



2015-2016
Department of Sociology
SOC3307F – 530
Investigating the Social World: Qualitative Methods
Tuesday 8:30am – 11:30am, BR-304



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Office Hours: Tuesday 12:00pm-1:00pm and by appointment

Abstract knowledge of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, of great books and foreign languages, will not help you reach an understanding of others unless you share in their lives as a fellow human being, with tact and sensitivity, care and concern.

Michael Jackson 2011: 5

Course description:

Qualitative research methods centre on the interpretation and underlying meaning of the lived-experience and social worlds of individuals and groups, and not on the measurement and generalized comparison thereof. In this course, students will learn to investigate the social world by way of a variety of qualitative approaches, such as ethnographic fieldwork and its various forms; in-depth interviewing (face-to-face and via the internet); the use of documents and images (photographs, videos and artwork); and, ultimately, the analysis, management and representation of qualitative information. A recurring theme will be the role of the management of adversity and ambiguity in qualitative research, especially with

respect to the emergent stages of all aspects of the research experience (i.e., formulating the research question, immersion in the research experience, and writing up).

Course objectives:

- Understand the underlying philosophical principals of qualitative research and its goals
- Understand the various practical approaches and strategies to conducting and analysing qualitative information
- Understand the ethical considerations and issues involved with doing qualitative research
- Demonstrate the ability to formulate and conduct a small research project from start to finish

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

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

Important note:

This is a mandatory course for third-year Sociology students in an Honours Specialization. You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites. If you do not have the requisites for this course, and you do not have written special permission from your Dean to enrol in this course, 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.

Required text:

Warren, Carol, A.B. and Tracy Xavia Karner. 2015. *Discovering Qualitative Methods: Ethnography, Interviews, Documents and Images*. Third Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

The supplementary articles/chapters (marked with an *) will be available on WebCT.

Evaluation:

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| Course participation: On-going | 10% |
| Research proposal: October 13 th , 2015 | 15% |
| Midterm exam: November 10 th , 2015 | 25% |

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| Term project/final paper: December 8 th , 2015 | 35% |
| Class presentation: December 8 th : | 15% |

TOTAL: **100%**

Midterm exam:

The exam will consist of short answers questions, definitions of concepts, and longer essays in which students are asked to reflect on conceptual aspects of qualitative research. This exam will cover all course material based on lectures and the assigned readings. Students are responsible for material covered in class regardless of whether they are present for each class.

Research proposal, final paper and class presentation:

The research proposal and final paper are practical exercises in qualitative information collection, analysis and representation. Your project will involve in-depth qualitative interviewing. More detailed information will be provided on WebCT and in class.

Weekly reading/lecture themes:

Week 1: September 15th

Instructor/course introduction, syllabus review and course expectations

Week 2: September 22nd

Welcome to the world of qualitative research!

Warren & Karner: Preface and Chapter 1

*Charmaz, Kathy. 2004. Premises, Principles and Practices in Qualitative Research: Revisiting the Foundations. *Qualitative Health Research* 14(7): 976-993.

*Devereaux, George. 1967. The Argument. In *From Anxiety to Method in the Behavioral Sciences*. Pp. xvi-xx. The Hague: Mouton & Co.

Week 3: September 29th

The politics and ethics of doing qualitative research

Warren & Karner: Chapter 2

*Ensign, Josephine. 2003. Ethical Issues in Qualitative Health Research with Homeless Youths. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 43(1): 43-50.

*Baez, Benjamin. 2002. Confidentiality in Qualitative Research: Reflections on Secrets, Power and Agency. *Qualitative Research* 2(1): 35-58.

Week 4: October 6th

An introduction to ethnography and ethnographic fieldwork

Warren & Karner: Chapter 3

*Campbell, Elizabeth and Luke Eric Lassiter. 2015. Introduction: Conceptualizing Ethnography. In *Doing Ethnography Today: Theories, Methods, Exercises*. Pp. 1-14. West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell.

Week 5: October 13th

The interpersonal and political aspects of doing ethnographic fieldwork

Warren & Karner: Chapter 4

*Dolson, M. S. 2013. Reflections through Reflexivity: Why My Collaborative Research Project in Arctic Labrador Did Not Work. *Collaborative Anthropologies*, Volume 6: 201-236.

Film: *Salmer fra Kjøkkenet* ("Kitchen Stories")

Week 6: October 20th

Documenting fieldwork: The case of fieldnotes

Warren & Karner: Chapter 5

*Clifford, James. 1990. Notes on (Field)Notes. In *Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology*. Roger Sanjek, Ed. Pp. 47-70. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Week 7: October 27th

On interviewing: From the formulation of questions to actually asking them

Warren & Karner: Chapter 6

*Briggs, Charles. 1986. Conclusion: Theoretical Quagmires and “Purely Methodological Issues”. In *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*. Pp. 112-125. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

*Quinn, Naomi. 2005. Introduction. In *Finding Culture in Talk: A Collection of Methods*. N. Quinn, ed. Pp. 1-34. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan.

Week 8: November 3rd

Interpersonal aspects of interviewing

Warren & Karner: Chapter 7

*Briggs, Charles. 1986. Interview Techniques Vis-à-Vis Native Metacommunicative Repertoires; or, on the Analysis of Communicative Blunders. In *Learning How to Ask: A Sociolinguistic Appraisal of the Role of the Interview in Social Science Research*. Pp. 39-60. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 9: November 10th

IN CLASS MIDTERM

Week 10: November 17th

Textual and visual information

Warren & Karner: Chapter 8

Week 11: November 24th

Analysis of qualitative information

Warren & Karner: Chapter 9

*Noble, Helen and Joanna Smith. 2015. Issues of Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research. *Evidence Based Nursing* 18: 34-35.

*Thomas, Eileen and Joan K. Magilvy. 2011. Qualitative Rigor or Research Validity in Qualitative Research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing* 16: 151-155.

*Sanjek, Roger. 1990. On Ethnographic Validity. In *Fieldnotes: The Making of Anthropology*. Roger Sanjek, Ed. Pp. 385-418. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Week 12: December 1st

Writing up qualitative research

Warren & Karner: Chapter 10

Week 13: December 8th

ESSAYS ARE DUE + IN CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Late Coursework

All coursework is due on the dates noted. Late coursework will only be accepted without penalty with appropriate documentation. Coursework received after the due date will have their grade reduced by a rate of 5% per day (including weekends).

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/2014/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

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

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 enrol 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 Ontario.

