

University of British Columbia

Sociology 503
Qualitative Research Design and Techniques

Term I: September – December 2017

Class Location: ANSO 203

Class Time: Tuesdays 1:00 – 4:00pm

Instructor: Prof. Wendy D. Roth

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Office hours: Book at:

<https://10to8.com/book/phjyow-free/286114/>

Tuesdays: 4-4:30pm; Thursdays: 2:30-4:30pm

Course Description: This course is designed for sociology students in the first year of their graduate program or who have little previous experience with qualitative research methods. It focuses on research design issues, data collection, and building skills as a qualitative researcher. The class is intended to be the first in a two-course sequence together with SOCI 515, which focuses on qualitative data analysis. The present course is intended to give students an understanding of several qualitative methodological approaches, but with special emphasis on interview-based research and ethnography/participant observation, with which students will gain hands-on experience. The course will provide an overview of other common qualitative methods used in sociology, including focus groups and case studies.

Course Objectives: After completing the course, you should be able to:

- 1) Describe the uses of qualitative work and explain which research methods are most appropriate for different types of research questions;
- 2) Evaluate the quality of the data and the appropriateness of the research design in social science studies you read;
- 3) Assess the ethical responsibilities of qualitative researchers, who have closer contact with research subjects than most survey researchers;
- 4) Conduct in-depth interviews, participant observation, and develop strong interviewing skills;
- 5) Design your own research projects using qualitative methodologies.

Required Texts: These texts are available at the UBC Bookstore and are on reserve in Koerner Library.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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

Morgan, David L. 1997. *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Qualitative Research Methods Series volume 16. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Roth, Wendy D. 2012. *Race Migrations: Latinos and the Cultural Transformation of Race*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.

In addition, several required readings listed on the syllabus come from the online report:

National Science Foundation. 2004. *Workshop on Scientific Foundations of Qualitative Research*. Report prepared by: Charles C. Ragin, Joane Nagel, Patricia White for the National Science Foundation: Sociology Program; Methodology, Measurement & Statistics Program; Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences.

This report is available at: <http://www.nsf.gov/pubs/2004/nsf04219/nsf04219.pdf>, and may be downloaded as a .pdf file.

* Excerpts from this report will be indicated as **NSF Report**.

All other required readings will be available on the course website (www.connect.ubc.ca).

Required Equipment: You will need a digital recorder (or a cassette recorder and at least three 90-minute cassettes). MP3 players and iPods are fine as long as you can save the recordings in .wav or .mp3 format. A limited number of recorders may be borrowed from Arts Audio Visual (ask me for details).

Assignments and Evaluation:

- **Leading class discussion** (10%)
- **Interview Assignment** (30%):
 - Complete and transcribe two interviews; hand in audio recordings, all interview forms, and electronic copies of transcripts.
Assignment discussed in class 1

***NOTE: You must hand in a certificate of completion of online Human Subjects training in advance to complete the interview assignment.**
- **Participant Observation Assignment** (approx. 8 pages, incl. fieldnotes) (15%):
- **Final Proposal** (approx. 20-25 pages) (35%)
- **Class Participation** (10%)

Class Participation: You should complete all assigned readings in advance of class and should attend class prepared to discuss them. The class participation component of your mark will be based on your attendance, preparation, and participation.

I expect students to make every effort to attend all classes. However, those who are unable to attend class on a given day are responsible for obtaining their classmates' notes on all material covered and any class announcements that may have been made. Please write down the names and contact information for two of your classmates below and contact them about any questions.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Office Hours: This year I will be booking office hour appointments online. Please book an appointment at <https://10to8.com/book/phjyow-free/286114/> . Changes or cancellations can also be done at this website. This will send you a reminder to avoid missed appointments. Please note that appointments must be booked at least 2 hours in advance.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when one person presents as one's own the words or ideas of another. This includes quoting sources, paraphrasing, or summarizing source material without indicating through the use of proper citation methods that the specific material in question was quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from a given source.

It is your responsibility to understand what is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism of any form, even unintentional, will not be tolerated. I recommend that students read the Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism and consult the Resources available at:

<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoid-plagiarism/>

Sources: For any written assignments that rely on sources, you should rely on published academic sources. Some academic sources such as peer-reviewed journals and e-Books may be accessed online through the library website. Only use online material that is peer-reviewed or provided on government websites (such as StatisticsCanada). You may not rely on other websites without explicit approval from me. Wikipedia or similar articles should not be used as sources of analysis or factual information.

Lateness Policy: Unless otherwise stated, hard copies of all assignments should be handed in at the beginning of class on the due date. Those which are to be sent electronically should be e-mailed to wendy.roth@ubc.ca before the beginning of class on the due date. Assignments which are late will be penalized 5 points per day (out of 100), including weekends. Lateness

will not be excused without a valid written reason (e.g. doctor's note, letter of consideration/standing deferred from Arts Advising). Similarly, extensions will usually not be granted without a valid written reason from a doctor or from Arts Advising. This is to ensure that all students are evaluated equally and none are given special advantages not offered to the rest of the class.

Conservation Policy: You are encouraged to print assignments on both sides of paper or on paper that has already been used on one side. What is printed on the opposite side will not affect the evaluation of the assignment.

READINGS

*** NOTE: No class on Sept. 5 due to Sociology Department Academic Launch ***

Tues. Sept. 12: *Introduction to Class*

- Overview of Class
- Forms and Purposes of Different Qualitative Research Methods
- Overview of International Student Study and interview assignment options

Read the entire syllabus

NSF Report. “General Guidance for Developing Qualitative Research Projects.” Pp. 9-16.

NSF Report. Mahoney, James. “The Distinctive Contributions of Qualitative Data Analysis.” Pp. 95-99.

NSF Report. Snow, David A. “Thoughts on Alternative Pathways to Theoretical Development: Theory Generation, Extension and Refinement.” Pp.133-136.

Tues. Sept. 19: *Comparing Qualitative and Quantitative Research*

- Operationalizing concepts
- Logical inference, induction and deduction
- Validity and Reliability

NSF Report. Collier, David, Jason Seawright, and Henry E. Brady. “Qualitative versus Quantitative: What Might This Distinction Mean?” Pp. 71-76.

NSF Report. Ragin, Charles. “Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Research.” Pp. 109-115.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1996. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Chapter 1: "The Science in Social Science," pp.3-33.

Roth, Wendy D. and Jal D. Mehta. 2002. "The Rashomon Effect: Combining Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches to the Analysis of Contested Events." *Sociological Methods and Research* 31(2): 131-173.

Tues. Sept. 26: *Ethics in Qualitative Research*

- Protecting confidentiality
- Your obligations to your subjects
- Your obligations to "the truth" wherever it leads
- Institutional Review Boards and professional ethics

Code of Ethics of the Canadian Sociological Association, available at:
<http://www.csa-scs.ca/files/www/csa/documents/codeofethics/2012Ethics.pdf>

Recommended:
American Sociological Association Code of Ethics. Available at:
<http://www.asanet.org/images/asa/docs/pdf/Ethics%20Code.pdf>
(or the code of ethics for your field if you are not in sociology).

Whyte, William Foote. 1984. *Learning From the Field: A Guide from Experience*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. Chapter 11: "Ethics in Field Research and Publication," pp.193-223.

Allen, Charlotte. 1997. "Spies Like Us: When Sociologists Deceive their Subjects." *Lingua Franca* 7(9): 31-39.

Ranson, Gillian. 2005. "'I'm Looking Forward to Hearing What You Found Out': Reflections on a Critical Perspective and Some of Its Consequences." Pp. 104-115 in *Doing Ethnography: Studying Everyday Life*, edited by Dorothy Pawluch, William Shaffir, and Charlene Miall. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Shea, Christopher. 2000. "Don't Talk to the Humans: The Crackdown on Social Science Research." *Lingua Franca* 10(6): 27-34.

Weiss, pp.127-136

***ETHICS ASSIGNMENT DUE: Complete the Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS 2) Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans. Hand in hard copy of certificate of tutorial completion at the beginning of class.**

Tutorial available at:

<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/>

This tutorial should take about two hours to complete. You can save your work and come back to it later if necessary.

Tues. Oct. 3: *Doing an Interview Study*

- Developing Interview Guides
- Connecting Interview Questions to Theoretical Ideas
- Writing Notes
- Interviewer Perspective

Lofland, John, David A. Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. 2006. 4th edition. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing. “Data Logging in Intensive Interviewing: Guides and Write-Ups,” pp. 99-108.

Weiss, “Preparation for Interviewing,” pp. 45-52 & “Issues in Interviewing,” pp.136-150.

Roth, *Race Migrations*, Chapters 1, 2 & 3

Tues. Oct. 10: *Interview-Based Research: Developing Interviewing Skills*

- Conducting Interviews
- Tricks of the Trade and Pitfalls to Watch Out For
- Interviewer-Interviewee Dynamics

Weiss, Chapter 4: “Interviewing,” pp.61-119.

Roth, *Race Migrations*, Chapters 4 & 5 and “Appendix: Notes on Methodology”

Tues. Oct. 17: *Interview-Based Research: Project Design*

- Site Selection
- Research Design
- Choosing a Sample

Weiss, Chapter 1: “Introduction” & Chapter 2: “Respondents: Choosing Them and Recruiting Them,” pp.1-37.

Bloemraad, Irene. 2013. “The Promise and Pitfalls of Comparative Research Design in the Study of Migration.” *Migration Studies* 1: 27-46.

Kenyon, Kristi, H el ene Frohard-Dourlent, and Wendy D. Roth. 2012. "Falling between the Cracks: Ambiguities of International Student Status in Canada." *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* 42(1): 1-24.

Roth, *Race Migrations*, Chapters 6 & 7

Tues. Oct. 24: *Ethnography and Participant Observation*

- Observing vs. Interviewing
- Gaining Entry
- Observer Role and Perspective

Fetterman, David M. 1998. *Ethnography: Step by Step*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Pp. 1-13.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 1: "Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research," & Chapter 2: "In the Field: Participating, Observing, and Jotting Notes." pp.1-38

Goffman, *On the Run*, "Introduction" & Chapters 1-4.

***INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT DUE: Bring all interview forms and any tapes to class. E-mail electronic copy of transcripts to wendy.roth@ubc.ca before the start of class.**

Digital recordings may be brought to class on a flash drive, sent to me before class as e-mail attachments, or uploaded to a file share site like www.sendspace.com. For the latter two, I will send an e-mail confirmation. If you do not receive it, assume that I did not receive the file and bring a copy on a flash drive to class.

Tues. Oct. 31: *Doing Ethnography and Participant Observation*

- Writing Fieldnotes
- Observer Reflexivity
- Debating Goffman

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 3: "Writing Up Fieldnotes I: From Field to Desk," pp. 39-65.

Goffman, *On the Run*, Chapters 5-7, "Conclusion," "Epilogue," and "Appendix: A Methodological Note."

Cobb, Jessica Shannon and Kimberly Kay Hoang. 2015. "Protagonist-Driven Urban Ethnography." *City & Community* 14: 348-351.

Small, Mario L. 2015. "De-Exoticizing Ghetto Poverty: On the Ethics of Representation in Urban Ethnography." *City & Community* 14: 352-358.

Rios, Victor M. 2015. Review of "On the Run: Life in an American City" by Alice Goffman. *American Journal of Sociology* 121: 306-308.

Zussman, Robert. 2016. "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland: *On the Run* and Its Critics." *Society* 53: 436-443.

Tues. Nov. 7: Focus Groups

- Comparison to Other Methods
- Designing and Moderating Focus Groups
- Confidentiality Issues

Morgan, *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, pp.1-74.

Hunt, Darnell M. 1997. "(Re)Affirming Race: 'Reality,' Negotiation, and the 'Trial of the Century.'" *The Sociological Quarterly* 38: 399-422.

Lezaun, Javier. 2007. "A Market of Opinions: The Political Epistemology of Focus Groups." *Sociological Review* 55: 130-151.

***PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT DUE: Hard copy of assignment to be handed in at the beginning of class.**

Tues. Nov. 14: Case Studies

- Comparison to Other Methods
- Benefits and Costs of More Data, Fewer Cases
- Choosing Cases

Berg, Bruce L. 2007. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 6th ed. Boston: Pearson. "Chapter 10: Case Studies," pp.283-302.

Yin, Robert K. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. "Chapter 2: Designing Case Studies," pp.19-56.

* *Recommended: Chapters 1 and 4 as well.*

Case Studies of School Violence Committee. 2003. *Deadly Lessons: Understanding Lethal School Violence*, edited by Mark H. Moore, Carol V. Petrie, Anthony A. Braga, and Brenda L. McLaughlin. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press. **Read the following selections, available online:**

- “Introduction,” pp.9-15
<https://www.nap.edu/read/10370/chapter/3>
- “Part I: Case Studies of Lethal School Violence,” pp.17-24
<https://www.nap.edu/read/10370/chapter/4>
- Harding, David, Jal Mehta and Katherine Newman. Chapter 5: “No Exit: Mental Illness, Marginality, and School Violence in West Paducah, Kentucky,” pp.132-162
<https://www.nap.edu/read/10370/chapter/8>
- Sullivan, Mercer L. and Mindy Thompson Fullilove, “Appendix A: Case Study Methodology and the Study of Rare Events of Extreme Youth Violence: A Multilevel Framework for Discovery,” pp.351-363
<https://www.nap.edu/read/10370/chapter/17>

Tues. Nov. 21: *Grounded Theory*

- Developing theory inductively
- Organizing the research around theory development
- Simultaneous data collection and analysis

Charmaz, Kathy. 2001. “Grounded Theory.” Pp. 335-352 in *Contemporary Field Research: Perspectives and Formulations*, edited by Robert M. Emerson. 2nd ed. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapter 6: “Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Memoing,” pp.142-168.

Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin. 1998. *Basics of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Chapters 1: “Introduction” & Chapter 2: “Description, Conceptual Ordering, and Theorizing,” pp.3-25.

Recommended:

NSF Report. Bashi, Vilna. “Improving Qualitative Research Proposal Evaluation.” Pp. 39-43.

NSF Report. Lamont, Michèle. “Evaluating Qualitative Research: Some Empirical Findings and an Agenda.” Pp. 91-93.

Tues. Nov. 28: *Student Presentations of Research Proposals*

***Final Proposals are due by Friday, December 8 at 3pm. Drop off your paper in the drop box outside the AnSo mail room. You must time stamp your paper before dropping it in the box.**

Leading Class Discussion

Students in SOCI 503 will take turns leading the class discussion of the readings. Depending on class enrollment, students may be assigned to lead discussion in groups of 2. At the first class, a sign-up sheet will be distributed for you to pick your day to lead discussion.

You should plan to lead discussion of the readings for the first half of the class. Please prepare handouts or outlines of the discussion that you think will be useful for the class.

- I encourage you to be creative in your plan for the class, while still covering the readings thoroughly. For example, film clips or activities that practice aspects of the research technique can be effective pedagogical tools. Please confirm any planned activities with Prof. Roth in advance.
- The week before you are presenting, please e-mail me an outline of what you plan to cover as well as any handouts you'll distribute by 3:00pm on the Thursday before your class. When necessary, I will send back comments or suggested revisions.

A few tips:

Guiding a class discussion is like conducting a qualitative interview in many ways, and many of the same skills will help you be an effective class leader. For example:

- Plan out discussion questions in advance. These questions work best when they are broader questions that generate discussion and are phrased in a way to make them easy to answer, rather than specific “testing” questions (i.e., to figure out if someone knows the right answer). Think about whether you would be able to answer those questions if a classmate asked them of you.
- It's helpful to keep your discussion questions simple, ask one at a time, and give your classmates time to think and to answer. Don't be afraid of pauses in the conversation, and don't rush to fill silences by rephrasing or moving on to the next topic.
- Leading the discussion requires a balance between flexibility and guiding the group in a certain direction. Allow them room to explore issues you might not have planned for and pursue their interests. But guide them back to the topic at hand if they go astray, if a topic winds down, or if you're running out of time and have issues you particularly want to cover.

The evaluation of this assignment is based on:

1. The organization and coherence of your plan for discussion
2. Your ability to facilitate discussion with the entire class
3. Your knowledge of the material
4. The clarity and comprehensiveness of your outline/handouts

Interview Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to help you build interviewing skills and give you experience conducting in-depth qualitative interviews.

There are two options for this assignment:

- 1) Conduct two interviews for the Study of International Student Integration at UBC, which Prof. Roth has created for this class. One interview should be with an international student and the other should be with a domestic student. Details of the study and this assignment option will be discussed in the first class. Interview guides, consent forms, and other materials are available on the course website.
- 2) Conduct two interviews for on a topic related to your interests. These may serve as pilot interviews for upcoming research, but you may not use any previously conducted interviews for this assignment. To choose this option, you must discuss it with Prof. Roth and get approval by Tues. Sept. 19. The following materials for your project must be handed in by the dates below:
 - a. Tues. Sept. 26: Consent form
 - b. Tues. Oct. 3: Interview guide

These will be returned to you with comments for revision by the following class.

For the assignment you will conduct and transcribe two interviews, and hand in tapes or digital files, all interview forms, and electronic copies of transcripts.

It is strongly recommended that you transcribe the first interview before conducting the second one. Transcription, while sometimes tedious, is an important way to reflect on and learn from the interviewing process.

The evaluation of this assignment is based on:

1. Your interviewing skills, including: building rapport, setting a good pace, appropriate probing, phrasing of questions, guiding the discussion
2. Disguising identifiable information and assigning coded titles to all files
3. Accuracy of transcription
4. Improvement between the first and second interviews

Participant Observation Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is for you to evaluate and write up the results of your observation of social behaviour in public places.

You should choose a public setting for observation. Examples of appropriate settings might be a shopping mall food court; a park or beach; the Seawall; the UBC bus loop; a sky train station; etc. The setting you choose should be approved by Prof. Roth first.

You should conduct observations in this location over approximately 3 hours. If possible, try to make observations on more than one day or time. You should write fieldnotes as soon as possible after your observations. You can take jotted notes but you should not write the full fieldnotes as you're observing.

Your assignment should include two components:

- 1) An analytical synopsis (~ 3 pages, single spaced) including:
 - a) A statement of what you chose to observe, why, and how
 - b) A discussion of your findings
 - c) The research question you would address if you were to continue this study, and a brief discussion of how you would go about answering it. Would you continue with the same observation strategy? Would you modify, expand, or vary the observation procedure? Would you supplement it with additional methods and, if so, why?
 - d) A discussion about the advantages and limitations of observation as a method, based on your experience.
- 2) An appendix consisting of a 5-page excerpt of your full fieldnotes (single spaced)
 - a) Include in the notes the date and time in which the visit was made and when the fieldnotes were written.
 - b) If you took rough or jotted notes while observing, please attach these as well.

The evaluation of this assignment is based on:

1. Following the assignment instructions
2. The depth of description in your full fieldnotes
3. An appropriate focus in observations given what you chose to observe
4. Thoughtful answers in the analytical synopsis, drawing on class readings and discussions

Final Research Proposal

Your final assignment for this class is to write a research proposal for a qualitative research project. This is intended to let you use this assignment to work out the details of the proposal you will submit for your Master's or Ph.D. thesis.

If your MA or Ph.D. proposal has already been approved by your UBC advisory committee, you must write a proposal for a different project for this class. It can be a follow-up project on the same topic, but it must be substantively different. You will be required to submit both your approved MA/Ph.D. proposal and your research proposal for this class.

The proposal should be of the quality that it could be submitted to either an MA/Ph.D. committee for approval or to a funding agency such as SSHRC. This means that it should be highly polished, with all the details of the research design and data collection worked out in advance.

The proposal should be approximately 20-25 pages long (double spaced; appendices may be single spaced). It should include the following:

1. The objectives of the study, including the research questions, their significance/value, and your hypotheses (if appropriate);
2. Discussion of relevant literature, locating the topic and research question within it, and a justification for why your study is needed and what it will contribute to the literature;
3. Detailed description of research methodology, including, as appropriate, regional/geographical considerations, number of respondents, sampling, access to populations, ethical issues and confidentiality;
4. Bibliography;
5. Appendix 1: Interview guide (if appropriate);
6. Appendix 2: Consent form;
7. Appendix 3: A detailed budget.

Examples of SSHRC grant proposals will be made available. You are also welcome to obtain examples from faculty in your own discipline (if not sociology).

The evaluation of this assignment is based on:

1. The coherence of and justification for the research question or focus and justification
2. The appropriateness of the literature review and how you use it to justify the study
3. Integration of course material in guiding the research design and supporting materials
4. Provision of sufficient details to address questions on project feasibility
5. Grammar, clarity and coherence of writing