



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

**SOC/ED POL 955: Qualitative Methods-The Case Study
Fall Semester 2020**

COURSE INSTRUCTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION & OFFICE HOURS:

Professor John M. Eason
Email: jeason2@wisc.edu
Thursday 2:30-4:00 and by appointment.
<https://john-eason.youcanbook.me>

CLASS MEETING TIME AND PLACE:

Thursday 9:30-12:00 p.m.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An intensive, practice-oriented exploration of qualitative research methods such as participant-observation, interviewing, narrative analysis, and ethnography. Exploration of qualitative methods include logics of inquiry, positionality, ethics, analysis, and writing.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Students will learn an array of qualitative methods to conduct case studies using induct and deductive approaches. Students will primarily use an ethnographic approach focusing on the multitude of ways participant observation can be used to test and build theory. Because ethnography is as much art as science, there will practical exercises to familiarize students with ethics, positionality, reflexivity, and the politics of representation in qualitative work. Students will also demonstrate their abilities to analyze information, to write clearly and persuasively, and to construct original arguments. Students should be able to prepare and conduct a qualitative research project on their own by the end of this course.

NUMBER OF CREDITS ASSOCIATED WITH COURSE

This is a three-credit course.

HOW CREDIT HOURS ARE MET BY THE COURSE

This three-credit course meets once a week for 75 minutes per session over approximately 15 weeks. This is the status quo and represents the traditional college credit format used for decades. This three-credit course will include at least 135 hours of learning activities, which include time in lectures or class meetings, in person or online presentations, reading, writing, studying, preparation for any of these activities, and any other learning activities.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Duneier, Mitchell. 2001. *Sidewalk*. Farrar Straus & Giroux.

Eason, John M., 2017. *Big house on the prairie: rise of the rural ghetto and prison proliferation*. University of Chicago Press.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.

Pattillo, Mary, 2008. *Black on the block: The politics of race and class in the city*. University of Chicago Press.

Weiss, Robert Stuart. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. Free Press.

Van Maanen, John. 1988. *Tales of the Field on Writing Ethnography*. University of Chicago Press.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- You are required to post all exercises/notes/abstracts to Canvas by 5pm on the Tuesday before class. Post all exercises directly into Canvas rather than uploading word docs.

- I expect that you will do the reading and participate in class discussions. Suggested readings are simply suggested. I do not expect you to read and present those the days in question. These are complimentary reading that from an important, yet similar vantage point. Furthermore, missing class will negatively impact your grade.

Assignments & Dates

Participation
Discussion Leader
Paper #1
Paper #2
Paper #3
Paper #4
Paper #5
Paper #6
Paper #7
Paper #8
Final Paper

Date

Each class

TBA

Tuesday, September 1st (4% of final grade)
Tuesday, September 8th (4% of final grade)
Tuesday, September 15th (4% of final grade)
Tuesday, October 13th (4% of final grade)
Tuesday, October 20th (4% of final grade)
Tuesday, November 3th (4% of final grade)
Tuesday, (November 17th (4% of final grade)
Tuesday, December 1st (4% of final grade)
TBA (50% of final grade)

Turning in Assignments

Papers should adhere to standard collegiate style having one-inch margins and be 12 point of a standard font. Your **first and last name** followed by the **name of the assignment**. For example, **JohnEason.paperassignment#1.doc** will be the first paper I would place in the designated content area on the due date.

FINAL PROJECT

Final projects should reflect your engagement with the seminar topic and are worth at least 50% of your final grade. Any of the following are acceptable project ideas:

- A research proposal for a specific empirical project that would be strengthened by your engagement with the course readings.
 - A research proposal for a funding proposal project that would be strengthened by your engagement with the course readings.
 - A methodological critique/innovation that draws on multiple sources in the course readings and beyond and applies it to your particular area of interest.
 - Some similarly substantial piece of scholarly work (at least 3000 words) that demonstrates your sustained engagement with the ideas and materials featured in this course.
 - You will be required to submit a brief summary of the plan for your final project for my review early in the semester.
- *Students who offer especially insightful and well-placed comments during class or who make productive use of office hours may receive special consideration in border-line grading situations.

RULES, RIGHTS, RESPONSIBILITIES:

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend class and participate. An unexcused absence will result in a participation grade penalty. Excused absences are accepted. Please review the graduate student handbook rules on attendance for what is considered an excused absence.

GRADING:

<u>Assignment</u>	<u>Points</u>
Participation	5
Discussion Leader	8
Response Papers (8 assignments 4 points each)	32
Final Presentation	5
Final Paper (10-15 pages)	50
Total	100

Final grades will be assigned as follows:

A	93-100
AB	88-92
B	83-87
BC	78-82
C	70-77
D	60-69.9
F	59.9 and lower

*****Please note that total points earned are equal to final grade percentages*****

COURSE SCHEDULE

*Denotes readings available through course reserves.

WEEK 1: Thursday, September 3rd

Access and Ethics

*Required Reading: Punch, Maurice. "Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research," pp.156-183 in "The landscape of qualitative research: theories and issues," Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln, editors.

Required Reading: Fine, Gary Alan. "Ten Lies of Ethnography: Moral Dilemmas in Field Research." *Journal of contemporary ethnography*. Vol 22, no. 3, (October 1993): 267-294.

Required Reading: Duneier, Mitchell. "How not to lie with ethnography." *Sociological Methodology*. Vol 41, no. 1(August 2011) pages 1–11.

Paper #1: Reflections on Invisible Man

In preparing for our initial meeting next week I would like for each of you to read the excerpt below from Ralph Ellison's "Invisible Man" and provide a short reaction of no more than 250 words. Your reaction should center on how/if Ellison speaks to reflexivity. If you so choose, you can use this as a way to consider your own position versus the potential subjects you are considering in your qualitative work. This will be graded but mainly as form of participation as we use the reactions to lead our first discussion.

WEEK 2: Thursday, September 10th

Field Notes & In-Depth Interviewing

Required Reading: Emerson, Robert M. Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5

*Required Reading: Geertz, Clifford. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," pp. 3-30 in *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays* / New York: Basic Books, [1973].

Required Reading: Weiss, Robert Stuart. Learning from strangers: the art and method of qualitative interview studies. Chapters 3, 4, 5 (pp39 – 150)

This set of suggested readings are a great compliment/supplement for students that would like to explore gendered positionalities begin to think about reflexivity from this standpoint.

Suggested Readings: Stacey, Judith. 1988. "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" *Women's Studies International Journal*. 11(1): 21-27.

Suggested Readings: Humphreys, Laud. 1975. "Postscript." *Tearoom Trade*. New York: Aldine de Gruyer. Pages 167-174.

Suggested Readings: Bolton, Ralph. 1995. "Tricks, friends and lovers." In *Taboo: Sex, identity and erotic subjectivities in anthropological fieldwork*. Ed. Don Kulick and Margaret Willson. New York: Routledge. 140-167.

Paper#2: Initial Proposal

Post a one-page abstract of your project that is in progress or that you plan to propose for this course. This project should include your field site (actual or proposed), your preliminary research question, and the status of your project to date.

WEEK 3: Thursday, September 17th

Symbolic Interactionist Approaches

* Required Reading: Anderson, Elijah. *A Place on the Corner (selected chapters)*.

*Required Reading: Becker, Howard Saul. "The Culture of a Deviant Group: the dance musician" and "Careers in a Deviant Occupational Group: the dance musician," pp 79-119 in *Outsiders; studies in the sociology of deviance*. London: Free Press of Glencoe, [c1963].

Grounded theory

*Required Reading: Glaser & Strauss. *Discovery of Grounded Theory. Part I Only*

Required Reading: Pattillo, Mary E. "Sweet Mothers and Gangbangers: Managing Crime in a Black Middle Class Neighborhood." *Social Forces* 76:747-774.

WEEK 4: Thursday 24th

Ethnomethodological Approaches

*Required Reading: Holstein, James A. and Jaber F. Gubrium. "Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, and Interpretive Practice," pp 137-157 in *Strategies of qualitative inquiry / editors, Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, c1998.

Required Reading: Paperman, Patricia. "Surveillance underground: the uniform as an interaction device." *Ethnography* Vol 4(3): 397-419.

Required Reading: McRoberts, Omar M. "Beyond Mysterium Tremendum: Thoughts Toward an Aesthetic Study of Religion." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 595 (1): 190. Download at: <http://ann.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/595/1/190>.

WEEK 5: Thursday, October 1st

Required Reading: Pattillo, Mary, 2008. *Black on the block: The politics of race and class in the city*. University of Chicago Press.

WEEK 6: Thursday, October 8th

Coding Data

Required Reading: Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. Chapter 6

Required Reading: Learning from strangers. Chapter 6.

Paper#3: Observation Exercise

Assignment pick a bus line in Madison and ride it from one end to another or at least for one hour and write field notes of your observations. Read the notes of at least two other students and come to class with thoughts on how they did it differently.

WEEK 7: Thursday, October 15th

Extended Case Method and Abduction

Required Reading: Burawoy, Michael. 1998. "The Extended Case Method" *Sociological Theory* 16(1), 4-33.

Required Reading: Stefan Timmermans and Iddo Tavory, "Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis." *Sociological Theory* 30(3) 167–186 Available in Canvas Course Materials.

*Required Reading: Lee. *The Specter of Global China: Politics, Labor, and Foreign Investment in Global Africa*.

Paper #4: IRB Practice

Write the justification part plus the cost benefits part of your potential study for IRB.

WEEK 8: Thursday, October 22nd

Reflexivity

Required Reading: Duneier, Mitchell. 2001. *Sidewalk*. Farrar Straus & Giroux.

Required Reading: Contreras, Randol. *Stick Up Kids* (selected Chapters)

Suggested Reading: Hughes, "Not Out in the Field: Studying Privacy and Disclosure as an Invisible (Trans)Man." *Other, Please Specify: Queer Methods in Sociology*.

Paper #5: Participant-Observation Exercise

Checkout a grocery market several times on your own. Describe what happens. Then observe what happens when others checkout and describe that. Read the notes of at least two other students and come to class with thoughts on how they did it differently than you did.

WEEK 9: Thursday, October 29th

Writing Ethnography

Required Reading: Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. Chapter Seven

Required Reading: Learning from Strangers. Chapter Seven

Required Reading: Van Maanen, John. *Tales of the field: on writing ethnography*.

WEEK 11 *Thursday, November 5th*

Thinking (and Theorizing) with Cases

Required Reading: Walton, John. 1992. "Making the Theoretical Case." In *What is a Case?: Exploring the Foundations of Sociological Inquiry*, edited by Charles C. Ragin and Howard S. Becker, 121-137.

Required Reading: Small, M. (2009). "'How many cases do I need?' On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research." *Ethnography* 10(1): 5-38.

*Required Reading: Yin, Robert. 2002. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (selected chapters).

*Suggest Reading: Glaser and Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Part III

*Suggested Readings: *Lost in Translation: How Not to Make Qualitative Research More Scientific*.

Paper #6: Shadowing Exercise

Follow a friend, classmate, neighbor, or stranger during a trip to and through the market. Try to find their logic of navigating the grocery store and of grocery shopping. How does one do grocery shopping? Write a set of notes on that and on what you find out about how people do the overall project of shopping at the market.

WEEK 12: *Thursday, November 12th*

Potential Pitfalls: Romanticizing/Pathologizing Subjects I

(All readings for today are in *American Journal of Sociology* Volume 107, Number 6) Required Reading: Wacquant, Loic J.D. "Scrutinizing the Street: Poverty, Morality, and the Pitfalls of Urban Ethnography."

Required Reading: Anderson, Elijah. "The Ideologically Driven Critique."

Required Reading: Newman, Katherine. "No Shame: The View from the Left Bank"

Required Reading: Duneier, Mitchell. "What Kind of Combat Sport Is Sociology?"

WEEK 13: *Thursday, November 19th*

Potential Pitfalls: Romanticizing/Pathologizing Subjects II

*Required Reading: Alice Goffman. *On The Run (selected chapters)*.

*Required Reading: Victor Rios. *Punished (selected chapters)*.

*Stuart, F. and Miller, R.J., 2017. The Prisonized Old Head: Intergenerational Socialization and the Fusion of Ghetto and Prison Culture. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 46(6), pp.673-698.

**THANKSGIVING
NO CLASS**

WEEK 14: Thursday, December 3th

The Politics of Representation

Required Reading: Rios, V., et al. (2017). "Ethnographies of Race, Crime, and Justice: Toward a Sociological Double-Consciousness." *Annual Review of Sociology* 43: 493-513.

Required Reading: Cobb, Jessica. S. and Kimberly Kay Hoang (2015). "Protagonist-Driven Urban Ethnography." *City & Community* 14(4): 348-351.

Required Reading: Small, M. L. (2015). "De-Exoticizing Ghetto Poverty: On the Ethics of Representation in Urban Ethnography." *City & Community* 14(4): 352-358.

Required Reading: How to do Ethnography Right: <https://contexts.org/blog/how-to-do-ethnography-right/>.

*Required Reading: Lost in Translation: How Not to Make Qualitative Research More Scientific.

Paper #7: Designing Research Projects

Develop a Research Question for your own project/proposal. Revise your abstract you submitted in Week Two.

WEEK 15: Thursday, December 10rd

Required Reading: Eason, John M., 2017. *Big house on the prairie: rise of the rural ghetto and prison proliferation*. Preface-Appendix.

Paper #8: Designing Research Projects (continued)

Write a one-page proposal situating your research question in the relevant literature. Write a half page memo justifying what your case represents.

Final Presentations

FINAL PAPER DUE-Tuesday, December 15th