

SOCI3231: Qualitative Research
Thursdays, January 13th-April 15th 11-12:50,

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Course Description:

All else equal, the more tools you have with which to do research, the higher the probability you will be able to answer the research questions that most interest you in a persuasive way. Having access to more data and different kinds of data is always beneficial but often this is not as much of a barrier as social scientists believe; instead, when they say they are unable to answer a research question they frequently are not making use of the full range of tools available to them. Frequently rather than pursuing fascinating research question, they train in a method and then search for problems amenable to those methods (proverbially carrying around a hammer searching for a nail to hit). When someone suggests an alternative method might be more appropriate, they insist upon using only those methods they have chosen to undergo training in. Taking inspiration from my past courses on quantitative methods that I found often did a much better job than qualitative courses at introducing you to a much larger range of available techniques, this class aims to lay a foundation for cultivating a new generation of more versatile social scientists that are less likely to think, “there is no way to research that” or even if you must say that, say that with much more conviction to a qualitative methodologist who may know better than you. I say “foundation” because you will only be introduced to the methods in this course and be able to briefly practice them through an exercise each week. You are not going to master any of the techniques in the limited time that we have. If any of the methods interest you, I encourage you to take other courses at CUHK or other universities or even methodology camps that sometimes offer training. But ultimately you are only going to learn these methods by practicing them on your own time. Therefore, practice exercises are the core part of this course, and I introduce you to them just so you know what your possibilities are.

Learning Objectives:

- learn about different qualitative research methods you can use in social science research
- think critically and creatively about what sort of research questions, theories, research fields, and data each method is most suitable for
- understand the weaknesses and strengths of each method, their complementarity with each other and various quantitative methods so you become a critical reader of research

- learn about the ethics of responsibly using these research methods in terms of the Principles of the Belmont Report and the risks they can pose to you and your research subjects in utilizing the methods
- gain some historiographical perspective about why some methods have become more widely used in Sociology and other social science disciplines but not others
- hopefully plant seeds of inspiration and expand your imagination of what social scientific methods can be

Course Schedule:

Session 1 (January 10th): Introduction to the Practice and Ethics of Qualitative Research Methods

Required Readings:

-the syllabus!

Some short readings on guidelines of ethical guidelines for qualitative research and a few examples of ethical malpractices of qualitative research:

-Wikipedia entry on “Belmont Report”:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belmont_Report

-Wikipedia entry on “Stanford Prison Experiment”:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanford_prison_experiment#Criticism_and_response

-Wikipedia Entry on “Tearoom Trade”:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tearoom_Trade

-“Lewis-Kraus, Gideon, “The Trials of Alice Goffman,” New York Times Magazine, January 12th, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/magazine/the-trials-of-alice-goffman.html>-----

- Allam, Hannah, “DHS blocked vital research on domestic threats, say terrorism experts”, Washington Post, November 15, 2022

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/11/15/dhs-mayorkas-domestic-violent-extremism/>

-Jacobs, Alan M. and Tim Buthe, “The Qualitative Transparency Deliberations: Insights and Implications,” American Political Science Association 2020. (I do not expect you to read all of this but only the sections I have highlighted which should amount to no more than 5 pages)

-Lee, Ching Kwan. "An Ethnographer's Odyssey: The Mundane and the Sublime of Researching China in Zambia." In *The Specter of Global China*. University of Chicago Press, 2020.

Session 2 (January 20th)

Pure Observation Utilizing All Five Senses

To Present:

Required Reading:

- Jerolmack, Colin, and Shamus Khan. "Talk is cheap: Ethnography and the attitudinal fallacy." *Sociological methods & research* 43, no. 2 (2014): 178-209.

-Geertz, Clifford. Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight. In *Culture and politics* (pp. 175-201). 2002. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

- Katz, Jack. Chapter Two: "Families and Funny Mirrors." Section: Constructing a Presumption of Shared Viewing. *How emotions work*. University of Chicago Press, 1999..
- Hirschauer, Stefan. "On doing being a stranger: The practical constitution of civil inattention." *Journal for the theory of social behaviour* 35, no. 1 (2005): **(Pages 47-58 only)**
- Pachirat, Timothy. "Shouts and Murmurs: The Ethnographer's Potion." *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 7, no. 2 (2009): 41

Session 3 (January 27th): Participation

Required Readings:

- Pachirat, Timothy. *Every twelve seconds*. Yale University Press, 2011. Chapter 1: Hidden in Plain Site
- Holmes, Seth M. "'Is it worth risking your life?': Ethnography, risk and death on the US–Mexico border." *Social Science & Medicine* 99 (2013): 153-161.
- Gong, Neil. "How to fight without rules: on civilized violence in "de-civilized" spaces." *Social Problems* 62, no. 4 (2015): 605-622.
- Hoang, Kimberly Kay. "Appendix: The Empirical Puzzle and the Embodied Cost of Ethnography" in *Dealing in desire*. University of California Press, 2015.

Session 4 (February 10th): Analyzing Qualitative Data

Required Readings:

Roth, Wendy D., and Jal D. Mehta. "The Rashomon effect: Combining positivist and interpretivist approaches in the analysis of contested events." *Sociological methods & research* 31, no. 2 (2002): 131-173.

Pacewicz, Josh. "What can you do with a single case? How to think about ethnographic case selection like a historical sociologist." *Sociological Methods & Research* (2020):

Timmermans, Stefan, and Iddo Tavory. "Theory construction in qualitative research: From grounded theory to abductive analysis." *Sociological theory* 30, no. 3 (2012): 167-186.

Lee, Ching Kwan, "An Ethnography of Comparative Ethnography: Pathways to Three Logics of Comparison", Chapter 5 in *Beyond the Case* by Corey Abramson and Neil Gong, 2020

Session 5 (February 17th): Interviewing and Focus Groups

Required:

- Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *Strangers in their own land: Anger and mourning on the American right*. The New Press, 2018. Chapter 1: Traveling to the Heart

-Paul, Anju Mary. *Multinational maids: stepwise migration in a global labor market*. Cambridge University Press, 2017. Methodological Appendix.

-Brinkmann, S. (2016). Methodological breaching experiments: Steps toward theorizing the qualitative interview. *Culture & Psychology*, 22(4), 520-531

-Kusenbach, Margarethe. "Street phenomenology: The go-along as ethnographic research tool." *Ethnography* 4, no. 3 (2003): 455-485.

-Watch: Frank Luntz and Beaumont Foundation. "Vaccine Focus Group", March 18th, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGo2l5lg8gs>

Session 6 (February 24th): Visual and Audio Tools For Capturing Data

Required Readings:

- Carroll, Henry. *Read this if you want to take great photographs*. Laurence King Publishing, 2014.

- John Keane, "We live in the age of nasty metaverse wars. Is there no escape from this hell?"

SCMP, June 11th, 2022: https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/opinion/article/3181225/we-live-age-nasty-metaverse-wars-there-no-escape-hell?module=more_on_scmp&pgtype=homepage

- Sniadecki, J.P. 2014 Chaquian/Demolition: Reflections on Media Practice. *Visual Anthropology Review* 30(1):23-37.

-De León, Jason. Excerpts from Part II, "Technological Warfare", in *The land of open graves*. University of California Press, 2015.

Exercise: Take 10-20 distinct photos or 1-2 minute video of some social activity and analyze it. How can you capture certain social behaviors and relationships with your camera than with words? How are certain cinematographic techniques like the angle of your camera, the focus, exposure, and aperture theoretically highlight certain dynamics?

Session 7 (March 3rd): Archeological Methods and Other Methods For Analyzing Objects

Required Readings:

Brown, Karida L. "On the participatory archive: the formation of the Eastern Kentucky African American migration project." *Southern Cultures* 22, no. 1 (2016): 113-127.

Renfrew, C. and Bahn, Paul. 2016. *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*. London: Thames & Hudson, pp. 40-48.

Rathje, William L, Vincent M. Lamotta, and William A. Longacre, "Into the *black hole*: Archeology 2001 and beyond..." from *Archeology: The On-going Debate*.

Rathje, William. "Integrated archaeology: a garbage paradigm." In *Archaeologies of the contemporary past*, pp. 75-90. Routledge, 2002.

De Leon, Jason, excerpts from Chapter 3 “Necroviolence” and Chapter 8 “Exposure” of *The Land of Open Graves*

Session 8 (March 10th): Analyzing Architecture and Built Environments/Infrastructure

To Present:

Required Readings:

Graham, Stephen, and Lucy Hewitt. "Getting off the ground: On the politics of urban verticality." *Progress in Human Geography* 37, no. 1 (2013): 72-92.

Harris, Andrew. "Vertical urbanisms: Opening up geographies of the three-dimensional city." *Progress in Human Geography* 39, no. 5 (2015): 601-620.

Rossini, Francesco, and Melody Hoi-lam Yiu. "Public open spaces in private developments in Hong Kong: new spaces for social activities?." *Journal of Urbanism: International Research on Placemaking and Urban Sustainability* 14, no. 2 (2021): 237-261.

Examine Any Ten Entries of Forensic Architecture at <https://forensic-architecture.org/>

Session 9 (March 17th): Ethnomethodology, Breaching, Social Experiments

Required Readings:

McGrane, B. Warning: sociology can be harmful for your ego. Chapter 1 in *The Un-TV and the 10 Mph Car: Experiments in Personal Freedom and Everyday Life* (pp. 1-19). Fort Bragg, CA: The Small Press, 1994.

Garfinkel, Harold. Chapter 2, “Study of the Routine Grounds of Everyday Activities”, in *Ethnomethodology*

Asch, Solomon E. "Opinions and social pressure." *Scientific American* 193, no. 5 (1955): 31-35.

Sherif, Muzafer. *The robbers cave experiment: Intergroup conflict and cooperation.* [Orig. pub. as *Intergroup conflict and group relations*]. Chapters 9 and 10. Wesleyan University Press, 1988.

South China Morning Post, Trending in China: “‘Fake socialite’ lives 21 days for free in Beijing.” View at:

<https://www.scmp.com/video/china/3159204/fake-socialite-lives-21-days-free-beijing-social-experiment>

Session 10 (March 24th): Conversation Analysis (CA)

Required Readings:

- Maynard, Douglas W. "On 'realization' in everyday life: the forecasting of bad news as a social relation." *American sociological review* (1996): 109-131.
- Bergen, Clara, Tanya Stivers, Rebecca K. Barnes, John Heritage, Rose McCabe, Laura Thompson, and Merran Toerien. "Closing the deal: a cross-cultural comparison of treatment resistance." *Health Communication* 33, no. 11 (2018): 1377-1388.
- Kitinger, Celia, and Hannah Frith. "Just say no? The use of conversation analysis in developing a feminist perspective on sexual refusal." *Discourse & Society* 10, no. 3 (1999): 293-316.
- Gan, Yumei, Christian Greiffenhagen, and Christian Licoppe. "Orchestrated openings in video calls: Getting young left-behind children to greet their migrant parents." *Journal of Pragmatics* 170 (2020): 364-380.

Session 11 (April 21st): Oral History and Participatory Action Research (PAR) Techniques

Required Readings:

--Listen: "How To Find Common Ground With Your Most Problematic Family Members" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/24/opinion/family-argument-thanksgiving.html>) on New York Time's podcast *The Argument*, in which Jane Costan interviews Dylan Marron, host of the much recommended podcast *Conversations With People Who Hate Me* (<https://www.dylanmarron.com/podcast>)

Brown, Karida L. *Gone home: Race and roots through Appalachia*. UNC Press Books, 2018. Chapter 3: "Home"

Portelli, Alessandro. "Oral history as genre." In *Narrative and genre*, pp. 23-45. Routledge, 2017.

Polletta, Francesca, Pang Ching Bobby Chen, Beth Gharrity Gardner, and Alice Motes. "The sociology of storytelling." *Annual review of sociology* 37 (2011): 109-130.

Morrissey, Charles T. "The two-sentence format as an interviewing technique in oral history fieldwork." *The oral history review* 15, no. 1 (1987): 43-53.

Undocumented Migration Project Webinar Ep. 3: HT94 Virtual Exhibition
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SZWKG8pEB0>

Recommended for those doing oral history about law: Neuenschwander, John A. *A guide to oral history and the law*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2014.

Session 12 (April 14th): Archival Research Methods and Content/Discourse Analysis

Required Readings:

Hall, Stuart. "Constituting an archive." *Third text* 15, no. 54 (2001): 89-92.

Mbembe, Achille. "The Power of the Archive and its Limits." In *Refiguring the archive*, pp. 19-27. Springer Netherlands, 2002.

El Shakry, Omnia. "'history without Documents': The Vexed Archives of Decolonization in the Middle east." *The American Historical Review* 120, no. 3 (2015): 920-934.

Smallwood, Stephanie E. "The Politics of the Archive and History's Accountability to the Enslaved." *History of the Present* 6, no. 2 (2016): 117-132.

Balcells, Laia, and Christopher M. Sullivan. "New findings from conflict archives: An introduction and methodological framework." (2018): 137-146.

Lowe, L., 2015. *The intimacies of four continents*. Duke University Press. [Chapter 1]

Session 13 (April 21st): Macro-level Methods of Historical Analysis

Required Readings:

- Slater, Dan, and Daniel Ziblatt. "The enduring indispensability of the controlled comparison." *Comparative Political Studies* 46, no. 10 (2013): 1301-1327. 26

- Sewell, William. "Three temporalities: Toward a sociology of the event." (1990). 33

- Berg-Schlosser, Dirk, Gisèle De Meur, Benoît Rihoux, and Charles C. Ragin. "Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) as an approach." *Configurational comparative methods: Qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) and related techniques* 1 (2009): 30

-Ebbinghaus, Bernhard. "When less is more: Selection problems in large-N and small-N cross-national comparisons." *International sociology* 20, no. 2 (2005): 133-152. 19