INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE METHODS
Tuesday 9:30am to 12:00pm

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This is a hybrid course in Spring 2021. This means that you may go to campus for class if you wish to do so. The Sociology conference room and Sociology library are reserved for this class. Social distancing and masks are required, which is why there are two rooms available. Since not all of our students are located in Tallahassee and neither room has the technology necessary for me to teach the course to multiple locations at once, I will teach the course via Zoom. Because of these unique arrangements you will need to have access to a computer/laptop during class time to participate in break-out rooms and other class exercises.

Course Description: This methods workshop will introduce you to a variety of methods to conduct and analyze qualitative research. The emphasis of this course is on the production of knowledge and the power dynamics that privilege some people and ways of conducting research, the creation of qualitative research tools, learning how to analyze data, and putting together a research proposal. This semester you will learn how to conduct content analysis, create an interview schedule, scrape existing data, do archival research, and analyze the data you collect using these tools – primarily through a series of exercises. The course is set up so that you can reflect on how qualitative tools are relevant to your work, create a qualitative tool (such as an interview schedule) that addresses research questions you find interesting, implement and refine your research tool, and get practical experience analyzing different types of qualitative data. The course is also designed to help you develop a research proposal, which should serve as a basis for your Masters paper.

Course Objectives:
• Understand how to design and carry out a qualitative research project
• Understand and apply research ethics
• Be able to create effective qualitative research tools
• Be able to analyze qualitative data in a rigorous way
• Write a complete research proposal that will help guide your M.A. efforts over the summer

Required Books:


Additional readings and videos will be available on Canvas.
Course Assignments: Essentially, you will turn in one or more assignments every week (see the course schedule). Each week you should post your work to Canvas. Most assignments will be handed in via the Discussion Board or Turnitin. Due dates are posted with the assignment. All work is due before midnight on the date listed EST. Generally speaking, the most time consuming work will be related to your research proposal, so plan appropriately. The basic components of each assignment are listed here.

1. Writing a Research Proposal (65 points total). One of the primary goals of the course is to make sure that you have a roadmap for your Masters paper. It is very important that you spend time preparing for your research this summer. To this end, we will spend the semester developing research questions, exploring how qualitative data are relevant to your questions, and putting together a research proposal (which does not have to be qualitative). The proposal has several components:
   - A draft of your research questions (2 points)
   - A revised draft of your research questions (2 points)
   - A source spreadsheet (5 points)
   - A memo outlining your ideas for your final proposal (6 points)
   - A rough draft of your literature review (10 points)
   - A rough draft of your proposal (15 points)
   - A final draft of your proposal (25 points)

2. Create and Implement a Content Analysis (30 points total). You will learn how to systematically code texts so that you can make some general observations about relevant data. There are three components to this assignment:
   - A reflection on how content analysis is relevant to your work (10 points)
   - A draft of your coding scheme with sample data (10 points)
   - A final draft of your coding scheme with sample data coded and a reflection (10 points)

3. Create and Implement an Interview Schedule (30 points total). You will learn how to create an effective interview schedule and will practice your interviewing skills in class. There are three components to this assignment:
   - A reflection on how interview data is relevant to your work (10 points)
   - A draft of your interview schedule (10 points)
   - A final draft of your interview schedule with a reflection (10 points)

4. Article Analysis Worksheet (10 points total). You will complete an article analysis worksheet. The intent of the worksheet and resulting discussion is to help you think through the structure of academic papers and research proposals.

5. Participant Observation Online (20 points total). For this assignment you will learn how to conduct participant observation online, write up notes on your observations, and code this data. You will want to spend some time exploring forums/sites that are relevant to your research. There are two components to this assignment:
   - A reflection on how online participant observation is relevant to your work (10 points)
Observation notes and memo (10 points)

6. **Class participation (15 points total):** Class participation is critical for a successful workshop and learning experience. As you will see below, I expect you to actively participate in the course and in framing our conversations. Please come to class prepared to discuss the reading and method, engage in the in-class exercises, and give feedback to your colleagues.

**Work Policy:** All work is due on the dates indicated on the syllabus EST. Given the nature of the course, late work will be penalized 50% the first day and will not be accepted after 24 hours after the assignment deadline unless it meets the university policy for an excused absence. See the university policy below. If you are experiencing trauma or a major life disruption or extreme stress, please reach out to the Department of Student Support and Transitions at [https://dsst.fsu.edu/contact-us](https://dsst.fsu.edu/contact-us). It is an excellent office full of folks who are ready to help you.

**University Attendance Policy:**
Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

**Reminder:** *Missing work is not sufficient reason for a grade of Incomplete (I).* An incomplete will not be given except under extreme circumstances at the instructor’s discretion. Note that College of Social Sciences and Public Policy guidelines require that students seeking an “I” must be passing the course.

**Academic Honor Policy:**
The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." ([Florida State University Academic Honor Policy](http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy))

**Cheating and Plagiarism.** The Provost and legal counsel of Florida State University warn us that any uses of others' copyrighted materials without proper acknowledgement is unlawful and may lead to criminal prosecution. To this end, please be scrupulous in using the work of others by giving full and appropriate credit to the sources and materials that you use. Please use care when taking words and phrases from others. If you use a string of three or more exact words from another source, you must place the words in quotes and cite the author, year and page number. Be a stickler about citing; cite more rather than less; cite early rather than late. Do NOT appropriate the concepts, phrases, or ideas of other people without giving them credit. If you do so, you risk losing your good name and getting into legal trouble. Any form of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will result in a "zero" for that particular assignment or possibly
an "F" for the course and may be reported to the University Judicial Office. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated.

Your paper would be considered as plagiarized in part or entirely if you do any of the following:
- Submit a paper that was written by someone other than you.
- Submit a paper in which you use the ideas, metaphors or reasoning style of another, but do not cite that source and/or place that source in your list of references.
- Submit a paper in which you "cut and paste" or use the exact words of a source and you do not put the words within quotation marks, use footnotes or in-text citations, and place the source in your list of references.
- You commit patchwork plagiarism by overuse of quotations – 25% or more of your paper
- If you use paraphrasing software.

Disabilities. Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. This should be done during the first week of class. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request. For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center
874 Traditions Way
108 Student Services Building
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167
(850) 644-9566 (voice)
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)
sdrc@admin.fsu.edu
http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/

Syllabus Change Policy: Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice. If I make changes, I will send you an email and note them in red.

Grading Scale:
- 94% to 100% = A
- 90% to 93% = A-
- 87% to 89% = B+
- 84% to 86% = B
- 80% to 83% = B-
- 77% to 79% = C+
- 74% to 76% = C
- 70% to 73% = C-
- 67% to 69% = D+
- 64% to 66% = D
- 60% to 63% = D-
- 59% and below = F
Course Schedule

**** First Day Attendance Assignment Due Friday January 8th at 12 noon. Send me an introduction email (deana.rohlinger@fsu.edu). Tell me a bit about yourself, your research interests, and what you are looking forward to learning about in class.

Week 1: Introduction to the Course and to Qualitative Research and Design

Week 2: Research Ethics Part 1: The Problems with Science in the U.S.

Week 3: Research Ethics Part 2: Thinking About Perspective and Privilege

Week 4: Dealing with the Literature and Writing Literature Reviews

Week 5: Research Design, Case Selection and Gathering Data

Week 6: Content Analysis

Week 7: Interviewing: An Introduction

Week 8: Interviewing continued

Week 9: Coding and Memos

Week 10: Article Analysis and Participant Observation

Week 11: Participant Observation Online

Week 12: Work Week and Individual Meetings

Week 13: Participant Observation and Research Prospectus

Week 14: Workshopping Your Proposal

Week 15: Finals Week
Your research proposal is due by noon on Wednesday April 21.