

GEOG 9108A – Qualitative Methods Course Outline: Fall 2023

1. Course Information

Contact Information:

Instructor: Roza Tchoukaleyska
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Office Hours: By appointment
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2. Calendar Description

This seminar examines the key qualitative research methods used in human geography. Students will deepen their knowledge of research ethics, critically reflect on positionality and power relations, and have opportunities to practice data gathering and analysis techniques.

Enrollment in this course is restricted to graduate students in Geography, as well as any student that has obtained special permission to enroll in this course from the course instructor as well as the Graduate Chair (or equivalent) from the student's home program.

3. Textbook

DeLyser, D., Herbert, S., Aitken, S., Crang, M., & McDowell, L. (Eds.) (2010). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography*. SAGE. (Available online via Western's Library).

Additional readings will be made available on the GEOG 9108 OWL site.

4. Course Objectives

Through this course, students will deepen their understanding of the possibilities and challenges of using qualitative methods such as interviewing, ethnography and participant observation, sensory and visual analysis, and narrative mapping. We will examine the philosophies underlying qualitative research methods and the ethical implication of our work. The course includes skill-building workshops, opportunities to practice data gathering and analysis techniques, and a session on how to pivot when research goes awry.

5. Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Consider the diversity of qualitative research methods in geography;
- Assess the appropriateness of methods for different research questions;
- Conduct original qualitative research, including analysis;
- Understand the basics of research ethics processes;
- Develop your critical analysis and presentation skills.

6. Evaluation

Students will be evaluated based on the following assignments:

Evaluation Components	Percentage of Course Grade	Assignment Schedule
Student led seminars	15%	To be assigned
Seminar participation	15%	Weekly class participation
Assignment 1: Reflection on positionality and ethics	15%	Wednesday, October 4
Assignment 2: Testing out a qualitative method	15%	Wednesday, November 8
Assignment 3: Reflection on coding workshop	10%	Wednesday, November 29
Assignment 4: Designing a qualitative research project	30%	At the latest by Friday, December 15

All written assignments should be submitted to OWL by the end of the day on the due date. The description and marking grid for each assignment is available on OWL.

Students are responsible for material covered in the lectures as well as the assigned chapters/sections in the text. Students are **REQUIRED TO COMPLETE ALL COMPONENTS** of this course. There are no exceptions to this. Extra assignments to improve grades **will NOT** be accepted.

Grades will not be adjusted on the basis of need. It is important to monitor your performance in the course. Remember: *You* are responsible for your grades in this course.

7. University Policy Regarding Illness

Accessible Education Western (AEW)

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are strongly encouraged to register with Accessible Education Western (AEW), a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both AEW and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If you miss a class due to minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or exam. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow the missed seminar notes from a classmate. If you expect to be away from campus for an extended amount of time, please make prior arrangements with your course instructors and/or supervisor.

[School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies information on Leave of Absence](#)

[Western's policy on graduate registration, including medical and compassionate leave of absence](#)

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

8. University Policies

Scholastic Discipline for Graduate Students

Members of the University Community accept a commitment to maintain and uphold the purposes of the University and, in particular, its standards of scholarship. It follows, therefore, that acts of a nature that prejudice the academic standards of the University are offences subject to discipline. Any form of academic dishonesty that undermines the evaluation process also undermines the integrity of the University's degrees. The University will take all appropriate measures to promote academic integrity and deal appropriately with scholastic offences.

For the complete policy and regulations see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

Academic Appeals for Graduate Students

Students may appeal an academic decision or ruling in accordance with the appeal procedures set out below. Students have a right to appeal to their graduate programs and, if unsuccessful, to the Vice-

Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies). Some decisions may be appealed further to the Senate Review Board Academic. The Vice-Provost's rulings in academic matters are final unless overturned or modified on appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA).

For the complete policy and regulations see:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsgrad.pdf

9. Support Services

Health/Wellness Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health Support at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Support Services

Student Support Services can be reached at: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Services can be reached at: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Short Absences

If you miss a class due to minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or exam. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow the missed lecture notes from a classmate.

Extended Absences

If you expect to be away from campus for an extended amount of time, please make prior arrangements with your course instructors and/or supervisor.

For the complete policy on registration visit the [Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies](#) website.

Academic Concerns

If you are in academic difficulty, it is strongly recommended that you see your Graduate Program Administrator, Supervisor, or SGPS

10. Important Dates

September 7: Classes resume

September 15: Last day to add a first term half course

October 9: Thanksgiving Holiday – Department Office Closed

October 30-November 5: Fall Reading Week (No classes; Department Office open)

November 13: Last day to drop a first term half course without penalty

November 30: Last day to drop a full course without penalty

December 8: Classes end

December 9: Study Day

December 10-22: Examination Period

11. Course Content

Week 1: September 13, Course introduction

No assigned readings

Week 2: September 20, Doing qualitative research in Geography

Cope, M. (2010). A history of qualitative research in geography. In DeLyser, D., Herbert, S., Aitken, S., Crang, M., & McDowell, L. (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography* (pp. 25-45). SAGE.

Tracy, S. (2020). Paradigmatic reflections and qualitative research territories. In *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact* (2nd edition, pp. 48-74.). Wiley Blackwell.

Week 3: September 27, Positionality and power

Rose, G. (1997). Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivity and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(3), 305-320.

Simandan, D. (2019). Revisiting positionality and the thesis of situated knowledge. *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 9(2), 129-149.

Week 4: October 4, Research ethics

DUE: Assignment 1, Reflection on positionality and ethics

Butcher, M. (2022). Qualitative research methods I: Emotionally engaged approaches to working with vulnerable participants. *Progress in Human Geography*, 46(3), 907-914.

Carpenter, D. (2018). Ethics, reflexivity and virtue. In Iphofen, R., & Tolich, M. (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research ethics* (pp. 35-50). SAGE.

Completion of the TCPS 2: CORE-2-22 Course on Research Ethics:

<https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

Week 5: October 11, The many ways to interview

Anderson, J. (2004). Talking whilst walking: A geographical archaeology of knowledge. *Area*, 36(3), 254-261.

McDowell, L. (2010). Interviewing: Fear and liking in the field. In DeLyser, D., Herbert, S., Aitken, S., Crang, M., & McDowell, L. (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography* (pp. 156-171). SAGE.

Pink, S. (2015). The sensoriality of the interview: Rethinking personal encounters through the senses. In *Doing sensory ethnography* (2nd edition, pp. 73-93). SAGE.

Week 6: October 18, WORKSHOP: Narrative mapping and archives (held at the Weldon Library)

Led by: Zack MacDonald, Map Librarian, Archives and Special Collections, Western Libraries. *Directions to the Weldon Library Map and Data Centre*, [are available here](#). Please make sure to request an ArcGIS online account ahead of the session by [visiting this site](#).

Crawford, L. (2022). Emancipatory archival methods: Exploring the historical geographies of disability. *Area* (early view), <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12844>

Turner, S., Zuberec, C., & Pham, T.-T.-H. (2021). Visualizing frictional encounters. Analyzing and representing street vendor strategies in Vietnam through narrative mapping. *Applied Geography*, 131, Article 102460

Week 7: October 25, Ethnography and photovoice

Nykiforuk, C., Vallianatos, H., & Nieuwendyk, L. (2011). Photovoice as a method for revealing community perceptions of the built and social environment. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 10(2), 103-124.

St. Martin, K., & Pavlovskaya, M. (2009). Ethnography. In Castree, N., Demeritt, D., Liverman, D., & Rhoads, B. (Eds.). *A companion to environmental geography* (pp. 370-384). Blackwell.

Yi'En, C. (2014). Telling stories of the city: Walking ethnography, affective materialities, and mobile encounters. *Space and Culture*, 17(3), 211-223.

Week 8: November 1, FALL BREAK

Classes not held, no assigned readings

Week 9: November 8, Participatory and community-engaged researchDUE: Assignment 2, Testing out a qualitative method

Guest speaker: Dr. Sakihitowin Awasis, Department of Geography and Environment, Western University

Awasis, S. (2023). Decolonial process tracing: Indigenous rights and pipeline resistance movements. *Environment and Planning F*, 2(1-2), 144-162.

Routledge, P. (2010). Major disasters and general panics: Methodologies of activism, affinity and emotion in the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army. In DeLyser, D., Herbert, S., Aitken, S., Crang, M., & McDowell, L. (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography* (pp. 388-405). SAGE.

Week 10: November 15, Designing a qualitative research project

Herbert, S. (2010). A taut rubber band: Theory and empirics in qualitative geographic research. In DeLyser, D., Herbert, S., Aitken, S., Crang, M., & McDowell, L. (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography* (pp. 69-81). SAGE.

Roberts, J.K., Pavlakis, A.E., & Richards, M.P. (2021). It's more complicated than it seems: Virtual qualitative research in the COVID-19 era. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069211002959>

Week 11: November 22, WORKSHOP: Coding and analyzing data

Dittmer, J. (2010). Textual and discourse analysis. In DeLyser, D., Herbert, S., Aitken, S., Crang, M., & McDowell, L. (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography* (pp. 274-286). SAGE.

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., & Shaw, L.L. (2011). Processing fieldnotes: Coding and memoing. In: *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes* (2nd edition, pp.171-199). The University of Chicago Press.

Week 12: November 29, Pivoting in the field and fieldwork safety

DUE: Assignment 3, Reflection on coding workshop

Guest speaker (last 20min of class): Erika Hill, Laboratory Manager and Health and Safety Representative, Department of Geography and Environment

Biswas, R. (2023). Embracing the uncertain – figuring out our own stories of flexibility and ethics in the field. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 30(8), 1126-1146.

Hyndman, J. (2001). The field as here and now, not there and then. *Geographical Review*, 91(1-2), 262-272.

Week 13: December 6, Wrap-up: Reflecting on qualitative research approaches

Charmaz, K. (2015). Teaching theory construction with initial grounded theory tools: A reflection on lessons and learning. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25(12), 1610-1622.

DeLyser, D. (2010). Writing qualitative geography. In DeLyser, D., Herbert, S., Aitken, S., Crang, M., & McDowell, L. (Eds.). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative geography* (pp. 341-358). SAGE.

DUE BY Friday, December 15th: Assignment 4, Designing a qualitative research project

Additional resources:

Western's SGPS has created a series on virtual qualitative research methods, which graduate student can access here: <https://grad.uwo.ca/academics/qualitativemodule.html>

A list of Weldon Library Map and Data Centre workshops is available here: <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/madgic/index.html>

The Department of Geography fieldwork health and safety information is available: https://geoenvironment.uwo.ca/resources/health_and_safety/index.html