COURSE DESCRIPTION

“… Deprive children of stories, and you leave them unscripted, anxious stutterers in their actions as in their words. Hence there is no way of giving us an understanding of any society, including our own, except through the stock of stories which constitute its initial dramatic resources.”

The aim of the course is to introduce students to the key components of qualitative methodology, including interviewing, focus groups, narrative analysis, ethnography, action research, content analysis, and case studies. The course will provide an assortment of hands-on activities, such as conducting interviews and observation, undertaking data analysis, and writing a paper based on that research. We will examine the relationship between theory and methods and discuss numerous, concrete examples from contemporary and classic cases.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students should be able to:
- Draw the connections between theoretical statements and interpretation of empirical data
- Effectively design, collect, and analyze qualitative data
- Critically assess ethical issues related to qualitative methods
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research undertaken by others
- Assess the advantages and limitations of each particular qualitative method
- Present their findings and reflections in a research paper

COURSE READINGS

You can also rent this book online instead of buying it. See CourseSmart at:
http://www.coursesmart.com
- All other course readings will be available on CourseLink.
COURSE FORMAT

The course will combine lecture, class discussion of reading assignments, and hands-on class group activities. It is pertinent that you pay close attention to this course syllabus, announcements posted on CourseLink, and announcements made in class so that you are aware on what is planned for the day. All slides that accompany lecture material will be posted on CourseLink after the class. However, it is strongly recommended that you take notes during the lectures as the slides are just an aide to keep the lecture organized and provide only a short summary of the lecture material.

To complete the course, students must complete the weekly reading assignments by the end of the week. The out-of-class assignments and final paper are based on in-class discussions. Detailed instructions for out-of-class assignments and final paper will be handed out in class.

Caution: A student who for any reason does not attend classes regularly, runs the risk of being unable to complete the work of the semester and is advised to report to the program counsellor for academic counselling upon return to classes.

EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Elements</th>
<th>Percentage Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-Class Assignments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research Problem Assignment (15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interview Assignment 1 (10%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interview Assignment 2 (15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Observation Assignment (15%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Problem Assignment – DUE February 4
Students are asked to identify a research problem, discuss the significance of examining this problem, specify their philosophical and theoretical framework, analyze already existent theoretical and methodological approaches related to the selected research problem, and propose a prospective research plan. The research focus is open, but the relevance of qualitative methodology to solve the problem should be clearly explained. Students are encouraged to consult with their instructor or/and TAs if they need help with defining the focus of their research. The research problem assignment should be approximately 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced, 12 font, typed, plus a reference list including at least 3 sources (articles, books, or book chapters).
Submit: CourseLink
Format: Word document (.doc)

Interview Assignment 1 – DUE February 25
Conduct about 1-1.5 hour long, semistandardized interview to address a research question of your choice. Students are expected to provide a detailed transcription of the interview with detailed field notes and reflections. The instructions on how to conduct an interview, prepare transcription and field notes will be provided in class.
Submit: CourseLink Format: Word document (.doc)
Observation Assignment – DUE March 17
In class we will discuss descriptive and analytical writing. In small teams you will be required to observe a scene over a certain period of time and record your observations and field notes. These observations will be accompanied by an analysis of the interaction, a focus on what you observed, what you think it “meant” to the people involved, and your observations on the process itself.
Submit: CourseLink
Format: Word document (.doc)

Interview Assignment 2 – DUE March 31
Students will provided with a transcript of a narrative interview. They will be asked to code it and display and analyse the elements of the narrative structure. The instructions will be provided in class.
Submit: CourseLink
Format: Word document (.doc)

Final Paper – DUE April 14
The final paper will be based on your methodological reflections on your research problem statement, analysis of the interview, and observation (if relevant). The analytical report on your findings should be structured as an analytical paper. The final essay should be around 4000 words in length, double-spaced, 12 font, typed, plus a title page and reference list.
Submit: CourseLink
Format: Word document (.doc)

The last date to drop one-semester courses, without academic penalty is Friday, March 11, 2016. Refer to the Graduate Calendar for the Schedule of Dates.

Instructor’s Evaluation of Practical Assignments (Interviews and Observation)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria of Assessment</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detailed transcription of interview/observation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of the procedure of collecting data</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearness of researcher’s notes and comments</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation and analysis of data</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instructor’s Evaluation of a Final Research Paper

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria of Assessment</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation and a clear definition of the research problem/research question. Demonstrated knowledge of a social and historical context of the research problem</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated understanding of methodology and selected qualitative methods Relevance of the methods to the research problem</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correspondence of the research problem and conclusions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis: explanation and evaluation of data, comparison and juxtaposition of arguments, developed independent arguments, evaluation of the limitations of research methods</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of the text: clear and distinct introduction, body, and conclusion</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic language, writing style</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic references and citation style</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLASS SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND READINGS

Readings from the required textbook by Berg & Lune (2012) are denoted by *Textbook*.

January 14, 2016

- Introduction to Qualitative Research
- Quantitative versus Qualitative Schools of Thought. Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives of Qualitative Research

Readings:
*Textbook*: Chapter 1 – Introduction

Mahoney, James, and Goertz, Gary. 2006. “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research.” *Political Analysis* 14(3): 227-249.

January 21, 2016

- Quantitative versus Qualitative Schools of Thought. Theoretical and Methodological Perspectives of Qualitative Research
- Qualitative Research Design: Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Sampling Strategies
Readings:


Textbook: Chapter 2 – Designing Qualitative Research


January 28, 2016

- Ethical Concerns in Qualitative Research
- Interviewing: Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Readings:
Textbook: Chapter 3 – Ethical Issues


Textbook: Chapter 4 – A Dramaturgical Look at Interviewing

February 4, 2016

- Interviewing: Methods of Data Collection and Analysis
- Focus Group Interviewing
  Guest talk by Sandra Auld, Research Ethics Director, the University of Guelph

Readings:


Textbook: Chapter 5 – Focus Group Interviewing
February 11, 2016

- **Focus Group Interviewing**
- **Action Research**

Readings:


*Textbook*: Chapter 7 – Action Research


**Winter Break – February 15-19 (No Classes)**

February 25, 2016

**Ethnographic Field Strategies**

Readings:
*Textbook*: Chapter 6 – Ethnographic Field Strategies


March 3, 2016

- **Human Traces as Data: Archival Strategies**
- **Historiography and Oral Traditions**

Readings:
*Textbook*: Chapter 8 – Unobtrusive Measures in Research
*Textbook*: Chapter 9 – Social Historical Research and Oral Traditions

March 10, 2016

- Historiography and Oral Traditions
- Methods of Study of Communication: Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, and Narrative Analysis

Readings:


March 17, 2016

- Methods of Study of Communication: Discourse Analysis, Conversation Analysis, and Narrative Analysis
- Narrative Interview as a Method of Exploring Human Experience

Readings:


March 24, 2016

- Thematic and Structural Narrative Analysis
- Writing Research Papers: Sorting the Noodles from the Soup

Readings:


Textbook: Chapter 12
March 31, 2016
Case Studies
Readings:
Textbook: Chapter 10 – Case Studies


April 7, 2016
Content Analysis
Reflection on Learning
Readings:
Textbook: Chapter 11 – An Introduction to Content Analysis


RECOMMENDED READINGS (Examples of Qualitative Research)

Grounded Theory Methodology

Ethical Issues in Social Research
Aldridge, Jo. 2014. “Working with vulnerable groups in social research: dilemmas by default and design.” *Qualitative Research* 14 (1): 112-130.

Historical Research

Ethnography


**Narrative Analysis**

**Discourse Analysis**

**Conversation Analysis**

**Analysis of Video Data**


**Qualitative Analysis Software**
Students are encouraged to use qualitative analysis software to analyse research data. The University of Guelph has a licence for NVivo: https://www.uoguelph.ca/ccs/software/supported-products/nvivo. A 30-day free trial or 6 month student license ($51 USD) of MAXQDA can be obtained from: http://www.maxqda.com/licenses/students

**E-mail Communication**
As per university regulations, all students are required to check their <mail.uoguelph.ca> e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.
When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons, please advise the course in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. See the graduate calendar for information on regulations and procedures for Academic Consideration:

http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e1415.shtml

Copies of out-of-class assignments

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

Accessibility

The University of Guelph is committed to creating a barrier-free environment. Providing services for students is a shared responsibility among students, faculty and administrators. This relationship is based on respect of individual rights, the dignity of the individual and the University community’s shared commitment to an open and supportive learning environment. Students requiring service or accommodation, whether due to an identified, ongoing disability or a short-term disability should contact Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible.

For more information, contact SAS at 519-824-4120 ext. 56208 or email sas@uoguelph.ca or see the website: https://www.uoguelph.ca/csd/

Academic Misconduct

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community – faculty, staff, and students – to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that discourages misconduct. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Academic Misconduct Policy is detailed in the Graduate Calendar:

http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e1687.shtml

Plagiarism is a combination of stealing and lying about it afterwards. It means using others’ work and misrepresenting that work as your own without giving the author credit: this includes:

- Ideas
- Words
- Data
- Computer programming
- Products of any other creative endeavour

An extreme example would be copying or purchasing an entire paper and submitting it as your own. Less extreme would be submitting a paper you have written for credit in another course without prior permission from your instructor. Another, more common example, would be copying another author's phrases, sentences, ideas, or arguments without citing the source.

Please also see Guidelines for Penalties for Academic Misconduct:
https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/sec_d0e2824.shtml

To check the originality of written assignments Turnitin will be used. Turnitin is a teaching and learning tool that compares writing submissions within the University and across a wide range of sources. By looking at the reports produced by the software, student and instructors can assess if writing is original work and if any sourced material is properly paraphrased or formatted and cited correctly.

**Non-academic Misconduct**
Students have a responsibility to act in a fair and reasonable manner in their interactions with their peers, instructor and in their use of campus property. The intent of this policy is to encourage appropriate student conduct and to identify and regulate student non-academic misconduct that jeopardizes the essential values of any academic community: mutual respect, dignity and civility. Particularly, the use of non-learning equipment in the classroom, i.e., cell phones, texting equipment, is not allowed.

No food, coming late, or leaving early are expected to occur in this class. For information on academic misconduct please see:
https://www.uoguelph.ca/secretariat/office-services-student-judicial-services-non-academic-appeals/policy-non-academic-misconduct

**Recording of Materials**
Presentations which are made in relation to course work — including lectures — cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a classmate or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

**Resources**
The Graduate Calendar is the source of information about the University of Guelph’s procedures, policies and regulations that apply to graduate programs:
http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/