

SOCI/ANTH 201 FIELD RESEARCH IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Bucknell University, Spring 2023

Professor: Dr. Daniel Alvord

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Office Location: 301 Academic West

Office Hours: Monday / Wednesday 1:30PM – 3:00PM

Course Location: 451 Olin Science

Course Days: Thursday

Course Time: 1:00pm – 3:50pm

Course #: 55213

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Qualitative research is a name given to a wide variety of methodologies, from ethnography to content analysis to in-depth interviews to focus groups. What unites these disparate methodologies is the goal of understanding meanings, experiences, practices, and processes. Several different disciplines use forms of qualitative research to generate academic knowledge, such as sociology, anthropology, education, political science, and others.

This course is designed to be a practical introduction to the logic and method of qualitative research, namely ethnography, participant observation, and in-depth interviewing. We will cover topics such as how to construct qualitative questions, how to code interview transcripts and field notes, how to sample, and some of the important issues of research ethics. There is no better way to learn how to conduct research than to actually *do* research. Thus, over the course of the semester, you will be engaging in empirical data collection and field research. You should expect to leave campus and devote a significant amount of time to this course. The goal of this class is for you to finish with a strong research proposal.

This class is also listed as a “W2” class, which means that we will focus on writing and “thinking through writing.” This means that there will be a significant amount of writing (and different forms of writing) over the semester as well as successive *drafts* of your proposal.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The primary goal for this course is to introduce you to the logic, method, and practices of qualitative research in sociology and anthropology. By the end of the course, you should be able to:

- Understand and appreciate the epistemological foundations of qualitative research
- Understand and appreciate the variety of qualitative methods
- Learn how to conduct a qualitative research project
- Learn how to analyze and write a research paper based on qualitative evidence
- Understand how the writing process undergirds research and theory development in the social sciences

COURSE MATERIAL

There is no need to purchase any texts for this class. All required readings will be made available on Moodle. Readings may change or be adjusted over the course of the semester. However, any updates to the readings will be noted and communicated ahead of time.

While there are no required books to purchase, there are several very good books on various aspects that we will cover in the course that you may wish to consult or even purchase if you want:

General Qualitative Research

Kristin Luker – *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences*
Ashely T. Rubin – *Rocking Qualitative Social Science*
Howard Becker – *Tricks of the Trade*
Kathy Charmaz – *Constructing Grounded Theory*
Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss – *Basics of Qualitative Research*
Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell - *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*
Andrew Abbott – *Digital Paper*
Wayne C. Booth et al. – *The Craft of Research*

Ethnography / Participant Observation

Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson – *Ethnography*
Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw – *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*
John Van Maanen – *Tales of the Field*
Giampietro Gobo and Andrea Molle - *Doing Ethnography*
Christena Nippert-Eng – *Watching Closely*

Interviewing

Annette Larea – *Listening to People*
Kathleen Gerson – *The Science and Art of Interviewing*
Robert S. Weiss – *Learning from Strangers*
Irving Seidman – *Interviewing as Qualitative Research*
Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin - *Qualitative Interviewing*

Analyzing

Stefan Timmermans and Iddo Tavory – *Data Analysis in Qualitative Research*
Johnny Saldana – *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*
Charles F. Vanover, Paul A. Mihas, and Johnny Saldana (eds) - *Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Research: After the Interview*

Writing

Helen Sword – *Stylish Academic Writing*
Cathy Birkenstein and Gerald Graff – *They Say / I Say*
Howard Becker – *Writing for Social Scientists*
Howard Becker – *Telling About Society*
Joli Jensen – *Write No Matter What*
William Germano – *On Revision*
Kristen Ghodsee – *From Notes to Narrative*
Lawrence A. Machi and Brenda T. McEvoy – *The Literature Review*

Some Academic Journals

Ethnography

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography

Field Methods

Qualitative Sociology

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative Research

Sociological Methods & Research

ASSESSMENTS

For this course, you will be expected to complete the following:

Discussion Leader (20%): You will sign up to lead discussion for one week. Each week a student will be responsible for leading the discussion on the topic and readings.

Participant Observation Assignment (20%): The purpose of this assignment is for you to a) gain some insight into field research techniques by participating in and observing social behavior in public places, b) get experience with writing jottings and fieldnotes, and c) reflect analytically on those processes. You should choose a public setting for your participant observation. Any locations which are not public settings of this type should be approved by me first. Participate and conduct observations in this location over approximately 3 hours. If possible, try to make observations on more than one day or time. Write up your fieldnotes as soon as possible after your observations. Ideally, you should take jotted notes, but don't write the full fieldnotes as you're observing. Because fieldnotes may be handwritten, please hand in a typed copy of this assignment at the beginning of class on the due date.

Interview Assignment (20%): The purpose of this assignment is for you to design an interview guide, develop interviewing skills, and gain experience conducting in-depth interviews. You will conduct and record 2-3 in-depth semi-structured interviews. You will submit a) the audio files, b) all interview forms (e.g., consent form), c) the transcribed and de-identified interview files, and d) sketches that describe the setting of the interview

Final Research Proposal (30%): Your final assignment for this class is to write a research proposal for a qualitative research project. The proposal should include:

- 1) The goal of the study, including the research question(s) and their significance/value (why should people care about your proposed study?);
- 2) Background/Context/Theoretical Framework discussion that locates the project within the relevant theoretical and empirical literature and justifies why your study is needed and how it will advance scholarly (and public) knowledge;
- 3) Detailed description of research methodology, including, justification for your method(s), description of your method(s), which may include: sampling considerations or case selection, access to research site/populations (e.g., recruiting participants), examples of interview questions for in-depth interviews or questions you might ask informally in the field, ethical issues, reflections on your social position and why you chose this topic of study, issues of confidentiality, and when and how you will begin data analysis.

- 4) Bibliography;
- 5) Interview guide (if appropriate);
- 6) Consent form (if appropriate)

Attendance and Participation (10%): Your attendance and participation are vital for this class. I expect you to be in class and ready to discuss the readings and your project. Because this class meets once a week, each class meeting is particularly important. Therefore, I will be taking attendance in this class. You will be allowed only 1 free absence.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

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| Discussion Leader | 15% |
| Participant Observation Assignment | 20% |
| Interview Assignment | 20% |
| Final Research Proposal | 30% |
| Attendance and Participation | 15% |
| TOTAL | 100% |

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity: Bucknell’s policy on academic responsibility is as follows: “Bucknell students are responsible to the academic community for the preparation and presentation of work representing their own individual efforts. Acceptance of this responsibility is essential to the educational process and must be considered as an expression of mutual trust, the foundation upon which creative scholarship rests. Students are directed to use great care when preparing all written work and to acknowledge fully the source of all ideas and language other than their own.” Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, academic misconduct, or misuse of computing facilities will not be tolerated. All incidents of which will be reported to the appropriate Associate Dean to be vigorously pursued in accordance with Bucknell’s Academic Responsibility policy. Please review the new Bucknell web resources on Academic Responsibility at <http://www.bucknell.edu/AcademicResponsibility/>

The Honor Code and Academic Engagement

The Committee on Instruction recommended to the faculty that they add the following two texts to their syllabi (College of Arts and Sciences Meeting on December 5, 2012):

Bucknell University Honor Code

As a student and citizen of the Bucknell University community:

1. I will not lie, cheat or steal in my academic endeavors.
2. I will forthrightly oppose each and every instance of academic dishonesty.
3. I will let my conscience guide my decision to communicate directly with any person or persons I believe to have been dishonest in academic work.
4. I will let my conscience guide my decision on reporting breaches of academic integrity to the appropriate faculty or deans.

Bucknell University Expectations for Academic Engagement

Courses at Bucknell that receive one unit of academic credit have a minimum expectation of 12 hours per week of student academic engagement. Student academic engagement includes both the hours of direct faculty instruction (or its equivalent) and the hours spent on out of class student work. Half and quarter unit courses at Bucknell should have proportionate expectations for student engagement.

Accommodations: Any student who needs an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) at OAR@bucknell.edu; 570-577-1188 or complete the Disability Accommodation Request form (https://bucknell-accommodate.symphlicity.com/public_accommodation/). The OAR will coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Attendance: Consistent class attendance is vital to your success in this course. I will take attendance in this course (though there is no points awarded for attendance) and it is expected that you will attend all class meetings, that you will arrive on time, and that you will be present and engaged during class meetings. If you have a bona fide reason that you must miss class, such as illness or a personal emergency, be sure to contact me and inform them about your situation; be sure to do so as soon as you know that you find it necessary to miss class, and if at all possible do this prior to the class session that you will need to miss. For any class session that you miss, for any reason, it is recommended that you come visit me during office hours to talk about the materials.

Electronic Devices: Cellphones and other mobile devices are to be silenced and stowed away during class. Research shows that using a laptop during class impedes both your learning and the learning of students around you (see, e.g., Sana et al. 2013, and Dynarski 2017). If you must use one, or insist on using one, students may sit in a “laptop zone” if they feel, for any reason, that you would benefit from using a laptop to take notes.

Email: Email is the most useful and convenient way to get in touch with me. There are a few email guidelines that should be adhered to during this course. First, I do not discuss grades over email. Any discussion of grades should be done during office hours. Second, unless otherwise noted, I do not read early drafts of papers or answer substantive questions by email. I am more than happy to read drafts, provide comments, and give clarification for concepts covered in class during office hours, but not by email. Finally, I am not “on call” with my email. If you email me late at night, for example, do not expect an immediate reply.

Extra Credit: There are no “built in” extra credit opportunities in this class. However, opportunities for extra credit will be made available as they present themselves.

Illness: If you are sick, please do not come to class. If you must miss a deadline because of illness, please contact me by email.

Late Assignments: Unless otherwise noted, all assignments must be submitted by the beginning of class on the assigned due date. If you anticipate missing an assignment, you must contact me ahead of time and we will work out an arrangement. If you miss an assignment without

contacting me ahead of time, you will have a limited period of time (2 weeks) to turn the assignment in for a reduced grade. After 2 weeks, there you will receive no credit for the late assignment.

Library: The library is a great and wonderful place. Contact the social science librarian for help if needed: Carrie Pirmann (carrie.pirmann@bucknell.edu), Bertrand Library Research Help Area.

Masking: In accordance with the University's rule that all individuals are to be masked at all times whenever inside campus buildings, you must be fully masked at all times when attending class. Unless and until the University announces a formal change to this policy in a written communication to the campus community, the masking policy will remain in effect. "Fully masked" means having a mask fully covering both your mouth and the entirety of your nostrils; wearing a mask over your mouth but not covering your nose entirely is as good as not wearing a mask at all. There are no exceptions to this masking requirement.

Mental Health Resources: Any student who is struggling and believes this may impact their performance in the course is encouraged to contact their Associate Academic Dean or the Dean of Students at 570-577-1601 for support. Furthermore, please approach me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide resources and support. If immediate mental health assistance is needed, call the Counseling & Student Development Center at 570-577-1604 (24/7).

Religious Holidays: Students seeking academic accommodations (missing class, rescheduling labs or assignments, etc.) in order to observe religious holidays should inform me as early in the semester as possible to set up a time to meet and discuss appropriate action.

Respectful Engagement: In this class, all students are welcome regardless of race/ethnicity, gender identities, gender expressions, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, disabilities, religion, regional background, Veteran status, citizenship status, nationality and other diverse identities that we each bring to class. Your success at Bucknell and beyond is enhanced by the innovation and creativity of thought that inclusive classrooms facilitate. The success of an inclusive classroom relies on the participation, support, and understanding of you and your peers. We encourage you to speak up and share your views, but also understand that you are doing so in a learning environment in which we all are expected to engage respectfully and with regard to the dignity of all others. We all come to class from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. Since the purpose of a class is to explore and better understand a topic, we need that variety of perspectives to strengthen our ability to learn, generate hypotheses, and analyze facts and opinions. Therefore, it is vital that each person feels comfortable bringing their unique perspective to bear on a given subject, and that it happens in a respectful manner.

Most people appreciate having freedom to explore their own opinions (and perhaps change their minds or retrench), so let us consider providing that freedom to each other as well. This give and take requires a community where people believe that they can speculate, question, or discuss deep or challenging issues without fear of attack or disrespect. This class is one of your first professional environments, so we will practice professional quality behavior. Behaviors that are of low quality, such as arriving late, being unprepared, missing class, texting, shirking group work, turning in work late, not doing your own work or other less desirable

behaviors, lay the groundwork for shallow learning. My intent is rather to help you lay the groundwork for deep and engaged learning, and so your involvement in and professional demeanor towards the class counts heavily. Please feel free to discuss these matters with me or the class. In cases of serious infractions, I will follow University policies for academic honesty & plagiarism, which can be found at <http://www.bucknell.edu/x1324.xml>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Course readings and topics are subject to change as the course unfolds. Any changes to the course schedule will be communicated with you ahead of time.

| DATE | THINGS TO DO BY THIS DATE |
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| Thursday, January 19 | <p>Introductions and Overview of the Class</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syllabus |
| Thursday, January 26 | <p>Epistemology, or What is Qualitative Research Trying to Accomplish?</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ashley T. Rubin – “Topo: What Exactly Are Qualitative Methods?” from <i>Rocking Qualitative Social Science</i> • Mario Luis Small – “‘How Many Cases Do I Need?’: On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research” <i>Ethnography</i> • Annette Lareau – “Using the Terms “Hypothesis” and “Variable” for Qualitative Work: A Critical Reflection” <i>Journal of Marriage and Family</i> • Kristin Luker – “What’s It All About?” from <i>Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences</i> • Howard Becker – “The Epistemology of Qualitative Research” from <i>Ethnography and Human Development: Context and Meaning in Social Inquiry</i> • Howard Becker – “How to Find Out How to Do Qualitative Research” <i>International Journal of Communication</i> • Josh Pacewicz – “What Can You Do With a Single Case? How to Think About Ethnographic Case Selection Like a Historical Sociologist” <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> |
| Thursday, February 2 | <p>Designing Research and Asking Questions that Qualitative Research Can Answer</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annette Lareau – “Before You Begin” from <i>Listening to People</i> • Ashley T. Rubin – “Picking Your Proj: Identifying your Research Question” from <i>Rocking Qualitative Social Science</i> • Kristin Luker – “What Is This a Case Of, Anyway?” and “Reviewing the Literature” from <i>Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences</i> |
| Thursday, February 9 | <p>Analyzing Qualitative Data: Inductive, Deductive, and Abductive</p> <p>Read</p> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrea J. Bingham and Patricia Witkowsky – “Deductive and Inductive Approaches to Qualitative Data Analysis” from <i>Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Research</i> • Iddo Tavory and Stefan Timmermans – “The Alternatives” and “Abduction and Multiple Theories” from <i>Abductive Analysis: Theorizing Qualitative Research</i> |
| Thursday, February 16 | <p>Ethical Considerations and Debates</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kathleen Blee and Ashley Currier – “Ethics Beyond the IRB: An Introductory Essay” <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> • Gideon Lewis-Kraus – “The Trials of Alice Goffman” <i>New York Times</i> • Mario L. Small – “De-Exoticizing Ghetto Poverty: On the Ethics of Representation in Urban Ethnography” <i>City & Community</i> • Colin Jerolmack and Alexandra K. Murphy – “The Ethical Dilemmas and Social Scientific Trade-Offs of Masking in Ethnography” <i>Sociological Methods and Research</i> • Irene Bloemraad and Cecilia Menjívar – “Precarious Times, Professional Tensions: The Ethics of Migration Research and the Drive for Scientific Accountability” <i>International Migration Review</i> • Katherine Borland – “That’s Not What I Said: Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research” from <i>Women’s Words</i> • Victoria Reyes – “Three Models of Transparency in Ethnographic Research: Naming Places, Naming People, and Sharing Data” <i>Ethnography</i> • Maria K. E. Lahman, Rowen Thomas, and Eric D. Teman – “A Good Name: Pseudonyms in Research” <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> |
| Thursday, February 23 | <p>Ethnography: Selecting a Site and Access</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Erving Goffman – “On Fieldwork” <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> • Brooke Harrington – “The Social Psychology of Access in Ethnographic Research” <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> • Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson – “Access” from <i>Ethnography</i> |
| Thursday, March 2 | Ethnography: Fieldnotes and Reflexivity |

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| | <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Victoria Reyes – “Ethnographic Toolkit: Strategic Positionality and Researchers’ Visible and Invisible Tools in Field Research” <i>Ethnography</i> • Roni Berger – “Now I See It, Now I Don’t: Researcher’s Position and Reflexivity in Qualitative Research” <i>Qualitative Research</i> • Elizabeth Cherry, Colter Ellis, and Michaela DeSoucey – “Food for Thought, Thought for Food: Consumption, Identity, and Ethnography” <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> • Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw – “Participant Observation and Fieldnotes” from <i>Handbook of Ethnography</i> |
| Thursday, March 9 | <p>Ethnography: Does Ethnography Have a Reliability Problem?</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitchell Duneier – “How Not to Lie with Ethnography” <i>Sociological Methodology</i> • Randol Contreras – “Transparency and Unmasking Issues in Ethnographic Crime Research” <i>Sociological Forum</i> • Steven Lubet – “Accuracy in Ethnography” <i>Contexts</i> • Steven Lubet – “Ethnography on Trial” <i>The New Republic</i> • Alexandra Murphy, Colin Jerolmack, and DeAnna Smith – “Ethnography, Data Transparency, and the Information Age” <i>Annual Review of Sociology</i> |
| Thursday, March 16 | <i>NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK</i> |
| Thursday, March 23 | <p>Interviews: Sampling and Asking Questions</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tomás R. Jiménez and Marlene Orozco – “Prompts, Not Questions: Four Techniques for Crafting Better Interview Protocols” <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> • Annette Lareau – “Chapter 4 Learning to Interview” and “Chapter 5 How to Conduct a Good Interview” from <i>Listening to People</i> |
| Thursday, March 30 | <p>Interviews: Transcribing and Coding</p> <p>Read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monique M. Hennink, Bonnie N. Kaiser, and Vincent C. Marconi – “Code Saturation Versus Meaning Saturation: |

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| | <p>How Many Interviews Are Enough?" <i>Qualitative Health Research</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charles Vanover – “Transcription as a Form of Qualitative Inquiry” from <i>Analyzing and Interpreting Qualitative Research</i> • Nicole M. Deterding and Mary C. Waters – “Flexible Coding of In-depth Interviews: A Twenty-first-century Approach” <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> • Eleanor McLellan, Kathleen M. MacQueen, and Judith L. Neidig – “Beyond the Qualitative Interview: Data Preparation and Transcription” <i>Field Methods</i> • Gery W. Ryan and H. Russell Bernard – “Techniques to Identify Themes” <i>Field Methods</i> • Iddo Tavory – “Interviews and Inference: Making Sense of Interview Data in Qualitative Research” <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> • Daniel G. Oliver, Julianne M. Serovich, and Tina L. Mason – “Constraints and Opportunities with Interview Transcription: Towards Reflection in Qualitative Research” <i>Social Forces</i> |
| <p>Thursday, April 6</p> | <p>Interviews: What Can (and Can't) Interviews Tell Us?</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson – “Oral Accounts and the Role of Interviewing” from <i>Ethnography</i> • Colin Jerolmack and Shamus Khan – “Talk is Cheap: Ethnography and the Attitudinal Fallacy” <i>Sociological Methods and Research</i> • Karen A. Cerulo – “Reassessing the Problem: Response to Jerolmack and Khan” <i>Sociological Methods and Research</i> • Michele Lamont and Ann Swidler – “Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing” <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> • Mario L. Small and Jenna M. Cook – “Using Interviews to Understand Why: Challenges and Strategies in the Study of Motivated Action” <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> • Allison J. Pugh – “What Good Are Interviews for Thinking About Culture? Demystifying Interpretive Analysis” <i>American Journal of Cultural Sociology</i> • Annette Lareau – “My Wife Can Tell Me Who I Know: Methodological and Conceptual Problems in Studying Fathers” <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rachel Rinaldo and Jeffrey Guhin – “How and Why Interviews Work: Ethnographic Interviews and Meso-level Public Culture” <i>Sociological Methods and Research</i> |
| Thursday, April 13 | <p>Archival and Document Analysis: Content Analysis</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Klaus Krippendorf – TBD from <i>Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology</i> • Kimberly A. Neuendorf - TBD from <i>The Content Analysis Guidebook</i> • Margrit Schreier - TBD from <i>Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice</i> |
| Thursday, April 20 | <p>Archival and Document Analysis: Archives</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claudio E. Benzecry, Andrew Deener and Armando Lara-Millán – “Archival Work as Qualitative Sociology” <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> • Chandra Mukerji – “The Archives Made Me Do It” <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> • Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson – “Documents and other artefacts, real and virtual” from <i>Ethnography</i> • Josh Pacewicz – “What Can You Do With a Single Case? How to Think About Ethnographic Case Selection Like a Historical Sociologist” <i>Sociological Methods & Research</i> <p>Complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to the Bucknell Archives |
| Thursday, April 27 | <p>Archival and Document Analysis: Library Research</p> <p>Read</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Abbott – TBD from <i>Digital Paper</i> • Patrick Carr – “Serendipity in the Stacks: Libraries, Information Architecture, and the Problems of Accidental Discovery” <i>College & Research Libraries</i> |
| Thursday, May 4 | NO CLASS |
| Thursday, May 11 | NO CLASS |