

Qualitative Methods
Graduate Seminar
Monday 4:10-6PM
Location?
Fall 2012

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Office hours: Monday 9-11AM or by appointment

Course Objectives:

This course provides students with an overview of qualitative methods in sociology: ethnography, interviews, content analysis, case studies, and historical and comparative research. We will read pieces that discuss the principles of each methodology as well as examples of each method put to work in a research project. The aim of this course is to help you better understand how sociologists gather reliable information, the advantages and limitations to different approaches, and begin to develop the capacity to use one of these methods in a project of your own.

Course Requirements:

There are five requirements for this class. First, students must attend all classes. They are permitted one excused absence. Each additional absence will result in a reduction of the final course grade by 1/2. Second, for each students will be responsible for leading the discussion on one of the semester's readings. Third, on the Sunday before every class students must hand in a brief (approximately 2 page) memo that addresses every reading and raises some questions of them. Students are permitted to skip one memo. Fourth, students must present a research project that they begin to develop over the course of the semester; they must also hand in a paper based upon this project. These presentations will be held the final two weeks of class. Students are not permitted to miss either of these two weeks. Finally, students must respond to the presentation of another student.

Grading:

20% Attendance and Participation
20% Memos
5% Discussion Leader
50% Final Presentation and Paper
5% Response to final Presentation of another student

Required Texts:

Privilege by Shamus Khan
Rationality and Power by Bent Flyvbjerg

Recommended Texts:

Tricks of the Trade by Howard Becker
Writing for Social Scientists by Howard Becker

All articles will be available online, on Courseworks

Course Outline:

Week 1: September 10 - Introduction

Week 2: September 17 - Concepts & Logic

- (1) "Concepts" from Becker, *Tricks of the trade*, pp. 109-145.
- (2) Stinchcombe, Arthur. 1968. "The Logic of Scientific Inference." Pp. 15-37 in *Constructing Social Theories*. Harcourt Brace and World.
- (3) Andrew Abbott, "Transcending General Linear Reality," *Sociological Theory* 6 (1988): 169-86.

Week 3: September 24 - Chicago School & Ethnography

- (4) Katz, Jack. 1997. "Ethnography's Warrants." *Sociological Methods and Research* 25:391-421.
- (5) Goffman, Erving. 1989. "On Fieldwork." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 18-2 (July): 123-132.
- (6) Park, Robert E. (1915). "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Behavior in the City Environment", *American Journal of Sociology* 20:579-83.
- (7) Wirth, Louis. (1938). "Urbanism as a Way of Life: The City and Contemporary Civilization". *American Journal of Sociology* 44:1-24.

Week 4: October 1 - Contemporary Ethnography

- (8) Joseph Maxwell, 1996, "Validity: How Might You Be Wrong?", pp. 86-98 in *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- (9) Alice Goffman, "On the Run," *American Sociological Review* 74 (2009): 339-57.
- (10) Matthew Desmond, "Disposable Ties and the Urban Poor," *American Journal of Sociology* (March 2012).
- (11) Patillo, Mary. (1998). Sweet mothers and gangbangers: "Managing crime in a Black middle-class neighborhood." *Social Forces*, 76(3): 747-774.

Week 5: October 8 - Ethnography

- (12) Khan, *Privilege* (entire)

Week 6: October 15 - Interviews I

- (13) Nelson, Alondra, "Bio Science: Genetic Ancestry Testing and the Pursuit of African Ancestry," *Social Studies of Science* 38: 759-783.
- (14) Edin, Kathryn, Maria J. Kefalas and Joanna M. Reed. "A Peek inside the Black Box: What Marriage Means for Poor Unmarried Parents." *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 67:1007-1014.
- (15) Ray, Rashawn and Jason A. Rosow. 2009. "Getting Off and Getting Intimate: How Normative Institutional Arrangements Structure Black and White Fraternity Men's Approaches Toward Women." *Men and Masculinities*. 1-24.

Week 7: October 22 - Interviews II

- (16) Lacy, Karyn R. "Black Spaces, Black Places: Strategic Assimilation and Identity Construction in Middle-Class Suburbia." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27, No. 6 (November 2004): 908-930.
- (17) Iddo Tavory and Ann Swidler, 2009, "Condom Semiotics: Meaning and Condom Use in Rural Malawi." *American Sociological Review* 74(2):171-189.
- (18) Michele Lamont and Sada Aksartova, 2002, "Ordinary Cosmopolitanisms: Strategies for Bridging Racial Boundaries among Working Class Men." *Theory, Culture and Society*. 19 (4):1-25.

Week 8: October 29 - Content Analysis

- (19) Jessica Autumn Brown and Myra Marx Ferree "Close Your Eyes and Think of England: Pronatalism in the British Print Media" *Gender & Society*. 19(1): 5-24 (2005).
- (20) Myra Marx Ferrer and Elaine J. Hall, "Rethinking Stratification from a Feminist Perspective: Gender, Race and Class in Mainstream Textbooks," *American Sociological Review*, 1996, 61 (6): 1-22.
- (21) Deborah Becher. 2008. "Narrating and Naming Positive Agents: Storytelling by Philadelphia Postwar Political Elite." *Poetics*. 36(1) 72-93.

Week 9: November 5: University Holiday

Week 10: November 12 - The Case Study

- (22) *Rationality and Power* by Bent Flyvbjerg (entire)

Week 11: November 19 - Historical Analysis

- (23) Ziad Munson, "Islamic Mobilization: Social Movement Theory and the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood," *The Sociological Quarterly* 42(4: Fall 2001): 487-510.
- (24) Nicola Beisel and Tamara Kay, "Abortion, Race, and Gender in Nineteenth-Century America" *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 69, (Aug., 2004), pp. 498-518.
- (25) Trotsky, Preface, chapter 8, chapter 11, in *History of the Russian Revolution*

Week 12: November 26 - Comparative History

- (26) Lieberman, Stanley. 1991. "Small N's and Big Conclusions: An Examination of the Reasoning in Comparative Studies Based on a Small Number of Cases." *Social Forces* 70: 307-320.
- (27) Skocpol, Theda and Margaret Somers. 1980. "The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22(2): 174-97.
- (28) Barkey, Karen, "Rebellious Alliances: The State and Peasant Unrest in Early 17th Century France and the Ottoman Empire," *American Sociological Review*, 56 December (1991).

Week 13: December 3: STUDENT CLASS PRESENTATIONS

Week 14: December 10: STUDENT CLASS PRESENTATIONS