

SOCI 5322: SEMINAR IN QUALITATIVE METHODS

Place: Old Main conference room 110
Time: Mon, 6.00 to 8.50 p.m.

Instructor: **Pratyusha Basu**
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Office Hours: Mon and Tue, 2.00 to 4.00 p.m., or by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Qualitative frameworks document and represent human experiences in order to provide insights into the construction of social and cultural practices. In the process, they raise significant questions about the politics of conducting research and the links between research and social justice. This course will introduce students to a range of qualitative methods, methodologies, and research designs, and examine both promises and problems of qualitative research designs. Alongside, it will critically consider how qualitative approaches provide useful insights into social identities and processes.

Course Objectives:

This course will enable students to:

- understand various elements of a qualitative research project, including formulation of research questions, and methods of data collection and analysis,
- situate qualitative methods in broader disciplinary and methodological practices,
- examine how concerns about research quality and ethics can be addressed in qualitative research,
- evaluate how qualitative research contributes to the building of social theory, and
- improve reading and writing skills through class participation and assignments.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Class Discussion Questions: 20%

In order to facilitate class discussion and enable a deeper engagement with the readings, students will prepare a set of questions pertaining to each of the readings for that week. These questions could relate to concepts/themes in the readings that need further clarification, or seek critical perspectives on the readings. **The questions will be due by 5 p.m. on the day of the class, and it is expected that there will be at least one question associated with each reading.** Please note that class discussion questions will count for class grade only when the student is present in class and participates in class discussion.

Weekly Assignments: 40%

At the conclusion of each class, students will be provided with an assignment pertaining to the readings for that week. This assignment has to be completed in the form of a 2-page essay (at least 500 words), and will be due at the beginning of the next class. Please note that weekly assignments will count for class grade only when the student is present in class and participates in the class discussion.

Final Paper: 40%

The final paper can be written on any topic related to qualitative methods; for instance, linked with the student's own research, or building on themes from class readings. The final paper has to be at least 10 pages in length (around 2,500 words) and has to be written as a formal paper with an introduction, main sections, conclusion, and references. The topic and references for the final paper have to be discussed with Dr. Basu. Please note that the final paper has to be submitted to obtain a passing grade for the class.

Grading scale (based on weighted total percentage points):

A = 90% plus

B = 80-89.9%

C = 70-79.9%

D = 60-69.9%

F = 59.9% and below 3

COURSE READINGS

Textbook: Seale, Clive. ed. 2011, 3rd edition. **Researching Society and Culture.** Sage.

Additional readings will be available via Blackboard.

Please contact Dr. Basu in case of any difficulties in obtaining access to textbooks or selected chapters.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS**22 Aug**

No class (Syllabus is available on Blackboard)

29 Aug

Seale (textbook): Ch 2: Introduction to the philosophy of science

Seale (textbook): Ch 3: Research and theory

Bryman: Ch 3: Nature of qualitative research

Bryman: Ch 4: Problems with qualitative research

Discussion: qualitative epistemology versus qualitative method

5 Sep

No class (Labor Day)

12 Sep

Seale (textbook): Ch 8: Research design

Seale (textbook): Ch 27: Combining qualitative and quantitative methods

Bryman: Ch 6: Combining quantitative and qualitative research

Robson: Ch 6: Flexible designs

Discussion: research question: theory or method?

19 Sep

Seale (textbook): Ch 6: Doing a literature review

Seale (textbook): Ch 7: Research questions and proposals

Seale (textbook): Ch 9: Sampling

Seale (textbook): Ch 10: Doing a dissertation

Discussion: finding references through library research

26 Sep

Denzin and Lincoln: Ch 8: Feminisms and qualitative research

Denzin and Lincoln: Ch 9: Racialized discourses and ethnic epistemologies

Denzin and Lincoln: Ch 12: Sexualities, queer theory, and qualitative research

Arias, P. 2013. International migration and familial change in communities of origin: Transformation and resistance. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 39, 429-450.

Discussion: class versus other identities

Oct 3

Seale (textbook): Ch 12: Qualitative interviewing

Bernard: Ch 8: Interviewing: unstructured and semi-structured

Seale (textbook): Ch 13: Focus groups

Roulston, K. 2010. Considering quality in qualitative interviewing. *Qualitative Research*, 10(2): 199–228.

Discussion: language and translation

Oct 10

Bernard: Ch 7: Non-probability sampling

Guest, G.; Bunce, A. and Johnson, L. 2006. How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1): 59–82.

Small, M. 2009. 'How many cases do I need?' On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research. *Ethnography*, 10(1): 5-38.

Burawoy, M. 1998. The extended case method. *Sociological Theory*, 16(1): 4-33.

Discussion: time and fieldwork

Oct 17

Seale (textbook): Ch 14: Doing ethnography

Bernard: Ch 12: Participant observation

Bernard: Ch 13: Field notes and database management

Massey, D. 1991. A global sense of place. *Marxism Today*, 38: 24-29.
Discussion: field persona

Oct 24

Seale (textbook): Ch 21: Coding and analyzing qualitative data
Seale (textbook): Ch 26: Content and comparative keyword analysis
Seale (textbook): Ch 22: Generating grounded theory
Seale (textbook): Ch 25: Narrative and interpretive phenomenological analysis
Discussion: qualitative analysis software: NVivo, Atlas.ti

Oct 31

Seale (textbook): Ch 23: Discourse analysis
Seale (textbook): Ch 24: Analyzing conversation
Seale (textbook): Ch 15: Historical research
Seale (textbook): Ch 16: Visual analysis
Discussion: talk and texts

Nov 7

Seale (textbook): Ch 11: Structured methods
Seale (textbook): Ch 17: Secondary analysis
Bryman: Ch 2: Nature of quantitative research
Bryman: Ch 7: Comparing quantitative and qualitative research
Discussion: mixed methods

Nov 14

Seale (textbook): Ch 5: Ethics and social research
Robson: Ch 9: Ethical and political considerations
Seale (textbook): Ch 30: Validity, reliability and the quality of research
Bryman: Ch 5: Debate about quantitative and qualitative research
Discussion: IRB

Nov 21

Seale (textbook): Ch 28: Writing a research report
Seale (textbook): Ch 29: Giving oral presentations
Seale (textbook): Ch 31: When things go wrong
Seale (textbook): Ch 4: Research and policy
Discussion: writing as skill

Nov 28

TBD

Dec 5

Final paper due

Supplementary Course Information:

Class Environment

It is important to recognize that the classroom is an environment that requires respect for all participants. Therefore, students are expected to conduct themselves in a considerate manner. All participants in the class must respect the classroom environment by being on time, turning off cellphones, earphones, and headphones, avoiding extraneous talking and chatting, refraining from reading non-class material, and by not eating during class time.

Help with Writing

The University Writing Center (UWC) (Library Building, 2nd [ground] floor, Room 227 [adjacent to the Collaborative Learning Center], Tel. 747-5112, Email uwc@utep.edu) provides walk-in assistance with writing to all UTEP students at no cost (including walk-in assistance and on-line assistance with writing and citations). Check the website – < <http://uwc.utep.edu/> – for a Fall 2015 schedule and more information.

Special Facilities

Individuals who have any disability, either permanent or temporary, which might affect their ability to perform in this class, must inform the instructor at the start of the semester. Adaptations of methods, materials, or testing may be made as required for equitable participation.

Incomplete Grades

Incomplete grades (I) will not be given in the course except under exceptional circumstances, based on written documentation, and at the discretion of the instructor.

Religious Preference Absence

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious activity must provide written notice of the dates to the instructor by the second week of the semester.

Selling Class Notes and Audio / Video Recordings

It is not permitted to make or sell notes and audio /video recordings from this class. If you need audio and video recordings of the class for personal study, please inform the instructor and obtain permission before doing so.

Academic Dishonesty

Cheating is unethical and not acceptable. Plagiarism is using information or original wording in a paper without giving credit to the source of that information: it is also not acceptable. Do not submit work under your name that you did not do yourself. If you are found to be cheating or plagiarizing, you will be subject to disciplinary action, per UTEP catalog policy. Refer to <<http://sa.utep.edu/osccr/academic-integrity/>> for further information.