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:


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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignments &amp; Dates</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>Each class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>Tuesday, September 1st (4% of final grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>Tuesday, September 8th (4% of final grade)</td>
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<td>Paper #3</td>
<td>Tuesday, September 15th (4% of final grade)</td>
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<td>Paper #4</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 13th (4% of final grade)</td>
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<td>Paper #5</td>
<td>Tuesday, October 20th (4% of final grade)</td>
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<td>Paper #6</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 3rd (4% of final grade)</td>
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<td>Paper #7</td>
<td>Tuesday, November 17th (4% of final grade)</td>
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<td>Paper #8</td>
<td>Tuesday, December 1st (4% of final grade)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>TBA (50% of final grade)</td>
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**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 borderline 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:**

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<td>Discussion Leader</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response Papers (8 assignments 4 points each)</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Presentation</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper (10-15 pages)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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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*


**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


*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.*


**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).


*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*


**WEEK 5: Thursday, October 1st**

**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


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


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**


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


**Paper t#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: 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).*

**THANKSGIVING**

**NO CLASS**

**WEEK 14: Thursday, December 3\textsuperscript{th}**

*The Politics of Representation*


Required Reading: How to do Ethnography Right: [https://contexts.org/blog/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 10\textsuperscript{th}**


**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 15\textsuperscript{th}