

# **SOCIOLOGY 183: QUALITATIVE METHODS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

## **SYLLABUS**

**SPRING QUARTER 2007**

Course time: Tue 2:15 – 4:05  
Location: Bldg. 120, Main Quad; Room 59

Instructor: Karen Sue Rolph  
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Office hours: Mon 1-2, Thu 11-12, Fri 12-1  
Location: Galvez Module, Rm 102 (near Moonbean's)

## **COURSE OBJECTIVE**

Qualitative, non-statistical social science research can form the basis of surprising and profound discoveries about individuals and societies. Through small-scale studies, the need for larger studies is exposed. Narratives, confessions, ethnographies, demographic studies, case studies, and more recently, focus groups contribute insight and depth to our understanding of the human condition.

The central goal of this course is preparing student researchers to design qualitative methods projects. In class, you will develop research goals, observe data collection and practice interviewing.

A particular emphasis of this seminar is anticipating and solving problems that may emerge in fieldwork settings. In social science we may work with traumatized individuals: those from economically-ravaged or war-torn cultures, those from countries with weak or non-existing democratic principles, or those who suffer human rights issues. In this course we will develop fieldwork strategies that prepare us for cross-cultural complexities related to ethnicity, gender, class, culture, age, and power dynamics.

Being attuned to 'the studied' will be paramount in this hands-on class. Whether your research is demographic, comparative, or based on a unique personal account, we will apply social and cultural awareness to practical methodological training. We will consider approaches to informed consent and intellectual property. By the end of the course you will have a clearly-defined project, you will know what you need to do, and you will be ready to adapt yourself to fieldwork, even with its many unanticipated events.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

**Participation (20%):** Active contribution to discussion, sharing ideas and insights, is critical to the success of project-centered methods training. Half of each class will be lecture and collaboration; the other half will be devoted to research projects and discussion.

**Coursework online assignments (20%):** Homework assignments will be online and include interaction/responses to classmates taken from topics covered in class, anything you want to say about your project, and class readings. Assignments will be due Sunday before midnight prior to class on Tuesday.

**Mid-quarter presentations and problem-solving exercise (15%):** Our first presentations will be informal practice explaining the research project. The aim is to clearly state your research hypothesis, articulate the kind of project you are undertaking, and formulate what questions will be asked or elicited. There will also be a written problem-solving assignment.

**Proposal development (20%):** is determined by the quality of content, style and foresight developed in your research project. Our shared goal is an outstanding research project and fieldwork experience for you.

**Final research project presentation and problem-solving exercise (25%):** The complete project is expected here; your finely-honed, carefully-worked research design is presented with scholarly flair. The problem-solving assignment will be similar to the samples above.

## REQUIRED READINGS:

The course textbook aids practical organization of your project. This 4<sup>th</sup> edition is a pragmatic “companion” for advanced undergraduates and graduate students engaging in fieldwork. Course readings fall into categories such as “classics” in social science research, theoretical works that challenge our assumptions, empirical methods works that illuminate our present path, and social science readings that serve us by context and example.

**Course Textbook:** *Designing Qualitative Research, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition*, by Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman (2006) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**Course Readings:** located in PDF online using SUNET ID or on Google.  
Any modified or additional reading will be discussed and/or distributed in class.

## SCHEDULE

### (1) APRIL 3 - RESEARCH PROJECTS- GETTING ORIENTED

- Overview
- Research plans
- The mission of research and science in advancing knowledge
- Qualitative research genres and definitions
- Hypothesis-driven versus spontaneous- development approaches to field studies

Reading assignment for next week: Chapter 1- *Designing Qualitative Research* (textbook)

Eckert, Andreas and Adam Jones (2002). Introduction: Historical Writing about Everyday Life. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 15(1):5-16.

Eggan, Fred (1954). Social Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Comparison. *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 56(1):743-763.

Ellwood, Charles A. (1924). Scientific Methods of Studying Human Society. *Journal of Social Forces*, 2(3):328-332.

Van Maanen, John (1979). Reclaiming Qualitative Methods for Organizational Research: A Preface. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24(4):520-526.

### (2) APRIL 10 – DEVELOPING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

- Value of qualitative studies; creating a rich qualitative study; augmenting quantitative research with ethnographic studies.
- Traditions in preparedness for fieldwork; recognition of methodological gains made on shortcomings of prior research; utility of historical-comparative studies in formulating research design; literate/non-literate interviewees.

Reading assignment for next week: Chapter 2- *Designing Qualitative Research* (textbook)

Adams St. Pierre, Elizabeth and Kathryn Roulston (2006). The state of qualitative inquiry: a contested science. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 19(6):673-684

Buthe, Tim (2002). Taking Temporality Seriously: Modeling History and the Use of Narratives as Evidence. *The American Political Science Review*, 96(3):481-493.

Coast, Ernestina (2003). An Evaluation of Demographer's Use of Ethnographies. *Population Studies*, 57(3):337-346.

Le Compte, Margaret D. and Judith Preissle Goetz (1982). Problems of Reliability and Validity in Ethnographic Research. *Review of Educational Research*, 52(1):31-60.

Phillips, Bernard (2002). Comment [From Bernard Phillips]. *Contemporary Sociology*, 23(2):266.

Tillman, Linda C. (2002). Culturally Sensitive Research Approaches: An African-American Perspective. *Educational Researcher*, 31(9):3-12.

### **(3) APRIL 17 –THE SCIENCE OF QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS**

- Formulating dimensions of a project- design and implementation.
- Surveys, questionnaires and interviews; pre-project (question order/clarity); pre-testing, parallel-testing, elicitation techniques; response arts; bias in data.
- Random and randomized surveys; design, what to seize upon, how, avoiding pitfalls and errors.
- Project, organizing data in the field; post-project considerations.
- Design of coding; coding to protect privacy.
- Gender, ethnicity, other important forms of identification.

Reading assignment for next week: Chapter 3- *Designing Qualitative Research* (textbook)

Carter, Joya Anastasia (2002). A Dialogue with Divas: Issues Affecting a Scholarly Agenda in Special Education, from Africana Feminist Perspectives. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 71(4):297-312.

Davison, Kevin G. (2007). Methodological Instability and the Disruption of Masculinities. *Men and Masculinities*, 9(3):379-391.

Moon, Seungsook (2006). Immigration and Mothering: Case Studies from Two Generations of Korean Immigrant Women. *Gender and Society*, 17(6):840-860.

Núñez, Sarmiento, Marta (2003). Gender Studies in Cuba: Methodological Approaches, 1974-2001. *Gender and Society*, 17(1):7-32.

Rudolph, Lloyd I. and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph (2003). Engaging Subjective Knowledge: How Amar Singh's Diary Narratives of and by the Self Explain Identity Formation. *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 1(4): (Dec) 681-694.

Van Langingham, Mark and Lea Trujillo (2002). Recent Changes in Heterosexual Attitudes, Norms and Behaviors among Unmarried Thai Men: A Qualitative Analysis. *International Family Planning Perspectives*, 28(1):6-15.

Werbner, Pnina (2007). Veiled Interventions in Pure Space: Honour, Shame and Embodied Struggles among Muslims in Britain and France. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 24(2):161–186.

### **(4) APRIL 24 – ENGAGING YOUR RESEARCH PARTICIPANT(S) - METHODS FOR COLLECTING EMPIRICAL DATA**

- Evidence, interpretation, and socio-cultural considerations in fieldwork design.
- *Personnae versus* who people are; political economy of the studied and studier; triangulation.
- Styles of participation and observation.
- Ethics in field research; conduct of investigator and study participants.

Reading assignment for next week: Chapter 4- *Designing Qualitative Research* (textbook)

Brown, Phil (2003). Qualitative Methods in Environmental Health Research. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 111(14):1789-1798.

Butera-Prinzi, Franca and Amaryll Perlesz (2003). Through children's eyes: children's experience of living with a parent with an acquired brain injury. *Brain Injury*, 18(1):83-101.

Culley, Marci R. and Holly L. Angelique (2003). Women's Gendered Experiences as Long-Term Three Mile Island Activists. *Gender and Society*, 17(3):445-461.

### **(5) MAY 1 – PRELIMINARY PRESENTATION ON PROJECTS**

Reading assignment for next week: Chapter 5- *Designing Qualitative Research* (textbook)

Lane Scheppele, Kim (2002). Cultures of Facts. *Perspectives on Politics*, 1(2):363-368.

Sapir, Edward (1927). Speech as a Personality Trait. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 32(6):892-905.

Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine and Dvora Yanow (2002). "Reading" "Methods" "Texts": How Research Methods Texts Construct Political Science. *Political Science Quarterly*, 55(2):457-486.

Tilley, Susan A. and Kelly D. Powick (2002). Distanced Data: Transcribing Other People's Research Tapes. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 27(2/3):291-310.

Tuchscherer, Konrad (2002). Cherokee and West Africa: Examining the Origins of the Vai Script. *History of Africa*, 29: 427-486. (Excerpt).

### **(6) MAY 8 – ESTABLISHING ADDITIONAL BREADTH OR CRITERIA FOR SOUNDNESS**

- Language-use across cultures; body language specific to culture; social constructions.
- Longitudinal studies and multi-site research.
- Seeking guidance from advisors and finding support if you need it while in the field.
- Outreach initiatives that support the group or individuals being studied, what we might do, and perhaps should not do.

Reading assignment for next week: Chapter 6- *Designing Qualitative Research* (textbook)

Burawoy, Michael (2003). Revisits: An Outline of a Theory of Reflexive Ethnography. *American Sociological Review*, 68(5):645-679.

Dudley Jenkins, Laura (2002). Another "People of India" Project: Colonial and National Anthropology. *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 62(4):1143-1170.

Isaacman, Allen (2003). Legacies of Engagement: Scholarship Informed by Political Commitment. *African Studies Review*, 46(1):1-41. (Excerpt).

Marcus, George E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24:95-117.

Robertson, Jennifer (2002). Reflexivity Redux: A Pithy Polemic on "Positionality". *Anthropological Quarterly*, 75(4):785-792.

## **(7) MAY 15 –INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION**

- Databases and what makes them functional; Boolean fields and other kinds of data; getting to know databases and how statistical programs can be useful; grasp and perception of findings, the fun of outliers, the gift of robusticity.
- Informed consent; intellectual property.
- Social capital and aspects of societies with vigorous informal sectors.

Reading assignment for next week: Chapter 7- *Designing Qualitative Research* (textbook)

Dowley, Kathleen M. and Brian D. Silver (2002). Social Capital, Ethnicity and Support for Democracy in the Post-Communist States. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 54(4):505-527.

Dutfield, Graham (2000). The Public and Private Domains: Intellectual Property Rights in Traditional Knowledge. *Science Communication*, 21:274-295.

Leung-Kwong Wong, Peter and Paul Ellis (2002). Social Ties and Partner Identification in Sino-Hong Kong International Joint Ventures. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 33(2):267-289.

Lucero, Jose Antonio (2002). Locating the “Indian Problem”: Community, Nationality, and Contradiction in Ecuadorian Indigenous Politics. *Latin American Perspectives*, 30(1):23-48.

Patterson, Amy S. (2002). Power Inequalities and the Institutions of Senegalese Development Organizations. *African Studies Review*, 46(3):35-54.

Posey, Darrell (1990). Intellectual Property Rights and Just Compensation for Indigenous Knowledge. *Anthropology Today*, 6(4):13-16.

## **(8) MAY 22 – FIELD PREPARATION**

- Data generated; planning how to organize it, thinking ahead.
- *Caveats*.

Reading for next week: to be assigned based on need for computer software.

## **(9) MAY 29- SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA AND SOFTWARE (SSDS) LAB**

- Orientation in the Green Library Social Science Software lab.

No new readings.

## **(10) JUNE 5 – PROBLEM-SOLVING EXERCISE/FINAL RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS**

- Day of final exam: remaining presentations.

## **STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES**

Students who have a disability which may necessitate an academic accommodation or the use of auxiliary aids and services in a class, must initiate the request with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC), located within the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). The SDRC will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend appropriate accommodation, and prepare a verification letter dated in the current academic term in which the request is being made. Please contact the SDRC as soon as possible; timely notice is needed to arrange for appropriate accommodations. The Office of Accessible Education is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066; TDD: 725-1067) <http://www.stanford.edu/group/DRC/>).

## STANFORD HONOR CODE

1. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively that they will:
  - a. Not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;
  - b. Do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.
2. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.
3. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.
  - a. Examples of conduct which have been regarded as being in violation of the Honor Code include:
    - Copying from another's examination paper or allowing another to copy from one's own paper
    - Unpermitted collaboration
    - Plagiarism
    - Revising and resubmitting a quiz or exam for regrading, without the instructor's knowledge and consent
    - Giving or receiving unpermitted aid on a take-home examination
    - Representing as one's own work the work of another
    - Giving or receiving aid on an academic assignment under circumstances in which a reasonable person should have known that such aid was not permitted
  - b. More information at <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/vpsa/judicialaffairs/guiding/honorcode.htm>