

The University of Georgia

Sociology 3590

Qualitative Methods of Social Research

Tu/Th 2:00-3:15, Psychology Bldg., Room 513

Tu/Th 3:30-4:45, Peabody Hall, Room 219

Instructor:	Dr. Joseph C. Hermanowicz	Term:	Fall, 2009
Telephone:	706-542-3129	Office:	Baldwin 324A
E-mail:	jch1@uga.edu	Office Hours:	By Appointment

Purpose:

This course is an overview of qualitative research methods in sociology and related fields. The course shall engage the practitioner with the practicalities, realities, limitations, and underpinnings of methods for qualitative research. In illustration, the course will concentrate on those qualitative research approaches that have defined a core of scholarly work in sociology. These include: observation, the interview, case studies, focus groups, life histories and life stories. In addition, the course will examine the use of film as an approach to qualitative research.

The course is designed to educate and prepare students according to specific objectives:

1. To understand and evaluate the principles of qualitative research methods.
2. To recognize when, and when not, to use qualitative research methods.
3. To differentiate between and implement varying methods of qualitative research.
4. To apply a qualitative research method to a setting.
5. To collect and appropriately record qualitative data.
6. To link qualitative data to sociological concepts and to build theory.
7. To formulate and engage in analysis of qualitative data.
8. To tell about some aspect of society by writing clearly from qualitative research.

Qualitative research, when done well, is challenging to say the very least. It requires a substantial investment of time, including time away from one's normal routines and comfortable surroundings. This course requires dedication, commitment, and perseverance. The learning of qualitative research methods and the development of a course project is highly cumulative: our class meetings will often build on one another. Your attendance is imperative, as is your completion of and active engagement with all of the readings for when they are assigned.

Format:

The course will operate as a combination of lecture and discussion. The objectives of the course will be pursued through a schedule of readings, lectures, and class participation. In addition, students will complete an independent research project in the use of qualitative methods for social research.

Readings:

The required readings for the course are listed on the course schedule. They are available through the UGA electronic course reserves: <http://gil.uga.edu/> The password is: **qualmethods**

WebCT Page:

This course has a WebCT page containing copies of important course materials. If you do not have one already, establish a “MyID” account for access to the course page.

Requirements:

1. Reading, which includes the set of distributed questions. You are responsible for preparing responses/answers to these questions in advance of the class meeting for which they are assigned. You should bring to class the reading assigned for that day’s class along with your completed questions.
2. Term Research Project & Paper. Each student will complete an independent research project that includes the use of two major qualitative research methods: interviews and observation. These methods will be used to study one of the following research sites to be selected by the student:
 - i. Pawn Shops
 - ii. Behind the Scenes of an Airport
 - iii. Automobile Dealerships
 - iv. The Underworld of Fraternities or Sororities
 - v. The Life World of the Cheerleader
 - vi. Alternate Site Agreed upon by Student and Instructor

The project will result in a 20+ pp. research paper (exclusive of supplementary materials, appendices, protocols, etc.) that describes the research setting and respondents and presents, analyzes, and interprets the results of the research. All materials from the research project, including fieldnotes, interview protocols, and interview tapes will be submitted with the final paper. (See special handout.)

Policy on late papers: The due date, time, and place for paper submission is listed on the syllabus. Late papers will not be accepted.

3. Mid-Semester Exercises. The exercises will include:

- A 1-2 pp. research statement
- An observational description
- An interview protocol
- Fieldwork for the term project

Credit for these exercises will be given only if submitted on or before the date when they are due. All exercises should be submitted in hard copy only; no e-mail submissions.

4. Four in-class exams. The exams will cover all of the reading assignments; the lectures; class discussions; and films up to the date of the exam. Exam format is true/false and multiple choice.

Make-Up Exam Policy: If you miss an exam, you are required to take a make-up exam. All make-up exams are given at one universal time: make-up exams will immediately follow Exam IV, the date of which is listed on the syllabus.

5. Five quizzes. There will be five quizzes at random points throughout the semester. The quizzes will be short (normally a few questions) and will be based strictly on the assigned reading for that day. The quizzes will consist of questions found word-for-word on the reading questions.

Quiz Policy: Quizzes will usually be given during the first 10 minutes of class. Because quizzes are random, there are no make-ups. The lowest quiz score will be dropped, resulting in the four top quizzes counted toward the final grade.

Grades:

Each of the above requirements will count as follows toward the final course grade:

Term Research Project:	100 pts.
Research Statement	5 pts.
Mid-Semester Interview Protocol:	10 pts.
Mid-Semester Fieldwork:	25 pts.
Mid-Semester Description Exercise:	10 pts.
Exams:	50 pts. X 4 = 200 pts.
<u>Quizzes:</u>	<u>5 pts. X 4 = 20 pts.</u>
Total:	370 pts.

Your final grade is based on the point totals below. There is no rounding.

345-370 pts.	= A
333-344 pts.	= A-
326-332 pts.	= B+
308-325 pts.	= B
296-307 pts.	= B-
289-295 pts.	= C+
271-288 pts.	= C
259-270 pts.	= C-
222-258 pts.	= D
0-221 pts.	= F

Note: For sociology majors, a grade of C- or lower will not count toward major coursework. Students in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences must earn a grade of C or higher in all courses toward the major.

Attendance Policy:

- Attendance is taken every day by signing your name on the class roster.
- It is each student's responsibility to sign their names on the list each day.
- Students who miss more than two classes are administratively withdrawn.
- No distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences; if you are not present, you are absent.
- If you leave before the end of a class, you forfeit attendance and any quiz that day.
- Signing-in a name other than your own is lying, a violation of the Academic Honesty policy—see below.
- This policy applies to all students.

Missed Classes/Films:

Students for whom an absence is unavoidable bear the responsibility of getting missed notes from another student. This also applies to notes on films scheduled for the course. The films are not available for loan on an individual basis.

Religious Holidays:

During the semester, class may fall on one or more holidays celebrated by a variety of religious or other groups. Unless the University closes on those days, absences will be counted. If you anticipate such days, plan accordingly and allocate an allotted absence for them.

Extra Credit:

See “Optional Final Exam” on Course Schedule.

Honors Option:

There is no honors option for the course.

Disability:

Students with a documented disability who would like to request permissible accommodations must see the instructor after class or at an appointment. The disability must be documented by the University's Office of Student Affairs or its Disabilities Division.

Incompletes:

The grade of "Incomplete" will not be given except under the most serious and highly unusual circumstances. These circumstances will require documentation sent to the Instructor by the University's Office of Student Affairs and will be made solely at the Instructor's discretion.

Withdrawals:

Withdrawals that occur before to the withdrawal point of the semester—including administrative withdrawals for non-attendance—will receive the grade of WP, if and only if a student has not reached the withdrawal maximum of 4. If a student has exceeded the withdrawal maximum, the University automatically will assign the grade of WF. In accordance with University policy, withdrawals that occur after the withdrawal point of the semester—including administrative withdrawals for non-attendance—will receive the grade of WF.

Classroom Etiquette:

The functioning of a class depends upon everyone's cooperation and courtesy.

- Take care of all necessary business before coming to the classroom. Unless it is an emergency, refrain from exiting and entering the room once class has begun—this is distracting to other students and the instructor.
- Avoid private conversations during lecture—this is disruptive to others taking notes.
- Be certain to turn off cell phones and watches that are distracting to others.
- Overall, treat other students in the class and the instructor in ways you would like to be treated by them.

Computers:

The use of computers in the classroom is prohibited. Exceptions require written documentation from an appropriate office of the University. Surfing the internet during class with any other device is inappropriate and unacceptable.

Academic Honesty:

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Ignorance of these policies is not an acceptable defense against violations of them. “A Culture of Honesty” and materials related to University policies governing academic work, including the disciplinary actions that will automatically be taken if a student violates academic honesty policies, may be found at:

<http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/acadhon.htm>

Grievances:

The Department of Sociology has a Human Rights Committee for the resolution of student grievances. Any student registered for a sociology course at the University who feels that he or she has not been treated in a fair or professional manner by an instructor is advised to follow these procedures:

- 1) The student should discuss his or her problems with the instructor of the course, unless extenuating circumstances prohibit such discussion.
- 2) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance, the student should then discuss the problem with the Head of the Sociology Department.
- 3) If that discussion does not resolve the grievance to the student’s satisfaction, the student may request the activation of the Human Rights Committee by submitting a letter to the Chair of the Committee.

The Human Rights Committee will have the responsibility of investigating all charges in accordance with procedures on file in the Sociology Department, copies of which are available to students. The Committee will also have the responsibility of making recommendations in writing to the Head, copies of which will be made available to the student and instructor. The Department Head will review the recommendations, and make a decision, in writing, with copies to the student and instructor. Any appeal of that decision must be made to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Course Schedule

*The course syllabus is a general plan for the course;
deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

Aug. 18: Introduction

Aug. 20: Orientation to Qualitative Methods

Becker, Howard S. 1996. "The Epistemology of Qualitative Research." In Richard Jessor, Anne Colby, and Richard A. Shweder (eds.), Ethnography and Human Development: Context and Meaning in Social Inquiry, 53-71. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Aug. 25: Qualitative Data & Theory

Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research, 21-77. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Aug. 27: Designing Qualitative Research: Framing Questions and Problems

Becker, Howard S., Blanche Geer, Everett C. Hughes, and Anselm L. Strauss. 1961. "Design of the Study" and "Perspective, Culture, and Organization." In Boys in White: Student Culture in Medical School, 17-48. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sep. 1: Getting In & Getting Along in Qualitative Research

Bosk, Charles L. 1979. "Appendix: The Field Worker and the Surgeon." In Forgive and Remember: Managing Medical Failure, 193-213. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sep. 3: Ethics in Qualitative Research—I

Film: Titicut Follies, Part 1

Sep. 8: Ethics in Qualitative Research—II

Film: Titicut Follies, Part 2

Anderson, Carolyn and Thomas W. Benson. 1988. "Direct Cinema and the Myth of Informed Consent: The Case of Titicut Follies." In Larry Gross, John Stuart Katz, and Jay Ruby (eds.), Image Ethics: The Moral Right of Subjects in Photographs, Film, and Television, 58-90. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sep. 10: Ethics in Qualitative Research—III

Scarce, Rik. 1994. "(No) Trial (But) Tribulations: When Courts and Ethnography Conflict." Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 23:123-149.

Sep. 15: Exam I

Sep. 17: Overview & Discussion of Term Projects

Sep. 22: Observation—I

Suttles, Gerald D. 1968. "The Ecological Basis of Ordered Segmentation," "Institutional Arrangements." In The Social Order of the Slum: Ethnicity and Territory in the Inner City, 13-60; See tables pp. 69; 139; 162; 177-180. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sep. 24: Observation—II

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. "Writing Up Fieldnotes II: Creating Scenes on the Page," "Pursuing Members' Meanings." In Writing Ethnographic Research, 66-141. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Research statements are due:

In a 1-2 pp. double-spaced statement, account for the research you propose to conduct. Write clearly and logically, so that someone unfamiliar with you, would know what you are going to do.

1. State the specific planned research site(s). (Where)
2. State what it is about this site you propose to study. (What)
3. State how you propose to study it. (How)

Sep. 29: Observation—III

Task: Write a description of someone you know *or* someone with whom you are not familiar. Bring and submit your type-written, double-spaced description in class. Do not ask “how long should it be?” You know that it should be as long as it takes to successfully complete the task.

Objective: To describe this person as never before. Offer a description of this person such that your audience feels *as if* they knew them the way you do. The objective is akin to writing a eulogy for a funeral. Convey the essence of the person so that those, however far removed, leave knowing what life inhabited, what is otherwise for us, the dead.

Begin observation work of your research site.

Oct. 1: The Interview—I

Sudman, Seymour and Norman M. Bradburn. 1982. “Asking Threatening Questions about Behavior,” “Measuring Attitudes: Formulating Questions,” “Order of the Questionnaire,” “Format of the Questionnaire.” In Asking Questions: A Practical Guide to Questionnaire Design, 54-87; 119-147; 207-260. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Example:

Laumann, Edward O., John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels. 1994. “Appendix C: The NHSLS [National Health and Social Life Survey] Questionnaire.” In The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States, 606-677. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Oct. 6: The Interview—II

Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. 1995. “Interviews as Guided Conversations.” In Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data, 122-144. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Example:

Hermanowicz, Joseph C. 1998. "Appendix A—Interview Questions." In The Stars Are Not Enough: Scientists—Their Passions and Professions, 211-213. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Oct. 8: The Interview—III

Your Interview Questions: Today's class is devoted to discussing the set of interview questions you have developed for your term research project.

- Construct your own, complete list of organized interview questions. Refer to the example protocol for organization, but DO NOT copy questions or topical headings from the example—devise your own original protocol.
- Identify your research site(s) on the protocol.
- Remember on your protocol to include the following, as covered in the last reading and the last lecture:
 - 20-30 main questions
 - Topical Headings
 - Probe Questions
- Turn in a type-written copy of your interview protocol at the end of class.
- Submit your protocol in hard copy only—no e-mail submissions.

Oct. 13: Exam II

Oct. 15: Case Studies

Platt, Jennifer. 1992. "Cases of cases...of cases." In Charles L. Ragin and Howard S. Becker (eds.), What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry, 21-52. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Begin interviews & continue observation of your research site.

Oct. 20: Life Histories & Life Stories

Shaw, Clifford R. [1930] 1966. "History of Stanley's Behavior Difficulties," "Starting Down Grade," "The Baby Bandhouse," "The Lure of the Underworld," "Summary of Case and Social Treatment." In The Jack-Roller: A Delinquent Boy's Own Story, 24-32; 47-64; 79-102; 164-183. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Oct. 22: Focus Groups

Stewart, David W., Prem N. Shamdasani, and Dennis W. Rook. 2007. "Introduction: Focus Group History, Theory, and Practice," "Focus Groups and the Research Toolbox," and "Recruiting Focus Group Participants and Designing the Interview Guide." In Focus Groups: Theory and Practice, 2nd Edition, 1-17; 37-68. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Oct. 27: The Use of Film: Hoop Dreams, Part 1

Oct. 29: The Use of Film: Hoop Dreams, Part 2

Nov. 3: The Use of Film: Hoop Dreams, Part 3

Sperber, Murray. 1996. "Hoop Dreams, Hollywood Dreams." Jump Cut 40:3-7.

Davis, Seth. August 30, 2006. "Still Dreaming." Sports Illustrated. www.SI.com. Date retrieved: October 9, 2007.

Nov. 5: Exam III

Nov. 10: Analysis of Qualitative Data

Lofland, John and Lyn H. Lofland. 1984. "Thinking Units," "Asking Questions," "Being Interesting," "Developing Analysis." In Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis 2nd ed., 71-127. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Nov. 12: Assessment of Quality in Qualitative Research

Ambert, Anne-Marie, Patricia A. Adler, Peter Adler, and Daniel F. Detzner. 1995. "Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research." Journal of Marriage and the Family 57:879-893.

Fieldnotes / Recorded Interview Tapes Due.

Nov. 17: Telling About Society—I

Berg, Bruce L. 2007. "Writing Research Papers: Sorting the Noodles from the Soup." In Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences, 6th ed., 340-363. Boston: Pearson.

Turabian, Kate L. 2007. "Revising Your Draft," "Writing Your Final Introduction and Conclusion," and "Revising Sentences." In A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, 98-119. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press Staff. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nov. 19: Telling About Society—II

Dec. 1: Exam IV

Dec. 3: Make-up Day/Course Conclusion

**Dec. 8: Term Research Papers Due—Follow Checklist on Handout
Deliver Project Materials in Hard Copy To:
Baldwin Hall 324A (Instructor's Office)
No later than 5 p.m.**

Dec. 15: Optional Final Exam
Literature Review Paper on Research Project
Synthesize literature in connection to research project
10 pp. double-spaced; 1 inch margins on all sides
Scholarly books and journal articles only
No web/internet sources
0-15 points added to final score
0 points for papers not meeting these minimum requirements
Criteria: Literature Coverage; Organization; Clarity; Grammar; Insight;
Connection to Project
Deliver Literature Review Paper To:
Baldwin Hall 324A (Instructor's Office)
No later than 5 p.m.

Dec. 18 : All scores posted on WebCT by this date.
Papers may be picked-up now or next semester.