Course Description
This course is designed to provide students with a broad introduction to commonly used approaches to conducting and analyzing systematic (mostly) qualitative research that include: participant observation, interviewing, ethnography, case studies, comparative historical analysis; archival research, and interpretive analysis. Throughout the semester, we will address common issues that arise when using qualitative methods, paying special attention to theory building, methodological reliability and validity, ethics, and the degree to which evidence from qualitative research can be presented convincingly. The course will also focus on the related problems inherent in “writing up” one’s work (i.e., how does one turn all this information into coherent theory?). This course intends to prepare students to evaluate existing empirical studies in planning and other social science journals, but also to conceptualize, develop and modify your own research.

We will also do close reads of published texts employing qualitative methodologies, using them as methodological case studies. This course, then, is part seminar (where students share with the professor responsibility for presenting and responding to the material), and part practicum in data collection (where students are expected to complete structured exercises in qualitative research, write them up, and discuss with class).

Course Requirements
1. Weekly participation and discussion questions 15%
2. Class presentation summarizing one week’s readings and providing critical questions for class discussion 15% (weeks 4,5,7,8, 9, 11, 12,13)
3. Assignments (4) 70%
   (1) Research problem (wk3); (2) Artifacts and visual methods (wk6); (3) Mini case (wk10); (4) Using mixed methods (wk14)

Required Books


Course Schedule

Week 1:  Introduction: Planning and Methods
1/22


*In class assignment*

Week 2:  Description, Descriptive Inference, Causality
1/29

- King, Keohane & Verba *Designing Social Inquiry* (chapters 2 & 3)
- National Science Foundation (2004) *Workshop on Scientific Foundations of Qualitative Research* Washington, D.C: National Science Foundation:
  - Mahoney. James - The distinctive contributions of qualitative data analysis (93-99)
  - Bennett, Andrew Testing Theories and Explaining Cases (49-51)

*Discuss research question*

Week 3:  Designing a Qualitative Study
2/5

John Creswell *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*

- Chapter 3. Designing a Qualitative Study
- Chapter 4. Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry
- Chapter 5. Five Different Qualitative Studies
- Chapter 6. Introducing and Focusing the Study

*Writing assignment #1: Research statement*

Week 4:  Design with Validity and Reliability
2/12

- John Creswell *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*
  Chapter 9. Writing a Qualitative Study
  Chapter 10. Standards of Validation and Reliability in Qualitative Research
- National Science Foundation (2004) *Workshop on Scientific Foundations of Qualitative Research* Washington, D.C: National Science Foundation:
  - Silbey, Susan S. - “Designing Qualitative Research Projects” (119-125)
  - Katz, Jack. - “Commonsense Criteria.” (81-90)
  - Bashi, Vilna. “Improving Qualitative Research Proposal Evaluation” (37-43)
Week 5: 2/19

**Authorship, Narratives, and Interpretation**

- John Creswell *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* Appendix B. A Narrative Research Study

Week 6: 2/26

**Direct Observation, Visual Methods, Interviewing and Artifacts**

- John Creswell *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* Chapter 7. Data Collection
- Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* Chapter 4. Oral History - Linda Shopes
  Chapter 5. Observations on Observation: Continuities and Challenges - Michael Angrosino and Judith Rosenberg
- King, Keohane & Verba *Designing Social Inquiry* Chapters 4 & 5

*Writing assignment #2 - Artifacts and visual methods project*

Week 7: 3/5

**Participatory Action and Adopting a Phenomenological Stance in Planning**

- John Creswell *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* Appendix C. A Phenomenological Study

Week 8: 3/12

**Ethnography and “Ethnographic Approaches”**

- John Creswell *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* Appendix E. An Ethnography

Week 9: 3/26

**Data Collection: Case Study I**

- Robert Yin *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* Chapters 1, 2 & 3
• John Creswell *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*  
  Appendix F. A Case Study  

**Week 10: Data Collection: Case Study II**

4/2

- Flyvbjerg, Bent. 2006. "Five Misunderstandings about Case Study"  

*Writing assignment #3: Mini case*

**Week 11: Comparative and Mixed Methods**

4/9


**Week 12: Evaluation and Evaluating Qualitative Research**

4/16

- Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*  
  18. Evaluation as a Relationally Responsible Practice - Tineke Abma, et al  
- National Science Foundation (2004) *Workshop on Scientific Foundations of Qualitative Research* Washington, D.C: National Science Foundation:  
  Kathleen Blee - Evaluating Qualitative Research  
  Michèle Lamont - Evaluating Qualitative Research: Some Empirical Findings and an Agenda

**Week 13: Ethics And Politics**

4/23

- Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*  
  8. The Methods, Politics, and Ethics of Representation in Online Ethnography - Sarah Gaston  
Note: in 2002 there was an extremely politically charged debate about urban ethnography that took place in the pages of the May issue of the American Journal of Sociology. That debate was sparked by Loïc Wacquant’s review of three books: Mitchell Duneier’s *Sidewalk*, Elijah Anderson’s *Code of the Streets*, and Katherine Newman’s *No Shame in my Game*. The authors all had the opportunity to respond in that issue. (Pay slightly less attention to point-by-point critiques and responses, but more attentions to the introductions, conclusions, and analyses that come just before the conclusions of each piece):

**Week 14: Constructing the Qualitative Proposal**

4/30

*Writing assignment #4: proposal using mixed methods*