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Office: Social Science 221
Hours: 9am-10am MW; 12:30-1:45pm MW

PREREQUISITES

Tier One courses in the Sociology Major (SOC 1/1S, SOC 3, SOC 125 & SOC 130W/WS) must be completed for Sociology Majors and Minors prior to enrolling in this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to familiarize students with the major techniques of qualitative data collection and analysis, and provides an overview of qualitative research methods in sociology, including interviews, participant observation, and focus groups. In this course, we examine qualitative theory, ethical issues in doing research, drafting proposals, choosing a research site, negotiating informant relationships, collecting and analyzing data, and writing reports.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

After completing this course, students will:

1. identify steps involved in planning and designing qualitative research;
2. apply appropriate qualitative research techniques, including observation, interviewing, and document analysis informed by sociological theory;
3. analyze qualitative data using appropriate sociological theory;
4. conduct qualitative research projects for one or more relevant social institutions;
5. discuss ethical implications of qualitative research and of doing qualitative research;
6. identify differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches (assumptions of the world, researcher's role, the relationships between theory and method); and
7. recognize the different types of information accessible through qualitative methods.

METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

This course meets twice a week, with an emphasis on group exercises, application of readings, mock interviews, and presentation of field notes for debriefings. Each week, after an overview of ethics in research and research design, we will concentrate on a particular form of qualitative research methodology. Class time will be devoted to lecture as well as media presentations to illustrate concepts relevant to particular forms of qualitative data collection and analysis. Outside of class time, students are expected to conduct fieldwork, collecting data via interviews and/or forms of observation.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

This course has two required texts, listed below, and they are available in the Kennel Bookstore.

Maxwell, Joseph. 2013. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*.

Creswell, John. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*.

Blackboard (BB) – This class is web-enhanced, which means that all students should have access to a Blackboard account. Other additional required and/or supplemental reading materials, handouts, etc., will be posted on Blackboard and are listed in the Topic and Reading Schedule. This course assumes a working knowledge of Blackboard, the Internet, and computers. Please access the resources on the Blackboard site, if you lack these skills, prior to asking for assistance. “Learn by doing” should be your mantra as a college student.

RECOMMENDED TEXTS

Babbie, Earl. 2002. *The Basics of Social Research, Second Edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Lofland, John and Lyn Lofland. 2005. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis, Fourth Edition*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Mason, Jennifer and Angela Dale. 2011. *Understanding Social Research: Thinking Creatively About Method*. Los Angeles: Sage.

McLeod, Julie and Rachel Thomson. 2009. *Researching Social Change*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Ragin, Charles and Lisa Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research, Second Edition*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Strauss, A. and J. Corbin. 2008. *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory, Third Edition*. Los Angeles: Sage.

ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS

There are five required components for this course, of which four will be assessed through grading. The course is designed so that students are provided with the opportunities to develop a skill set using various qualitative methods for data collection and analysis.

1. Participation & Attendance: Students must attend class regularly, be prepared for class participation and discussion (by reading assignments ahead of time), come to class on time and remain the entire class session.
2. Midterm Exam.
3. Research paper based on the study you have chosen to do. If you wish to do an ethnography, you will have to demonstrate to me that you can devote the time necessary to employ this methodology.
4. Presentation of field notes. During the semester, we will have debriefings during class time, in which students will present their memos and field notes from their research for the study you have chosen. Every student will have opportunity to present their field notes – those who have none to present will receive zero points for this component of assessment.
5. Final Exam. For your final exam, in addition to objective criteria (multiple choice and matching questions) you will be provided a research topic for which you will have to choose a qualitative methodology and write up a research design, explaining how you would go about addressing the research questions, collecting data and what types of issues you may encounter doing the research (i.e., ethical issues). You will need an 882-E scantron form for this exam and a blue book.

Writing assignment guidelines for typed essays:

1. Always identify by your first and last name, course number and date at the upper right hand corner of the front page for all typed assignments.
2. Use double spacing (Do NOT press “Return” twice between paragraphs - that’s quadruple spacing).
3. Make sure you’ve included a reference list.
4. Do NOT include a cover sheet or any form of binder for type-written papers.
5. Proofread your document thoroughly. Make sure to read through your document prior to submitting it. Ask yourself for each sentence, “Does this sentence make sense?”
6. For quotations: don’t alter the material in direct citations unless you indicate that you have done so with ellipses and brackets. Use appropriate punctuation in the quotation. If you want to augment a quotation use ellipses . . . to cut material out of it and use brackets [] to insert material.
7. If you paraphrase you must include an in-text citation, even if you do not directly quote. Students can be accused of plagiarism if they do not cite the original author and/or if they try to pass other peoples’ ideas off as their own. Try to get used to using citations and references in your writing as this is a crucial skill for success in college writing.

GRADING

Grades will be based on the typical academic criteria of demonstrating understanding of the material through application and communication. Grades will be based on the standard university scale:

100 - 90% = A	Field note presentation = 50
89-80 = B	Mid-term exam = 100
79-70 = C	Research Paper = 100
69-60 = D	Final Exam = <u>100</u>
>60 = F	350

NOTE: All course work must be turned in to attain a passing grade. Class attendance will not be factored into grading. However, you will find it exceedingly difficult to pass the course and understand the material if you don’t come to class. No extra credit assignments will be given. The grade you receive is the grade you’ve earned. Contestation of a grade on either an individual assignment or for the course must be presented to your instructor in writing, presented in person during office hours, with an argument explaining why you think the grade should be changed. I will not respond to inquiries or complaints regarding grades via email or telephone. Faculty members hold office hours for such purposes – universities are not businesses, and faculty members are not customer service representatives.

NOTE: a re-examination of course work may result in further deduction of points, as a rigorous analysis may find flaws or mistakes in the course work that might have been missed in the initial grading. Do not assume that contesting a grade will result in gaining additional points or maintaining the existing grade.

PAPER ASSIGNMENT EVALUATIONS

The research paper assignment is worth 100 points. The following are the assessments explaining the point breakdown for the assignment:

Excellent paper (A quality)

- You addressed the questions posed on the assignment.
- You followed the directions of the assignment.
- Your analysis is outstanding. You make it clear how sociological concepts help you understand the issue, and you do so in a particularly insightful way.
- You included a particularly insightful discussion of how the sociological perspective provides insight into this issue.
- Excellent writing that really enhances your paper.
- Your paper is free from spelling and/or grammatical errors.

Good paper (B quality)

- You addressed the questions posed on the assignment.
- You followed the directions of the assignment.
- You used a few sociological concepts, but you could have used more concepts or discussed them more thoroughly.
- Your analysis is solid. You make it clear how sociological concepts help you understand the issue.
- Your discussion of the sociological perspective is solid and relevant and follows logically from the rest of your paper.
- Solid, competent writing. Your paper is clearly and logically written.
- Your paper is free from spelling and/or grammatical errors.

Average paper (C quality)

- You addressed the questions posed on the assignment.
- You followed the directions of the assignment.
- You used some sociological concepts to analyze the issue, but it was clear from your paper that you did not understand these concepts or apply them appropriately.
- Your analysis is superficial or demonstrates a lack of understanding.
- You provide a cursory or superficial discussion, but could have done much more with this part of the paper.
- Writing is weak and needs work.
- Your paper has some spelling and/or grammatical errors

Substandard paper (D quality)

- You did not address the questions posed on the assignment.
- You did not follow the directions of the assignment.
- You used some sociological concepts to analyze the issue, but it was clear from your paper that you did not understand these concepts or apply them appropriately.
- Your analysis is superficial or demonstrates a lack of understanding.
- You provide a cursory or superficial discussion, but could have done much more with this part of the paper.
- Writing is weak and needs work.
- Your paper has some spelling and/or grammatical errors.

Why did you bother turning in the paper? (F quality)

- You did not address the questions posed on the assignment.
- You did not follow the directions of the assignment.
- You didn't use any sociological concepts to analyze the issue.
- There is no analysis in your paper.
- There is no sociological commentary in your paper.
- Your writing makes the paper difficult to understand or evaluate.
- Your paper has many spelling and/or grammatical errors that make it difficult to read.

CLASS POLICIES

TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE UPON ENTERING CLASS.

Sociology is not for everyone. Some humans have difficulty with their world view being critiqued or questioned, and as a discipline, sociology is fairly radical in that it peels back the layers of mysticism and ideology to expose what is really going on in the world. Part of getting a university education entails challenging one's preconceptions and possible misconceptions about the world. If you cannot handle such things, dis-enroll from this class immediately. Getting an education is not about affirming or reinforcing pre-existing beliefs about the world.

Since we all will have something to say, but may be saying vastly different, even contradictory things, the following guide-lines will be adhered to while in this course:

- Acknowledge that prejudice and discrimination based on race, class, sex, sexual orientation, age, and physical differences exist.
- Acknowledge that all of us have learned misinformation about our own group and about members of other groups, whether we belong to a majority or minority group, from the mass media and other sources.
- Assume that people in this class are doing the best they can do.

- Never demean, devalue, or in any way “put down” people for their experiences, back-grounds, or statements. This does not mean that you can't disagree, only that you do so with respect.
- Don't interrupt. Listen before speaking.

The classroom is a special environment in which students and faculty come together to promote learning and intellectual growth. Therefore, the goals of the course will be met, in large part, by giving respect and consideration to all. This means that we will pay full attention to lecture, discussion, or workshop activity during class sessions. Reading and writing irrelevant material, talking about unrelated issues, sleeping, listening to head-sets, making or receiving phone calls, text-messaging on cell phones, web-surfing on a laptop, and any other distracting activities – including eating, gum popping, or chewing tobacco will not be tolerated. **THE USE OF WORD PROCESSING AND/OR TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICES IN THIS CLASS IS PROHIBITED.** If you require the use of a laptop to take notes, you must provide documentation from Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to me, and then we will discuss the use of the device. Failure to comply with this policy for any of the above infractions will result in being removed from class for that day and a grade of zero for any assignment due for the week of the infraction.

I encourage you to speak, as class discussion is an effective way of exploring issues in this course, but please direct all your comments to the entire class. To help facilitate a safe and productive learning environment, we will adhere to the following policies:

- University policy on cheating and plagiarism will be observed (see the *Catalog* or the *Schedule of Courses* for description of policy).
- If you have any medical or learning disability that might affect your work in this course, it is your responsibility to inform Professor Jones and to contact the University's Service to Students with Disabilities in the Library at 278-2811 so that reasonable accommodations can be made.
- University policy on incomplete grades will be observed (see the *General Catalog* or the *Schedule of Courses* for description of policy).
- You are expected to attend all scheduled class sessions. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were away. Being absent does not excuse you from anything that was discussed or due in class. Lecture notes are not disseminated. When you have a serious and compelling medical condition or when a death or serious illness in the immediate family that prevents attending class, you are responsible for contacting Professor Jones as soon as possible (translation: NOT after missing class). You are also responsible for providing documentation of the reason for the absence upon returning to class. Things that are not considered a valid excuse for missing class: time conflicts with social events; doctor's appointments – do not schedule them during class-time, forgetting the date of the exam; feeling 'down' because you just broke up with your one true love – life happens – show me you care about your education.
- Students are expected to take examinations at the scheduled date and time. A makeup exam for the midterm will be conducted during dead days for students who missed the midterm and provide documentation of what Professor Jones deems a valid excuse for missing the exam (see the bullet point above for what is not considered a valid excuse). Missing the final exam will result in a grade of zero – no excuses will be acknowledged nor deemed acceptable for missing the final.
- All assignments must be turned in on time and in paper copy form. Electronic transmission of papers will not be accepted, unless arrangement is made with Professor Jones. Late assignments will NOT be accepted - no exceptions. You are to have done the assignments well in advance of class time, which means you cannot wait until the last minute to do the work for this class.
- If you need to leave early, please let Professor Jones know at the beginning of class that you will be doing so. Please do not just get up and leave.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

(Refer to University Catalog or Schedule of Courses for more information.)

Honor Code: Members of the California State University, Fresno academic community adhere to principles of academic integrity and mutual respect while engaged in university work and related activities. You should:

- a. understand or seek clarification about expectations for academic integrity in this course
- b. neither give nor receive unauthorized aid on examinations or other course work that is used by the instructor as the basis of grading.
- c. take responsibility to monitor academic dishonesty in any form and to report it to the instructor or other appropriate official for action.

Cheating and Plagiarism. Cheating is the actual or attempted practice of fraudulent or deceptive acts for the purpose of improving one's grade or obtaining course credit; such acts also include assisting another student to do so. Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating that consists of the misuse of the published and/or unpublished works of another by misrepresenting the material (i.e., their intellectual property) so used as one's own work? (University Catalog). In other words, do your own writing; when you use another person's ideas or words, reference the material. Possible penalties include but are not limited to failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and/or expulsion from the university. For more information on the University's policy regarding cheating and plagiarism, refer to the Class Schedule (Policy/Legal Statements) or the University Catalog (University policies).

Disabilities. If you have any medical or learning disability that might affect your work in this course, it is your responsibility to inform me and contact the University's Service to Students with Disabilities in the Library at 278-2811 so that reasonable accommodations can be made.

Computers. At California State University, Fresno, computers and communications links to remote resources are recognized as being integral to the education and research experience. Every student is required to have his/her own computer or have other personal access to a workstation (including a modem and a printer) with all the recommended software. Computer labs on campus are available (e.g., SS202, PHS107).

Copyright policy: Copyright laws and fair use policies protect the rights of those who have produced the material. The copy in this course has been provided for private study, scholarship, or research. Other uses may require permission from the copyright holder. The user of this work is responsible for adhering to copyright law of the U.S. (Title 17, U.S. Code). To help you familiarize yourself with copyright and fair use policies, the University encourages you to visit its copyright web page. Digital Campus course web sites contains material protected by copyrights held by the instructor, other individuals or institutions. Such material is used for educational purposes in accord with copyright law and/or with permission given by the owners of the original material. You may download one copy of the materials on any single computer for non-commercial, personal, or educational purposes only, provided that you (1) do not modify it, (2) use it only for the duration of this course, and (3) include both this notice and any copyright notice originally included with the material. Beyond this use, no material from the course web site may be copied, reproduced, re-published, uploaded, posted, transmitted, or distributed in any way without the permission of the original copyright holder. The instructor assumes no responsibility for individuals who improperly use copyrighted material placed on the web site.

COURSE OUTLINE: TOPIC AND READINGS SCHEDULE

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Topic Outline / Readings / Assignment</u>
Week 1	<u>Introduction to the course</u>
Aug. 25	Course Syllabus Readings: Creswell, Chapter 1; Maxwell, Chapter 1
Aug. 27	Brainstorming: Development of research topic for the course

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Topic Outline / Readings / Assignment</u>
Week 2	<u>A Brief history of Qualitative Research</u>
Sept. 1	Weber, Chicago School, Frankfurt Institute
	Readings: “The Coming Crisis of Empirical Sociology” (BB)
Sept. 3	Qualitative & Quantitative Research: A comparison of approaches
Week 3	<u>Epistemology and Ethics</u>
Sept. 8	Philosophy and Research Ethics
	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 2; Maxwell, Chapter 2
Sept. 10	Ethical issues, human subjects and Institutional Review Boards (IRB)
Week 4	<u>Designing a Qualitative Study</u>
Sept. 15	Asking Research Questions
	Readings: Creswell, Chapters 3; Maxwell, Chapters 3
Sept. 17	
Week 5	<u>Data Collection</u>
Sept. 22	Determining methodological efficacy: fieldwork & unobtrusive methods
	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 4 & 7; Maxwell, Chapters 4 & 5
Sept. 24	Research paradigms
Week 6	<u>Content analysis</u>
Sept. 29	Readings: Smith, “Content analysis and Narrative Analysis” (BB); Jongudomkarn and Camfield, “Exploring the Quality of Life of People in North Eastern and Southern Thailand” (BB)
Oct. 1	Data collection technique: Content analysis
Week 7	
Oct. 6	Review for mid-term exam
Oct. 8	Mid-term Exam
Week 8	<u>Narrative research</u>
Oct. 13	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 5, pages 111-114 & Appendix B
Oct. 15	Data collection technique: Interviewing
Week 9	<u>Phenomenological research</u>
Oct. 20	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 5, pages 114-116 & Appendix C
Oct. 22	Data collection technique: Focus Groups & Interviewing
Week 10	<u>Grounded theory research</u>
Oct. 27	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 5, pages 116-117 & Appendix D
Oct. 29	Data Collection technique: Observation
Week 11	<u>Ethnographic research</u>
Nov. 3	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 5, pages 118-119 & Appendix E
Nov. 5	Data collection technique: Archival research

<u>Schedule</u>	<u>Topic Outline / Readings / Assignment</u>
Week 12	<u>Case study</u>
Nov. 10	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 5, pages 119-125 & Appendix F
Nov. 12	Data collection technique: Historiography
Week 13	<u>Data analysis</u>
Nov. 17	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 8
Nov. 19	
Week 14	<u>Writing a qualitative paper</u>
Nov. 24	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 9; Maxwell, Chapter 7
Nov. 26	(NO CLASS) Thanksgiving Holiday
Week 15	<u>Issues of validity and reliability</u>
Dec. 1	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 10; Maxwell, Chapter 6
Dec. 3	
Week 16	<u>Conclusion</u>
Dec. 8	Readings: Creswell, Chapter 11
Dec. 10	Last day of class
Final Exam	Wednesday December 17 03:30PM-05:30PM DUE: Research Paper

A FINAL NOTE: This syllabus and schedule are subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances. You are responsible for knowing any minor changes I make in the Lecture and Reading Schedule. If you are absent from class, it is your responsibility to check on announcements made while you were absent and acquire missed lecture notes from a classmate. Thus, as stated before, class attendance is critical to your successful completion of the course and to your overall understanding of the content of the course.