The University of Western Ontario
Department of Sociology
Fall 2013

SOC3307F - 001
Investigating the Social World: Qualitative Methods
Wednesday 1:30-4:30pm, SSC 3006

Professor Georgios Fthenos
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TA:
Office Hours:
Office:
Email:

Course Description

In this course, students will learn to investigate the social world using a variety of qualitative approaches, such as in-depth interviewing, participant observation, or content analysis. In so doing, students will explore the principles underlying qualitative inquiry and acquire a general understanding of the numerous theoretical positions that underlie qualitative methodology. Through lectures, readings, guest presentations, and hands-on research activities, students will explore different ways of investigating the social world in a scientific but non-statistical way that gives voice to the people we are studying. The ultimate goal is to let students experience the ways that qualitative sociologists do research. We will therefore emphasize applied aspects of qualitative research.

Antirequisites - Sociology 3310F/G, 3311F/G.

Prerequisites - Enrollment in Honors Specialization or Honors Double Major in Sociology or Criminology with a minimum grade of 60% in both Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B. Non honors students require a minimum grade of 70% in both Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B.

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course prerequisites. If you do not have the requisites for this course, and you do not have written special permission from your Dean to enrol in this course, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Required Texts


Additional articles are assigned weekly and will be posted on Sakai.

Evaluation

Midterm exam: 25%
Research proposal: 15%
Term paper: 50%
Poster/presentation 10%
Course Schedule

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Sept 11</td>
<td>Epistemological Issues and Research Questions</td>
<td>Chps. 1-2 SR: #1-3</td>
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<td>Sept 18</td>
<td>Library Presentation – <em>Students are to report to the D.B. Weldon Service Desk at 1:30am</em></td>
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<td>Sept 25</td>
<td>The Research Process: Practical and Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>Chp. 3 SR: #4-6</td>
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<td>Oct 2</td>
<td>In-Depth Interviewing Special Forms of Interviewing: Focus Groups and Oral Histories</td>
<td>Chpts. 4-7 SR: #7-8</td>
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<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Ethnography and Field Work <em>Due: Research Proposal</em></td>
<td>Chpt. 8 SR: #9</td>
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<td>Oct 16</td>
<td>Content Analysis and Unobtrusive Measures</td>
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<td>Oct 23</td>
<td>Case Study and Mixed Method Approaches</td>
<td>Chpt. 10-11</td>
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<td>Oct 30</td>
<td>Visual Sociology</td>
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<td>Nov 6</td>
<td><em>Midterm Exam</em></td>
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<td>Nov 13</td>
<td>Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data</td>
<td>Chpt. 12</td>
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<td>Nov 20</td>
<td>Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data</td>
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<td>Nov 27</td>
<td>Analysis and Interpretation: Writing Up Results</td>
<td>Chpt. 13</td>
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<td>Dec 4</td>
<td>Group Presentations <em>Due: Term Paper</em></td>
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Supplemental Reading


Midterm Exam

The exam will consist of short answer questions, definitions of concepts, and longer essays in which students are asked to reflect on conceptual aspects related to qualitative research. More details will be given in class.

Research proposal, term, and poster presentation:

Detailed information will be provided in class.

Grade Guidelines

Department of Sociology guidelines require a particular course grade distribution, which may require curving or otherwise adjusting your course grade in order to meet this requirement. As much as possible, your earned course grade will be the grade you receive. For 3000-level courses, the course mean is to be between a 70-74%.

Laptop Policy

Laptops are generally prohibited in this course. However, if you believe that your academic performance will be unduly disadvantaged by not being able to use a laptop and can provide a compelling reason for this, please come discuss the matter with me. All students granted leave to use a laptop in class will be required to sit in the last row so as not to distract others.

Mobile Phone Policy

All phones are to be shut off at the start of class, except if you have a dire emergency that you are having to attend to (such as an immediate family member’s illness or hospitalization, or your spouse’s/domestic partner’s impending delivery), in which case you need to let me know at the start of class. Text messaging is absolutely prohibited during class times.

Communications

Email is my preferred method of contact. It should be professionally prepared, spell- and grammar-checked, and not written in “text message” format. All communications must be written from your UWO account. The subject heading should read the course title. Sign the email with your full name and student number. Expect a response within 24-48 hours, excluding weekend.

Late Coursework

All coursework is due on the dates noted. Late coursework will only be accepted without penalty with appropriate documentation. Coursework received after the due date will have their grade reduced by a rate of 10% per day (including weekends). Coursework that is late is to be placed in an envelope and left in the mailbox for late assignments on the 5th floor of the SSC in the Department of Sociology.
Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (http://www.turnitin.com).

Missed Exams and Late Assignments

Make-up exams will be granted with approved documentation only. If you have a conflict with one of the exam dates, it is your responsibility to discuss it with the Academic Counseling office at least one week before the regularly scheduled exam and provide documentation of the conflict. If approved, you will be allowed to schedule a make-up exam.

If you miss an exam or assignment due to illness or for any other unforeseen reason, you must provide notification of and documentation for the reasons for your circumstances to your Academic Counselor within 48 hours. If your problem is medical in nature, you should be seen by your doctor on the date of the exam or on the date the assignment is due. If your Academic Counselor agrees that your reasons are legitimate and are supported by your medical doctor’s documentation, you will be allowed to write a makeup exam or hand in your assignment at a later date.

Compassionate Grounds

Serious Illness of a Family Member: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a medical certificate from the family member's physician to your home faculty’s Academic Counseling office.

In Case of a Death: Inform your instructor as soon as possible and submit a copy of the newspaper notice, death certificate or documentation provided by the funeral director to your home faculty’s Academic Counseling office.
Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.