

**THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
(www.soci.ucalgary.ca)**

SOCIOLOGY 705.03 (Case Study Research)

Course Outline, Winter 2009

Safewalk/Campus Security: 220-5333, ANYTIME

This course makes use of Blackboard to communicate information to students. To access Blackboard, go to: blackboard.ucalgary.ca OR my.ucalgary.ca

Instructor: Tom Langford Email: langford@ucalgary.ca
Offices: SS 954 (Phone: 220-6500) or SS 924 (Phone: 220-5043)

Office Hours: Fridays 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. from January 16 to February 27 (not including the Reading Week Friday, February 20)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- (1) To enable students to become familiar with some of the current methodological writing on case study research.
- (2) To read and discuss a classic sociological case study, William Foote Whyte's *Street Corner Society*.
- (3) To allow each student to find a published case study in a substantive field of interest that can then be used to discuss some of the central methodological issues in case study research.
- (4) To read and discuss some of the critiques of variable-centred research.
- (5) To introduce Michael Burawoy's extended case method.
- (6) To identify criteria that can be used to judge the goodness of case study research.
- (7) To identify effective ways to justify the utility of case study research to granting agencies, academic reviewers, journal editors and other academic gatekeepers.
- (8) To introduce Charles Ragin's Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and related techniques for explanatory research in small N studies.

BOOKS and OTHER READINGS

Two books have been ordered through the book store:

- (1) Yin, Robert K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, fourth edition* (Applied Social Research Methods Series, v. 5, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).
- (2) Whyte, William Foote. 1993 [1943]. *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum, fourth edition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press). (It would also be okay to read the third edition published in 1981.)

If other readings are not readily available on line, I will provide a personal photocopy that students can copy. See the reading schedule at the end of this outline.

STUDENT EVALUATION

1. Participation in seminars

- please come to class having completed any assigned readings and prepared to contribute to our discussions
- you don't have to say a lot in order to make a positive contribution, but you do have to say something!

... value = 15%

2. Methodological summary and critique of a published case study of interest to you

- 10 minute presentation to the class supplemented by a one page handout
- a written report of a maximum 1000 words is due after your presentation
- presentations will be scheduled for February 2 or 9
- written report is due no later than Tuesday February 10

... value = 20%

3. Possible questions for the take-home test

- please contribute two original essay questions that would challenge the students in this seminar to demonstrate their understanding of some feature(s) of case study research
- due by email no later than Wednesday February 11

... value = 5%

4. Take-Home Test

- Questions will be handed out no later than Friday February 13 at noon
- Answers will be due on Monday February 23 at noon (submit as an email attachment)
- Format: Answer 2 of "X" questions. Strict word limits will be stipulated for your answers.
- The Take-Home Test will cover all course material EXCEPT Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

... value = 60%

IMPORTANT CONVENTIONS

(1) Except in the cases of documented illness, or extenuating circumstances brought to the attention of instructor prior to the due date of a particular course component, there will be a penalty for late work of 5% of the assigned grade per day.

(2) A student who has a legitimate reason for being unable to complete a required course activity on time must discuss an alternative course of action with the instructor.

(3) Please note that requests to defer term work past the end of a term go through the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO). You can find the Deferred Term Work Form at: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf> You must submit this form to the Social Sciences Associate Dean (Students) through the Undergraduate Programs Office, 4th Floor, MacEwan Student Centre. To make an appointment with the Associate Dean, phone (403) 220-8155. Only the Associate Dean approves requests for deferrals which extend beyond the end of a term.

(4) The quality of a student's writing is a factor in the evaluation of a student's work in this course.

(5) "Intellectual honesty is the cornerstone of the development and acquisition of knowledge" (*Calendar 2008-09*, p. 54). Please review the University of Calgary's policies for dealing with student misconduct, particularly plagiarism and cheating.

(6) **The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP)** legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments or tests or projects from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Graded work must be returned to students individually. After the term is over, please email the instructor to arrange to pick up work in person. Alternately please supply a stamped, self-addressed envelope so that your work can be returned to you by mail.

(7) **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 Departmental Ethics Committee. Therefore please ensure that departmental ethics approval is in place before you begin the group research project for this course.

(8) Academic Accommodation

Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of

class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

LETTER GRADE ASSIGNMENT

At the end of the term numerical marks are totalled and a final letter grade is assigned on the following basis:

Percentage Range	Letter Grade	Graduate Description
less than 40	F	
40-44	D	
45-49	D+	
50-54	C-	
55-59	C	
60-64	C+	
65-69	B-	" Minimum Pass"
70-74	B	"Satisfactory performance"
75-79	B+	"Good performance"
80-84	A-	"Very good performance"
85-89	A	"Excellent – superior performance"
90 or higher	A+	"Outstanding"

DETAILED COURSE SCHEDULE, including readings

Date	Topic	Readings
12 January	Introductory	Flyvbjerg, Bent, 2004. "Five Misunderstandings about case-study research." (full reference at top of paper)

Date	Topic	Readings
19 January	(1) Yin's approach and recommendations (2) The Normative Case Study	Yin, <i>Case Study Research</i> , chapters 1, 2 and 4 (only glance at chapter 3) Thacher, David, 2006. "The Normative Case Study." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 111(6): 1631-76.
26 January	(1) Yin on analyzing case study evidence (2) Yin on the exemplary case study (3) Beginning <i>Street Corner Society</i>	Yin, <i>Case Study Research</i> , chapter 5 Yin, <i>Case Study Research</i> , pp. 185-190 Whyte, <i>Street Corner Society</i> : 1) Introduction and Part I 2) Appendix A
2 February	(1) Critiques of Variable Analysis (2) More <i>Street Corner Society</i>	1) Blumer, Herbert, 1956. "Sociological Analysis and the 'Variable'." <i>American Sociological Review</i> , 21(6): 683-690. 2) second reading TBA Whyte, <i>Street Corner Society</i> : Part II

Date	Topic	Readings
9 February	(1) Extended Case Method (2) Finishing <i>Street Corner Society</i> (3) Judging the Goodness of Case Study Research (4) Justifying the Utility of Case Study Research	Burawoy, Michael, 1998. "The Extended Case Method." <i>Sociological Theory</i> 16 (1): 4-33. Whyte, <i>Street Corner Society</i> : 1) Part III 2) Appendix B none none
16 February	Reading Break	Work on Take-Home Test
23 February	Qualitative Comparative Analysis	None (Langford will present material)