

FES 70003a

Social Science Qualitative Research Methods

Credit Hours: 3
Time: Monday and Wednesdays 1-2:20
Location: Kroon Hall, Room G01
Instructor: Dr. Amity Doolittle
Office: Rm.121 Kroon
Office hours: TBA

Email:

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Course Description

This course is designed to provide a broad introduction to issues of social sciences research methods and design. Emphasis in the readings and lectures is placed on qualitative methods; although, consideration is given to both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. No prior knowledge of methodology or statistics is expected or assumed. The course is intended for both doctoral students who are in the beginning stage of their dissertation research, as well as for master's students developing research proposals for their thesis projects. The course will cover the basic techniques for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing certain types of qualitative data. During the semester, we will explore three interrelated dimension of research, one focuses on the theoretical foundations of science and research, another focuses on the various methods available to researchers for data collection and analysis, and finally we will complete exercises in the practical application of various methods.

One significant premise underlies this class: some of the most important questions addressed in environmental studies have such complex solutions that traditional positivist scientific approaches have limited application.

The course differs from other courses on research design in that it is decidedly interdisciplinary in nature (including drawing on literature from anthropology, geography, political science and sociology) and it consciously address the unique nature of social science research within environmental studies..

Theoretically we will consider questions such as: What is qualitative research? Is qualitative research scientific? What are the roles of induction and deduction in qualitative research? What is the role of a hypothesis or research question in qualitative research? What role does grounded theory play in qualitative research? Does ethnographic research have a small-n problem (lack of generalizability of the results)? Is replication possible in ethnographic, or interview-based, studies?

Practically we will consider questions such as: What makes a good key informant? How can you triangulate social data? What goes into field notes? Should you use a tape recorder? How do you code data? What is snowball (or purposive)



Course Objectives

sampling? How can you judge the qualitative of ethnographic research? How do you interpret qualitative data? What techniques can we borrow from Rapid Rural Appraisal? What role do surveys or archival data play in qualitative research?

Ultimately the distinction between theory and practice is artificial. One informs the other in a reiterative and reflexive manner. To answer most of the practicalities of how to collect, analyze, and interpret qualitative data requires certain theoretical assumptions that will influence the final product. If you are here to get your “toolbox” without understanding the theoretical background that underlies and validates the method, you will be very frustrated in this class.

1. To understand competing approaches to research design and methods, and their philosophical differences.
2. To get better acquainted with specific research tools, including in person interviews, survey design, field observation, participatory action techniques, and case studies.

3. To facilitate students in making informed choices over research design and methodological choices for the questions they seek to answer, and to judge and evaluate the quality of projects and their methodologies.

Required Text (RT):

Creswell, John. 2002. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Sage Publications

Required Text will be on **reserve at the F&ES library** and available for purchase at: **Labyrinth Books**, 290 YORK STREET, NEW HAVEN, CT 06511. PHONE: 787-2848

Most articles are available as pdfs on the class website

Coursepack: Articles not available as pdfs are marked in the syllabus with an (*). They can be purchased from RIS at <https://ris-store.its.yale.edu/start.jsp> located at 155 Whitney Ave.



Course Readings

Course Requirements

1. Participation (20% of grade):

You are expected to complete all **readings** before class in preparation for class discussion. **Discussion** is an important part of this course and 20% your grade will be based on your participation in discussion section. Regular **attendance**, therefore, is essential. I will take attendance and will deduct points from your participation grade for each class missed. Because we will be covering a good amount of material in the course, it is imperative that you keep up with the readings. Please speak with me if you would like advice on what aspects of the readings you should be focusing on, reading strategies, or if you are falling behind.

2. Three Field Assignments (total of 20% of grade)

Learn by doing. There will be three field assignments where you can spend time by doing participant observation, interviewing and surveying.

3. Three Short Essays (total of 20% of grade)

Learn by interpreting. There will be three short essays (at least 450 words) designed to explore and critique the readings in detail.

4. Final Term Paper (total of 40% of grade)

One major term paper is required: a 10-12 page research proposal for funding for your summer research. **Due: December 13th**

A short 1-2 page synopsis of the long paper will be due **October 26th** and should focus on describing the research topic and 15 sources for research paper/proposal question. You are expected to present your research papers in the final week of class (TBA, but most likely on December 4th).

5. Give a 20-minute oral presentation on your research proposal at the end of the course

To get the most out of this class you must read everything assigned, and participate actively and constructively in class discussion. Doing research is not only the process of putting tools to use, but also the process of understanding why you use the tools you do, what sorts of data they generate, and how and when you need to alter your choice of tools

Course Field Component

The field component of this course, the participant observation exercise, the survey and the interview will focus on New Haven City Seed's Project. There are 4 farmers' markets in town, lots of vendors and buyers and plenty of variation. These markets are an

excellent place to practice field methods. **But you need to be organized so you do not miss market dates or get rained out.** Look at the program's website and start thinking about which market you want to visit. Think about doing a pre-field visit to the market just to get oriented. You should decide if you want to survey a particular pre-determined set of vendors or buyers or do you plan to do a random sampling. If you are going to do a pre-determine the sample (in order to get the data you think will be most interesting, eg. all honey producers) then you will need to do enough leg work ahead of time. You do not want to get behind in the course! And for the in-depth interview you do need to contact the person ahead of time and organize and time and place for the interview.

Check out these sites for schedules and vendors.

http://www.cityseed.org/city_markets/markets/schedule.shtml

http://www.cityseed.org/city_markets/markets/wooster/vendors.shtml

If this project is completely unappealing to you, you are welcome to propose an alternative.

Part I: Building Blocks and Foundations

September 2nd & 7th,
LECTURE: Introductions-The relationship between social science theory and research methods

Readings (to be completed for discussion section)

1. Doolittle, A. 2008. "Stories and Maps, Images and Archives: Multi-Method Approach to the Political Ecology of Native Property Rights and Natural Resource Management in Sabah, Malaysia" *Environmental Management*.
2. Babbie, Earl. 2003. "Lessons Learned from Teaching Quantitative Methods." *Qualitative Research Journal*. Special Issue 12-23.
3. Howard, Becker. 2006. "The Epistemology of Qualitative Research," in Jessor, Colby, and Schweder, eds. *Ethnography and Human Development:: Context and Meaning in Social Inquiry*, pp. 53-72. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Writing Assignment #1a (to be completed before Tuesday, September 8th at NOON for discussion section)

What are your academic or policy interests? How might field-based research help develop these interests? Do you have a burning research topic? Go to the classes server and:

1. Post a few paragraphs on your interests and potential research questions;
2. Comment on two other people's posts with questions, ideas, potential articles to read or research sites, etc.

September 9th : DISCUSSION SECTION

Discussion of your research plans and goals for course and F&ES. We will also begin a preliminary look at the main requirements of a research proposal.

Activity for discussion: "The Scientific Method Revisited"

September 14th LECTURE: Qualitative-Quantitative Divide; Research Design

Readings

1. Denzin, N.K. and Y.S. Lincoln. 1994. "Introduction: Entering the Field of Qualitative Research." In *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. p. 1-17.(*)
2. Shiel, D. et al 2006. "Recognizing Local People's Priorities for Tropical Forest Biodiversity" *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment*. 35 (1): 17-24.
3. Kepe, T and I Scoones.1999. "Creating grasslands: Social institutions and environmental change in Mkambati Area, South Africa." *Human Ecology* 27(1): 29-53.
4. Shively, G.E. 1997. "Poverty, technology, and wildlife hunting in Palawan." *Environmental Conservation* 24(1):57-63.



Part II: The Practice of Research

Writing Assignment #2 (due in lecture, September 14th)

Compare the methods and data in Kepe & Scoones with Shively, answering the following questions: What are their methods, what are the sources of their data; what assumptions do they bring to the study; which article is more convincing and why?

September 16th DISCUSSION SECTION

Discussion on writing assignment #2; explore links between questions, data required to answer the questions and the methods that will provide the data.

Mini-lecture/discussion and handouts

What is in a literature review?

September 21st

LECTURE: Formulating Research Questions and Proposal Writing

Readings

1. Creswell, John. 2002. Research Design. Ch 4 and 5, “The Introduction” and “The Purpose Statement”, pp. 71-104
2. “The Research Questions” from Institute of International Studies online Dissertation Workshop
(<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>)
3. “Research Design” from Institute of International Studies online Dissertation Workshop
(<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>) .
4. Strang, Veronica. 2007. Integrating the social and natural sciences in environmental research: a discussion paper”. Environment, Development and Sustainability. 11(1): 1-18.
5. Turner, BL and Paul Robbins. 2008. “Land-Change Science and Political Ecology: Similarities, Differences, and Implications for Sustainability Science”. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 33: 295-316

Writing assignment #1b (complete before discussion section, September 23rd)

Come with a written research question, hypothesis, or problem statement. Hand this in to instructor along with potential revisions after discussion. These should build from earlier discussions and writing assignment 1a from week 1.

September 23rd DISCUSSION SECTION

What are the burning questions you want to explore? What is the best method(s) to achieve this? Workshop your research question in small groups

****Think about which market you will chose for your exercise. You might want to visit twice. Once just to get your bearings and the next time to do the exercise. Start thinking about who you want to survey and interview. Remember, markets only meet one day a week!

September 28th

LECTURE: Research Ethics: Study Subjects, Politics, and Relationships with Communities Studied

Readings

1. Creswell, John. 2002. *Research Design*. Ch 3: "Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations", 49-73.
2. Vanderstay, Steven. 2005. "One-Hundred Dollars and a Dead Man: Ethical Decisions in Ethnographic Fieldwork." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 34(4): 371-409.
3. Shea, Christopher. 2000. "Don't Talk to the Humans: The Crackdown on Social Science Research." *Lingua Franca* 10(6).
4. Hilts, Philip. 1998. "Experiments on Children are Reviewed." *New York Times*. April 15, 1998.
5. Brown, Jill. 2004. "Seduction and Betrayal Revisited: Ethical Dilemmas of Insider Research." AARE Conference Proceedings 2004.

September 30th DISCUSSION SECTION

Guest: Susan Borguey from Human Subject Committee. Receive HSC training in class section

Assignment for discussion: Come prepared to talk about the ethical implications of your research. Is there an inherent power imbalance? How do you handle these issues?

October 5th

LECTURE: Participant Observation

Readings

1. Gladwell, Malcolm. 1997. "The Coolhunt". *New Yorker*.
2. "Guidelines for Field Notes and Journals"
<http://www.union.edu/PUBLIC/ANTDEPT/fiji99/assignments/wk1notes.htm>
3. Johnson, Jeffrey C. , Christine Avenarius and Jack Weatherford. 2006. "The Active Participant-Observer: Applying Social Role Analysis to Participant Observation". *Field Methods* 18(2): 111-134
4. Whyte, William Foote. 1993. *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*. 4th Edition "Methodological Appendix, pp. 279-373. University of Chicago Press. (*)
5. Wolfinger, Nicolas. 2002. "On Writing Ethnographic Field Notes: Collection Strategies and background Expectancies." *Qualitative Research* 2(1): 85-95
6. Lowe, C. 1999. "Global Markets, Local Injustice in Southeast Asian Seas: The Live Fish Trade and Local Fishers in the Togeian Islands of Sulawesi." In *Plants, People and Justice*. C. Zerner, ed. New York: Columbia University Press, p 234-258. (*)

Field Exercise #1: Participant Observation (to be handed in at discussion section, October 7th)

In teams of 2-3 go to one for New Haven's farmers' markets: Downtown, Wooster Square, Fair Haven, or Edgewood. The schedule can be found at http://www.cityseed.org/city_markets/markets/schedule.shtml.

Observe and participate (sample foods, buy foods!), take photographs, describe the scene, map the scene, look for difference aspects of the market to observe in detail. Try to think about what the market would look like to someone who had never been in USA before. Prepare a powerpoint presentation on the market, your experience as a field

ethnographer and your preliminary findings in discussion section. Hand a print out of the powerpoint to instructor for grading.

October 7th DISCUSSION SECTION:

Present and discuss the experience, observation thoughts, etc on participant observation.

October 12th

LECTURE: Surveys, Questionnaires, and Sampling

Readings

1. Creswell, John. 2002. *Research Design*. Ch 9: “Quantitative Methods”, p 153-178
2. Davis, A. and J. R. Wagner. 2003. “Who Knows? On the Importance of Identifying “Experts” When Researching Local Ecological Knowledge.” *Human Ecology* 31(3): 464-489.
3. Cao, Chen, Liu. 2009. “An Investigation of Chinese Attitudes toward the Environment: Case Study Using the Grain for Green Project”. *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment*. 38(1): 55-64.
4. Mertens, Benoit, William Sunderlin, Ousseynou Ndyoke. 2000. “Impact of Macroeconomic Changes on Deforestation in South Cameroon: Integration of Household Surveys and Remotely-Sensed Data.” *World Development* 28 (6): 983-999.

Sample surveys to reading

1. Crop Raiding from Priston, N. E. “Crop-Raiding by *Macaca ochreata brunnescens* in Sulawesi” unpublished thesis University of Cambridge, modified by Laura Robertson (*)
2. Grizzly Bears, from Seth Wilson (*)

Field Exercise #2

The Steps in a Survey Project—to be handed in before lecture, October 19th).

Design and Administer a 10-15 question survey in groups of 2-3.

1. Establish the goals of the project - What you want to learn
2. Determine your sample - Whom you will interview, how will you select them
3. Choose interviewing methodology - How you will interview
4. Create your questionnaire - What you will ask
5. Pretest your survey on friends – Do your questions make sense
6. Conduct the survey and enter data - Ask the questions of at least 4 people at the market of your choice.
7. Analyze the data and/or the process
8. Hand in the survey instrument and the analysis/write up of the process

October 14th DISCUSSION SECTION

Discuss survey construction, hand in final surveys

October 19th

LECTURE: Case Studies and Comparative Research

Readings

1. Stake, R.E. 1994. “Case Studies.” In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. NK Denzin and YS Lincoln, eds Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp 361-376. (*)
2. Small, Mario. 2005. “Lost in Translation: How Not to Make Qualitative Research More Scientific”. Working Paper presented at Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research, May 2005.
3. Wollenberg, Eva. 2000. “Methods for Estimating Forest Income and Their Challenges.” *Society and Natural Resources*. 13: 777-795.

4. Salafsky, N, et al. 2001. "A systematic test of an enterprise strategy for community-based biodiversity conservation." *Conservation Biology* 15(6): 1585-1595
5. Ford, James, Barry Smit and Johanna Wandel. 2006 "Vulnerability to climate change in the Arctic: A case study from Arctic Bay, Canada". *Global Environmental Change* 16: 145-160.

October 21st DISCUSSION SECTION:

Does it matter that it is hard to make generalizations from case studies?
Under what circumstances does a case study approach make the most sense?

(Hand 1-2 page in synopsis of research topic and 10 relevant sources)

October 26th

LECTURE: The Art of the Interview

Readings

1. Fontana, A. and JH Frey. 1994. "Interviewing: The Art of Science." In *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, NK Denzin and YS Lincoln, eds. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, p 361-376. (*) .
2. Zavaleta, E. 1999. "The emergence of waterfowl conservation among Yup'ik hunters in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, Alaska." *Human Ecology* 27(2): 231-266..
3. Moffat, Tina and Elizabeth Finnis 2005. "Considering social and material resources: the political ecology of a peri-urban squatter community in Nepal" *Habitat International*. 29(3): 453-468.

Field Exercise #3: Interview (due at lecture on November 2nd)

Choose a vendor, an organizer or a participant at the market of your choice to interview. Make sure to contact them well in advance and arrange a

good time for an interview. Travel to their farms if you have to in order to get a good interview. Tape record the interview (if you have a recorder) and take notes (never know when your equipment will fail!). Transcribe one hour of the interview and hand it in along with notes.

November 4th DISCUSSION SECTION:

Do you intend to use interviews in your own research? Why kind of interview? What sorts of data will you get through interviews? If you do not plan to use them, WHY?

November 9th

LECTURE: Participatory Action Research

Readings

1. Beebe, J. 1995. "Basic Concepts and Techniques of Rapid Appraisal." *Human Organization* 54(1): 42-51. (*)
2. Chambers, R. 1991. "Shortcut and Participatory Methods for Gaining Social Information for Projects." In *Putting People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development*, M. Cernea ed. New York: Oxford U. Press for the World Bank, pp.515-537 (*)
3. Fortman, L. 1996. "Gendered Knowledge: Rights and Space in Two Zimbabwe Villages: Reflections on Methods and Findings" in *Feminist Political Ecology*, D. Rouchleau, B. Thomas-Slayter and E. Wangari, eds. London: Routledge, p. 211-223. (*)
4. Pain, Rachel. 2004. "Social Geography: Participatory Research." *Progress in Human Geography* 28(5): 652-663.
5. Kesby, Mike. 2000. "Participatory Diagramming: Deploying Qualitative Methods through an Action Research Epistemology." *Area* 32(4): 423-435.
6. Catley, A., J. Burns; D. Abebe; O. Suji.2008. "Participatory methodology Participatory Impact Assessment: a guide for practitioners". Feinstein International Center, USA (SKIM)

November 11th DISCUSSION SECTION:

Have you ever been involved in a PAR project? What was your experience? Can you envision how it might be valuable in your project. What are some of the drawbacks?

November 16th
**LECTURE: Working
with Data, Coding and
Analysis**

**Part III: Data Analysis
and Write Up**

Readings

1. Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin. 1998. "Open Coding." In Basics of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
2. Siedel, J. "Qualitative Data Analysis" www.qualresearch.com
3. Ryan, G. and T. Weisner. 1998 "A content analysis of words in brief descriptions: How do fathers and mothers describe their children?" In: *Using methods in the field: A practical introduction and casebook*, V. de Munck & E. Soboeds. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 57-68.
4. Montgomery, P. and P. H. Bailey. 2007. "Field Notes and Theoretical Memos in Grounded Theory" *Western Journal of Nursing Research* 29 (1): 65-79
5. Tip Sheet: Coding Qualitative Data
6. Sipe, L. and M. Ghiso. 2004. "Developing Conceptual Categories in Classroom Descriptive Research." *Anthropology and Educational Quarterly* 35(4): 472-485.
7. Dewulf, A, Greet François,, Claudia Pahl-Wostl,, and Tharsi Taillie. 2007. "A Framing Approach to Cross-disciplinary Research Collaboration: Experiences from a Large-scale Research Project on Adaptive Water Management." *Ecology and Society* 12(2). (SKIM)

Writing Assignment #3

**Code interview from last week (due at discussion
November 18th)**

1. Use the one hour you transcribed from last week interviews.

2. First establish basic substantive categories and then “open code” your interview on the basis of those categories.
3. Organize and discuss the conceptual categories you used.

November 18th

DISCUSSION SECTION:

November 30th

LECTURE: Pulling it all Together: Writing the Research Proposal

Readings

1. Przeworski, A. and F. Salomon. 1988. On the art of writing research proposals. Social Science Research Council.
http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/art_of_writing_proposals.page
2. Geever, Jane and Patricia McNeill. 1997. “A Proposal-Writing Short-Course.” Excerpt from The Foundation Center’s Guide to Proposal-Writing, New York: The Foundation
<http://foundationcenter.org/getstarted/tutorials/shortcourse/>
3. “Timeline” from Institute of International Studies online Dissertation Workshop (<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>)
4. “Background and History” from Institute of International Studies online Dissertation Workshop
(<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>)
5. “Theory” from Institute of International Studies online Dissertation Workshop (<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>)
6. “Budgets” from Institute of International Studies online Dissertation Workshop (<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>)

Recommended readings for writing strategies in interpretive research

1. Creswell, Chapter 3 (part 1) “Writing Strategies”, pp 49-61 (RT).

2. Geertz, Clifford. 1973. "Thick Description" in *Interpretation of Culture*. Basic Books.
3. Geertz, Clifford. 2000. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight" in *Interpretation of Culture*. Basic Books.

December 2nd, no class, prepare for presentations

**Friday, December 4th, we will set aside an
long bit of time (TBA) for student
presentations**

**Final papers due December 13th
Deliver a HARD COPY to my office or Laurie
Bozzuto, Kroon 115
AND EMAIL A COPY**
