

Sociology 413.01
Intermediate Qualitative Research Methods
WINTER 2016

PLEASE READ THIS SYLLABUS CAREFULLY

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Bruce Arnold*
drarnold@ucalgary.ca (only)

OFFICE: SS 912

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday & Thursday 2:00 – 3:00pm - Scheduled appointments recommended & preferred.

PHONE: 220-6508.

CLASS: SS 010 9:30-10:45 Tuesdays & Thursdays.

EMAIL POLICY – IMPORTANT PLEASE READ CAREFULLY: the instructor uses *limited email* for substantive or content related course issues because it is an inefficient means for assisting students. Instead, the instructor is available at various times weekly throughout the term to assist you and you are encouraged to use Dr. Arnold as a resource throughout the course. Please use the email above to report an absence from class or to set up an appointment during office hours.

- Please put your course number and section in your email's subject line, and include a proper salutation, your full name, student ID, and a proper closing in the body of your email. All emails violating customary email conventions will be ignored.
- Please take that into account when emailing me questions pertaining assignments or exams. Also, please e-mail me for administrative purposes only, for example to set up an appointment regarding assignments or exams. Questions pertaining to assignments or exams are best addressed in person.
- If you have a course-related question, please check the course outline first. **Questions that can be answered by consulting the course outline or course information posted on D2L will not be answered – please see me in person.**
- Please do not use e-mail as a replacement for an office visit, if there is something you want to discuss. Questions about the course content and readings, concerns about grades, or any other personal issues should be dealt with in person during my office hours. I am pleased to meet with you and offer assistance.

* For student study resources see <http://soci.ucalgary.ca/18/jfstud.htm>

* The instructor may make some changes to course deadlines, timing, format, and content. Check D2L regularly.

* All audio recording in class must have prior written permission from the instructor. No video recording allowed.

* All students must be registered in this class.

Course Goals and Organization: This is a highly interactive, challenging, and rewarding course designed as an upper-level undergraduate “Inquiry-Based” **seminar** with a supplemental **lecture component**. When not all required readings are introduced directly in the classroom, students are expected and encouraged to ask (sociological) questions about these readings and how they apply to each specific class, previous classes, or assignments. Learning how to ask sociological questions is an important part of this course – we will practice this throughout the term. Course goals and expectations for students are based on this design. All students in this course will have at least the Sociology 313 (Introduction to Research Methods) pre-requisite so it is expected that there already exists a basic understanding of research methods issues (e.g. research design, causality, sampling, operationalization-measurement, validity-reliability, some data collection techniques) and that students will contribute to the class through regular class discussions. Please read this syllabus carefully to make sure you understand what the student expectations and course goals are. One central goal is to learn methodological problem identification and solving to learn various aspects about

qualitative research decision-making. We do this by working individually and with an instructor provided visual data set. This seminar is therefore highly participatory: thinking and doing. I look forward to contributing to your reaching of these goals!

Your instructor is a supportive resource you can access throughout the term during office hours, special appointments at mutually convenient times, or before and after class. It is my pleasure to assist you with the research issues, decision-making, and challenges in this course. PLEASE NOTE - I DO NOT POST (D2L) OR DISTRIBUTE MY POWERPOINT SLIDES, NOTES, OR OTHER LECTURE MATERIALS.

- WE WILL DISCUSS THIS COURSE OUTLINE AND COURSE RELATED ISSUES DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF CLASS.
- PLEASE ASK QUESTIONS AND RAISE CONCERNS DURING THIS TIME OR BRING THEM TO THE ATTENTION OF THE INSTRUCTOR DURING OFFICE HOURS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
- IT IS MY PLEASURE TO ASSIST YOU THROUGHOUT THIS COURSE – SCHEDULE OFFICE HOUR MEETINGS WELL IN ADVANCE, ESPECIALLY FOR THE RESEARCH PROJECT.

Course Goals include:

1. Identify key differences between qualitative and quantitative paradigms in terms of paradigm assumptions.
2. Articulate the key characteristics of a qualitative research study.
3. Understand the place of theory and literature in a qualitative study.
4. Define and identify the key characteristics of five approaches of qualitative inquiry: autobiography, the interview, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology.
5. Discuss potential ethical issues that can occur when conducting qualitative research.
6. Understand the role of researcher in qualitative research.
7. Identify a researchable problem and develop research questions and a purpose statement for a qualitative research project.
8. Use appropriate qualitative data collection procedures including observations, interviews, document and visual material review.
9. Introduction to qualitative data analysis procedures and coding techniques with practical examples and applications of a selected sample of these techniques.
10. Identify and conduct verification procedures for the qualitative project.
11. Select appropriate narrative strategies and styles for reporting qualitative findings.
12. Extend qualitative research to include mixed-methodologies & multidisciplinary research
13. To be able to evaluate a qualitative research project (yours and others).
14. To learn to work effectively in research, knowledge building, and decision-making.
15. To develop systematic critical, analytical, and problem solving thinking skills.
16. To develop time management, positive motivational, and personal academic goal setting skills.
17. Acquire the basic skills to independently undertake independent study courses, an Honors Thesis and develop the foundations for post-graduate research.
18. To develop intellectual humility, ways of using doubt as a resource, and exploring intellectual curiosity and imagination.
19. Qualitative research: an art and “science”.
20. Practical applications for research at the undergraduate, graduate, and professional level.

Topics will include:

- Philosophical, Paradigm, and Interpretive Frameworks
- Qualitative Research Designs & methodological “**thinking**” (e.g., decision-making criteria)
- Selected Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry and Data Collection (e.g., narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic research)
- Data coding, analysis, and interpretation with a focus on visual methodologies.
- Extending Qualitative Research to Mixed-Methods and multidisciplinary research (e.g. qualitative-quantitative research, cognition, medicine, and other disciplines).
- Gaining qualitative research experience by conducting research projects with an instructor approved visual data set.
- Applying course content to other courses and areas of your life.

This course makes full use of students learning by doing (participating), engaging the course materials and issues, focusing on thinking skills, and student’s existing knowledge and experiential basis. This is also known as “**inquiry-based learning**” (See Blackboard for more details) and a teaching priority at the U of C. Individual and class based learning is emphasized in this course to develop individual and group decision-making and problem solving skills. Methodological techniques and analytical skills are introduced and practices so they may be applied to other university courses and work and volunteer activities outside the classroom. Students are also expected to develop academic and civil responsibilities as members of this class. Instructor’s notes and PowerPoint slides are not posted on Blackboard. Take systematic notes in advance of each class from the readings and expand upon them during classes.

Student Responsibilities:

- Follow syllabus guidelines and ask for clarification whenever required.
- Check D2L for updated information regularly (e.g., a couple of times a week)
- **IMPORTANT FOR A SEMINAR-BASED COURSE - Prepare for each class in advance** by attending to the required readings (see reading schedule on D2L) - including taking notes - the importance of this cannot be overstated - it is very important for student and class progress. Please come to class prepared for regular in-class exercises and discussion. A **Class Reading Schedule** will be posted on D2L before the first class and updated during the term to show which readings are required for each class.
- **Practice asking sociological questions using the required readings for each class. Students will be expected to bring sociological questions to each class. This will also involve developing criteria for evaluating questions and possible answers.**
- Expand upon pre-class notes with supplemental notes during class and share them with other class members.

The three major methodological approaches in qualitative research are: (1) post-positivist, (2) interpretive (e.g., subjective meanings, phenomenology, and symbolic interaction), and (3) critical - e.g., postmodernism, post-structuralism, feminism, social justice. While all approaches offer important contributions, this course will focus on only the first two of these approaches and examples of how they are used in mixed-methodologies and their links to multidisciplinary research. For this purpose, emphasis will be placed upon the intersection between empirical observation, perception, and logical interpretation using visual methodologies.

Methodological **THINKING** is introduced in this course and is one of the more transferable skills (to other courses and areas of your life) underlying methodologies. Also sometimes called “critical” thinking, it is a **mode of thinking** - about any subject, content, or problem - in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. This type of **thinking** will include:

- (1) Raising vital questions and problems, developing specific sociological decision-making criteria, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- (2) Gathering and assessing relevant information and using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively, or visa versa;
- (3) Coming to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;
- (4) thinking with an open mind within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences;
- (5) Communicating effectively with others in figuring out solutions to progressively more complex problems.
- (6) identifying and avoiding (or limiting) ego-based thinking and decision-making.

Part I: The first part of this course will introduce some general issues as well as some data collection techniques during class. Ongoing small exercises will be used to individually and collectively learn how these can be used and to identify problems that arise during the research process. This will be student-engaged focused with in-class exercises and discussions. Student research projects will be tentatively identified and outlined.

Part II: The second part of this course will extend Part I and focus on “doing” research by applying data coding-analysis techniques and their applications. Student research will undertake an instructor approved sociological project to practice and learn course issues and content.

Students wanting to make any type of recording (e.g., audio in class **must first** receive written permission of the instructor for privacy, confidentiality, copyright, and ethical reasons. All recordings are for individual course related study purposes only, and must be destroyed by the last day of this term.

Required Readings:

1. Hesse-Biber, S. & Leavy P. (2011). **The Practice of Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)**. Sage Publications
2. Ball & Smith. (1992) **Analyzing Visual Data**. Sage Publications.
* (1 & 2 are “bundled” to reduce student costs: ISBN 9781452277127)
3. Elder & Paul. **The Art of Asking Essential Questions**.
4. Danny Jorgensen. Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies. Sage. 1989.
U of C Taylor Family Library – **on-line text**.

Evaluations: All components of this course must be completed, and without any violation of copyright laws or University of Calgary ethics, to receive a passing grade. Deadlines are deadlines.

Course evaluation will be based upon:

- **Research Presentations:** TBA – last 2-3 weeks of term (30%)
- **Text Chapter Presentation:** TBA (5%)
- **Participation** (5%)
- **Exams:** Thursday, Feb. 25th (25%) and Thursday, March 24th (25%)
- **Final Quiz:** Tuesday, April 12th (10%) in-class.

- All components of this course must be completed to pass this course.
- No components of any assignments can include any copyright or U of C ethical violations.

Grading Scheme

A+	96-100
A	85-95
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	74-76
B-	70-73
C+	67-69
C	64-66
C-	60-63
D+	55-59
D	50-54
F	49-0

No individual exam grades, nor final course grades, will be “rounded up” to the next percentage (e.g., 85.8 is 85, not 86). No information right of the decimal point is used for calculating grades. Each exam or assignment grade is entered using this criteria, as is the final course grade. This information is to provide a clear and precise boundary for all students to ensure equal evaluation for all students.

Exams are not cumulative with the exception of the final quiz (see final quiz section). Examinations will draw from all materials used, presented, discussed, and assigned in this course (except informal exercises), unless otherwise instructed. About 15% of questions for each exam will draw from course-based supplemental materials presented in class that are not from the textbook or available from other sources. Students are expected to keep up-to-date with all course information and developments in class and on D2L. Again, please be reminded to check D2L regularly (e.g., a couple times a week). All evaluation components must be completed to pass this course.

Deferrals & Make-up Exams

When possible, please provide advance notice if you are unable to write an exam or complete/turn-in assignments on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the health issue rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements, misreading the syllabus, and scheduling conflicts with other classes or employment are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible **or** can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Department of Sociology.

Three Exams: These will include multiple choice, short-answer, fill in the blanks, or work-concept identification questions drawn from materials presented in class, readings, and class discussion, and presentations. The first two exams are not cumulative. Students are advised to take careful and timely notes throughout the class. It is also advised to study in groups. We will work on developing a method for taking notes, studying strategies, and preparing for the exams as part of the course content.

(1) The mid-term exams will be on all course material, discussions, presentations, and assignments up to the date of the exam but not include materials from previous exams.

(2) The final in-class examination will include questions drawn from selections from research presentation, selected course readings, and other class work (students will be notified of areas to review –TBA). More detailed information will be given in class, well in advance.

Text Chapter Presentation: PURPOSE: This assignment allows students to: (1) begin developing and assessing working in a research, (2) practice presentation and communication skills, (3) practice methodological thinking we are learning in this class. Each student will be assigned a chapter (a qualitative methodological issue) from one of the text books to summarize and present to the class. The student will then make a 15-minute power point presentation. This presentation will summarize and critically comment on the assigned reading, make clear links to other course readings and issues, and require a 1-2-page point-form summary outline be distributed to all class members prior to the presentation. Do not limit your presentation to reading off the slides or your handout. It is suggested you use no more than 10 slides to discuss your information. More details will be given in class the first week of the term. Do not violate any copyright material from any source, including the internet. If the source does not explicitly give permission to use it, don't. There is new federal copyright legislation in place for the U of C and university faculty and students could be audited and be held liable by non-university bodies for copyright violations. As will all components of this course, please use the instructor as a supportive resource (plan in advance).

Research Presentation: PURPOSE: The main purpose of this assignment is for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of what they have learned from the beginning of the term through an applied and analytic research project. For the professional *research presentation* of 20-25 minutes, students are expected, in consultation with the instructor, to work in a supportive learning environment to present their mixed-methods research assignment focusing on demonstration of understanding course issues and analysis of data. Since the project will draw from materials and issues covered during the term it has a “**cumulative**” component in terms of presentation and evaluation. More instructions will be provided in class.

Research topics and data collection methods must be approved by Dr. Arnold NO LATER THAN FEB. 23RD. More info will be given during a number of classes – feel free to discuss your ideas and interests so I can assist you with your project. Your research topic **must** be one we cover in this class. All components of this assignment must be completed, otherwise it will be graded “incomplete.”

This project will use instructor approved on campus participant observation (ethnographic) research projects, unless otherwise instructed. This project will give students “hands-on” experience with some of the decision-making challenges and rewards associated with “doing” qualitative research. More information will be given in class early in the term and posted on D2L. Dr. Arnold will work with you to develop your ideas, methodological issues, ethical, and substantive content issues. Do not violate any University of Calgary copyright rules for material from any source, including the internet. When in doubt, ask Dr. Arnold. Any violations will be the sole responsibility of the student.

Class Presentation Handout: A 2-3 page (only) singled-spaced point-form outline of the presentation (not a copy of the Power Point slides), plus the bibliography, will be submitted to the instructor and all students at the beginning of the class presentation, plus bibliography). Arrangements can be made for teaching aids to assist in presentations when necessary (e.g. PowerPoint). Do not simply read off your power point slides or handouts. More information will be given well in advance. *A copy of the PowerPoint presentation will be emailed to the instructor (drarnold@ucalgary.ca) before the presentation.*

Again, do not violate any copyright material from any source, including the internet. If the source does not explicitly give permission to use it, don't. There is new federal copyright legislation in place for the U of C and university faculty and students could be audited and be held liable by non-university bodies for copyright violations. No violations are permitted.

Participation: Students are expected to be prepared to engage the class materials to contribute to all class exercises and discussions (please recall this is a SEMINAR based course) making **thoughtful** and **critical use of course readings, issues, and sociological thinking**. We will all therefore be able to learn, make mistakes, and work together. We will use *uncertainty* as a learning tool!

(1) Students will be asked during the course to thoughtfully comment on specific assigned readings and or issues discussed in class. Again, this is for students to learn how to apply course material and issues and so all students are on “the same page” and are therefore better prepared to learn from the classes, labs, and be better equipped for exams and research projects.

(2) Students are expected to initiate and ask thoughtful questions and respond to questions throughout the course.

CONTINUED REGISTRATION IN THIS COURSE IMPLIES AGREEMENT WITH TERMS IN THIS COURSE SYLLABUS.

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1. Grade Reappraisal: Within two weeks of the date the exam/assignment is returned, students seeking reappraisal of examinations or assignments must submit a written response to the instructor explaining the basis for reconsideration of one’s mark. The instructor will reconsider the grade assigned and will then book a time with the student to discuss his or her work and rationale. It should be noted that a reconsidered mark may be raised, lowered, or remain the same.
2. The main Sociology Department office does not deal with any course-related matters. Please speak directly to your instructor.
3. Academic Misconduct: Please refer to the website listed below for information on University of Calgary policies on Plagiarism/Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>
4. Protection of Privacy: The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPP) legislation does not allow students to retrieve any course material from public places. Anything that requires handing back will be returned directly during class or office hours. “If students are unable to pick up their assignments from the instructor, they provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.” All recordings of any type in class must first be approved by the instructor and a privacy, confidentiality, and copyright form needs to be signed.
5. Academic Accommodation - Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit www.ucalgary.ca/access/.
Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.
The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at
http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy_0.pdf
6. Student Representation - The 2015-16 Students’ Union VP Academic is Stephan Guscott: email: suvpaca@ucalgary.ca. The Faculty of Arts has four SU representatives who may be contacted at any of the following email addresses: arts1@ucalgary.ca, arts2@ucalgary.ca, arts3@ucalgary.ca, and arts4@ucalgary.ca. You may also wish to contact the Student Ombudsperson for help with a variety of University-related matters: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds/role>
7. Emergency Evacuation: In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom, please proceed to the assembly point for our class at **The Professional Faculties – Food Court**. Please check these assembly point locations for your other classes at:
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>
8. Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a “safe walk” service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the “Help” phones located around Campus.
9. Ethics Research - Students are advised that any research with human subjects – including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation – must have the approval of the Faculty Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects’ research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

