

SOCI 307 – Qualitative Methods

Monday 12:45 pm
Wednesday 11:15 am

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Office hours: Tuesdays 9-11am; 1-2pm
Wednesdays 1-2pm
Fridays 9-11am

Course description

This course sets out to familiarise students with the various ways in which sociologists use qualitative methods to do research. Please note, this is a research and writing intensive course.

Course objectives

Students will first learn the ways in which epistemology, ontology and theory are critical to research. Following this, students will understand five main approaches to qualitative research: narrative, phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and case studies. In the final part of the course, students will gain knowledge of how data is analysed and evaluated. Throughout the course, students will be working on one project that speaks to all phases of the research process.

Textbook



Qualitative inquiry and research design, 3rd ed. J.W. Creswell

The textbook is available at the Campus Bookstore.

Evaluation

Reflexive piece (15%): This is to be a five-page essay in which students attempt to lay out their epistemology and ontology. As this is a reflexive piece assignment students are encouraged to use the first-person when necessary. Students need to cite academic sources as required. The opinions expressed need to be informed opinions. Within the conclusion of the paper, students should set out a research question that interests them.

Research proposal (25%): This is to be an approximately 8 page proposal that sets out the qualitative research you are going to do for your final term essay. The research is to be designed by each student with a topic that relates to student life at St. FX. You will need to set up the proposal with one of the studied methods (narrative, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, case study). If required, two copies (one for the instructor and one for the Department's Ethics Committee) of an ethics form must be attached. More details to follow.

Term essay (40%): This is a culmination of students' work. In this 12-15 page paper, students are to provide a completed qualitative research project. This will include a theoretical / conceptual framework, the "puzzle" they looked at, what methods they used and why, why is this important research, the way analysis was conducted, the findings, and the contribution this makes to sociology. A more detailed outline for the assignment will be distributed later in the term.

Pop quizzes (4 x 5% = 20%): Five times throughout the term a pop quiz will be announced. This means that you will be required to answer an essay question based on the assigned readings for that week. The four quizzes with the highest marks will be counted toward the final grade.

N.B.: Be sure to retain a hard copy of all assignments that are handed in.

Late penalties: For each day a paper is late (including weekends), **5%** will be deducted from the assignment's grade.

Extensions: Extensions will only be granted with proper documentation.

Plagiarism

Copying of direct quotes or ideas without acknowledging the original author is considered plagiarism. Handing in a paper that you did not write, or a paper that you handed in for another class without permission of the instructor is also considered an infraction. These are serious academic offences. Any such offence will result in a ZERO in this course and referred onto university officials. For more information on plagiarism see the University Calendar.

Special needs

If a student requires special accommodations, please see the instructor as soon as possible.

Class schedule

09/05: Introduction to course

09/10: What do we mean by qualitative?
Chapter 1

09/12: Ontology and epistemology
Chapter 2

09/17: Paradigms

09/19: Intellectual puzzles
Chapter 3

09/24: Different research designs
Chapter 4
REFLEXIVE PIECE DUE

09/26: Ethics
.pdf file will be emailed

10/01: Ethics

10/03: Narratives
Chapter 5, App. B

10/10: Phenomenology
Chapter 5, App. C

10/15: Grounded theory
Chapter 5, App. D

10/17: Ethnography
Chapter 5, App. E

10/22: Case study
Chapter 5, App. F

10/24: Visual research
RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE; ETHICS APPLICATIONS DUE

10/29: Introducing and focussing a study
Chapter 6

10/31: Sampling and selection

Chapter 7

11/05: Documenting and reading data

11/07: Data analysis (Narrative)

Chapter 8

11/12: Data analysis (Phenomenology, Grounded Theory)

11/14: Data analysis (Ethnography, Case study)

11/19: Writing

Chapter 9

11/21: Validation and reliability

Chapter 10

11/26: Evaluation

11/28: Where to now?

Chapter 11