The goal of this course is to give students experience in qualitative research methodologies. Qualitative methods are a primary way that sociologists learn about the larger social world, test and develop theories and hypotheses, and make sense of complex situations and interactions. Qualitative methods allow sociologists to understand the world from the perspective of the individual and their experiences and to gain a better understanding of how the social world operates.

**Learning objectives for this course:**

1) To understand the distinction between qualitative and quantitative analyses and learn when a particular method is appropriate.

2) To examine the various qualitative methods that sociologists use to study the social world including the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

3) To conduct hands-on research using qualitative methods: ethnography, interviewing and content analysis.

4) To develop an independent research plan including a proposal, data instruments, analysis plan, data collection procedures, and dissemination of results.

**Grading:**

All students are required to conduct original research throughout the quarter. Grades will be based on the following:

**20% - Class participation and Attendance**

- Includes participation during lecture, small group work (including in-class assignments such as the content analysis group assignment (#8)) and any Canvas discussion assignments.

**20% - Midterm quiz - Week 6, Tuesday, May 8.**

**10% - Poster presentation for our mini-conference! - Week 10, Tuesday, June 5**

- Students will create poster presentations and present their preliminary findings at a mini-conference the last day of class. This session is mandatory! Templates and guidelines will be discussed later in the quarter and will be available on Canvas.

**50% - Final Project - Due Tuesday (June 12) of Finals Week by 10am**

- Final Projects will include a research paper where you present your methodology and main research findings. You must also submit several attachments along with your research paper (including interview guide, field notes, interview profiles and other key information). Attachments must be uploaded by the deadline in order for your Final Project to be graded.
- Assignments #1, #5 and #7 will count toward your Final Project Portfolio grade. If these assignments are not complete or late, your overall project grade will be lowered.
Required texts and readings:
Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition. (Ordered at Norris Book Center)
**Note: Be sure to double-check the titles of the chapters assigned from Hesse-Biber before you read. When in doubt, go by chapter title rather than chapter number.**

Readings marked with ** will be available on Canvas through Course Reserves.

(Additional materials may be required and added throughout the semester. Any additional materials will be available electronically through the course’s Canvas site.)

Canvas site:

The Canvas site is a fundamental part of this course. All templates, guidelines, and so forth will be available on the site. Important announcements and helpful hints will be posted regularly. Students should check the site at least a couple times a week.

*Note: I will post any PowerPoint presentations the night before lecture by 9pm on Canvas.*

Academic Integrity:

Issues regarding academic integrity will be immediately referred to the Dean’s Office. For further information regarding the academic integrity policy at Northwestern, please consult the *Student Handbook* and [http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/uniprin.html](http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/uniprin.html).

AccessibleNU

Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with AccessibleNU (accessiblenu@northwestern.edu; 847-467-5530) and provide professors with an accommodation notification from AccessibleNU, preferably within the first two weeks of class. All information will remain confidential.

Laptop Policy

Laptops (along with other forms of technology including cell phones, iPods, etc.) are not to be used during lecture. This includes no texting during class.

**This syllabus is as of April 5, 2018. If there are any modifications to the assignments, course policies, or criteria for evaluation, any updates will be posted on the course’s Canvas site. Students are responsible for any changes and additions to the syllabus and course assignments.**

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**Important Course Policies!**

- The research conducted for this class will abide by guidelines for ethical research. However, this research is for educational purposes only. No data can be presented or published outside of this class. Your research will not have the approval of Northwestern’s IRB (Institutional Review Board).

- Research must be original and conducted for this class only. Your 329 project may inspire future projects, such as a senior research project or research grant. But remember this project is not IRB approved! Meaning that if you go on to do more research on your topic that is IRB approved (such as a URG), you cannot use data from 329 as part of that project (*Translation – this data can never be published or presented outside of this course!*)

- You may use the tools you develop for your research project for this course (such as interview guides, field note guides, and so forth) for future IRB-approved projects.

- Previous research cannot be substituted for the assignments outlined below. You may choose a topic related to previous projects, but you must collect new data (i.e., additional fieldwork and interviews) and create new research tools (including interview guides).
I. Introduction to Qualitative Methods

Week 1

Thursday (April 5)
Introduction to course – No readings

Week 2

Tuesday (April 10) - Quantitative vs. Qualitative Methods
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 1, “An Invitation to Qualitative Research”

II. Developing a Research Plan and Doing Ethical Research

Thursday (April 12)
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 2, “Paradigmatic Approaches to Qualitative Research”
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 3, “Designing Qualitative Approaches to Research”

Week 3

Tuesday (April 17)
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 4, “The Ethics of Social Research”

Assignment #1 (due Tuesday, April 17 by 6pm) - Students will submit a 2 to 3-page proposal for their research for the quarter. The project will have both ethnographic and interview components. Proposal Guidelines will be posted to Canvas after they are distributed in class.
***PLEASE USE LAST NAME AS FILE NAME and upload the proposal to Canvas by deadline.
***We will give you the okay to continue on with your research plan after we review your proposal. We may ask for revisions, if necessary.

III. Ethnography/Participant Observation

Thursday (April 19)
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 7, “Ethnography”

Assignment #2 (ongoing, Weeks 3 through 9) – Start collecting ethnographic data! Students should spend 2-3 hours per week (Weeks 3 through 9) at their research site. 12 hours minimum of ethnographic observation/participation is required. Students must take field notes. An optional field notes template is available on Canvas (you can edit the template to better suit your project). Field notes may be handwritten.

Week 4

Tuesday (April 24)
Thursday (April 26)
**Rios, Punished, Preface and Chapter 1**

| Assignment #3 (due no later than Thursday, April 26 and preferably sooner) | Must return signed Ethnography Site Research Permission Form (on Canvas) to Dr. Snyder (IF REQUIRED) before beginning collecting ethnographic data. The sooner you can turn this in – the sooner you can start your ethnographic research! Dr. Snyder will let you know after reading your proposal if you need to have a signed permission from your ethnographic site. |
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### IV. Interviewing

#### Week 5

**Tuesday (May 1)**
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 5, “In-Depth Interviewing”


Snyder and Pearse, Interview Guide (will be distributed during class)

**Thursday (May 3)**

**Healey-Etten & Sharp, 2010. “Teaching Beginning Undergraduates How to Do an In-depth Interview: A Teaching Note with 12 Handy Tips.” Teaching Sociology 38: 157–165. (Only read the Appendix starting on page 162).**

| Assignment #4 (due Thursday, May 3) | Bring your interview guide draft to class! You will do practice interviews. You are not collecting data at this point – even if your topic is on college students. Practice interviewees should not give truthful answers. This exercise is to help you practice interviewing, including the testing of questions for clarity, timing, and so forth – not to collect data. |
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| Assignment #5 (due Friday, May 4, 10am) | After revising your interview guide based on practice/feedback from Thursday’s class (5/3), submit a revised version for approval prior to interviewing! Please upload interview guide to Canvas by the deadline (label file with your last name please!). If you submit it earlier, we will get back to you sooner! Cannot start interviews until we approve your interview guide. |
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| Assignment #6 (ongoing, Weeks 5 through 9) | You will conduct interviews with 8 respondents. Students must fill out an Interview Profile form for all interviews and students must have an Interview Consent Form initialed for each interview. (We will discuss both of these issues during Week 5.) Reminder: Interview data MUST remain confidential! Do not record names or other identifying information on the data itself, which includes the interview guide, audio files, etc. |
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#### Week 6

**Tuesday (May 8) - Midterm Quiz**

**Midterm - Tuesday, May 8. Midterm is open book and open notes. Can work in groups (students will submit separate midterms). Can use laptops. Exams are due 9pm on May 8.**

**Thursday (May 10)**


**Goldberg & Kuvalanka. 2012. "Marriage (In)equality: The Perspectives of Adolescent and Emerging Adults With Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Parents." Journal of Marriage and Family 74: 34-52.**

| Assignment #7 (due Thursday May 10, 6pm) | Students should submit 1 set of field notes for comments to Canvas. If field notes are hand written, please scan and submit a copy to Canvas as a PDF. |
V. Making Sense of It All! – Analyzing and Presenting Data

Week 7

Tuesday (May 15) – Content Analysis
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 9, “Researching Mass Media: Images and Texts”

Assignment #8 (During class Tuesday, May 15) – In teams of 3-4 students during class, students will do a content analysis project. All materials will be provided during class on May 15.

Thursday (May 17) - Integrating Ethnography/Participant Observation & (Structured) Interview Data

Week 8

Tuesday (May 22) - Creating Memos and Being Reflective
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 11: “Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data”

Thursday (May 24) - Coding! Categories! 2x2 tables! etc.
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 11: “Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data” (continued discussion)

Week 9

Tuesday (May 29) - Revisiting Validity

Assignment #9 (During class Tuesday, May 29) – During class, we are going to start analyzing your data! Should have 10 hours worth of field notes and at least 4 (preferably 5-6) interviews by May 29. Interactive workshop on how to approach your data! Students must bring data to analyze.

Thursday (May 31)
Hesse-Biber, Chapter 12: “The Writing and Representation of Qualitative Research Projects”

Week 10

Tuesday (June 5)

Mini-Conference Poster Session!!!! – Students will present posters of their preliminary research findings. Posters should cover central research questions, methodology, along with preliminary findings. Template for poster presentation is available on Canvas. Remember to keep data confidential (no names!) This presentation counts for 10% of your grade. Attendance is mandatory.

FINAL PROJECTS ARE DUE by June 12 (Tuesday) by 10am
Final Projects must be uploaded to Canvas
***Remember - Backup data and files!! No extensions will be given for lost data.