COURSE OUTLINE
Qualitative Methods in Human Geography, CRN 13810

Office Hours: Monday: 9:30-12 or by appointment
Office Location: B360 David Turpin Building
Contact: dcloutier@uvic.ca
Classroom: DSB C124, Wednesday 6:30-9:20 to be discussed

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION
This course is designed to help students to explore and be exposed to a range of theoretical and methodological approaches for undertaking research in human geography. In this course our emphasis is on qualitative research. In this class, we will explore the linkages between theory, methodology and methods and focus on the research questions as the anchors for determining the right approaches and methods. Note: Students who are interested in quantitative survey research should consider the possibility of a directed studies course with me or another instructor.

Areas for more in-depth consideration will be a function of the need to cover fundamental ideas and approaches to qualitative research AND supporting the directions and interests of you as the students. Generally, we will address core concepts of ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology, and some of the more common theoretical orientations in human geography (e.g., feminism, Marxism, political ecology and indigenous methodology). We will also explore a range of methodological approaches such as: mixed methods, ethnography, case study, grounded theory, community-based participatory action research, and discourse analysis again depending on time and student interests. Finally, we will work to develop skills with specific methods and techniques such as: interviews, interview guides, participant observation techniques, focus groups, survey instrument design, memoing/journaling as well as thematic and content analysis.

COURSE STRUCTURE
The class format is seminar-based. Each class begins with a brief statement of our goals, a discussion of the readings about theory and methodology, and then we move on to different exercises throughout the term designed to give students an introduction to qualitative research, and to support and build some practical experience with methods. Students are expected to come to class having done the readings and being prepared to discuss them. See Coursespaces for important course documents and deadlines.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
In this course, we are interested in exploring how human geographers approach qualitative research studies with human subjects. For example, what are the relevant theories about knowledge (epistemology), reality (ontology), and values (axiology) that guide our thinking about research approaches, processes and methods? How do we approach the study of people, place, and social processes, while paying attention to issues of social justice, equity, and social change? NOTE: Our emphasis is on exploring a range of qualitative, and to a much
lesser degree, quantitative approaches (e.g., positivism and survey design) that help us to both learn about, and do research. Students interested in quantitative work, i.e., multivariate statistics and spatial statistics should consider other graduate courses offered through our department such as: Geography 518 Spatial Statistics or Geography 524 Advanced Methods in Geography or a directed studies courses to support their specific needs and program interests.

This course (523) provides you with an entry point to qualitative research and approaches, and basic skills on research methods in human geography. By the end of the course, you will be able to think critically about issues related to: the nature of qualitative research in terms of: research questions, ethics, researcher positionality and reflexivity, assumptions, validity, theory and methods for acquiring and analyzing data and reporting findings.

**Learning Outcomes:**

* to introduce some of the strengths of, and debates in qualitative research
* to foster an understanding of a range of theories, methods and literature related to research in human geography
* to continue to develop critical reading, analytical, interpretive, and writing skills
* to develop skills and experience with issues relating to: research approach, question development, data collection, interpretation and analysis, writing and dissemination of findings

**USEFUL RESOURCES**


**OLDER BUT STILL VALUABLE REFERENCES**


**MARK ALLOCATION:**

There are 4 formal assignments in this class that are graded, and one participation mark.

- Assignment 1: Facilitate discussion on theory (10%)
- Assignment 2. Interview with colleague* (25%)
- Assignment 3. Critical Review of Articles** (25%)
- Assignment 4. Research Journal (30%)
- Participation Mark (10%)

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<th>Marks</th>
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<td>Sept. 25th</td>
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ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS:
*Note – the interview with a fellow student is handed in electronically to me and then becomes part of your research journal exercise section.
** Can be handed in at any time.

1. **Theory Discussion. (Value: 10%).** Students will facilitate a discussion on a theory employed in human geography choosing from the following: Marxism, feminism, post-structuralism, post-colonialism, political economy, political ecology, ethnography, or phenomenology. The discussion time will be in the range of 18-20 minutes. You will pick a research article to tell the class about; one that has employed this theoretical orientation in your field or a field similar to yours. Discussion marks will be based on your introduction (spend 5 minutes outline what the theory is, how it was employed in this study/how it shaped the research, how it linked to the findings. Be prepared at the outset of your talk to pose 1-2 questions for students to consider as you tell them about your article. Seminars on theory will take place In Class on Sept. 25th

2. **Interview with colleague in class. (Value: 25% - Marked separately but incorporate into your research journal).** Students will conduct a brief interview with a colleague from class. Interviews should be no more than 20-25 minutes in length on the topic of ‘friendship.’ We choose friendship, because everybody has experience with friendship even if you may not be versed in the research literature on friendship. In preparation for the interview you will establish 3-4 questions for you to ask your peer. Interviews should be taped and transcribed (using phones). Transcription should be done by October 10 when we will discuss your findings/outcome/challenges etc. You should sum everything up in 3-4 paragraphs (maximum one page). In class you should be prepared to comment on the quality of your interview questions, how the interview went, your learnings about yourself as an interviewer, and highlight any challenges and successes you had with taping and transcribing the data. Due: Oct. 9

3. **Critical Review of Peer Reviewed Literature (Value: 25%)**

The intention of this piece is to have you write a review piece (10-12 pages in length and 4500 words maximum) on 3 articles that have relevance for your own research. The review should have clear sections and subsections, be written in APA format v6.0, and be double-sided, double-spaced, paginated, 11-12 point font, and have a title, and appropriate reference list. Marks will be lost for failure to conform to APA guidelines. Electronic, MS-word submissions are encouraged.

Criteria for evaluating your paper are related to the structure and mechanics of the paper (instructions, etc.), and the content of your reviews. Under content I am interested in your assessment of the quality of the research articles you cite, and the insights and arguments you gained by reading them. Under mechanics, I am interested in your skills with grammar and punctuation, sentence structure (e.g., non run-on, etc.), transitions, clear and meaningful sections and adherence to APA citation style both in text and in reference list. Due: Nov. 20th

4. **Research Journal (Value: 30%).** The research journal is intended to be a source of support and a repository of ideas and information gathered and useful to you throughout your research process. One goal of this journal is to instill the importance of recording your insights, field experiences, etc. You will begin immediately to journal your perceptions and reflections to start to develop a practice. The journal represents a summary of: class and reading highlights, a compilation of class exercises, personal notes, articles and reflections collected over the entire course and relevant to your own research.

The journal is also intended to help you to begin to develop the practice of memoing and reflecting on your ideas throughout the research process. It serves as a tangible document/tool/resource for you to build
upon, and return to, time and again throughout your research experience to develop your insights. It also acts as an aide memoire helping you throughout your research process to know when you started to develop particular ideas, interpretations, when you needed to change a particular strategy etc.

A possible/suggested format for journal: Section 1 - Each week you should write a summary of no more than 400 words that highlight the insights from the class and the readings and exercises. Note: you may record a lot more notes about your readings, but you are being asked to create a brief summary of events each week. Section 2 – insert our in-class exercises into the journal. Section 3 – A miscellaneous section for you to insert any other materials that you gather for your own research such as: references, readings, texts, stories, conceptual frameworks, etc. to consolidate some of your ‘growing expertise’ as you learn about theory, methodology and methods in human geography.

Your mark on the journal will be based on Sections 1 and 2. As you hand in your journal, you need to meet with me to explain what is in there and how it works for you. Assigned marks will be either a B (meets expectations or (A to A+ level for exceeds expectations). Journals can be paper-based or electronic. Criteria for marking also include: visual style of presentation, logic, coherence.

Due: Dec. 4th

5. Participation Mark
A participation mark worth **10%** will be assigned that will be based on your attendance in class, your contributions in class, your attention to doing the readings and other class exercises. In addition, this mark will reflect your attention and kindness regarding letting me know about missed meetings and other events that will impact your class experience.

GEOGRAPHY GRADING SYSTEM:

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POLICY ON LATE ASSIGNMENTS
Please speak to me well in advance if you anticipate a delay in submitting your work, particularly when dealing with illness or family occasions or conflicts.

- Late penalties will be applied to overdue assignments. Please note that a **5% penalty per day** will be applied to late assignments including weekend days. For example, 5% will be deducted from the assignment if due in class and if handed in later in the day. If the assignment is submitted the next day, 10% will be deducted from the assigned grade, and so forth.
- **Assignments submitted more than one week late will NOT be graded.**
- All work must be original. Please see plagiarism policy below.

POLICY ON ATTENDANCE
Due to the nature and scope of the course, regular attendance is required to develop competency with the course concepts and to receive full marks on participation. Consistent, punctual attendance is required. If you are going to miss a class, it is your responsibility to be in touch with me and let me know. In order to receive a complete mark on the participation element of the course, students should attend all classes throughout the term. Exceptions will be made for issues of severe illness or bereavement. Illnesses will require doctor’s notes.
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
It is every student’s responsibility to be aware of the university’s policies on academic integrity, including policies on cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized use of an editor, multiple submission, and aiding others to cheat.

Policy on Academic Integrity: http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/info/regulations/academic-integrity.html

If you have any questions or doubts, talk to me, your course instructor. For more information, see http://www.uvic.ca/learningandteaching/students/resources/expectations/.

ACCESSIBILITY
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a documented disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the Centre for Accessible Learning as soon as possible. The CAL staff are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations http://www.uvic.ca/services/cal/. The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course.

POSITIVITY AND SAFETY
The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing and protecting a positive and safe learning and working environment for all its members.

COURSE EXPERIENCE SURVEY (CES)
I value your feedback on this course. Towards the end of term, as in all other courses at UVic, you will have the opportunity to complete an anonymous survey regarding your learning experience (CES). The survey is vital to providing feedback to me regarding the course and my teaching, as well as to help the department improve the overall program for students in the future. The survey is accessed via MyPage and can be done on your laptop, tablet, or mobile device. I will remind you and provide you with more detailed information nearer the time but please be thinking about this important activity during the course.

WEEKLY CALENDAR
Note for instructors: Important dates are here: http://web.uvic.ca/calendar/general/dates.html

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<tr>
<th>WEEK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>Part 1. Introduction to Course, Course Outline and Evaluation Items</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>September 11</td>
<td>Qualitative Research Foundations: Epistemology, Ontology and Axiology, Objectivism, Subjectivism and Constructionism</td>
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<td>September 18</td>
<td>Exercises: 1. Ideas: Questions generation 2. Students pick a theoretical orientation to research and discuss.</td>
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<td>Theory in Qualitative Research: (Compare and Contrast e.g., Feminism, Marxism, Political ecology)</td>
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<td>Exercise: Discuss Interview with Colleague Assignment</td>
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| 3 September 25 | - Power, position and ethics  
|            | - Research sampling considerations  
|            | Exercises:  
|            | 1. Facilitated Discussions on Theory  
|            | 2. Create Friendship Interview dyads |
| 4 October 2 | Guest Lecturer: Andrea Mellor, PhD Candidate – Indigenous Methodology  
|            | Exercise: TBD |
| 5 October 9 | Part 2. Methodology and Methods  
|            | *Mixed Methods, Case Studies and Action Research  
|            | *Methods of Interviewing and Focus Groups  
|            | Exercises:  
|            | 1. Primer for Focus Group Exercise.  
|            | 2. Report back on Interview with Colleague |
| 6 October 16 | Graduate Student Panel –  
|            | Research potentials, pitfalls, methods, techniques |
| 7 October 23 | Research Questions as Anchors, Methodology, and Armchair walkthroughs  
|            | Exercise: Participant observation |
| 8 October 30 | Part 3. In-depth Methods and Analysis  
|            | - Discuss Example Case Studies  
|            | - Discourse Analysis  
|            | Exercise: Focus Group Conduction |
| 9 November 6 | Thematic Analysis Workshop  
|            | Exercise: Begin friendship coding and thematic analysis |
| 10 November 13 | No Class - Reading Break |
| 11 November 20 | Introduction to Alternative Methods: e.g., community mapping, life mapping, photovoice, graphic novels  
|            | Exercise: Life mapping |
| 12 November 27 | Politics of Research and KT/KM/KS  
|            | Exercise: Positionality and reflexivity |
| 13 December 4 | Final Discussions, course review/highlights and evaluation |

**DISCLAIMER**
The above schedule, policies, procedures, and assignments in this course may be subject to minor changes in the event of extenuating circumstances as well as opportunities.

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