COURSE TITLES: SOCI 407/807: Strategies of Social Research: Qualitative Methods

TIME: Wednesdays, 2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Oldfather Hall, Room 204

PROFESSOR: L. J. Dance, 723 Oldfather Hall, Office phone: 472-2962, UNL email: ldance2@unl.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Tues & Thurs, 2:15 to 3:00

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
In this global world in which we live, windows to a variety of national contexts are only a YouTube clip, Facebook page, Skype session, or Tweet away. In this way, the world has become smaller. Researchers now have easier access to research contexts, both within their own countries and within other countries, which may be culturally/ethnically/nationally different from their own cultural/ethnic/national milieus. However, successfully traversing lines of social difference to conduct qualitative research requires careful consideration of subtleties derived from historical, cultural, political, socio-economic, and group identity contexts; these subtleties can present huge obstacles. Several qualitative methods/methodologies are particularly useful given the global + local or “glocal” era in which we live.

Useful methodological approaches include Ethnography, Life History, Participant/Community Action Research, Discourse Analysis, Visual Methodology and other qualitative methodologies that will be covered in this course. Some specific methods reviewed will include interviewing (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), participant observation, use of primary sources (including personal documents) and triangulation. These methodological approaches and methods are not flawless, but can be a good place to start if you are interested in cross-cultural, cross-national, culturally sensitive, post-colonial, anti-orientalist, and/or Human Rights-sensitive approaches to conducting research.

Lectures will provide students with useful methodological, theoretical, conceptual, and empirical information. In-Class Activities along with Q&A discussions will provide students with hands-on experiences and opportunities to pose questions about class assignments that are designed to familiarize students with the actual “doing” or practice of qualitative research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
• Sample qualitative approaches with an emphasis on theoretical and methodological approaches that fall under the general categories of “post-colonial,” “critical,” “feminist,” and “post-postmodern” methodologies.
• Become familiar with qualitative data collection and analysis techniques, for example field observations, various approaches to interviewing, using ethnographic techniques versus doing “an ethnography”, coding and analyses of data and texts, etc.
• Enhance critical analyses, and syntheses of theoretical and empirical scholarship on persons from non-Western backgrounds/heritages.
• Facilitate discussions among students of different nationalities/ethnicities regarding how social norms may vary across different cultural/social/ethnic/national contexts.
• Understand the importance of ethical requirements, recommendations, and considerations when doing qualitative research.

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Acquire the *formulae for writing documents based upon academic research* (essays, theses, and/or articles and, especially, research proposals).

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**
There are two required texts for this course. In addition to the texts below, required articles will be placed on Blackboard or provided in some other electronic format.


**RECOMMENDED TEXT(S):**
There is one recommended text for this course.


**GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**
All students are expected to attend classes, participate in class discussions, do in-class presentations, read assigned texts, complete one to three reflective essays¹, complete one work plan for a mini-research project, and complete one final research proposal. The final grade for this course will be based upon class participation and in-class presentations, one to two reflective essays out of the three reflective essays that will be offered, one mini-research project work plan, and one final research project proposal. Your final grade will be based upon the total number of points earned on the assignments identified above and listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points (Percentage)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Essay(s)</td>
<td>10 pts (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work plan for mini research project</td>
<td>10 pts (10%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper/Project Proposal</td>
<td>50 pts (50%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation²</td>
<td>30 pts (30%)</td>
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**TOTAL**                                           **100 pts (100%)**

Grading Scheme:
- A = 92-100% of total points
- B = 84-92% of total points
- C = 76-84% of total points
- D = 68-76% of total points
- E = 60-68% of total points
- F = 59% or less of total points

**MAKE-UP POLICY:**
Because each assignment builds upon the previous assignment, as a general rule there will be **NO** make-up assignments. In **extraordinary** circumstances, a late assignment may be accepted if: (1) you know in advance that you will be unable, for **extraordinary** reasons, to hand in the assignment, and you make

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¹Students must complete at least one reflective essay. Students who require more feedback may write a second and third essay. If students write two essays each essay will be with 5 points; if students write three essays the first two are worth 3.25 points and the third will be worth 3.5 points.

² **2.0 points will be deducted from your Class Participation (CP) grade for each class that you miss if you do not have an official excuse.** For example, if you miss two classes, your CP grade could be no higher than 26 points (B), if you miss four classes, your CP grade could be no higher than 22 points (C), and so on. On top of this, your CP grade may also be affected by not participating in class discussions when you are in class. So, please do not miss classes. Of course, if you have an official excuse for missing class, then no points will be deducted from your CP. Furthermore, in-class presentations required throughout the course will count for up to 15 of your 30 class participation points.

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arrangements with the professor at least one week before the scheduled due date; or (2) you are suddenly hospitalized, become seriously ill, or experience some other serious event and then consult with the professor about handing in the assignment as soon as possible. In any event, the professor reserves the right to refuse permission for make-up assignments if she feels it is not warranted. At the end of the semester, however, students with missing assignments will be given an opportunity to make-up missing work.

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:
The University of Nebraska-Lincoln provides individualized accommodations to students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that is impacting your academic progress, please call Students w/Disabilities Services (SSD) at 472-3787 and schedule an appointment with the Director, Veva Cheney, so that she can arrange a confidential discussion of your individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodations to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

If you do not have a documented disability but you are having difficulties with your coursework (such as receiving low grades even though you study more than your classmates or running out of time for test questions when the majority of your peers finish their exams in the allotted time), you may still schedule an appointment with Veva Cheney to discuss the challenges you are experiencing.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES:
The professor believes that students should not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs. Students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the professor of any intended absences for religious observances in advance. Notice should be provided to the professor as soon as possible but no later than the end of the fourth week of classes.

USE OF CELL PHONES AND COMPUTERS DURING CLASS:
Please be courteous to your classmates and instructor and do NOT use your cell phone, I-phone, etc., during class. Computers and I-Pads are allowed in class but only with the approval of the professor and for course-related reasons (e.g., note taking, presentations).

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SOCI 407/807: Strategies of Social Research: Qualitative Methods
Outline of Course Activities
(This first version of meetings, reading, and assignments is subject to revisions)

Part One: Important Background Information
Jan 14 The “Swedish Model” and “American Model” of Multiculturalism

Readings


Jan 21 Qualitative Research: A General Overview

1. “New” Perspectives on “Old” Qualitative Methods
2. Original Research, Primary Sources, Secondary Sources, Tertiary Sources
3. In-Class Activity: Comparing Scholarly Works and Sources

Readings


In Class Activity: Comparing Scholarly Works & Sources (Modified and borrowed from Qualitative Research Methods)
Compare the reading by Norden to the reading by Schierup & Ålund:
• Can you identify the main research question(s) in each article/chapter?
• Can you identify any underlying paradigms and/or theories?
• Do either one of the readings use an emic perspective?
• Is there any evidence of reflexivity?
• What sources (original research? Primary sources? Secondary sources?)?
• On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 = high quality; 1 = low quality) how would you assess the quality of each reading?

Jan 28 Ethics and Research: Nuremberg Code and Codes of Ethics

1. “Real Ethical Challenges that I Have Faced” by Lory J. Dance
2. In-Class Activity: An Open Discussion on Ethics and Othering

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A) Nuremburg Code:
http://www.ushmm.org/research/doctors/Nuremberg_Code.htm
http://ohsr.od.nih.gov/guidelines/nuremberg.html

B) Sociologists and Ethics
http://www.asanet.org/about/ethics.cfm

Readings
Please read the information contained in the above websites.

Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey (2010). Qualitative Research Methods, Chapter 4: Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research.

“Stereotypes of Arabs, Middle Easterners, and Muslims,” from Teach Mideast: An Educational Initiative of the Middle East Policy Council (http://www.teachmideast.org/)


In Class Activity: Othering in Political Cartoons:
Students should survey political cartoons in their local paper and online for a week, and bring in at least one example. If students cannot find a suitable political cartoon from a recent news source, a political cartoon produced in the last five to ten years may be used. Students should point out how the cartoonist uses visual shorthand, i.e., how he or she exaggerates features, creates representative figures or elements, or uses stereotypes to make his or her point. What is the cartoonist's critique? Do you agree with the critique? Do you agree with the cartoonist's visual representation in making his or her critique? (Activity from teachmideast.org)

Feb 4 Examples of U.S. Human Rights Violations in Qualitative Research (Research Ethics Legends)

1. Documentary on SPE and Lessons Learned from Milgram, Humphrey, Van Maanen, and Zimbardo
2. In Class Activity on Ethical Breaches
3. Organize Next Week’s Group Presentations on The “Golden Movement” in Theory

A) The Milgram Study
http://www.age-of-the-sage.org/psychology/milgram_obedience_experiment.html
B) Humphrey’s Tearoom Trade Study
http://web.missouri.edu/~bondesonw/Laud.html
C) John Van Maanen’s field observations with abusive police (see reading below)
D) Ethical and Human Rights Violations at Abu Ghraib
http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2004/05/10/040510fa_fact/?currentPage=all

Readings
Please read info from the above websites


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**In Class Activity:**
1) Documentary: The SPE
2) What, if any, ethical breaches occurred in Van Maanen’s field experience? In your opinion, did stereotyping play a role? What, if any, ethical breaches occurred in The Milgram Study and Humphrey’s Study? Again, did stereotyping play a role? Did you see evidence of Human Rights violations in “The Moral Fix” or in The SPE? What about Abu Ghraib? Are there parallels between SPE and Abu Ghraib? As a researcher, what kinds of moral fixes could you find yourself in.

**REFLECTIVE ESSAY #1 DUE ON FEB 6th or FEB 7th** (See instructions on the First Reflective Essay Assignment).

**PART TWO: DOING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH VIA THEORY AND DESIGN**

Feb 11 History and Theory in Qualitative Research

1. The Roles of Theory in Qualitative Research
2. What is Grounded Theory?
3. Group Presentations on The “Golden Age Moment” in Theory
4. Organize Next Week’s Group Presentations on Beyond The “Golden Movement” in Theory

**Readings**


**In Class Activity: The “Golden Age Moment” in Theory and Objections to the “Golden Moment”**

**Group Presentation, The Golden Moment**

Feb 18 Research Design: The Basics

1. U.S.-Sweden Comparisons, Researchers, and the Challenges of Triangulation
2. Preliminary Designs for Students’ Mini Research Projects
3. Group Presentations on Beyond the “Golden Moment” in Theory

**Readings**


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Rethinking Race and Ethnicity in Research Methods by John Stanfield II (ed.) Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc.

In Class Activity: Beyond the “Golden Moment” in Theory Group Presentation, “The Break with Modernity”

REFLECTIVE ESSAY #2 DUE ON FEB 20TH or FEB 21ST (See instructions on the Second Reflective Essay Assignment).

Part Three: Methodological Approaches Designed to Minimize Ethical & Human Rights Breaches

Feb 25 Ethnography, Critical Ethnography, Life History, Auto-Ethnography

1. Doing Ethnography versus Using Ethnographic Methods
2. Types of Ethnography versus Life History
3. In Class Activity: Exercises from Negotiating Cultures and Identities by John Caughey

Readings

Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey (2010). Qualitative Research Methods, Chapter 6: In-Depth Interviews and Chapter 8: Observation. (If you are interested in Focus Group interviews, then also read Chapter 7: Focus Group Discussions).

Caughey, John. (2006). Negotiating Cultures and Identities: The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, pages 3 to 76.

Recommended Reading:
“Rethinking Ethnography: Toward a Critical Cultural Politics” by Dwight Conquergood from Lincoln, Yvonna S. and Norman K. Denzin (Eds.) (2003), Turning Points in Qualitative Research: Tying Knots in a Handkerchief. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

“Writing the Revolution: Dilemmas of Ethnographic Writing after the January 25th Revolution in Egypt” by Julia Elyachar from Jadaliyya Feb 10, 2012

In Class Activity: Negotiating Cultures and Identities by John Caughey
Working in groups of 2 to 3 students, complete up to three exercises from pages 26 to 76 of Negotiating Cultures and Identities by John Caughey. In class, be prepared to discuss which exercises you chose and why you chose them.

Mar 04 Discourse Analysis and Visual Methodology

1. Discourse Analysis and Visual Methodology
2. Group Presentations on Ethnography and/or Critical Discourse Analysis

Readings

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**Recommended Reading:**


“A critical discourse analysis of the selected Iranian and American printed media on the representations of Hizbullah-Israel war.” Journal of Intercultural Communication No. 21 (2009)

**In Class Activity: Ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis CDA**

**Group Presentation, Ethnography:**

Mar 11 Mini-Project Brainstorming Session

1. Personal Experience Methods
2. In Class Activity on Mini-Projects

**Readings**
Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey (2010). Qualitative Research Methods, Chapter 9: Data Preparation and Developing Codes and Chapter 10: Textual Data Analysis.


**Recommended Readings:**


**In Class Activity: Mini-Project Brainstorming Session**

1) What research topic(s) are you interested in? Can you formulate that topic into an overarching research question or two? If so, what is/are your overarching research question(s)

2) Is there a pre-existing study (in an academic article or book) that could serve as a model for your research topic? Is there a theory (or theories) that will serve as a good frame for your research topic? Or do you prefer to use a more grounded theory approach?

3) What method(s) would you use? What methods would be inappropriate? (In considering this question, you can peep ahead to the methods we have not yet discussed).

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4) How doable/feasible is your research topic?

5) What is your time line for completing the research?

6) Practice Interview/Observation/Discourse Analysis/Use of Primary Source. On April 3, 2013 we will have an in-class section on “Analyzing Qualitative Data”. For now, you should break up into groups of three persons and decide upon a practice interview or observation or discourse analysis, etc., that you will conduct and present on April 3, 2013. Your interview or observation should only be one page long; your discourse analysis should only be of about one page of text.

Mar 18 Feminist Methodologies, Various Examples of “Action Research”

1. The “God-Trick”: Once Upon a Time When Knowledge Came from Nowhere
2. Situated Knowledges and Group Presentation on Feminist Methodologies
3. Participatory Action Research and Other Decolonizing Methodologies
4. In Class Activity: Hand in your group’s one page from an interview, field notes, text for discourse analysis, letter, etc.

Readings


RFREAD
Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey (2010). Qualitative Research Methods, Chapter 9: Data Preparation and Developing Codes.


In Class Activity: Questions about Doing Interviews, Observations, and Discourse Analyses

Group Presentation, Feminist Methods:

1) Now that you have conducted interviews/observations/discourse analyses, what questions do you have about conducting interviews, observations, or discourse analyses?
2) Discussion about coding data (interviews, observations, or personal sources) versus doing discourse analyses.
3) Organize presentations for April 3rd.

Mar 25 NO CLASS-SPRING BREAK

Apr 01 Analyzing Qualitative Data

1. Working Session on data analysis
2. Hand in draft of Work Plan

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In-Class Assignment
Presentations by groups that coded interviews.
Presentations by groups that coded observations
Presentations by groups that coded personal sources (letters, diaries, blogs).
Presentations by groups that did discourse analysis.

REFLECTIVE ESSAY #3 DUE ON APRIL 3RD or APRIL 4TH (See instructions on the Third Reflective Essay Assignment).

REREAD
Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey (2010). Qualitative Research Methods, Chapter 9: Data Preparation and Developing Codes and Chapter 10: Textual Data Analysis.

Apr 08 Writing About Research
1) Writing Research Proposals
2) Writing Literature Reviews

Readings
Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Bailey (2010). Qualitative Research Methods, Chapter 11: Writing Qualitative Research.


Caughey, John. (2006). Negotiating Cultures and Identities: The Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, pages 77 to 92.

Apr 15 Mini-Project Work Plan
Instead of attending class students should complete the work plan for their mini research project.

Apr 22 Final Project Presentations

Apr 29 Final Project Presentations

Final Project Submission Period:
Final Projects can be submitted to Prof. Dance in her office (Oldfather Room 723) anytime between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2015.

Supplemental Readings (These Books Are NOT Required)
Abdulhadi, Rabab, Evelyn Alsultany, and Nadine Naber (eds). (2010). Arab & Arab American Feminisms: Gender, Violence, & Belonging (Gender, Culture, and Politics in the Middle East) by Syracuse: Syracuse University Press


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