

Qualitative and Interpretive Research Methods Practicum
POL #####
Syllabus

Date/time of class meetings

Location of class meetings

Instructor: Be Stone

Email: estone@gradcenter.cuny.edu

Office Hours: dates/times

Course Description and Learning Objectives

This course will introduce students to the principles and methods of qualitative and interpretive research. We will cover the primary qualitative methods used by researchers in the social sciences, including interviews, ethnography, interpretive discourse analysis, participant observation/participatory action research, archival research, feminist methods, and research with visual materials. Students will gain experience using several approaches and learn about the major steps of the research process, including project design, implementation, research ethics, data analysis, and writing. The final research paper will demonstrate the student's familiarity with relevant literature in the subfield, competence in research, research methods, writing and analysis, and command of basic concepts in the discipline. Students will also make a brief presentation of their research paper to the class during our final class period.

Course Objectives:

- Develop students' analytical, critical, and hermeneutic abilities.
- Expose students to a range of qualitative and interpretive methodological practices.
- Foster students' consideration of ethical concerns in research.
- Assist students in the development of their own research projects.
- Develop students' ability to write effectively, engage in intellectually grounded debates, and form and express cogent arguments.
- Advance students' oral communication skills.

Texts

Required texts for this course:

Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow. 2012. *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. = *IRD* below

Carol A. B. Warren and Tracy X. Karner. 2015. *Discovering Qualitative Methods: Ethnography, Interviews, Documents, and Images*. 3rd ed. = *DQM* below

Grading & Class Requirements

Your grade is based on the six requirements for this course:

1. Class Participation (10% of class grade)

- Participation in class discussion is a critical part of the learning process. You are expected to come to every class having read all of the readings, prepared to contribute to class discussion and participate in class activities.

- You are required to bring a printed or electronic copy of all the readings to each class.
- 2. Research Questions (10% of class grade)**
 - As a lead-up to your final project, you will be required to provide three possible research questions for your project proposal, due on **DATE**.
 - 3. Practice Exercises (2 x 10% = 20% of class grade)**
 - You will be asked to choose **TWO** methods that you are interested in using for your research project to engage as practice exercises. Details regarding these exercises will be distributed in class. Included in this exercise is a write-up of your findings, and a reflection on your experience. Practice exercises are due the week after we cover that method in class.
 - 4. Literature Review and Methods Section (10% of class grade)**
 - As a lead-up to your final paper, you will be required to write a literature review and methods section outlining what method you intend to use, where you will find your data, and how you plan to analyze it, due **DATE**. Details and rubric will be provided in a handout distributed in class.
 - 5. Research Paper (30% of class grade)**
 - Your final project will be writing a research paper using (at least) one of the methods you engaged in the practice exercises to collect and analyze data. This paper will include a literature review, research question, details regarding your methods, data sources, and analytical approach, and an initial analysis of your findings. A handout will be provided detailing the requirements of the assignment and rubric. Research papers are due on **DATE**.
 - 6. Research Presentation (20% of class grade)**
 - During our final class meeting each student will make a 5–8 minute presentation of their research. This presentation will allow you to practice your oral presentation skills, and to share your achievements and challenges in developing this project with your peers. Rubric and details will be provided in class.

Classroom Philosophy and Conduct

Discussing political topics can challenge deeply held or unexamined beliefs. Expect to be challenged in this classroom to think critically about the ideas presented in the readings and common assumptions made about political research. Given the difficult, sensitive, and political nature of the material to be discussed in this course, students will be expected to conduct themselves in a mature and respectful manner. This requires both thoughtfully voicing your own opinion and respectfully listening and responding to the opinions of others. The ultimate goal of this course is to provide you with the knowledge and critical thinking skills to construct informed opinions on complex political issues.

Writing Center

[*Details regarding how to access the campus writing center*]. Students are required to visit the College's Writing Center **at least once** during the semester. Your visit may be for any service that is helpful to you, and examples of services include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Proofreading a draft of your literature review or final paper
- Attending a workshop on a particular topic
- Receiving help with citations

You must submit proof of attendance (usually a note signed by a tutor or another Writing Center

staff member) to Prof. Stone by the end of the semester.

Office of Accessibility

[Details regarding the College's policies and procedures for providing accommodations].

Academic Integrity

[Details regarding the College's policies and procedures addressing academic integrity].

A Note on Gender Pronouns: Please notify me of your gender pronouns and the name you'd like to be called prior to the start of class using the First Day Survey. I use she or they pronouns and you may call me Professor Stone or Professor Be. You are expected to respect the pronouns and gender identities of me, your classmates, and the people we discuss in class.

Weekly Course Schedule

All dates, readings, and assignments are subject to change.

Part I: What Are Qualitative and Interpretive Methods?

Class Meeting 1: Welcome and Introduction

Class Meeting 2: What are qualitative and interpretive methods?

- Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow. 2012. "Introduction" and p. 113, in *IRD*.
- Carol Warren and Tracy Karner. 2015. Ch. 1: "Introduction to Qualitative Methods" in *DQM*.

Class Meeting 3: Are qualitative methods for me? Project design & research questions

- Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow. 2012. Chs. 1–2: "Wherefore Research Design" and "Ways of Knowing: Research Questions and Logics of Inquiry" in *IRD*.
- Carol Warren and Tracy Karner. 2015. Ch. 2: "The Law, Politics, and Ethics of Qualitative Research" in *DQM*.

Part II: Qualitative and Interpretive Methods in Practice

Class Meeting 4: Archives

- Laura Schmidt. Using Archives: A Guide to Effective Research. Society of American Archivists, www2.archivists.org/usingarchives.
- Marek Tesar. 2015. "Ethics and truth in archival research." *History of Education* 44 (1): 101–114.
- **List of three potential research questions due**

***All students required to meet with Prof. Be during office hours this week to identify one research question to pursue

Class Meeting 5: Interviews

- Carol Warren and Tracy Karner. 2015. Chs. 6–7: “The Interview: from Research Questions to Interview Questions” and “The Interview: Interaction, Talk, and Text,” in *DQM*.
- Beth L. Leech. 2002. Asking questions: Techniques for semistructured interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35 (4): 665–668.
- **Archives practice exercise due**

Class Meeting 6: Ethnography

- Carol Warren and Tracy Karner. 2015. Chs. 3–5: “Ethnography: Setting and Entrée,” “Roles and Relationships in Ethnographic Research,” and “Writing Fieldnotes” in *DQM*.
- *Bonus reading: Lee Ann Fujji. 2014. "Five stories of accidental ethnography: Turning unplanned moments in the field into data." Qualitative Research 15 (4):525–539.*
- **Interviews practice exercise due**

Class Meeting 7: Participant observation & participatory action research

- Barbara B. Kawulich. 2005. “Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method.” *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 6 (2).
- Sarah Marie Wiebe. 2020. “Sensing Policy: Engaging Affected Communities at the Intersections of Environmental Justice and Decolonial Futures.” *Politics, Groups, and Identities* 8 (1): 181–193.
- **Ethnography practice exercise due**

Class Meeting 8: Interpretive discourse analysis

- Fred Schaffer. 2016. “Why Do Concepts Need Elucidating?” in *Elucidating Social Science Concepts*.
- Be Stone and Alyson Cole. 2023. “Language as Action and ‘We’ as Invitation in Hanna Pitkin’s *Wittgenstein and Justice*” *Polity* 55 (3): forthcoming.
- **Participant observation/action exercise due**

Class Meeting 9: Visual materials

- Carol Warren and Tracy Karner. 2015. “The Textual and the Visual as Qualitative Data: Documents, Images, and the Internet,” *DQM*.
- Carolyn M. Brooks. 2014. “Anti-Oppressive Visual Methodologies: Critical Appraisal of Cross-Cultural Research Design.” *Qualitative Sociology Review* 10 (4): 32–50.
- **Interpretive discourse analysis exercise due**

Class Meeting 10: Feminist methods

- A. Doucet and Natasha Mauthner 2006. “Feminist Methodologies and Epistemologies” in *Handbook of 21st Century Sociology*, ed. Bryant and Peck, 26–32.
- Nadia E. Brown. 2012. “Negotiating the Insider/Outsider Status: Black Feminist Ethnography and Legislative Studies.” *Journal of Feminist Scholarship* 3: 19–39.
- **Visual materials practice exercise due**

Part III: Data Collection, Analysis, and Research Ethics

Class Meeting 11: What do I do? Literature review and collecting qualitative data

- Lisa A. Baglione. 2015. “Making Sense of the Scholarly Answer to Your Research Question: Writing the Literature Review” in *Writing a Research Paper in Political Science: A Practical Guide to Inquiry, Structure, and Methods*.
- Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow. 2012. Ch. 4: “The Rhythms of Interpretive Research I: Getting Going” in *IRD*.
- **Feminist methods practice exercise due**

Class Meeting 12: What do I do? Analyzing qualitative data and writing

- Carol Warren and Tracy Karner. 2015. Chs. 9–10: “Analyzing Qualitative Data: Fieldnotes, Transcripts, Documents, and Images” and “Writing Well” in *DQM*.
- **Literature review and methodology section due**

***All students required to meet with Prof. Be during office hours this week to discuss your research plan for the final paper

Class Meeting 13: Research Ethics

- Roni Berger. 2015. “Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research.”
- Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow. 2012. Ch. 7: “Design in Context: From the Human Side of Research to Writing Research Manuscripts” in *IRD*.

Part IV: Student Research Projects

Class Meeting 14: Paper workshop period

- We will meet for a work period on your papers, everyone should be prepared to bring a draft to discuss with Prof. Be during class.

Class Meeting 15: Paper presentations

DATE: Final Research Papers Due



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