



QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS 100% online

Professor: Roslyn Schoen, PhD
Office: Heritage Hall 204B
Office hours will be posted to the course Canvas page.

Course Description: This course will provide students with an understanding of the methodological approaches we commonly think of as qualitative research methods, with special emphases on various types of interviewing, observation techniques, ethnographic field-based methods, and content analysis. Students will learn both the techniques of qualitative research and engage in philosophical, ethical, and theoretical conversations around qualitative methods. The course will explore issues of research ethics as they pertain to qualitative research in the social sciences as well as the history and epistemological basis of qualitative research methodology. Students are encouraged to take SOCI 4316 before or in conjunction with this course.

Course Objectives: The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to the intellectual and pragmatic issues concerning qualitative research methods in the social sciences. Students will be able to...

1. Understand qualitative research in the social sciences, including data collection techniques, analysis, writing, and presenting qualitative material.
2. Discuss the epistemological position of qualitative methods and review the various areas in sociology where qualitative work has been most effective.
3. Examine the ethical responsibilities of qualitative researchers in light of the much closer contact with “subjects” and “informants” than in other areas of research.
4. Think collectively and critically about qualitative research, including the ability to locate and assess the quality of published qualitative studies.
5. Identify the professional norms and styles for writing and presenting qualitative research findings.

Mode of instruction and course access: This is an online course with all assessments and lectures available through our course Canvas page.

Required Reading and Textbook(s):

Saldana, Johnny and Matt Omasta. 2017. *Qualitative Research: Analyzing Life*. Sage Publications. 978-1506305493

Goffman, Alice. 2014. *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. The University of Chicago Press.

Other required reading materials listed on the syllabus will be available through our course E-Reserve page.

Recommended Book(s):

ASA Style Guide, 5th edition. American Sociological Association.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Discussion Boards: Students will participate on our course discussion board, with graded discussion taking place during 5 of the 16 weeks this semester. Participation on graded discussion boards is an important part of learning for this course. Primary/initial postings will address my weekly discussion question(s) and should be 300 words or longer. Primary posts are due by midnight (11:59 PM CST) each Thursday. Once several initial posts have been made, you will move on by reading and responding to at least two of your peers' primary posts. Response posts commenting and reflecting upon the comments of your peers should be made by midnight (11:59 PM CST) each Sunday.
2. Quizzes: Students will take 6 quizzes at regular intervals throughout the course. Quizzes are each worth 25 points, or 150 points in total (30% of your grade). Quizzes will cover the readings and other material assigned for the same week. On weeks when you have a quiz, you should first complete the readings and take notes. There will be no discussion board or reflection essay during the weeks you take a quiz so that you can focus on and prepare for the quiz. Prepare and manage your time wisely; you will not be able to re-take a quiz, nor can you re-open a quiz once you have started it. Quizzes will be available from Wednesday afternoon until Sunday at 11:59 PM CST.
3. Methods Exercises: Students will complete 5 methods exercises in order to practice and apply information from the readings. Exercises are worth 50 points each for a total of 250 points. The exercises will be...
 - a. Analysis 1 – analyzing spaces and objects in their surroundings
 - b. Earning a CITI certificate in human subjects research
 - c. Conducting an interview
 - d. Ethics essay – applying ethical principles to a hypothetical research situation
 - e. Analysis 2 – coding and analyzing interview data

Point distribution

	Points	Percent of grade
Discussion boards 5 @ 20 points each	100	20%
Quizzes 6 @ 25 points each	150	30%
Methods exercises 5 @ 50 points each	250	50%
TOTAL	500	100%

Point distribution for letter grades

446 - 500	90 – 100%	A
396 - 445	80 - 89%	B
346 - 395	70 – 79%	C
296 - 345	60 – 69%	D
295 or below	0 – 59%	F

Posting of Grades:

- All student grades will be posted using the Canvas grade book and students should monitor their grade status through this tool.
- Students should always refer to the syllabus for total points and points possible. The Canvas gradebook tool may misinform students from time to time.
- Grades will usually be posted within 7-10 days of due dates. Some assignments require more personalized feedback. These assignments could take longer to grade and so you may need to be patient.

COURSE TOPICS:

Introduction and identifying the field site. Week 1.

Data sources beyond talk: How to examine documents, artifacts, and digital materials. Weeks 2-3.

Qualitative interviews: What to do when preparing, conducting, and analyzing interviews followed by discussions of “the active interview” and collaborative construction. Weeks 4-6.

Methodological frameworks, epistemology, and the role of theory and social position in research design. Weeks 7 and 8.

Ethical concerns in qualitative research. Focus will be on confidentiality issues, making in-field decisions, maintaining parity, and managing data. Weeks 9 and 10.

Analysis: Condensing, patterning, unifying followed by interpreting and theorizing based on data. Weeks 11 and 12.

Wrap up: Exiting the field and closing out the project, followed by discussion of scholarly writing and professional research presentations. Weeks 13-15.