, Peter Jamadar, Elron Elahie, and Tori Sinanan. 2017. ‘Securing Equality For All – The Evidence and Recommendations,’ in *Caribbean Judicial Dialogue: Equality For All in The Administration of Justice*. Judicial Education Institute of Trinidad and Tobago and Faculty of Law, Mona Campus, University of the West Indies, November 29/30 2017 (**Available on mylearning**).

Week 3 Feb 6: Literature review and loose hypothesis/research questions

- What is a research question or loose hypothesis?
- How do you answer a research question?
- What is a literature review for?
- How do you write a literature review?

Key Readings:

- **Read Chapter 2** in Bernard, Russell H, Amber Wutich and Gerry W Ryan. 2017. *Analysing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches*, ‘Chapter 2 Choosing a topic and searching the literature pp. 17-36. London: Sage Publications (**Available on mylearning**).

Supplemental:

- Marshall, Catherine, and Gretchen B. Rossman. 1999. *Designing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications. Chapter 2. **(Available on mylearning)**.

SECTION 2 – Research Designs:

Week 4 FEB 13: NO CLASS – CARNIVAL TUESDAY

Week 5 FEB 20: What is a research design? What are different research designs? And the importance of ethics in qualitative research

- What is the difference between a research design and a research method?
- What are different types of research designs?
- What are ethical issues in qualitative research?
- Consent and IRBs
- Case Studies

Key Readings:

- **Read Chapter 4** in Creswell, John W. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. **H61 .C73 2013**

Supplemental:

- **Read Chapter 10** in Berg, Bruce L and Howard Lune. 2012. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Chapter 10 Case Studies, pp. 325-348. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon. **H61.B4715 2007 (Available on mylearning)**
- Yin, Robert R. 1994. *Case Study Research Design and Methods*. (2nd edition). London: Sage Publications. Chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4. **H61 C274 2004**

Week 5 FEB 27: Sampling

Once you have a research question or hypothesis the next step is research design and the two components of research design can be divided into sampling and measurement. This week we cover sampling.

- Two kinds of samples: Probability and nonprobability sampling
- What are different kinds of nonprobability samples?
- Quota Sampling
- Purposive sampling
- Convenience Sampling
- Network Sampling: Snowball and responded-driven sampling

- Theoretical Sampling
- Key informants

Key Readings:

- **Read Chapter 3** in Bernard, Russell H, Amber Wutich and Gerry W Ryan. 2017. *Analysing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches*, ‘Research Design 1: Sampling’ pp. 37-62. London: Sage Publications (**Available on mylearning**).

Supplemental:

- Coyne, Imelda T. 1997. “Sampling in Qualitative Research. Purposeful and Theoretical Sampling; Merging or Clear Boundaries?” *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 26: 623–630. (**Available on mylearning**)
- Noy, Chaim. 2008. “Sampling Knowledge: The Hermeneutics of Snowball Sampling in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 11(4): 327-344. (**Available on mylearning**)

Week 6 Mar 6: Fieldwork and Measurement

Don’t be scared by the term measurement. In qualitative research it’s another way of saying, “collecting data”.

- What is fieldwork?
- What should I do before entering the field?
- Self-Care
- Dangers in fieldwork
- Data collection methods

Key readings:

- **Read Chapter 4** in Bernard, Russel H, Amber Wutich and Gerry W Ryan. 2017. *Analysing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches*, ‘Research Design 2: Collecting Data.’ pp. 63-100. London: Sage Publications (**Available on mylearning**)

Supplemental:

- Baird, Adam. 2017. Dancing with danger: ethnographic safety, make bravado and gang research in Colombia. *Qualitative Research* (**Available on mylearning**)

SECTION 3 Mar 13: Data Collection Methods

Week 7: Ethnography, fieldwork and thick description

- Indirect Observation

- Direct Observation
- Participant Observation
- Ethnographic fieldwork
- Autoethnography / Rapid Assessment Ethnography
- Emic vs Etic

Key Readings:

- Hammersley, Martyn and Atkinson, Paul. 1995. *Chapter 1. In Ethnography: principles in practice*. London. Routledge. **(Available on mylearning)**

Supplemental Readings:

- Crang, Mike and Ian Cook. 2007. *Chapters 1&2. Doing Ethnography*. London: SAGE Publications **(Available on mylearning)**

Week 8 Mar 20: Interviews, recording and transcription

- Elicitation methods/Types of interviews
- Dramaturgy and interviewing
- Conducting an interview
- Data collection instrument
- Quotes and language in use: How to use interview data

Key Readings:

- Baker, Sarah Elsie and Edwards, Rosalind (eds.) 2012. *‘How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research.’* Southampton, GB National Centre for Research Methods 43pp. National Centre for Research Methods Reviews. **(Also available on mylearning)**

Supplemental Readings:

- Corbin, Juliet, and Janice M. Morse. 2003. “The Unstructured Interactive Interview: Issues of Reciprocity and Risks When Dealing With Sensitive Topics.” *Qualitative Inquiry* 9: 335-354. **(Available on mylearning)**
- DiCicco-Bloom, Barbara, and Benjamin F. Crabtree. 2006. “The Qualitative Research Interview.” *Medical Education* 40: 314–321. **(Available on mylearning)**
- Oliver, Daniel G., Julianne M. Serovich, and Tina L. Mason. 2005. “Constraints and Opportunities with Interview Transcription: Towards Reflection in Qualitative Research.” *Soc Forces* 84(2): 1273–1289. **(Available on mylearning)**

- Turner, Daniel W. 2010.” Qualitative Interview Design: A Practical Guide for Novice Investigators.” *The Qualitative Report* 15(3): 754-760. **(Available on myelearning)**
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Week 9 Mar 27: Focus groups: Preparation, recruitment, data collection and analysis

- What are focus groups?
- Working with a group
- Preparation and recruitment
- The moderator’s guide
- Recording and transcription
- Analysing focus group data

Key Readings:

- Read Chapter 5 in Berg, Bruce L and Howard Lune. 2012. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Chapter 5 Focus Group Interviewing, pp. 164-195. Boston: Pearson/Allyn & Bacon. **H61 .B4715 2007 (available on myelearning)**

Supplemental:

- Bloor, Michael et al. 2002. *Focus Groups in Social Research*. London: Sage **(available on myelearning)**
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Week 10 APR 3: Data Analysis 1 (codes, themes and insights)

Key readings:

- Saladaña, Johnny. 2012. Chapter 1. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. London:Sage

Supplemental:

- Crang, Mike and Ian Cook. 2007. *Chapter 9. Doing Ethnography*. London: SAGE Publications
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Week 11 APR 10: Data Analysis 2 (analytical induction and grounded theory)

Key readings:

- Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. 1990. “Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons and Evaluative Criteria.” *Zeitschrift fur Soziologie* 19 (6): 418-427. **(Available on myelearning)**

Supplemental:

- Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. "Grounded Theory as an Emergent Method." In *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, edited by S.N. Hess-Biber and P. Leavy, 155-172. New York: Guilford Press. **(Available on mylearning)**
- Strauss, Anselm, and Juliet Corbin. 1990. *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications. **HA29 .S823 1990**

Week 12 APR 17: Revision and Future Thoughts:

- **Project hand-in date is no later than 5pm on Friday April 20th**
- Revision tips
- Decolonising research methods,
- What are some other methods we didn't cover?
- Digital methodologies

TUTORIALS:

Tutorials are a time for discussion of ideas, thoughts, and information from the lectures. It is not another lecture. Tutorials begin in the second week of classes.

TUTORIAL QUESTIONS – Semester 2, Academic Year 2017/2018

1. What is qualitative research? What is inductive reasoning? What do you see as the importance of qualitative research in sociology?
2. What is a research question? How are the literature review, research question and loose hypothesis connected in the conduct of a qualitative study?
3. What is the difference between a research design and a research method? What are the main features of qualitative research designs? How can a researcher ensure that ethical standards are maintained while conducting his/her study?
4. What are the different ways sampling can be done in a qualitative study? How does the research topic influence the sampling design chosen by the researcher?
5. What is fieldwork? What is a setting? What should a researcher consider before embarking on data collection?
Bring to tutorial: your research question, your selected research design, and an idea of when, where and among whom you will be conducting your data collection
6. What are the different forms of observation in qualitative research? How does observation help the researcher to produce thick description?
7. What are the different ways in which qualitative interviewing can take place?
Bring to tutorial: your interview questions for review

8. What are the pros and cons of focus groups as a method of data collection?
9. What are codes, themes and insights? How does a researcher uncover a code and theme?
Bring to tutorial: your transcribed interview (at least two) for coding exercise
10. What is the connection between analytic induction and grounded theory?
Bring to tutorial: your semi-completed summary report for feedback
11. Review and final coursework assistance.

OTHER INFORMATION

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. I take plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously, and I am required to report cases to the Head of the Behavioural Sciences Department, whose policy is to fail students for the course or expell them from UWI completely. Please be sure to ask me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism.

In writing papers, you must properly cite all sources (1) directly quoted, (2) paraphrased, or (3) consulted in any fashion. Sources include all printed material as well as the Internet. Proper citation means using a standard citation format: MLA, APA, or Chicago. Quoted and paraphrased material should be —sandwiched, a clear beginning and ending to the material should be indicated by quotation marks, or, in paraphrases, by the source name at the beginning and the citation at the end.

It is also considered plagiarism if you merely rework source material, placing an author's thoughts in other words without contributing your own ideas. For that reason, you must include some kind of source note whenever drawing on someone else's interpretation. A source note can be a sentence or more in your paper, or it can be a footnote. A source note should clarify the extent to which your interpretation is indebted to your source, explaining both (1) what you use and (2) where you depart or differ from the source.

It is also considered plagiarism to submit drafts, response papers, and other informal assignments without properly citing sources and acknowledging intellectual debts. Failure for the course is the typical sanction in such cases.

You must receive prior permission from me if you want to submit a paper or part of a paper that you have written for a previous class.

I expect all work that you do to be your own original work. And let's be as clear as possible. If you are caught plagiarising YOU WILL BE CALLED OUT ON IT WITH ALL THE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS THIS ENTAILS.