

## **Qualitative Sociological Research Methods**

Sociology and Anthropology 856

Section: D100

Term: 2008 Fall

Instructor: Dr. Hannah Wittman

Email: hwittman@sfu.ca

Office: AQ 5079

**Discussion Topics:** This advanced course in qualitative methods in Sociology and Anthropology combines critical perspectives on graduate research with hands-on practice and a student-led learning format. After reviewing the historical and epistemological foundations underlying choices in research methodologies and related qualitative fieldwork methods, we will undertake original research as well as read and critically assess qualitative research conducted within the disciplines. We will engage in discussion of research motivations, ethics, methodological choices, and fieldwork experiences in both academic and applied research settings. Careful examination of the issues of representation, voice, reflexivity and researcher positioning will form an important part of the course.

The course is designed around two main exercises. First, we will explore qualitative research design and analysis through discussion of a set of key readings on qualitative fieldwork methods. The readings will be supplemented with exercises covering research ethics, research design and site selection, fieldwork methods including observation (participant and unobtrusive), interviewing, testimony and oral history, focus groups, analysis of texts and material culture, visual methods, archival research, data analysis, and writing up and presenting qualitative research. Students will also design and carry out an original field research project incorporating several of the qualitative methods learned in class.

Grading: Research Proposal 15%

Reviews and Exercises 25%

Final Research Paper 45%

Participation/Class Presentation 15%

All the assignments in this course must be completed for a final grade to be assigned. The Department of Sociology and Anthropology follows SFU policy in relation to grading practices, grade appeals (Policy T 20.01) and academic dishonesty and misconduct procedures (Policy T 10.03). It is the responsibility of students to inform themselves of the content of these policies (available on the SFU website under Administration, SFU Policies & Procedures).<sup>1</sup>

**Required Texts:** 1. Hesse Biber, Sarlene Nagy and Patricia Leavy (2004) *Approaches to Qualitative Research: A reader on theory and practice.* New York: Oxford University Press.

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2. Silverman, David (2005) *Doing Qualitative Research* 2nd

Recommended Texts: 4. Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz, Linda L. Shaw (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press.

5. Charmaz, Kathy. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage.

Materials/Supplies: None

Prerequisite/Corequisite: Required course for MA and PhD students in Sociology and Anthropology. Students from other departments and faculties may enroll with permission of instructor. Offered each spring term.

Notes: All students are expected to read and understand SFU's policies with regard to academic dishonesty (T 10.02 and T 10.03). These policies are available at the following web addresses: <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/t10-02.htm> and <http://www.sfu.ca/policies/teaching/t10-03.htm>

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