

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
([www.soci.ucalgary.ca](http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca))

SOCIOLOGY 705 S01 (Case Study Research)

Course Outline, Winter 2014

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](http://blackboard.ucalgary.ca) OR [my.ucalgary.ca](http://my.ucalgary.ca)

**Instructor:** Tom Langford Email: [langford@ucalgary.ca](mailto:langford@ucalgary.ca)  
Office: SS 924 (Phone: 220-5043)

**Course Schedule:** We will meet on Mondays at 1:00 p.m. in SS 905 on the following dates: January 13, 20 and 27; February 3, 10 and 24.

**Office Hours:** Tuesdays or Thursdays, 12 noon to 1 p.m., or by appointment (no office hours during Reading Week, February 16-22).

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. 2014. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods, fifth edition* (Applied Social Research Methods Series, v. 5, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage).
- (2) Whyte, William Foote. 1993. *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum, fourth edition, revised and expanded* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press).

If other readings are not available on line I will provide a personal photocopy. 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 assigned reading questions, 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 = 20%

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

- 10 minute presentation to the class with questions to follow
- a written report of a maximum 1000 words is due after your presentation
- presentations will be scheduled for February 3
- written report is due no later than February 4, end of the day (to be submitted as an email attachment)

... value = 25%

### 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 12, end of the day

... value = 5%

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4. Take-Home Test

- Questions will be handed out no later than Friday February 14 at noon
- Answers will be due on Friday February 21 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 = 50%

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) *Deferred Term Work Form:*

Deferral of term work past the end of a term requires a form to be filled out. It's available at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

Once an extension date has been agreed between instructor and student, the form should be taken to the Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (SS 102) for approval by an Associate Dean (Students).

(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) All of your work in this course should be submitted as an email attachment. It will be returned with comments in the same way.

(7) Academic Accommodation
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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
13 January	Introductory	<p>(1) Yin, <i>Case Study Research</i>, Preface (xix to xxii only) and all of Chapter 1 (pp. 1 to 25).</p> <p>(2) “Defining Case Study Research” section of the “Introduction” to the <i>Encyclopedia of Case Study Research</i>, edited by Albert J. Mills, Gabrielle Durepos and Eiden Wiebe.</p> <p>(3) Steidl, Christina R. 2013. “Remembering May 4, 1970: Integrating the Commemorative Field at Kent State.” <i>American Sociological Review</i> 78(5): 749-772.</p>
20 January	<p>(1) Yin's approach and recommendations on designing case studies</p> <p>(2) Mis-understandings about case study research</p> <p>(3) The Normative Case Study</p>	<p>Yin, <i>Case Study Research</i>, chapter 2 and two selections from Chapter 3 (first two paragraphs on p. 84; and the section on pp. 92-93, “Undesired confusion between unit of data collection and unit of analysis”).</p> <p>Flyvbjerg, Bent, 2004. "Five Misunderstandings about case-study research." (full reference at top of the chapter I will hand out)</p> <p>Thacher, David, 2006. "The Normative Case Study." <i>American Journal of Sociology</i> 111(6): 1631-76 (note: “Reading Notes and Discussion Questions” are posted on Blackboard).</p>

27 January	<p>(1) Yin on collecting case study evidence</p> <p>(2) Yin on analyzing case study evidence</p> <p>(3) Yin on the exemplary case study</p> <p>(4) Beginning <i>Street Corner Society</i></p>	<p>Yin, <i>Case Study Research</i>, chapter 4</p> <p>Yin, <i>Case Study Research</i>, chapter 5</p> <p>Yin, <i>Case Study Research</i>, pp. 200-206</p> <p>Whyte, <i>Street Corner Society</i>:</p> <p>1) Introduction and Part I (pp. xv-108)</p> <p>2) Appendix A (pp. 279-360)</p>
3 February	<p>(1) Critiques of Variable Analysis</p> <p>(2) More <i>Street Corner Society</i></p>	<p>1) Blumer, Herbert. 1956. "Sociological Analysis and the 'Variable'." <i>American Sociological Review</i>, 21(6): 683-690.</p> <p>2) Ragin, Charles C. 1992. "Introduction: Cases of 'What is a case?'" In Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker (eds.), <i>What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry</i>. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). [Only read pp. 1-11.]</p> <p>Whyte, <i>Street Corner Society</i>: Part II (pp. 111-252)</p>
10 February	<p>(1) Extended Case Method</p> <p>(2) Finishing <i>Street Corner Society</i></p>	<p>Burawoy, Michael, 1998. "The Extended Case Method." <i>Sociological Theory</i> 16 (1): 4-33.</p> <p>Whyte, <i>Street Corner Society</i>:</p> <p>1) Part III (pp. 255-276)</p> <p>2) Appendix B (pp. 361-375)</p>

10 February (continued)	(3) Judging the Goodness of Case Study Research  (4) Justifying the Utility of Case Study Research	none  none
17 February	Reading Break	Work on Take-Home Test
24 February	Qualitative Comparative Analysis	None (Langford will present material)