

Geography Department

University of Wisconsin-Madison

Qualitative Research Strategies in Geography

GEOGRAPHY 500

3 credits

September 3 – December 10, 2014

Classes: pm, Wednesday, 3:00-5:30 pm
SCIENCE HALL 350

Course Director:

Ian Baird

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Office Hours: Wednesday, 1:45-2:45 pm, or by appointment (via e-mail)

Introduction

This course is designed to familiarize both upper level undergraduate and graduate students with various aspects of qualitative research strategies as practiced by human and people-environment geographers, and prepare students to address many (but certainly not all!) of the kinds of challenges that they are likely to encounter when conducting qualitative research in both the USA and internationally. The goal is to increase the confidence of students in relation to choosing appropriate strategies for conducting various kinds of qualitative research. The course, which is taught as a seminar, considers a wide range of issues related to qualitative research, including the human subjects review process, research ethics, the development of research questions, conceptualizing research subjects, preparing for fieldwork, participant observation, interviewing techniques, the organization of focus group discussions, filmic experiences, participatory action research, analyzing field materials and some (but not all) of the writing styles commonly used in qualitative research.

Students are expected to be able to work independently as well as in group situations. Cooperating with others is an important aspect of this course, just as cooperation is frequently an important part of qualitative research.

Class Text

Crang, Mike and Ian Cook (2007) *Doing Ethnographies*. Sage, Los Angeles, London, New Dehli and Singapore, 244 pp. It can be found as an e-book at the Geography Library via <http://www.WISC.ebib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=370497>

Evaluation and Assignments

Term Paper	20%
Seminar Preparation, Organization and Presentation	15%
Seminar Paper	20%
Commentary	5%
Abstracts	15%
Participation	25%
	100%

1) **Term Paper:** 20%. This paper will relate to a particular experience, theoretical concept, method, idea or critique linked to a certain aspect of qualitative research. The topic will be chosen by the student, but will need to be approved by the course director in advance. The paper should be no more than 8 double-spaced pages long (12 double-spaced pages for graduate students) (12 point Times New Roman font), not including the title page and references. The paper is due December 3rd, 2014.

2) **Seminar Preparation, Organization and Presentation:** 15%. During the course each student will have to participate in an individual or team project. The individual or pair will research, organize and present this seminar for other students, including choosing appropriate readings for the topic (along with the readings already listed in the syllabus) and deciding on activities during the class. The seminar content will have to be approved a number of days in advance of the assigned class, and students will need to improve the content of seminars if they do not meet a minimum standard. More details will be provided during class. Graduate students will be graded differently from undergraduates.

3) **Seminar Paper:** 20%. This paper will relate to the same topic covered in the seminar that the student is involved in researching, organizing and presenting. However, these papers will be prepared on an individual level by each student. The paper should be no more than 8 double-spaced pages long (12 double-spaced pages for graduate students) (12 point Times New Roman font), not including the title page and references. The paper is due December 10th, 2014.

4) **Commentary:** 5%. Each student will each have to write one 500-1,000-word commentary (double-spaced, 12 point Time New Roman font) on one of the seminars organized by other students, as sort of a peer-review of the student-organized seminars. Commentaries should be critical but polite and constructive where possible. More information will be provided in class. Commentaries are due one week after the seminars are completed. After that, they cannot be handed in.

5) **Abstracts:** 3% each x five (15% total). Students will have to write 200-word (maximum length) abstracts describing five seminars over the course of the semester (students may not write abstracts on seminars they prepare). More information will be provided in class. If the abstracts are of adequate quality, full marks will be given. If they

are of lesser quality, only half marks will be awarded. Abstracts are due one week after the seminars are completed. After that, they cannot be handed in.

6) **Participation/Attendance:** 25%. Attendance is important, including staying the full duration of classes, and fully participating. Students are expected to engage in class discussions and other activities, while not overly dominating other students. Two marks will be subtracted for each absence (unless authorized for medical or compassionate reasons), and one mark will be deducted for being late. At the end of the course, the overall depth and quality of student participation will be evaluated. Attendance will be recorded for each class.

Good writing is important: I appreciate good writing, and will reward those who demonstrate their ability to write well.

Grading

90-100	A
82-89	AB
74-81	B
66-73	BC
58-65	C
51-57	D
50 and below	F

Students whose grades border between two letter grades will be given the higher grade if they have excellent attendance records, good participation in classes, and show improvement over the course of the term.

Plagiarizing and otherwise cheating will not be tolerated, and it is suggested that students become familiar with UW-Madison policies related to this issue.

Assignments will be docked 10% for each **calendar day (not class)** that they are late. There are no exceptions to this apart from cases of serious health problems or other documented emergencies.

Course Schedule

1	Wednesday, September 3 th , 2014	<p>Course Introduction</p> <p>Review of syllabus, key course concepts</p>
2	Wednesday, September 10 th	<p>Human subject review</p> <p>Part 1</p> <p>Guest Speaker: Lil Larson, Director of Education and Social & Behavioral Sciences IRB, Office of Research Services, College of Letters and Science</p> <p>She will discuss the human subject review process at the University of Wisconsin–Madison</p> <p>All students are required to provide evidence that they have completed and passed the CITI Human Subjects Review Training module BEFORE this class. Students should print out verification that they have completed the training (either in the past or in relation to this course). The training module can be found at: http://www.ls.wisc.edu/ors/IRB/IRB_Home.html</p> <p>Part 2</p> <p>Additional discussion about human subject review</p>
3	Wednesday, September 17 th	<p>Part 1</p> <p>Computer-based qualitative analysis</p> <p>Guest Speaker: David K. Woods, Ph.D. Researcher, Transana Lead Developer Wisconsin Center for Education Research</p> <p>Paul G. Dempster & David K. Woods (2011) The Economic Crisis Through the Eyes of Transana. <i>Forum Qualitative Social Research</i> 12(1), art. 16, January 2011. Access via: http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1515/3127</p>

		<p>Part 2</p> <p>Behind enemy lines: Reflections on the practice and production of oppositional research</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Hansen Thiem, Claudia and Morgan Robertson (2010) Editorial. <i>Geoforum</i> 41: 5-6.</p> <p>Morgan Robertson (2010) Performing environmental governance. <i>Geoforum</i> 41: 7-10.</p> <p>Han, Ju Hui Judy (2010) Neither friends nor foes: Thoughts on ethnographic distance. <i>Geoforum</i> 41: 11-14.</p> <p>Gould, Kevin A. (2010) Anxiety, epistemology, and policy research “behind enemy lines”. <i>Geoforum</i> 41: 15-18.</p> <p>Jansson, David (2010) The head vs. the gut: Emotions, positionality, and the challenges of fieldwork with a Southern nationalist movement. <i>Geoforum</i> 41: 19-22.</p> <p>Oglesby, Elizabeth (2010) Interviewing landed elites in post-war Guatemala, <i>Geoforum</i> 41: 23-25.</p>
4	Wednesday, September 24 th	<p>Part 1</p> <p>Conceptualizing the subject and developing research questions</p> <p>Required reading:</p> <p>Chapter 2 of Crang and Cook</p> <p>Booth et al. (1995) From topics to questions. Pages 35-63 (chapter 3) in Booth et al., <i>The Craft of Research</i>. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.</p>
5	Wednesday, October 1 st	<p>Doing Research in Restricted Places Overseas</p> <p>Chapters from: Turner, Sarah (ed.) (2013) <i>Red Stamps and Gold Stars: Fieldwork Dilemmas in Upland Southeast Asia</i>. University of British Columbia, Vancouver.</p> <p>Read:</p> <p>Chapter 1, Sarah Turner, Dilemmas and detours: Fieldwork with ethnic minorities in upland Southwest China, Vietnam and Laos.</p>

		<p>Chapter 2, Jean Michaud, Comrades of minority policy in China, Vietnam, and Laos.</p> <p>Chapter 3, Stephanie Gros, Blunders in the field: An ethnographic situation among the Drung people in Southwest China.</p> <p>Chapter 4, Magnus Fiskesjo, Gifts and debts: The morality of fieldwork in the Wa lands on the China-Burma frontier.</p> <p>Chapter 12, Sarah Turner, The silenced research assistant speaks her mind.</p>
6	Wednesday, October 8 th	<p>Preparing for fieldwork</p> <p>Chapter 3 of Crang and Cook</p> <p>Cambell, Lisa M., Noella J. Gray, Zoe A. Meletis, James G. Abbott and Jennifer J. Silver (2008) Gatekeepers and keymasters: Dynamic relationships of access in geographical fieldwork. <i>The Geographical Review</i> 98(1): 97-121.</p> <p>Wesche, Sonia, Niem Tu Huynh, Erin Nelson and Leela Ramachandran (2010) Challenges and opportunities in cross-cultural geographic inquiry. <i>Journal of Geography in Higher Education</i> 34(1): 59-75.</p> <p>Tillmann-Healy, Lisa M. (2003) Friendship as method. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> 9: 729-749.</p> <p>Watson, Elizabeth E. (2004) 'What a Dolt One Is': Language learning and fieldwork in geography. <i>Area</i> 36(1): 59-68.</p> <p>September 29: Meeting about seminar</p>
7	Wednesday, October 15 th	<p>Participant observation</p> <p>Chapter 4 of Crang and Cook</p> <p>Herbert, Steve (2000) For ethnography. <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> 24: 550-568.</p> <p>Dowler, Lorraine (2001) Fieldwork in the trenches: Participant observation in a conflict zone. In Claire Dwyer and Melanie Limb (eds), <i>Qualitative Methods for Geographers</i>, Arnold, London.</p> <p>October 6: Meeting about seminar</p>
8	Wednesday, October 22 nd	<p>Interviewing</p> <p>Chapter 5 of Crang and Cook</p> <p>Ritchie, Donald A. (2003) An oral history of our time. Chapter 1, pages 19-46 in</p>

		<p><i>Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide</i> (2nd Edition). Oxford University Press, Oxford</p> <p>Herrod, Andrew (1999) Reflections on interviewing foreign elites: Praxis positionality, validity, and the cult of the insider. <i>Geoforum</i> 30: 313-327.</p> <p>Baxter, Jamie and John Eyles (1997) Evaluating qualitative research in social geography: Establishing 'rigour' in interview analysis. <i>Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers</i> 22: 505-525.</p> <p>October 13: Meeting about seminar</p>
9	Wednesday, October 29 th	<p>Focus groups</p> <p>Chapter 6 of Crang and Cook</p> <p>Krueger, Richard A. (2002) Designing and conducting focus group interviews. 17 pp.</p> <p>Kitzinger, Jenny (1994) The methodology of Focus Groups: The importance of interaction between research participants. <i>Sociology of Health & Illness</i> 16(1): 103-121.</p> <p>October 20: Meeting about seminar</p>
10	Wednesday, November 5 th	<p>Discussion with graduate students about their experiences doing qualitative research</p> <p>Guest Participants: UW-Madison Geography graduate students with recent experience conducting qualitative research</p>
11	Wednesday, November 12 th	<p>Filmic approaches</p> <p>Chapter 7 of Crang and Cook</p> <p>Markwell, K.W. (2000) Photo-documentation and analyses as research strategies in human geography. <i>Australian Geographical Studies</i> 38(1): 91-98.</p> <p>Anderson, Kevin Taylor (2003) Toward an anarchy of imagery: Questioning the categorization of films as "ethnographic". <i>Journal of Film and Video</i> 55(2-3): 73-87.</p> <p>November 3: Meeting about seminar</p>
	Wednesday, November 19 st	<p>Using archives</p> <p>Harris, Cole (2001) Archival fieldwork. <i>Geographical Review</i> 91(1/2): 328-334.</p> <p>Baker, Alan R.H. (1997) The dead don't answer questionnaires: Researching and writing historical geography. <i>Journal of Geography in Higher Education</i></p>

		<p>21(2): 231-244.</p> <p>Johnson, Catherine A. and Wendy M. Duff (2005) Chatting up the archivist: Social capital and the archival researcher. <i>The American Archivist</i> 68(1): 113-129.</p> <p>November 10: Meeting about seminar</p>
12	Wednesday, November 26 th	No class – Thanksgiving (the class would be too late for people trying to leave Madison on this day for Thanksgiving the next day)
13	Wednesday, December 3 rd	<p>Writing through materials – writing through codes, autoethnography and montage</p> <p>Chapters 8 and 9 of Crang and Cook</p> <p>Cape, Meghan (2005) Coding qualitative data. In Iain Hay (ed.) <i>Qualitative Methodologies for Human Geographers</i>, 2nd edition, Oxford University Press, pp. 310-324.</p> <p>Belgrave, Linda Liska, Diane Zablotsky, Mary Ann Guadagno (2002) Pearls, Pith, and Provocation How Do We Talk to Each Other? Writing Qualitative Research for Quantitative Readers. <i>Qualitative Health Research</i> 12(10): 1427-1439.</p> <p>November 17: Meeting about seminar</p> <p>Term Papers Due</p>
14	Wednesday, December 10 th	<p>Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Action Research (AR)</p> <p>Pain, Rachel (2003) Social geography: on action oriented research. <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> 27(5): 649-657.</p> <p>Pain, Rachel (2004) Social geography: Participatory research. <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> 28(5): 652-663.</p> <p>Pain, Rachel (2006) Social geography: Seven deadly myths in policy research. <i>Progress in Human Geography</i> 30(2): 250-259.</p> <p>McKinnon, John (2010) Ways of seeing environmental change: Participatory research engagement in Yunnan, China, with ethnic minority Hani participants. <i>Asia Pacific Viewpoint</i> 51(2): 164-178.</p> <p>December 1: Meeting about seminar</p>

		In relation to final thoughts about the course, at the end of class, read Chapter 10 of Crang and Cook Seminar Papers due
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* Note that during the course it is possible that some of the contents of classes will change. The reading lists for student-organized seminars will be provided one week in advance, via e-mail.