

**San José State University**  
**College of Social Sciences, Geography Department**  
**Course # 47266, GEOG 135 – Qualitative Methods in Geographical Research,**  
**Fall, 2015**

**Course and Contact Information**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Kerry Rohrmeier, Ph.D.
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Monday 1:30-2:30 pm, Tuesday 4:00-6:00 pm, and by appointment
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Monday 3:00-4:15 pm
<b>Classroom:</b>	Clark Building, Room 224
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	English 1B

**Course Format**

This is a hybrid course, which means half of the time will be spent in lecture/studio-style weekly class meeting and half of the time will be spent working in the field on a consulting project for the City of Palo Alto Public Works Department. A considerable portion of student work is to be done independently or in small groups with the instructor present so it is imperative that students are familiar with course expectations and assigned responsibilities. All course resources can be found on the GEOG 135 [Canvas](#) webpage using your 9-digit SJSU ID and password. You are responsible for regularly checking this website for the latest information and communication. Please log in and follow the ‘Getting Started’ steps.

**Faculty Messaging**

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for regularly checking with the Canvas website to learn of any updates. The email address listed above is best for the fastest reply.

**Course Description**

From the Course Catalog: Development of skills required for geographical research and writing. Library research, oral presentations, variety of writing assignments dealing with diverse geographic problems (3 units).

Qualitative research methods will be taught in a studio format so that students have an opportunity to engage the material collaboratively. The City of Palo Public Works Department Zero Waste Program is seeking mapping and analysis of its waste facilities located along alleyways in the University and California Avenue corridors. These spaces are becoming popular pedestrian linkages, but still need to serve commercial users for refuse, storage, collection, and deliveries. The project goal will be to ‘clean up’ these key alleys while still providing commercial customers appropriate services.

## **Learning Outcomes and Course Goals**

### **Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- CLO 1 *Define and use basic geographic tools and techniques.*

Students will demonstrate understanding through weekly written assignments and the term studio project. These exercises involve writing, public policy research, GPS data point collection, GIS, and cartographic skills.

- CLO 2 *Demonstrate understanding of, and ability to, analyze and critique human and environment interactions.*

The course studio project will incorporate various social science qualitative methods to analyze the human environmental connections pertaining to land use and waste disposal (garbage, recyclables and compost material).

- CLO 3 *Demonstrate professional communication skills.*

Students will interview and survey stakeholders affected by the proposed activated alleyways, plus the class as a whole will submit an official summary report to the City of Palo Alto, California.

## **Required Texts/Readings**

### **Textbook**

A traditional textbook is not required for this class. All readings are hyperlinked in the course schedule or placed on Canvas.

## **Course Requirements and Assignments**

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on.

- Active participation in this course is mandatory, and is especially important for a flipped hybrid course format. Given our limited time together in person you will likely have little to contribute to the class if you have not completed required studio responsibilities and class assignments ahead of time (CLO1).
- There are 10 assignments to be completed outside of class meetings. These range from compiling sources, reviewing public policies, writing survey questions, interviewing stakeholders, and demonstrating the knowledge gap between geographic theory and practice as it pertains to waste management (CLO1 and CLO2).
- The class will prepare a comprehensive report on activated alleyways along both California Avenue and University Avenue for the City of Palo Alto Public Works Department (CLO3). Students will be divided up into teams and must meet group tasks as outlined in the Scope of Work chart attached at the end of this

syllabus. The project aims to address fear-inducing spaces, generate a vibrant sense of place, and critique the cultural norms of rapid consumption and disposal. The ultimate goal will be for the City to one day use this baseline as a tool for implementing activated alleyways – a new trend on urban design. Various qualitative research methods will be covered and applied throughout the term such as observation, landscape photography, surveys, interviews, GPS mapping, and GIS spatial analysis will be required of this project (CLO1).

### Grading Policy

	Points Possible
Participation	100
10 Assignments	400 (40 each)
Studio Project	500
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,000</b>

*Note: Department policy dictates that graduate students are expected to contribute more than undergraduate students taking undergraduate courses. Therefore, additional project management responsibilities are required for 100-points; making the graduate student total points possible 1,100 points*

### SCALE:

<b>A+</b> = ≥98%	<b>A</b> = 94-97%	<b>A-</b> = 90-93%
<b>B+</b> = 87-89%	<b>B</b> = 84-86%	<b>B-</b> = 80-83%
<b>C+</b> = 77-79%	<b>C</b> = 74-76%	<b>C-</b> = 70-73%
<b>D+</b> = 67-69%	<b>D</b> = 60-66%	<b>D-</b> = 51-59%
		<b>F</b> = ≤50%

All students have the right, within a reasonable time, to know their academic scores, to review their grade-dependent work, and to be provided with explanations for the determination of their course grades. In keeping with this policy, and to making grading responsive. All assignments are due as stated on the Course Schedule and Canvas. **Late work is not accepted.** Please save all your work until after you have checked your final course grade. Then if you have questions about your final grade, you can bring in past work, and if necessary, corrections can be made.

### Classroom, Field & Online Protocol

- All assigned readings must be completed prior to class for successful participation in the discussions.
- This course requires working with others, so civility and courteousness is always expected. While we may not agree with other perspectives and opinions stated, respect is mandatory.
- For group work it is expected that all members contribute equitably to any assignment.

### University Policies

#### General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See University Policy S90-5 at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf>. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the SJSU catalog, at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html>. In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

## **Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic year calendars document on the [Academic Calendars webpage](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic\\_calendars/](http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/). The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

## **Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material**

[University Policy S12-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf), <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf>, requires students to obtain instructor's permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor's permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
  - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
  - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

## **Academic integrity**

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf> requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

## **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. [Presidential Directive 97-03](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) at [http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD\\_1997-03.pdf](http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf) requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) (AEC) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

## **Accommodation to Students' Religious Holidays**

San José State University shall provide accommodation on any graded class work or activities for students wishing to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays before the add deadline at the start of each semester. If such holidays occur before the add deadline, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to

make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed. See [University Policy S14-7](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S14-7.pdf>.

## **Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the [Academic Success Center](http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/> located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

## **SJSU Peer Connections**

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) at <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu> for more information.

## **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to



scan this code.)

## **SJSU Counseling Services**

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an

individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

# Course # 47266 / GEOG 135 – Qualitative Methods in Geographical Research, Fall 2015, Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change with fair notice. For the most up to date information please check Canvas.

## Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	8/24	<p>A resurgence in geographic qualitative research, group signups</p> <p>Read: Nietschmann, Bernard. (2001). Nietschmann syllabus: A vision of the field. <i>The Geographical Review</i> 91(1/2) 175-184.</p> <p>Read: <i>Seattle Times</i> <a href="#">“Seattle’s Alleys Getting a Facelift”</a></p> <p><b>Assign 1:</b> Review the Scope of Work assigned to your role. Briefly explain your understanding of what each task entails and how and when you plan to complete this work. <b>Due 8/30</b></p>
2	8/31	<p>STUDIO Project Kick-off Meeting</p> <p>Client Guest Matthew Krupp, AICP – Manager, Environmental Programs (Zero Waste), City of Palo Alto Public Works Department</p> <p>Read: Katz, Cindi. (1994). Playing the field: Questions of fieldwork in geography. <i>Professional Geographer</i> 46(1) 67-72.</p> <p><b>Assign 2:</b> Prepare kick-off meeting follow up questions for the project manager <b>Due 9/6</b></p>
3	9/7	<p><i>LABOR DAY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS</i></p> <p>Online Study: Ethical considerations when working with human subjects</p> <p>Read: <a href="#">AAG Statement on ethics</a></p> <p><b>Assign 3:</b> Review SJSU IRB Certification, <a href="#">Complete CITI Training</a> <b>Due 9/13</b></p>
4	9/14	<p>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH THEORY Social science research issues of power, access, identity, and storytelling</p> <p>Read: Campbell, Lisa M., et al. (2008) Gatekeepers and keymasters: Dynamic relationships of access in geographical fieldwork. <i>The Geographical Review</i> 98(1): 97-121.</p> <p><b>Assign 4:</b> Reflexivity, evaluating issues of positionality and the bias’ you might encounter in or bring to your role <b>Due 9/20</b></p> <p><b>All Background Documents Due, Socioeconomic Data Due, Waste Generation Information Due, Shortform and Visual Preference Survey Instruments Due, Stakeholder Identification Due</b></p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
5	9/21	<p>PLANNING YOUR RESEARCH Advancing research from topics to questions</p> <p>Read <a href="#">Pages 35-48</a>: Booth et al. (1995). <i>The Craft of Research</i>. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.</p> <p><b>Assign 5:</b> Review proposed Shortform Survey and Open-ended Interview questions. Provide feedback - are they sufficient? Why or Why not? <b>Due 9/27</b></p> <p><b>Content Analysis (aka Policy Review) Due, Other Case Study Examples Due, Report Layout and Cover Due</b></p>
6	9/28	<p>RESEARCH METHODS Using visual evidence to document cultural landscapes</p> <p>Read: Rose, Gillian. (2014). On the relation between “visual research methods” and contemporary visual culture. <i>The Sociological Review</i> 62(1) 24-46.</p> <p><b>Assign 6:</b> Upload your best field photos, their associated metadata, and captions for the Cartography &amp; Graphics Team <b>Due 10/4</b></p> <p><b>Good timing for mapping data points</b></p>
7	10/5	<p>Ethnography: the participant observer as an insider</p> <p>Read ‘Participant Observation: <a href="#">University of Oregon Methods Wiki</a></p> <p><b>Assign 7:</b> Journaling is an excellent way to document field research. Ethnographic participant observation embeds the research in his/her subject and thus having ‘lived it’ must keep extensive daily records. Reflect on your day in the field and submit your observations – detail matters! <b>Due 10/11</b></p>
8	10/12	<p>Interviews and discourse analysis</p> <p>Read ‘Semi-structured interviews’: <a href="#">University of Oregon Methods Wiki</a></p> <p><b>Assign 8:</b> One of the best ways to prepare for open-ended interviews is to anticipate participant questions ahead of time. Put yourself in the stakeholders position and create three questions you would ask of the interviewer? <b>Due 10/18</b></p> <p><b>Corrected Photos Due, Randomized Identification of Open-Ended Interviewees with a Contact List Due</b></p>
9	10/19	<p>Examining Surveys and Focus Groups</p> <p>The University Ave People Team will Host a Mock Focus Group in class</p> <p>Read ‘Focus Groups’: <a href="#">University of Oregon Methods Wiki</a></p>

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
9 Cont.	10/19	<p>Read <a href="#">36-47</a> Questionnaires: Lindsay, James M. (1997). <i>Techniques in Human Geography</i>. Routledge, London.</p> <p><b>Assign 9:</b> Reflect on your involvement in the focus group exercise and provide follow up commentary which you may have forgotten at the time or wish to further explain <b>Due 10/25</b></p> <p><b>Good timing for a second observatory at sites</b></p>
10	10/26	<p>Unusual interviewees – friendship as a method; managing the corporate interview</p> <p>Read: Tillmann-Healy, Lisa M. (2003) Friendship as method. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> 9: 729-749.</p> <p>Read: Schoenberger, E. (1991). The corporate interview as a research method in economic geography. <i>Professional Geographer</i> 43(2) 180-189.</p> <p><b>Assign 10:</b> You must clearly defend in a 750-word written essay the challenges that exist between theoretical and field study of place, and why both are important to geographic training <b>Due 11/1</b></p> <p><b>All GPS Data Points Due to the Cartography/Graphics Team</b></p>
11	11/2	<p>CHALLENGES</p> <p>Research in conflict areas, addressing topics of opposition, and/or the challenges of fieldwork abroad</p> <p>Read: Dowler, Lorraine. (2001). The four square laundry: Participant observation in a war zone. <i>The Geographical Review</i>. 91(1/2) 414-422.</p> <p>Read <a href="#">Ch 12</a>: Turner, Sarah (2013). The silenced research assistant speaks her mind. <i>Red Stamps and Gold Stars: Fieldwork Dilemmas in Upland Socialist Asia</i>. UBC Press, Vancouver.</p> <p><b>Shortform Survey, Visual Preference Survey, and Open-Ended Interview Results Due</b></p> <p><b>If there were any issues with data then this week go back to the field</b></p>
12	11/9	<p>DATA ANALYSIS</p> <p>Reliability, coding then deciphering the narrative: discourse analysis</p> <p>Read: ‘Discourse Analysis’: <a href="#">University of Oregon Methods Wiki</a></p> <p>Read <a href="#">26-29</a> Evaluating Data: Lindsay, James M. (1997). <i>Techniques in Human Geography</i>. Routledge, London.</p> <p><b>If Revised Mapping Was Needed Then New GPS Data Due</b></p>
13	11/16	The importance of mixed methods

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
		<p>Read: Philip, L.J. (1998). Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to social research in geography – an impossible mixture? <i>Environment and Planning A</i> 30(2) 261-276.</p> <p><b>GIS Spatial Analysis Due</b></p>
14	11/23	<p>WRITING Putting the field experience into words and voicing authenticity</p> <p>Read <a href="#">Part VI-End</a>: Geertz, Clifford. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. <i>The Interpretation of Cultures</i>. Basic Books, New York.</p> <p>Read <a href="#">Intro</a>: Barnes, Trevor and James Duncan. (1992) Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape. Routledge, London.</p> <p><b>All Maps and Graphics Due, Lit Review Due, Report Written Sections Due</b></p>
15	11/30	<p>Studio Day</p> <p><b>Submit Draft Deliverable (1 Color Hardcopy) Due 12/1</b></p>
16	12/7	<p>Studio Day, Go Over Instructor Revisions</p>
Final	Fri 12/11@ 12:15 pm	<p><b>Submit Final Deliverable to Client in Person (3 Color Hardcopies, 1 Electronic PDF Format)</b></p>

## City of Palo Alto Public Works Department Activated Alleyways Project - California Avenue & University Avenue

### CALIFORNIA AVENUE FIELD GROUP (7 Students)

#### Mapping Team (4 Students)

Take Photos of Existing Conditions in Sept  
Collect GPS Points on all can/enclosures on regular day  
Collect GPS Points on all can/enclosures on trash day  
Observe pick up - locate access issues/challenges points  
Check to see if constriction issues are still present in late Oct  
Get all GPS points into an ArcMap layer

#### People Team (3 Students)

Draft the Shortform Survey to be used at both sites  
Conduct Shortform/VPS Interviews Sun Morn (During Farmers Market)  
Conduct Midweek Day Shortform/VPS Surveys  
Conduct Weekday Evening Shortform/VPS Surveys  
Conduct Sat Afternoon/Evening Shortform/VPS Surveys  
Random Select and Conduct Open-ended Merchant Interviews  
Crunch both sites Shortform & VPS Data

### UNIVERSITY AVENUE FIELD GROUP (7 Students)

#### Mapping Team (4 Students)

Take Photos of Existing Conditions in Sept  
Collect GPS Points on all can/enclosures on regular day  
Collect GPS Points on all can/enclosures on trash day  
Observe pick up - locate access issues/challenges points  
Check to see if constriction issues are still present in late Oct  
Get all GPS points into an ArcMap layer

#### People Team (3 Students)

Draft Visual Preference Survey to be used at both sites  
Draft Open-ended Interview Instrument to be used at both sites  
Host Mock Focus Group  
Conduct Midweek Day Shortform/VPS Surveys  
Conduct Weekday Evening Shortform/VPS Surveys  
Conduct Sat Afternoon/Evening Shortform/VPS Surveys  
Random Select and Conduct Open-ended Merchant Interviews  
Crunch both sites Open-ended Interview Data

### POLICY & DESIGN GROUP (4 Students)

#### Cartography & Graphics Team (2 Students)

Gather GIS Base Layers  
Prep Site Photos (Crop, Correct, Adjust, etc.)  
Compile Images, Graphics from Bay Area Ex Sites (SF/Oak)  
Upload and project Mapping Team data points  
Design Report Cover and Report Layout  
Prepare and Plot Large Maps for use in class exercises  
Produce production quality maps for the draft and final reports  
Design and produce the Visual Preference Survey instrument  
Create a Graphic of this Workflow  
Visualize crunched survey data

#### Policy Analysts (2 Students)

Visit City Office to Collect Pertinent Planning & Public Works Docs  
Gather Socioeconomic Data  
Gather Waste Stream Data for the two sites  
Identify Stakeholders  
Research Bay Area Activated Alleyways Cases (SF & Oak)  
Synthesize All Pertinent Existing Policies - look for conflicts  
Write Up Vision Statement  
Write Up Goals  
Write Up Project Description  
Write Up Methods, Results, and Policy Recommendations

## PROJECT MANAGEMENT (1 Grad Student)

### Functional Responsibilities

Client Communications

Take Notes at 8/31 Kick-off Mtg, Follow up with Action Items

Oversee Schedule and Tasks

Review and edit report draft

Weekly 15-min update during Class

### Research Responsibilities

Lit Review line of research 1: identity of place/fear inducing places

Lit Review line of research 2: mass consumption/disposable material culture

Lit Review line of research 3: other activate alleyway cases

Synthesize Focus Group Findings

GIS Spatial Analysis of Point Data