Instructor: Dr. Amy Leisenring
Office Location: DMH 226A
Telephone: 408-924-5756
Email: Via Canvas: https://sjsu.instructure.com
Office Hours: Mondays 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2:45 to 3:45 p.m.
By appointment
Class Days/Time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1:30 to 2:45 p.m.
Classroom: DMH 221A
Prerequisites: SOCI 1, SOCI 100W, SOCI 105

Course Description
This course is centered on an in-depth exploration of ethnographic research methods, with a particular focus on data analysis. Ethnography, also known as field methods, explores how people live, understand, and make sense of their lives in social environments. Ethnographers participate in people’s lives in a particular social setting for an extended period of time, watch what happens, listen to what is said, and ask questions to fully understand the topic under investigation. The ethnographer records all data s/he collects and analyzes this data in order to generate “thick description” of human behavior.

We will be utilizing a grounded theory approach to data analysis. Grounded theory is an approach for conducting and analyzing qualitative research that was originally developed by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s. It involves the development of theory through the analysis of data. Data is collected (in this class via observations and in-depth interviews) and key points are extracted from the texts via the process of “coding.” Through the process of memo-writing, codes are grouped into categories, which are then used to generate theory.

This course is designed for advanced-level undergraduate students and graduate students who are assumed to already have some familiarity with the basics of qualitative research methods. More of our time will be devoted to the exploration of data analysis than with the “how-to” of conducting qualitative research. However, I will provide recommendations of additional readings for those students who believe that their foundational skills and/or knowledge of qualitative methods are lacking.
This course is designed to be practical, collaborative, and hands-on. The particular social environment that will serve as the basis for our research is the campus of SJSU. Students will work in small groups to examine the experiences of a particular group of students at SJSU. (Groups will be assigned during the first week of class based on student interest.) Thus, most/all observations will take place on the SJSU campus and interviews will be conducted with SJSU students. In class we will assist each other in the data collection and analysis processes.

**Required Texts/Readings**

3. Online Readings posted on Canvas: (Listed as “Canvas” in schedule)

**Canvas**

There is a Canvas site for this class and you will be automatically added. You will turn in all assignments here. I will also use Canvas to make announcements and post all handouts, assignments, and online readings. Canvas will also be a place for you to ask questions to other students in the class for which everyone might want the answer. Finally, all course emailing will be conducted via Canvas. Thus, I highly recommend that you either check Canvas regularly for important messages and announcements and/or that you link your Canvas email to your regular email.

**Attendance**

While I will not take attendance, because this is an advanced-level seminar course, there is an expectation that you will attend class regularly. You will miss important information, feedback, etc. if you fail to attend class. Further, there will sometimes be exercises that take place in class for participation credit. You will lose this credit if you do not attend class and there is no additional opportunity to make it up. You do not need to let me know if you miss class for a day or two. However, if you experience something that will result in a long-term absence, please do let me know. I do not give incompletes except for in the case of an extreme emergency, and even then a student must have completed at least 70% of the course work (according to University Policy).

**Late Work Policy**

You need to upload assignments to the Canvas assignment folder by the beginning of class (1:30 p.m.) on the day they are due in order for work not to be counted late. I will accept late work for 1 week after an assignment is due. However, late work will be dropped a third of a letter grade for each weekday it is late after the due date. For example, a grade of B- would become a C+ if turned in one day after it is due and a C if turned in two days after it is due. After one week, a missing grade becomes a zero (there are NO exceptions to this except for in cases of extreme emergencies, which you must communicate to me ASAP).
Assignments and Grading Policy

Your final grade in this class will be based on the following:

1. **Class Participation and Activities**
   Because this is a workshop-style course, student participation is vital for the success of the class. I will evaluate your class participation based on the following:
   
   a. Participation in course discussions.
   
   b. Submission of reading discussion questions. For each week when there are readings assigned, students must submit two discussion questions about the reading materials for that week. I will draw from these questions during in-class discussions. Thus, your questions should be designed to encourage thoughtful discussion, debate, or critical analysis. Questions with yes-no answers and factual questions from the readings are not acceptable. There are readings for 11 of the weeks of class and questions from 10 weeks will count toward your participation grade. (Thus you may miss/drop one week). Questions will be graded credit/no credit. Questions need to be uploaded to the “Discussion” folder on Canvas by midnight on the night before the readings are due.
   
   c. Successful completion of various in-class activities (i.e. interview & coding exercises, writing exercises, small group activities, and peer review work and feedback)
   
   Please note: You cannot make up in-class activities and exercises. However, when I calculate your final participation grade I will allow for a bit of “cushion room” which means if you miss a day of in-class activities it will not adversely impact your grade.

2. **Observation and Interview Exercises**
   Before beginning your fieldwork for your project, you will conduct both an observation and interview exercise and write a brief paper about each of these experiences.

3. **Field Notes and Interview Transcripts**
   You will conduct at least 4 “formal” observations in your setting and interview at least 3 members of the group that you are studying. The notes from these will be recorded, transcribed, and turned into “full” fieldnotes.

4. **Coding/Memos**
   You will code all of your data and write several analytic and thematic memos to help you analyze your data. You will turn in one coded interview transcript, one coded set of observation field notes, and two memos for credit throughout the semester. (All research materials will be turned in at the end of the semester with your final paper.)

5. **Research Paper**
   You will write a final 15-20 page paper at the end of semester based on your research.

6. **Final Presentation**
   Students will present their findings from their projects during an approximately 10-15 minute presentation at the end of the semester.
Information and specific details about each assignment will be provided at a later date. (All handouts will always be posted to Canvas, as well).

The breakdown of your final grade looks like this:

Observation Exercise: 5%
Interview Exercise: 5%
Coded Field Notes: 15%
Coded Interview Transcripts: 15%
Coding/Memos: 15%
Research Paper: 30%
Final Presentation: 5%
Class Participation: 10%

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Total: 100%

Final letter grades for the course will be assigned based on the following scale:
A = 93 – 100%  B = 83 – 87%  C = 73 – 77%  D = 63 – 67%
A- = 90 – 92%  B- = 80 – 82%  C- = 70 – 72%  D- = 60 – 62%
B+ = 88 – 89%  C+ = 78 – 79%  D+ = 68 – 69%  F = 59% or less

University Policies

Academic integrity

Students should know that the University’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require 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 website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at [http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. Information on add/drops are available at [http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html).
Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

**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 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.
COURSE SCHEDULE

Please note that I reserve the right to make changes to the schedule, as needed, with fair notice.

Week #1: Thursday, 1/23
Topic: Class Introduction

Week #2: Tuesday, 1/28 and Thursday, 1/30
Topic: What is Ethnography? What is Grounded Theory?
Read:
  • Canvas: “Introduction: The Methodological Strengths and Dilemmas of Qualitative Sociology” by Goodwin and Horowitz
  • Canvas: “Introduction: The Development of Ethnographic Field Research” by Robert Emerson
  • Charmaz CH 1

Week #3: Tuesday, 2/4 and Thursday, 2/6
Topic: Contextualizing Our Research
Read:
  • Grigsby CH 1 and Appendix 1.2
  • Canvas: CH 1 and Afterword from “My Freshman Year” by Cathy Small

NO CLASS ON THURSDAY, 2/6

Week #4: Tuesday, 2/11 and Thursday, 2/13
Topic: Gathering Data: Fieldwork
Read:
  • Charmaz CH 2
  • Canvas: “Common Problems in Field Work” by Annette Lareau
  • Canvas: “In the Field” by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw

Week #5: Tuesday, 2/18 and Thursday, 2/20
Topic: Gathering Data: Interviews
Read:
  • Canvas: “Depth Interviewing” by Miller and Crabtree
  • Canvas: “Learning from Strangers” by Weiss
  • Canvas, “Doing Race Through the Context of Feminist Interviewing” by Amy Best
Due: Thursday, 2/20: Observation Exercise

Week #6: Tuesday, 2/25 and Thursday, 2/27
Topic: Ethics and the Role of the Ethnographer
Read:
  • Canvas: “You Still Takin’ Notes?” by Barrie Thorne
  • Canvas: “Ten Lies of Ethnography” by Gary Alan Fine
  • Canvas: “Flirting with Boundaries” by Rueben May
Due: Thursday, 2/27: Interview Exercise
Week #7: Tuesday, 3/4 and Thursday, 3/6  
**Topic: Coding**  
Read:  
- Charmaz CH 3  
- Grigsby CH 2

Week #8: Tuesday, 3/11 and Thursday, 3/13  
**Topic: Memo Writing**  
Read:  
- Charmaz CH 4  
- Grigsby CH 3

Week #9: Tuesday, 3/18 and Thursday, 3/20  
**Topic: Theoretical Sampling**  
Read:  
- Charmaz CH 5  
- Grigsby CH 4

Week #10: Tuesday, 3/25 and Thursday, 3/27: SPRING BREAK

Week #11: Tuesday, 4/1 and Thursday, 4/3  
**Topic: From Data to Theory Building**  
Read:  
- Charmaz CH 6  
- Grigsby CH 5  
**Due: Thursday 4/3: Memo #1**

Week #12: Tuesday, 4/8 and Thursday, 4/10  
**Topic: Data Analysis**  
Read:  
- Canvas: “From How to Why, Part 1” by Jack Katz  
- Canvas: CH 3, 5, 7 “My Freshman Year” by Cathy Small  
**Due: Thursday 4/10: All interview transcripts uploaded to Canvas by 5:00 p.m.**

Week #13: Tuesday, 4/15 and Thursday, 4/17  
**Topic: Writing**  
Read: Charmaz CH 7  
**NO CLASS ON TUESDAY, 4/15**  
**Due: Thursday 4/17: One coded interview transcript and one coded set of field notes**

Week #14: Tuesday, 4/22 and Thursday, 4/24  
**Topic: In-class Analysis Work**  
**Due: Thursday 4/24: Memo #2**

Week #15: Tuesday, 4/29 and Thursday, 5/1  
**Topic: In-class Analysis Work**
Week #16: Tuesday, 5/6 and Thursday, 5/8
Topic: Presentations
Due: Thursday, 5/8: Draft of Final Paper

Week #17: Tuesday, 5/13
Topic: In-class Analysis Work And Presentations
(Last Day of Office Hours)

*Final Paper, Coded Fieldnotes, and Coded Interview Transcripts Due: Upload to Canvas by 12:00 p.m. on Monday, May 19th
*Meet During Final Exam Time on Monday, May 19th at 12:15 p.m. to finish presentations
*Comprehensive Exam for Sociology Graduate Students: To be arranged