

SO102 Methods in Social and Historical Studies

Seminar Leader: Dr. Agatha Siwale
Course Times: Wed & Fri 14:00-15:30
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Office Hours: Tuesday 3pm - 5pm
Office Location: P98a

Course Description

This course introduces undergraduate students to a variety of qualitative research methods used in the social sciences and to the epistemological and ontological foundations that undergird them. The goal of the class is to equip students to formulate good research questions and then devise appropriate research plans for execution of qualitative research projects. Students will learn the “hows” and “whys” of writing literature reviews, generating hypotheses, selecting cases for investigation, collecting and analyzing data, and presenting findings. This will be accomplished through a series of seminars and research exercises carried out individually as well as in teams, involving application of various components in qualitative research (e.g. carrying out focus-group discussions, role-playing the interview process and analyzing data). Students will then be required to submit a mini-thesis at the end of the course. Another important aim of the course is to train students to become critical consumers of research generated by others through evaluating the sources of evidence, and the methods and conclusions proposed by others. At the end of the course, students should be able both to conduct and to critique research.

Course Goals

1. To introduce students to the theoretical underpinnings of qualitative research and how it differs from quantitative methods.
2. To equip students with the ability formulate research questions and to identify the appropriate research design (data collection and analysis methods) for answering them.
3. To provide students with first-hand exposure to applying qualitative research methods.
4. To build analytical and communication skills as well as team collaboration skills.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be:

1. Able to distinguish between qualitative and quantitative methods and understand different approaches and methodological traditions underpinning them.
2. Students will be able to formulate research questions, undertake a literature review, come up with a qualitative methodological design that appropriately answers the question and to present findings.
3. Students will be equipped to apply certain qualitative methods

Requirements

1. Participation – 10%
2. Mini- Thesis
 - i) Introduction (10%)
 - ii) Literature Review and Research Question – 20%
 - iii) Methodological design and data collection – 30%
 - iv) Data Analysis, findings and conclusion – 20%
3. Presentation of findings 10%

1. Participation (10%)

You are all expected to do the assigned readings *before* each class and to actively participate in discussions. The highest grades for participation will be awarded to those who make regular, valuable contributions to discussions and demonstrate an effective engagement with and application of readings (up to A-/A). Good faith attempts at participation will attract an average grade (up to B-/B/B+) while attendance without participation will attract a C-/C. A crucial part of participation is providing feedback to your colleagues on their ideas, particularly during the presentations of their proposals.

The goal, however, is not to aim at saying something (or anything) each time we meet but to develop the art of analyzing ideas expressed by others and contributing to them as well as expressing your own standpoint.

2. Mini-Thesis (80%)

The goal of this semester-long exercise is to give you first-hand exposure to social science research based on qualitative methods. You will, therefore, have the opportunity of applying the key ideas of the class to a real-life research project. You are free to work alone or in pairs for this project. The mini-thesis is divided into small chunks that will make it much more easily managed.

i) Setting up your inquiry and writing your introduction (10%): You will indicate whether you would like to work independently or with a colleague by the end of **week 1**. You will then identify a policy problem, formulate a research question and explain why your chosen question is important either theoretically or policy-wise. The research question must be one that can be answered using qualitative methods.

Having discussed these key elements in pairs/independently, you will *all* work *alone/independently* to come up with a **one (1) page introduction (450 words)** to your research. This introduction will be due by the end of **Week 4 – Friday, February, 22nd**.

ii) Literature Review (20% - 2500 words with a minimum of 6 peer reviewed sources): You will then carry out a literature review for your chosen question. The literature review requires you to firstly provide an overview of existing research most closely related to your topic – who else has written on your area of interest? What are the key debates on the topic? However, you are not to merely report on what others

have said but rather to critically analyse it and use it to come up with your own position – some questions to consider:

- How convincing have various scholars been at explaining the phenomena you are studying?
- What have others overlooked that your research will help us understand?
- What methods have been mainly used?
- How appropriate were they? Will you offer a better approach or perhaps simply apply their method to a new area?

The goal of the literature review is to identify a gap in the literature and to use the review as a basis for justifying your current research. Therefore, after completing the literature review, revisit your initial research problem and question in the introduction and refine it in line with the new information you may have discovered in the literature review. Also come up with clear research goals for your study.

Literature reviews will be written *independently* and are due by the end of **Week 8 (22nd March)**. Team mates can, however, share information on relevant sources and compare notes on critiques. Literature reviews should flow cohesively from the introduction. Remember, this is a single mini-thesis.

iii) Methodological Design (30% - 1000 words)

Here, you will receive first-hand exposure to coming up with a methodological design and then executing it. You will:

Part A

- i) Identify the methodological approach most appropriate for answering your research question and why it is best. Since it must be a qualitative approach, you will justify why it is appropriate.
- ii) Identify what cases you will use and explain how cases will be selected and why those specific cases are important.
- iii) What data collection methods will you use? Why?
- iv) How will you analyse your data?

Due Date : Week 11, April 10

Part B

- v) Design the data collection tool (e.g. if you will use open-ended interviews, design an interview guide).
- vi) Execution: Implement the data collection method and remember to keep a record (e.g. interview notes or notes from observation. For this segment, only 1 - 2 data collection activities are required (e.g. 2 interviews, 2 observation exercises or analysis of a single document).

To be done between April 10th and April 24th

iv) Consolidated Mini-Thesis including data analysis, findings and conclusion (20% - 2000 words)

This will be the final stage of your mini-thesis. You will analyse the data that you obtained from your data collection exercise to complete the mini-thesis. Be open about the limitations of your research and then provide a conclusion. Further details will be provided in class.

Due Date: 17th May, 2019.

v) Presentation of Findings (10%)

Each of you will have the opportunity to present your research project and defend your thesis between **Week 13 and 15 (26th April and 8th of May, 2019)**. The presentation of findings is scheduled before the final submission of the consolidated mini-thesis to allow you to incorporate peer feedback into your final submission.

More details about aspects to emphasise during the presentation will be given during the term. An online google sign-up sheet will be set up at least 6 weeks before the 26th of April on which you can select a date for presenting.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Late submission of essays by up to 24 hours will result in a downgrade by one full grade (e.g. from B to B-). Essays that are more than 24 hours late maybe rejected for grading, particularly where the explanation given is not satisfactory. Where a late essay is accepted for grading, it must be submitted within one week of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, you will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin upholds the highest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Cases of academic misconduct including cheating and plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct, Section III Academic Misconduct.

Attendance

You must attend ALL classes and participate actively in sessions. Absence from two sessions of 90 minutes in a semester will attract deductions from your participation grade unless permission is sought in advance in accordance with the Student Handbook's regulations on illness or leaves of absence.

Reading Material:

This course does not have a mandatory textbook but you are encouraged to purchase:

- Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter, and Ayay Bailey. 2011. *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications

Otherwise, Weekly readings will be shared via google classroom at the beginning of the term.

Schedule

Please note that this schedule is subject to change depending on emerging class needs during the term. I will inform students in advance of any changes and the online platform will also be used give advance notices of changes.

Week 1: Course Introduction and Philosophical Approaches

Wednesday, January 30

- We get introduced to each other and have a course and syllabus overview, discuss assignments. No assigned readings.

Friday, February 1

- Ormstone, R., Spenser, L., Barnard, M., & Snape, D. (2013). The Foundations of Qualitative Research, In: Ritchie, Jane, and Jane Lewis (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers* (Chapter 1: 1-13). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Further Reading:

- Della Porta, Donatella and Michael Keating. 2008. "How Many Approaches in the Social Sciences? An Epistemological Introduction." In *Approaches and Methodologies in Social Sciences*, edited by Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 19–39.

Week 2: Design Selection

Wednesday, February 6

- Creswell, John W. 2008. "The Selection of Research Design." In *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 3–21.

Further Reading:

- Mayoux, L. (2006). Quantitative, Qualitative or Participatory? Which method for what and when?, In: Desai and Potter (Eds.), *Doing Development Research* (115-129)
- Schmitter, Peter. 2008. "The Design of Social and Political Research." In *Approaches and Methodologies in Social Sciences*, edited by Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 263–295.

Friday, February 8

- Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter, and Ayay Bailey. 2011. "The Nature of Qualitative Research." In *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 8–28.
- Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter, and Ayay Bailey. 2011. "The Design Cycle." In *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 29–60.

Week 3: Research Questions and Hypotheses

Wednesday, February 13

- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2008. "From Topics to Questions." In *The Craft of Research*, 3rd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 35–50.
- Creswell, John W. 2008. "Research Questions and Hypotheses." In *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 129–144.

Friday, February 15 Literature Review and Theory 1

- Creswell, John W. 2008. "Review of the Literature." In *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd edition. Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 23–48.

Week 4: Literature Review and Theory 2 and Concepts

Wednesday, February 20 – Literature Review 2

- Creswell, John W. 2008. “The Use of Theory.” In *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd edition, 49–72.

Friday, February 22 Concepts

- Adcock, R. & Collier, D. (2001). Measurement Validity: Toward a Shared Framework for Qualitative and Quantitative Research. *American Political Science Review* 95: 3, 529–546.

Further Reading:

- Howard S. Becker. 1998. “Concepts.” In *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You’re Doing It*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 152–198.

Due Date for Introduction

Week 5: Case Selection and Case Study

Wednesday, February 27

- Gerring, John. 2004. “What is a Case Study and What Is It Good For?” *American Political Science Review* 98(2): 341–354.

Further Reading:

- Della Porta, Donatella. 2008. “Comparative Analysis: Case-Oriented versus Variable-Oriented Research.” In *Approaches and Methodologies in Social Sciences*, edited by Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 198–222.

Friday, March 1

- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. “Carrying Out the Case Studies.” In *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, edited by Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 89–108.

Week 6: Process-Tracing and Causality

Wednesday, March 6

- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. “Process-Tracing and Historical Explanation.” In *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, edited by Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 205–232.

Friday, March 8

- Bennett, Andrew. 2010. “Process Tracing and Causal Inference.” In *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*, 2nd edition, edited by Henry E. Brady and David Collier. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 207–219.
- Vennesson, Pascal. 2008. “Case Studies and Process Tracing: Theories and Practices.” In *Approaches and Methodologies in Social Sciences*, edited by Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 223–239.

Week 7: Interviews and Focus Groups

Wednesday, March 13

- Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter, and Ayay Bailey. 2011. "In-Depth Interviews." In *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 108–134.

Further Reading:

- Soss, Joe. 2006. "Talking Our Way to Meaningful Explanations: A Practice-Centered View of Interviewing for Interpretive Research." In *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, edited by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 127–149.
- Herzog, Hanna. 2005. "On Home Turf: Interview Location and Its Social Meaning." *Qualitative Sociology* 28(1): 25–47.

Friday, March 15

- Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter, and Ayay Bailey. 2011. "Focus Group Discussions." In *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 135–168.

Week 8: Discourse Analysis

Wednesday, March 20

- Jaworski, Adam and Nikolas Coupland. 1999. "Introduction: Perspectives on Discourse Analysis." In *The Discourse Reader*, edited by Adam Jaworski and Nikolas Coupland. London: Routledge, 1–40.

Friday, March 22

- Gee, Paul. 2014. "Language as Saying, Doing and Being." In *The Discourse Studies Reader: Main Currents in Theory and Analysis*, edited by Johannes Angermuller, Dominique Maingueneau, and Ruth Wodak. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 234–243.

Further Reading:

- Escobar, Arturo. 1995. "Power and Visibility: Tales of Peasants, Women, and the Environment." In *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton University Press, 154–211.

Due Date for Literature Review

Week 9: Textual Analysis and Narrative Analysis

Wednesday, March 27

- Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter, and Ayay Bailey. 2011. "Data Preparation and Developing Codes." In *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 203–232.

Further Reading:

- Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter, and Ayay Bailey. 2011. "Textual Data Analysis." In *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 233–267.

Friday, March 29

- Franzosi, Roberto. 1998. "Narrative Analysis – Or Why (and How) Sociologists Should Be Interested in Narrative." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24: 517–554.

Further Reading:

- Bevir, Mark. 2006. "How Narratives Explain." In *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, edited by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 281–290.

Week 10: Material Analysis

Wednesday, April 3

- O'Toole, Paddy and Prisca Were. 2008. "Observing Places: Using Space and Material Culture in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Research* 8(5): 616–634.

Further Reading:

- Yanow, Dvora. 2006. "How Built Spaces Mean: A Semiotics of Space." In *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn*, edited by Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 349–366.

Friday, April 5

- Hill, Michael R. 1993. In *Archival Strategies and Techniques*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1–50.

Week 11: Ethnography

Wednesday, April 10

- Goffman, Erving. 1989. "On Fieldwork." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 18(2): 123–132;

Further Reading:

- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine and Dvora Yanow. 2012. "The Rhythms of Interpretive Research I: Getting Going." In *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. London: Routledge, 54–77.

Due Date for Methodological Design

Friday, April 12

- Kapiszewski, Diana, Lauren M. MacLean, and Benjamin L. Read. 2015. "Site-intensive Methods: Ethnography and Participant Observation." In *Field Research in Political Science: Practices And Principles*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 234–264.

Further Reading:

- Burawoy, Michael. 1998. "The Extended Case Method." *Sociological Theory* 16(1): 4–33.
- Fujii, Lee Ann. 2010. "Shades of Truth and Lies: Interpreting Testimonies of War and Violence." *Journal of Peace Research* 47(2): 231–241.

Week 12: Mid-Term Break April 15-21

Week 13: Ethical Issues in Research

Wednesday, April 24

- Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter, and Ayay Bailey. 2011. "Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research." In *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: Sage Publications, 61–79.

Further Reading:

- Schwartz-Shea, Peregrine and Dvora Yanow. 2012. "Designing for Trustworthiness: Knowledge Claims and Evaluations of Interpretive Research." In *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes*. London: Routledge, 91–114.
- Rose, Gillian. 1997. "Situating Knowledges: Positionality, Reflexivities and Other Tactics." *Progress in Human Geography* 21(3): 305–320.
- Burawoy, Michael. 2003. "Revisits: An Outline of a Theory of Reflexive Ethnography," *American Sociological Review* 68(5): 645–679.

Friday, April 26 – Presentations of Research Projects

Week 14: Presentations of Research Projects

Wednesday, 1 May *Labour Day*

- Holiday, No class

Friday, May 3

- Presentations of Research Projects

Week 15: Presentations of Research Projects and Wrap-Up

Wednesday, May 8

- Final Presentations

Friday, May 10

- Wrap-up

Week 16: Completion Week May 13-17

- Final Thesis due on May 17th, 2019