

SO203 Qualitative Methods in Social Sciences

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm or by appointment

Course Description

This course covers the principles and contemporary practices of qualitative research methods across the social sciences and humanities. We will start by exploring the ethical and philosophical foundations of qualitative inquiry, examining how knowledge is produced, who gets to interpret data as the researcher, and who becomes the data as the research participant.

Through a combination of theoretical readings, field-based observation, in-class exercises, discussions, student-led field research, and iterative research paper writing, students develop theoretical knowledge as well as practical skills in conducting and analyzing qualitative research that particularly prepares them for conducting their thesis research. The course covers a wide range of qualitative methods, including observation, interviewing, qualitative content analysis, metaphor analysis, narrative analysis, conversation analysis, signifier analysis, network analysis, and discourse analysis. We will apply these methods to diverse forms of qualitative data, including everyday social interactions, conversations, urban spaces, archives, traditional and social media, photographs, videos, maps, fashion, and other objects and texts. Students will be conducting their research, employing these methods, sharing their findings and the challenges they face with the instructor and their peers throughout the semester, receiving regular feedback, and developing their paper through an iterative process.

By the end of the course, students will be able to select appropriate methods for their research questions, collect and interpret qualitative data, and communicate their findings through informed and reflexive analysis.

Requirements

You are expected to participate in the field trip in Berlin during class hours, complete all the assigned readings before the class, participate in the class discussions and exercises, and submit all assignments in a timely manner. Attendance is of utmost importance in this course since we will conduct in-class group exercises to practice the methods we cover.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the highest standards of academic integrity and expects students to adhere to these standards at all times. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Accommodations

Bard College Berlin is committed to inclusion and providing equal access to all students; we uphold and maintain all aspects of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and Section 3 of the German Disability Equality Act of April 27, 2002 (Federal Law Gazette I p. 1468). If you have a disability, or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, Atticus Kleen, (accommodations@berlin.bard.edu) to request an official accommodation.

Requests for accommodations should be made as early as possible to ensure adequate time for coordination and planning. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and may require advance notice to implement.

If you have already been approved for accommodations with the Disability Accommodation Coordinator, please arrange to meet with me outside of class so that we can develop an implementation plan.

Students may face extenuating circumstances related to various personal or external factors, which impact their academic performance. While these circumstances often do not fall within the legal framework of Disability Accommodations, Bard College Berlin is committed to supporting students experiencing such circumstances. A student needing a short extension or a replacement assignment because of an extenuating circumstance is encouraged to make arrangements directly with instructors if possible. If further support is needed, please visit the [Bard College Berlin Accessibility page](#). Questions about this process can be directed to James Harker (j.harker@berlin.bard.edu) or Maria Anderson-Long (m.andersonlong@berlin.bard.edu).

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is a crucial part of the education offered by Bard College Berlin. To account for minor circumstances, two absences from twice-per-week courses or the equivalent (e.g. one absence from a once-per-week course) should not affect the participation grade or require documentation.

Please provide documentation if you want to be excused for exceptional circumstances.

Bard College Berlin may not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences. The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where a professor agrees to accept a late assignment, it should be submitted by the new deadline agreed upon by both parties. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students will receive feedback for their coursework during and at the end of the semester.

Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Grade Breakdown

Participation : 30%
Weekly assignments : 20%
Extended introduction : 20%
Final Paper : 30%

Course Schedule

Please submit all assignments on Google Classroom unless it is explicitly stated otherwise.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 1	September 4	What is Qualitative Analysis? Qualitative versus Quantitative Research	Denzin, Norman K., & Yvonna S. Lincoln. <i>Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research</i>. In <i>The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research</i>.	Submit: Research question.
Week 2	September 11	What, How, Whom, and Why to Research	- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). <i>Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches</i>. Sage. - Gregory, Eve, and Mahera Ruby. "The 'insider/outsider' dilemma of ethnography: Working with young children and their families in cross-cultural contexts." <i>Journal of Early Childhood Research</i> 9.2 (2011): 162-174.	
Week 3	September 18	Epistemic Violence, Ethics, and Knowledge Production	- Haraway, Donna. <i>Situated Knowledges</i>. Recommended: Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. <i>Can the Subaltern Speak?</i> - Emerson, Robert M., Rachel Fretz, & Linda Shaw. <i>Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes</i>, Chapters 1–2. - Whyte, William H. <i>The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces</i> (selected chapters). Recommended: Geertz, Clifford. <i>Thick Description</i>.	Submit: Suggested research method.
Week 4	September 25	Observation and Spatial Analysis (Field Exercise in Berlin – Class Trip)	- Lefebvre, Henri. <i>the Production of Space</i> (selected excerpts). - Phadke, Shilpa, Sameera Khan, & Shilpa Ranade. <i>Why Loiter? Women and Risk on Mumbai Streets</i>. Introduction. - Miéville, China. <i>The City & the City</i> (selected excerpts). - Kvale, Steinar, & Svend Brinkmann. <i>InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing</i>, Chapters 1–4.	
Week 5	October 2	Spatial Analysis		Submit: Revised research question, research method, and type of material to be analyzed.
Week 6	October 9	Interviewing		
Week 7	October 16	Qualitative Content Analysis	Schreier, Margrit. <i>Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice</i>, Chapters 1–3.	Submit: Extended introduction of your term paper.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignments
—	October 23	Spring Break – No Class		
Week 8	October 30	Metaphor Analysis	- Lakoff, George, & Mark Johnson. <i>Metaphors We Live By</i>. - Cameron, Lynne. <i>Metaphor in Educational Discourse</i> (selected excerpts).	
Week 9	November 6	Narrative Analysis	- Riessman, Catherine Kohler. <i>Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences</i>, Chapters 1–2. - Bruner, Jerome. <i>Life as Narrative</i>.	Submit: Findings from the field.
Week 10	November 13	Conversation Analysis	- Sidnell, Jack. <i>Conversation Analysis: An Introduction</i>. - Sacks, Harvey. <i>An Initial Investigation of the Usability of Conversational Data</i>. Recommended: ten Have, Paul. <i>Doing Conversation Analysis</i>.	Share: One-page essay on the practical challenges and roadblocks encountered during your field research.
Week 11	November 20	Signifier Analysis and Semiotics	- Barthes, Roland. <i>Mythologies</i> (selected essays). - Hall, Stuart. <i>The Work of Representation</i>. Recommended: Chandler, Daniel. <i>Semiotics: The Basics</i>.	Share: One-page essay on the ethical challenges and roadblocks encountered during your field research.
Week 12	November 27	Network Analysis	TBD	Share: One-page essay on the psychological challenges and roadblocks encountered during your field research.
Week 13	December 4	Discourse Analysis	- Fairclough, Norman. <i>Language and Power</i>. - Foucault, Michel. <i>The Archaeology of Knowledge</i> (selected excerpts). Recommended: Gee, James Paul. <i>An Introduction to Discourse Analysis</i>.	Submit: Rough draft of final paper.
Week 14	December 11	Student Research Presentations	<i>The rough draft of one classmate.</i>	Peer feedback on a classmate's draft.
	December 18	Completion Week		SUBMIT FINAL PAPER!!!