QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS (SOCL 217B)

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Roberts 108
Office Hours: Tu, 3:00–5:00
(or by appointment)

[OVERVIEW]

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of two methodological approaches we call qualitative—interviewing and ethnography. Class discussions will center on understanding the tradition and purpose of qualitative research (as distinguished from quantitative research), as well as the various data-gathering techniques available to the qualitative researcher. We will also be engaged in actual data gathering through both interviewing and ethnography, in addition to analyzing original data and writing up findings.

[REQUIREMENTS]

CLASS PARTICIPATION + ATTENDANCE (15%)

Your active and engaged participation in class sessions is essential. All students are expected to be active, attentive, and respectful members of the class and to participate in class discussions and activities. This means coming to class prepared, having done all the reading, and ready to discuss and apply the materials. Attendance is mandatory, and I will take attendance at the beginning of each class. (NOTE: If you arrive more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be marked absent for that class.) You are allowed TWO unexcused absences, after which I will lower your participation grade by 3% per unexcused absence. I will excuse an absence if it has been discussed with me in advance. (NOTE: This does not mean emailing me right before class to inform me you will not be coming to class.)

READING RESPONSE PARTS I & II (5%)

Two paragraph-long reading responses.

PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION PROJECT (40%)

The purpose of this assignment is to give you hands-on experience doing participant observation. You will choose one setting (or type of setting) where you can conduct three sessions of observations and/or participant observations. Prior to going out into the field you will submit a research proposal describing the setting you will visit and why you are interested in that setting. You will also describe how you will gain access and your role in that setting (participant and/or observer). Each session should be one to one and a half hours long during which you will record a detailed description of what occurred in fieldnotes. We will discuss these notes in class activities so it is important that you bring them to class on the relevant dates listed on the syllabus (we will also be workshopping memos for initial analysis of your data). These notes will be the data you analyze to write your paper so it is extremely important that you take the necessary time to write them. You should expect to write between 3-5 single spaced pages of notes per session. Percentage breakdown of grading for the project:
INTERVIEW PROJECT (40%)

The purpose of this assignment is to give you hands-on experience doing interviews. You will interview three adults (age 18 or older) with the aim of answering a research question of your choosing. Each interview should last a minimum of 20 minutes. Prior to conducting your interviews, you will submit a research proposal describing your research question, description of potential interview participants, and a preliminary description of your interview questions. This project may be related to your participant observation project or may be something different. These interviews must be conducted in person, over the telephone or via video like Skype (they cannot be conducted over email). You should expect to write a 5-10 page single-spaced transcript for each 15-minute interview that you conduct. These transcripts will be the data you analyze to write your paper so it is extremely important that they are comprehensive and detailed. We will discuss these transcripts in class activities so it is important that you bring them to class on the relevant dates listed on the syllabus (we will also be workshopping memos for initial analysis of your data). Percentage breakdown of grading for the project:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Proposal</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Transcript (for in-class workshop)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preliminary Analytical Memo (for in-class workshop)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Final Paper (with complete coded data portfolio)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Paper Formatting: Both papers should be 2,000-2,500 words, single-spaced page, written in 12pt. Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins. Please include a word count as well.

Paper Submitting: All papers must be submitted electronically on Moodle as a Word doc (no PDFs).

Late Papers: Unless previous accommodations have been made, I will deduct 3% for each day late.

*** SUMMARY OF DUE DATES ***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 31</td>
<td>One-paragraph Participant Observation proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 5</td>
<td>Reading Response I</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 21</td>
<td>First set of fieldnotes (in-class workshop)</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Preliminary PO analytical memo (in-class workshop)</td>
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<td>March 19</td>
<td>Participant Observation paper</td>
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<td>March 26</td>
<td>One-paragraph Interview proposal</td>
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<td>March 26</td>
<td>Reading Response II</td>
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<td>April 9</td>
<td>First interview transcript (in-class workshop)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>Preliminary Interviewing analytical memo (in-class workshop)</td>
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<td>May 4</td>
<td>Interviewing paper</td>
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DIGITAL ETIQUETTE
To prevent undue distraction and to encourage a participatory and respectful classroom environment, the use of cell phones, laptop computers or PDAs is not permitted in class, unless required as an accommodation.

REQUIRED TEXTS

NOTE: These books are available cheaply on Amazon, and I will also post PDFs of all readings (these books in their entirety included) on Moodle.

ACCOMMODATION
Haverford College is committed to supporting the learning process for all students. Please contact me as soon as possible if you are having difficulties in the course. There are also many resources on campus, including the Office of Academic Resources (https://www.haverford.edu/oar) and the Office of Access and Disabilities Services (https://www.haverford.edu/ads/). If you think you may need accommodations because of a disability, please contact Sherrie Borowsky, Coordinator of Accommodations, Office of Access and Disability Services at hc-ads@haverford.edu. If you have already been approved to receive academic accommodations and would like to request accommodations in this course because of a disability, please meet with me privately at the beginning of the semester (within the first two weeks if possible) with your verification letter.

[COURSE SCHEDULE]

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

WEEK ONE — Why do qualitative research?
Monday, January 22 — Course Introduction
• No readings

Wednesday, January 24 — Qualitative Research

WEEK TWO — Research Design
Monday, January 29 — Choosing Subject Matter, Cases, and Sites

Wednesday, January 31 — Conducting Ethical Research

***DUE: One-paragraph proposal describing your participant observation setting***

- American Sociological Association, Code of Ethics
- IRB: https://www.haverford.edu/provost/committees-and-reports/irb

[PART II: ETHNOGRAPHY / PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION]

WEEK THREE: Ethnographic Research

Monday, February 5 — Participant Observation / Ethnography


***READING RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT PART 1***

Write a paragraph that (1) identifies the author’s key research question(s), (2) how the author justifies the use of their method (explicitly or implicitly); and (3) identify how the data are used by the author to develop their argument. Be prepared to discuss your analysis in class.

Wednesday, February 7 — Gaining Access


WEEK FOUR: Conducting Ethnographic Research

Monday, February 12 — Fieldnotes


Wednesday, February 14 — Issues in Ethnography


WEEK FIVE: Conducting Ethnographic Research

Monday, February 19 — Creating Scenes


Wednesday, February 21 — Workshop: Fieldnotes
***DUE: First set of fieldnotes due in class (bring two copies)***
• No reading [in-class workshopping]

WEEK SIX: Analyzing Ethnographic Data

Monday, February 26 — Making Sense of Data

Wednesday, February 28 — Grounded Theory

WEEK SEVEN: Analyzing and Writing Ethnography, cont.

Monday, March 5 — Extended Case Method

Wednesday, March 7 — Workshop: Data & Writing
***DUE: Preliminary analytical PO memo due in class (bring two copies)***
• No reading [in-class workshopping]

*** WEEK EIGHT (March 12 & 15) — NO CLASS! (Spring Break) ***

WEEK NINE: Ethnography wrap up

Monday, March 19 — Ethnography conference
***DUE: Participant Observation paper***
• No readings [project presentations]

Wednesday, March 21 — Ethnography conference
• No readings [project presentations]

[ PART III: INTERVIEWING ]

WEEK TEN: Conducting In-depth Interviewing

Monday, March 26 — Introduction to Interviewing
***DUE: One-paragraph proposal describing your interview project***
**READING RESPONSE ASSIGNMENT PART 2**** Write a paragraph that (1) identifies the author’s key research question(s); (2) how the author justifies the use of their method (explicitly or implicitly); and (3) identify how the data are used by the author to develop their argument. Be prepared to discuss your analysis in class.

Wednesday, March 28 — Who do we ask? Developing questions and research design


WEEK ELEVEN: How to Interview

Monday, April 2 — What do we ask? Sampling consideration


Wednesday, April 4 — The Art of Talking


WEEK TWELVE: Analyzing Data

Monday, April 9 — Workshop: Interview Transcriptions

***DUE: First interview transcript due in class (bring two copies)***

- No reading [in-class workshopping]

Wednesday, April 11 — Analyzing Interviews

- TBD.

WEEK THIRTEEN: Writing

Monday, April 16 — Issues in Interviewing

Wednesday, April 18 — Writing up Findings


**WEEK FOURTEEN: Writing and Presenting Findings**

Monday, April 23 — Coding

***DUE: Preliminary analytical Interviewing memo due in class (bring two copies)***

- No reading [in-class workshopping]

Wednesday, April 25 — Writing day!

- No class, work on papers

**WEEK FIFTEEN: Course Conclusion**

Monday, April 30 — Interview Conference / Course Conclusion

- No readings [project presentations]

Wednesday, May 2 — Interview Conference / Course Conclusion

- No readings [project presentations]

***Friday, May 4 — DUE: Interviewing paper***