

BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
SOCIOLOGY 3307f (530)
FALL 2013

Investigating the Social World: Qualitative Research

Instructor: Prof. Patricia Pakvis
Class Time: Thursday 11:30 am-2:30 pm
Place: Br 302
Office: TBA
Office Hours: Wed. 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. (no hours Wed. Oct. 16)
E-mail: pakvis@uwo.ca
Webpage: <http://publish.uwo.ca/~pakvis/>

Drop Date: November 5, 2013

Prerequisites: Enrolment in a Sociology Honours Specialization with a minimum grade of 60% in Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B or the former Sociology 231. If not in an Honours Specialization, a minimum grade of 70% in Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B or the former 231 or permission from the professor.

Antirequisites: Sociology 3310F/G, 3311F/G.

Note: Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Format: Three-hour seminar course.

Course Description:

The objective of this course is to provide you with the tools necessary to conduct research in the social world through the use of selected qualitative research methods and through the examination of ethical issues that might arise when conducting social research. This course will help you to develop an in-depth, first-hand understanding of an aspect of everyday life that is of interest to you. Over the semester, we will cover a variety of qualitative research methods such as interviewing, focus groups, ethnography, historiography, action-research, and content analysis and you will take part in class activities designed to expand your knowledge of qualitative methods. Finally, you will be expected to conduct your own qualitative research, seeing it through to completion, after which you will write a qualitative report describing your work and your findings.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Design a qualitative research project
- Know what ethical considerations accompany qualitative research
- Collect data on social life using a variety of qualitative research techniques
- Code and analyze qualitative data
- Write a research report using qualitative data
- Understand many of the complex issues encountered when collecting qualitative data
- Integrate and develop theory grounded in analyses of the social world

Note: This course may be more demanding than other half credit courses. You will be conducting original research, which will include collecting and analyzing data, and writing a full research report on your findings, which can be very time-consuming; however, you will likely find the process of actually doing your own research project to be rewarding and fulfilling.

Assignment and Grading Structure*:

A. Ongoing Preparation and Participation	10%
B. Mini-Assignments:	Total 50%
Problem Statement (individual 10%)	
Interviewing Exercise (pair 10%)	
Focus Group Activity (group 15%)	
Observation Exercise (individual 15%)	
C. Coding Notes	10%
D. Qualitative Research Paper	30%

Note: There is no final exam in this course

Required Texts and Readings:

Van den Hoonaard, Deborah 2012 *Qualitative Research in Action A Canadian Primer*
ISBN 9780195439199 (Required)

Selection of Online and Reserve Readings.

All assigned readings should be read before the class for which they are assigned. It is your responsibility to check the readings ahead of time and to read them in advance of the class for which they are assigned. Your preparation/participation mark will be based on how well informed you are and on your classroom contributions to discussions.

EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS & OTHER EVALUATION CRITERIA:

A. Ongoing Preparation and Participation (10% of Final Mark). Students are expected to attend classes, to do all required readings in **advance**, to demonstrate comprehension and deep engagement with the assigned readings throughout the term and to **actively** participate in seminar discussion and all other class activities. Instructor will keep a weekly log of both attendance and active participation. In order to achieve a B or higher grade in the participation mark students need to

regularly **both attend classes and participate**. In addition, there will be group research meetings held during class time during which students will discuss their choice of project and their planning progress and receive feedback from both their peers and the instructor.

B. Mini-Assignments (Total 50% of Final Mark). There will be four mini-assignments to be handed in during the course, worth 10, 10, 15 and 15% of the final mark.

The first assignment (10%) is due on **Thursday, September 26th, 2013** is individual and will consist of a problem statement for your research project and an outline of your proposed sample and methodology. More details will be posted on the class webpage.

The second assignment (10%) is due on **Thursday, October 10th, 2013** will be completed with a partner. It will include interview notes and your reflections comparing two types of interviews (structured and depth) that were completed during class time on **October 3rd**. Details will be provided in class and will be posted on the class webpage.

The third assignment (15%), on **Thursday, October 17th, 2013** is a group assignment that will be completed with three of your classmates. It will consist of conducting a focus group during class time. One person will act as a moderator, one as an observer, and two as recorder/transcribers. In the week before Oct. 17th, you will meet with your group to develop a moderator's guide and on the 17th you will run a small focus group, take detailed field notes, and prepare a group (rough) report of your findings which will be submitted at the next class on **Oct. 24th**. Further details will be provided.

The fourth assignment (15%) is due on **Thursday, Nov. 7th, 2013** and is an individual assignment. You will be conducting a non-participant observation in a public setting during the week before (i.e. over the fall study break) and will submit your rough field notes and preliminary analysis (in the form of a theoretical memo) on Nov. 7th. More details will be provided in class and will be posted on the class webpage.

C. Coding Notes. (10% of Final Mark). Due Thursday, November 14th, 2013. You will submit the rough notes for the open and axial coding phase of your analysis, along with your preliminary findings (in the form of a theoretical memo.) Further details will be provided in class and on the class webpage.

D. Qualitative Research Paper and Presentation of Findings (30% of Final Mark). You will conduct an individual qualitative research project and write a paper describing your research and your findings. The project will be a detailed semiotic content analysis of YouTube videos (both textual and visual aspects.) You will submit the research paper on **Thursday, November 28th, 2013**. The paper is to be approximately 10-12 typed double-spaced pages. It will include an introduction and outline of the chosen problem/topic, a literature review, your methodology and discussion of ethical considerations, the results of your qualitative analysis and your conclusion. You will give a brief (10 minute) presentation on your findings on **Nov. 28 or Dec. 5, 2013**.

Late Penalty: Any project component that is submitted late will incur a 5% penalty per day. The policies governing requests for academic accommodation for course components worth 10% or more of the course grade are outlined in the Brescia Academic Policies.

Please note: Further course and assignment information, as well as a detailed reading schedule will be posted online at <http://publish.uwo.ca/~pakvis/>

BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> . If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician/nurse practitioner, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2013/pg117.html>

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, www.registrar.uwo.ca, for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not

missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

7. SUPPORT SERVICES

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar_services/index.html . The Western Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm> . The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/> . Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western