Qualitative Research Methods
SOCIOL 979 / URB STD 979
Thursday's 3-5:40pm
Synchronously via Canvas Collaborate Ultra

Instructor: Prof. Esther Chan
(she/her/hers)
Email: chane@uwm.edu
Office Hours: Monday's 2:30 to 4:30pm or by appointment
(Sign up on Canvas via "Syllabus" tab)

Course Description

Qualitative methodologies are one of the key methodologies of the social sciences. In this course, you will become familiar with a variety of qualitative methods, including and not limited to methodologies such as ethnography, participant observation, and in-depth interviewing, as well as non-invasive qualitative methods. We will evaluate key empirical works that have utilized these methodologies and consider the logic and limit of each method. This course will also include hands-on assignments to begin building a sociological practice of qualitative methods. We will also consider the ethics of qualitative methods as well as practical approaches to managing qualitative data.

Please note, this course operates under the assumption that you have had some exposure to social science research methods. In other words, this is not an introductory research methodology course. With that said, it is still possible for you to take this course even without having taken a research methodology course and we will still go over some of the basics of research methodology in the beginning of the course.

To get the most out of this class, you ought to consider using the assignments to facilitate or "jump start" your own research. You will work with one primary research topic for all the assignments. You will write a proposal for an interview study, craft an interview guide, conduct an interview, transcribe it, and create a coding key.

I have checked with UWM's IRB and we do not need to go through the IRB process for this class. If your research blossoms into a full-fledged project, you will need to go through UWM's IRB process. You can find more information here: https://uwm.edu/irb/

The best way to reach me is by e-mail. I will do my best to respond to your e-mail within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. If I do not respond within that time, please e-mail me again. Sometimes things get lost in the inbox.

Please note that **office hours** are by sign-up only or appointment only. In other words, there are no walk-in office hours. **Please sign up by navigating to "Syllabus" page on the Canvas website**. The office hours should show up there. If not, please send me an email.

Required Texts

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw (1995). *Writing Ethnographic*

Fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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

Other required readings will be posted on Canvas.

Technology

To get the most of this course, you must have access to some kind of computer (laptop or desktop) with internet that is able to fully utilize the applications in Canvas. Please take this survey about your technological access, so I can have a better sense of your accessibility: https://milwaukee.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0IBfUM5zxqvVgxf

We will be using **Canvas's Collaborate Ultra** application to meet. Please note that we will use the general **"Qualitative Research Methods Course Room" for the class and for office hours**. In general, please **mute** yourself when you are not speaking and please try to use your **camera** as much as possible, so we are able to see one another. Technology problems do happen, however, so we will also be patient with one another when these things occur! Please also feel free to use the **chat** function during the course. I will save a copy of the chat as a document and upload it to our Canvas page.

Because staring at a screen can be exhausting, we will be taking ten-minute breaks during the course of each class.

Accessibility
The University of Wisconsin Milwaukee supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform me of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. I will work either directly with you or in coordination with the Accessibility Resource Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Please note that this course will also be recorded as part of an accessibility request. I retain all intellectual rights to these recordings and they will not be distributed outside its requested use. Please also note that this will not affect your assessment for this class and I can request that the recording be paused if sensitive topics arise. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know.

I will also save the course chat on a word document and upload it to Canvas.

Course Expectations

Students should come to class having completed the readings for the week and be prepared to engage in discussion.

Reading Responses & Student Led Discussion

1. Students are required to write **weekly memos** (max: 300 words). These memos are informal spaces for you to reflect on the readings and raise questions. Because this is a methodology course, your memos should include reflections or questions related to the methods, in addition to anything else you find interesting. You may also relate what you are reading to your individual research topics and process. In addition, because we will also be reading empirical pieces, your memos may also include reflections on the methods, findings, etc of these pieces. Your memos must include **at least one question for discussion**. Your memos are due the day before class (Wednesday's 3pm) to make sure discussion leaders have ample time to go through the memos and collate the questions. **You do not need to write memos for one week of your choosing**. **You will also not write a memo for Week 9.** Memos are worth **15%** of your grade. Please turn in your memos on the Canvas "Discussions" page.

2. Students are required to **lead discussion twice and in pairs**. Discussion leaders will go through the memos and collate the questions, noting where there might be themes across the memos and questions. Discussion leaders should also feel free to ask their peers to expand on things they've written in their memos as well as. There is also quite a bit of flexibility to how you would like to lead discussion. For example, you may create handouts (word documents/pdf), have brainstorming sessions about key terms or topics from the readings, bring in an outside source (e.g. a video, social media post, image, interview segment) for us to analyze through the methodology of the week, etc. Discussion leaders should ultimately engage with their classmates' responses to the readings, but should also feel the freedom and flexibility to engage the class and the material in their own pedagogical styles. Leading discussion is worth **10%** of your grade.

Qualitative Methods in Practice

One goal of this course is to develop skills and experience in conducting qualitative methods. Therefore, you will be expected to complete a number of assignments. Due to the pandemic, our practice of qualitative methods will be limited. As a result, you will write a mini research proposal for an interview study and conduct one interview over the phone, zoom, facetime, skype, or some other medium. Details about these different assignments are briefly described below.

1. Research Topic and Research Questions (5%) – due Sept 17 by midnight

In around one to two paragraphs, please detail your research topic and potential research questions. You should include why sociologists or experts in your discipline should be invested in your study. If you are struggling with this, take a look at the research proposals we will read the second week of class for examples. I will review these and let you know whether I think your topic is feasible for this class.

2. Introduction and Literature Review (10%) – due Oct 8 by midnight

This assignment is to facilitate the first part of your mini research proposal assignment. Here you will write an introduction and literature review for your research proposal. The introduction will explain the importance of your project and introduce us to your research question(s). Normally, the introduction will also provide a roadmap of your methods, but you do not need to include that for now.

Your mini literature review should provide a brief overview of the literature relevant to your research topic and question. Strong literature reviews synthesize the literature while also setting up why your own work is important. If you are struggling with this, please look at the example proposals we will read for this course. It is also helpful to look at published papers and seeing how they set up their literature reviews.

Overall, your introduction and mini literature review should be around 5-6 pages double spaced.

3. Interview Mini Proposal and Guide (20%)

This assignment is made up of several parts. The first part will be a copy of your Introduction and Literature Review assignment with any changes made as a result of my feedback. Your introduction should now also include a brief roadmap of your proposed methodology.

The second part will be your proposed methodology. You should address why you are using interviews, what are the characteristics of your population of interest, how you will sample the population, and gain access to recruit individuals for interviews. You should also consider any ethical dilemmas that may arise. You should also briefly reflect on your social identities and how this might affect the data collection process and your potential respondents.

With the introduction, literature, and proposed methodology, this should be around 6-9 pages double-spaced.

At the end of the proposal, you will include your proposed interview guide. The interview guide should be single-spaced and can be of any length.

Your peers will be reading your mini proposal and interview guide and provide helpful feedback on your guide.

4. Interview, Context Notes, and Transcription (30%) due Dec 3 by midnight

Using your interview guide, you will conduct a recorded interview. You will complete context notes for the interview which will provide detailed information on how you recruited your respondent and observations about your respondent and the interview. This

is also a space for you to reflect on yourself as an interviewer and your interview guide. I will provide an example of context notes and a template, but you also ought to feel free to create your own context notes template to facilitate your study.

You will transcribe your interview and include it after your context notes. This should be completely singled-spaced with breaks between speakers. We will go over various transcription software and services in class.

5. Coding Key (10%) due Dec 17 by midnight

You will create a coding key for your interview. This will detail the "codes" you are using and a brief description of what each code captures. We will also go over various coding software in class, but you will not be required to use any software for this assignment.

As the UW System assumes "that study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours" (UWS ACPS 4), a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. You may find it necessary to spend additional time on a course; the numbers below only indicate that the course will not require any less of your time.

  • 37.5 hours in the classroom

  • 75 hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings

  • 31.5 hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

<u>**Course Schedule at a Glance**</u>

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment Due Dates (not including weekly memos)	Discussion Leaders
1	3-Sep	Introduction		N/A
2	10-Sep	Qualitative Research Design		
3	17-Sep	Ethics	due: research topic & potential questions	
4	24-Sep	Participant Observation & Ethnography		
5	1-Oct	Participant Observation & Ethnography		
6	8-Oct	Visual Sociology	due: introduction & mini literature review	
7	15-Oct	Interviews		
8	22-Oct	Interviews		

9	29-Oct	Workshop Interview Guides	due: interview proposal & guide (due earlier - tbd)	N/A
10	5-Nov	Historical and Comparative		
11	12-Nov	Content analysis (talking about social media or next week)		
12	19-Nov	Text Analysis and Big Data		
13		Thanksgiving break		
14	3-Dec	Coding + interview reflection in class	due: interview, context notes, & transcription	
15	10-Dec	Coding & wrap up		
FINALS	17-Dec		due: coding key	N/A

Weekly Schedule

Week 1, September 3: Introductions
- Introductions
- Review syllabus
- Research interests & getting the most out of this course
- How to think about the readings together

Week 2, September 10: Designing Qualitative Research Studies
- Luker, Kristin. 2008. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 51-75. (ch 4: What is this a Case of, Anyway?)
- Lareau, Annette. 2012. "Using the Terms Hypothesis and Variable for Qualitative Work: A Critical Reflection." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 74(4): 671-677.
    - o This is a response piece to Ralph LaRossa (you do not need to read that piece to understand this one)
- Cordin, Juliet and Anselm Strauss. 1990. "Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria." Qualitative Sociology 13(1):3-19.
- Example proposals – Rene Almeling & Elaine Howard Ecklund. Pay attention to how these individuals crafted their research question and proposed methods.

Optional

- Luker, Kristin. 2008. Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences. Cambridge: Harvard University Press Ch 1-6

Week 3, September 17: Ethics

Due: Research Topic and Questions

- Heimer, Carol A. and JuLeigh Petty. "Bureaucratic Ethics: IRBs and the Legal Regulation of Human Subjects Research," Annual Review of Law and Social Science 6: 601-26.

- Smith, L. T. 1999. **"**Chapter 4: Research Adventures on Indigenous Land" in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. New York, NY: Zed Books
- Allen, Charlotte. 1997. "Spies Like Us: When Sociologists Deceive their Subjects." *Lingua Franca* 7(8): 31-39.
- Williams et al. 2017. "Towards an Ethical Framework for Publishing Twitter Data in Social Research: Taking into Account Users' Views, Online Context and Algorithmic Estimation." Sociology 51(6): 1149-1168

Week 4, September 24: Participant Observation & Ethnography
- Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Ch1 – 2.
- Geertz, Clifford. 2005 [1972]. Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight. Daedalus.
- Duneier, Mitchell. 2011. "How not to lie with ethnography." Sociological Methodology 41(1): 1-11.
- Lichterman, Paul. 2008. "Religion and the Construction of Civic Identity." American Sociological Review. 73(1): 83-104.

Optional:
- Platt, Jennifer. 1983. "The Development of the 'Participant Observation' Method in Sociology: Origin Myth and History." Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences 19:379-393.
- Geertz, Clifford. 2001. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture."
- Cobb, Jessica S and Kimberly Kay Hoang. 2015. "Protagonist-Driven Urban Ethnography." City and Community. 14(4):348-51

Week 5, October 1: Participant Observation & Ethnography
- Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Ch 3-4
- Fine, Gary Alan. 1993. "Ten Lies of Ethnography." Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 22(3): 267-294.
- Mears, Ashley. 2015. "Working for Free in the VIP: Relational Work and the Production of Consent." American Sociological Review 80(6): 1099-1122.
- Resuming Research in Pandemic Times - https://items.ssrc.org/covid-19-and-the-social-sciences/social-research-and-insecurity/resuming-field-research-in-pandemic-times/
- EDC - go over PO data management

Optional

- "Ethnography in a Time of Pandemic." (listen to the workshop ~50mins) https://www.socsci.uci.edu/newsevents/events/2020/2020-4-22-ethnography.php
- "Ethnography in Time of COVID-19." https://www.asanet.org/news-events/footnotes/may-jun-2020/professional-challenges-facing-sociologists/ethnography-time-covid-19
- "Doing Fieldwork in a Pandemic" resource pdf. (https://nwssdtpacuk.files.wordpress.com/2020/04/doing-fieldwork-in-a-pandemic2-google-docs.pdf)

Week 6, October 8: Visual Sociology and Analyzing Images

Due: Introduction and Literature Review

- Pauwels, Luc. Ch 3: "Researching Found or Pre-Existing Visual Materials"
- Pauwels, Luc. Ch 4: "A Visual Multimodal models for Analyzing Online Environments"
- Pauwels, Luc. Ch 12: "Ethics of Visual Research in the Offline and Online World."
- Choose any ONE example of the case studies in Part IV: Applications and Case Studies

Week 7, October 15: Interviews
- Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers.* Ch 1-3
- Almeling, Rene. Sex Cells. Ch 2 – Selling Genes, Selling Gender (EDC provide)
- Rene's grant proposal + interview guide (return to this from week 2)
- EDC – go over interview assignment and data management for interviews – sample excel, interview excel.

Optional:
- Young, Alford A. 2004. "Experiences in Ethnographic Interviewing about Race: The Inside and Outside of it." Pp. 187-202 in Researching Race and Racism, edited by Martin Bulmer and John Solomos. London: Routledge.
- Lamont, Michèle, and Ann Swidler. 2014. "Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing". Qualitative Sociology 37 (2):153-171.
- Pugh, Allison J. 2013. "What Good Are Interviews for Thinking About Culture? Demystifying Interpretive Analysis." American Journal of Cultural Sociology 1: 1: 42–68.

Week 8, October 22: Interviews

- Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers.* Ch 4-5
- Deakin, Hannah and Kelly Wakefield. 2014. "Skype interviewing: reflections of two PhD researchers." Qualitative Research 14(5):603-616.
- Ecklund, Elaine Howard and Christopher Scheitle. 2018. Religion V. Science. Ch 7 – Religious People are Against Science and Technology. & Appendices 1 & 2
- Elaine's proposal – return to this research proposal from week 2.
- EDC - go over writing context notes after an interview

Optional:
- Hermanowicz, Joseph C. "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed." *Qualitative Sociology* 25(4): 479-499.
- Rubin, Herbert and Irene Rubin. 2005. "Designing Main Questions and Probes." Pp. 152-72 in *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing* Data (second edition). California: Sage.

Week 9, October 29: Interviews

Due: Proposal and Interview Guides

- Review your peers' interview proposals and guides and be prepared to provide feedback on the interview guide.

Week 10, November 5: Comparative Historical Sociology

- Mayrl, Damon and Nicholas Hoover Wilson. 2020. "What Do Historical Sociologists Do All Day? Analytic Architectures in Historical Sociology." American Journal of Sociology 125(5): 1345-1394.
- Bhambra, Gurminder. 2016. "Comparative Historical Sociology and the State: Problems of Method." Cultural Sociology 10(3): 335-351.
- Plys, Kristin. 2017. Political deliberation and democratic reversal in India: Indian coffee house during the emergency (1975–77) and the third world "totalitarian moment." *Theory and Society* 46:117–142 (read the Appendix as well)
- Go, Julian. 2011. Patterns of Empire: The British and American Empires, 1688 to the Present. Cambridge University Press. (Introduction Ch & Appendix.)
- ==EDC – Brief discussion of transcription softwares & tips for transcribing==

Week 11, November 12: Content Analysis ("Non-Invasive")

- Neuendorf, Kimberley A. 2017. The Content Analysis Guidebook. 2nd ed. Chapter 1 – Defining Content Analysis.
- Altheide, David. 1987. "Ethnographic Content Analysis." Qualitative Sociology 10(1):65-77.
- Panofsky, Aaron and Catherine Bliss. 2017. "Ambiguity and Scientific Authority: Population Classification in Genomic Science." American Sociological Review 82(1):59-87.
- Brown, Hana. 2013. "Race, Legality, and the Social Policy Consequences of Anti-Immigration Mobilization." American Sociological Review 78(2):290-314

Week 12, November 19: Text Analysis and Big Data

- DiMaggio, Paul. 2015. "Adapting computational text analysis to social science (and vice versa)." *Big Data and Society* 2(2).
- Bail, Christopher. 2014. "The cultural environment: measuring culture with big data." Theory and Society 43:465-482.
- Bail, Christopher, Taylor W. Brown, and Marcus Mann. 2017. "Channeling Hearts and Minds: Advocacy Organizations, Cognitive-Emotional Currents, and Public Conversation." American Sociological Review 82(6): 1188-1213.
- Kozlowski, Austin, Matt Taddy, and James A. Evans. 2019. "The Geometry of Culture: Analyzing the Meanings of Class through Word Embeddings." American Sociological Review 84(5): 905-949.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 13, December 3: Coding

Due: Interview, Context Notes, & Transcription

- Saldana, Johnny M. 2015. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers.* Ch 1
- Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Ch 5
- Nicole M. Deterding. "Flexible Coding: A 21st Century Approach to Coding Data"
  https://vimeo.com/385026200
  or
  Nicole M. Deterding and Mary C. Waters. 2018. "Flexible Coding of In-Depth Interviews; A 21st Century Approach." Sociological Methods and Research
- Guetzkow, Joshua, Michèle Lamont and Grégoire Mallard. 2004. "What is Originality in the Social Sciences and the Humanities?" *American Sociological Review* 69:190-212. [Read through Appendix! – example of coding key]

Week 14, December 10: Coding & Writing

- Saldana, Johnny M. 2015. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers.* Ch 2
- Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Ch 6-7
- Biernacki, Richard. 2012. Reinventing Evidence in Social Inquiry: Decoding Facts and Variables Ch 1 & 5.

- <mark>EDC - Brief discussion of coding softwares</mark>
- Wrap up

Optional

- Saldana, Johnny M. 2015. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers.* Thousands Oaks: Sage Publ.
- Biernacki, Richard. 2012. Reinventing Evidence in Social Inquiry: Decoding Facts and Variables

FINALS WEEK: December 17 – Due: Coding Key

UNIVERSITY AND SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT POLICIES

The Secretary of the University maintains a web page that contains university policies that affect the instructor and the students in this course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. The link to that page is: https://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf

Students with Disabilities. In the pursuit of equal access and in compliance with state and federal laws, the University is required to provide accommodations to students with documented disabilities. To learn more, please visit: http://uwm.edu/arc/

Religious Observances. Policies regarding accommodations for absences due to religious observance are found at the following: http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm

Students called to active Military Duty. Students called to active military duty. Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.
Students: http://uwm.edu/active-duty-military/
Employees: https://www.wisconsin.edu/ohrwd/download/policies/ops/bn9.pdf

Incompletes. A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-13.%20Incomplete%20Grades.pdf

Discriminatory Conduct. Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience and well-being of students, faculty and staff. Policies regarding discriminatory conduct can be found at: https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf

Title IX/Sexual Violence. Title IX is a federal law that prohibits sex discrimination in education program or activities, and UWM policy prohibits such conduct (see Discriminatory Conduct, above). This includes sexual violence, which may include sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, and/or stalking in all educational programs and education-related areas. UWM strongly encourages its students to report any instance of sex discrimination to UWM's Title IX Coordinator (titleix@uwm.edu). Whether or not a student wishes to report an incident of sexual violence, the Title IX Coordinator can connect students to resources at UWM and/or in the community including, but not limited to, victim advocacy, medical and counseling services, and/or law enforcement. For more information, please visit: https://uwm.edu/sexual-assault/

Academic misconduct. Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. http://uwm.edu/academicaffairs/facultystaff/policies/academic-misconduct/

Complaint procedures. Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%205-1.%20Discriminatory%20Conduct%20Policy.pdf

Grade appeal procedures. A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School. https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-10.%20Grade%20Appeals%20by%20Students.pdf

LGBT+ resources. Faculty and staff can find resources to support inclusivity of students who identify as LGBT+ in the learning environment. https://uwm.edu/lgbtrc/

Smoke and Tobacco-Free campus. UWM prohibits smoking and the use of tobacco on all campus property. https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%2010-8.%20Smoke%20and%20Tobacco-Free%20Campus%20Policy.pdf

Final Examinations. Information about the final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, and make-up examinations. https://apps.uwm.edu/secu-policies/storage/other/SAAP%201-9.%20Final%20Examinations.pdf

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