San José State University
Department of Sociology
SOCl 105: Qualitative Research Methods. Section 1, Spring 2015

Instructor: Dr. Natalie Boero
Office Location: DMH 211
Telephone: (408) 924-5345
Email: natalie.boero@sjsu.edu or message through Canvas
Office Hours: Monday: 5-6pm
Wednesday: 2:45-4:45pm
Class Days/Time: Monday and Wednesday 10:30-11:45am
Classroom: Clark 234
Prerequisites: SOCI 1, SOCI 100W, SOCI 101, Upper Division Standing

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on the course Canvas page. You are responsible for regularly checking the course Canvas page as well as your email for notifications relevant to the course.

Course Description

In this course, we will focus on the philosophy and design of qualitative research. Unlike quantitative research methods which focus on the measurement of social phenomena, qualitative research methods focus on questions of meaning and experience which often do not lend themselves to quantification. For example, if you are interested in how many women have babies each year, you would use quantitative methods. If you want to know what it feels like to have a baby and the experience of being pregnant, you would use qualitative methods. In this course you will learn about various qualitative research
methods and read and analyze examples of qualitative research. Most important, you will
gather and analyze your own data through participant observation and in-depth
interviewing on a topic of your own choosing. This course will give you the opportunity
to gain hands-on experience with various qualitative methods. You will learn to read and
evaluate qualitative research and gain important analytic and practical skills.

Required Texts/Readings

Books:
Warren and Karner (2015), *Discovering Qualitative Methods: Ethnography, Interviews,
Documents, and Images*. Oxford University Press.

Other Readings
I will post additional readings on the course Canvas page in PDF format. They will
always be posted at least a week before they are due. In the course schedule below, these
readings are designated with a (PDF).

Classroom Protocol
I expect that you will have each week’s readings completed by class on Monday of
each week. I have tried to make the reading interesting and manageable so that we can all
participate in active discussions. Please bring your readings to class each day so that
we can refer to them in discussions.

Participation is important and it helps make discussions livelier as well as to clarify
materials. Coming to class is important as I will be lecturing on materials not included in
the readings.

If you cannot come to class, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your peers.
If you miss any handouts or are not in class the day I return an assignment or an exam, I
will have them available for you to pick up during my office hours. When you are in
class, I expect all cell phones and electronic devices to be turned off and put away.
Students may use laptops in class, but, to avoid distracting other students I ask that
students using laptops please sit in the back rows of the classroom.

Office Hours, email and Canvas

I encourage all of you to come by my office hours (listed above). Even if you don’t have
a specific question, office hours are a great chance for me to get to know you better and
for you to give me feedback on the course. If you are having any problems that could
impact your success in the course, come see me as soon as possible. It is much easier to
deal with problems early on. Please note that I do not give incompletes except in the most
extreme situations, and even then only if a student has already completed a majority of
the work for the course.

I am also available by email at the address above or through the Canvas site. However,
given the large number of students in my classes, I may take a day or two to respond to
emails. It is also important that you check your email as well as the “news” section of
Canvas for any course updates. I will email the class of any changes in the schedule. If
you do email me, please include your name and the course number and section in the subject line.

Assignments and Grading Policy

The assignments for this course are designed to give you some experience designing and conducting a qualitative research project. We will spend a lot of time in class working on and talking about your projects and I will post detailed assignment sheets on Canvas well in advance of the due date.

Late assignments will be penalized one third of a grade for each day late (for example, a “B” paper turned in one day late would be given a “B-”). No assignments will be accepted if they are more than one week late.

I will further detail my expectations on your assignment sheets, but in general I require that all assignments (with the exception of in-class exercises) be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font, with standard 1” margins, stapled, with page numbers, and in black ink.

The assignments and activities for this course are designed to enhance understanding of course material. Your final grade in this class will be based on the following:

1. **Two In-depth Observations**: This represents your first opportunity to independently conduct qualitative research. You will make two separate observations in a classroom setting at SJSU and take extensive fieldnotes.

2. **Interview Project**: This is the central course project that we will work on for the majority of the semester. It allows you the opportunity to design and conduct a mini in-depth qualitative research project from start to finish and gain interviewing experience. You will choose a topic/research question, design an interview guide, recruit and interview two people, and write a final reflection paper.

3. **Midterm exam**

4. **Annotated bibliography**: This assignment is designed to help you gather background information for your interview projects.

5. **Class Participation/Class 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. Successful completion of various in-class activities (i.e. interview & coding exercises, writing exercises, small group activities, and peer review work).
   c. Occasional reading reflections to be announced the week prior

**Please note**: You cannot make up in-class activities and exercises.
Grading

Your grade for the course will be broken down as follows:

- Observation assignment: 20%
- Research question: 10%
- Interviews and reflection paper: 25%
- Annotated Bibliography: 15%
- Midterm Exam: 15%
- Participation: (Participation in class discussions, reading reflections, and in-class activities): 15%

Final letter grades for the course will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A   = 93 – 100%   B   = 83 – 86%   C   = 73 – 76%   D   = 63 – 68%
- A-  = 90 – 92%   B-  = 80 – 82%   C-  = 70 – 72%   D-  = 60 – 62%
- B+ = 87 – 89%   C+ = 77 – 79%   D+ = 67 – 69%   F   = 59% or less

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 section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current academic calendar web page located at http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The Late Drop 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 at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.

Assignments and Grading Policy

University Policies

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University’s Academic Integrity policy, located at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm, 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 is available at 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 your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

**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 Disability Resource Center (DRC) at http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/ to establish a record of their disability.

**Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and 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 digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**Learning Assistance Resource Center**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/.

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/.

**Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping
students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/
This schedule is subject to change. I will inform you in class and via email of any changes at least one week in advance.

### Table 1 Course Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Monday 1/27</td>
<td><strong>Introduction: What is Qualitative Research?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monday 1/29</td>
<td>Reading: Warren &amp; Karner Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 1/29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Monday 2/2</td>
<td><strong>What is Qualitative Research? cont. &amp; Positivism and its Discontents</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 2/4</td>
<td>Reading: Warren &amp; Karner Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Monday 2/9</td>
<td><strong>Ethnography and Observation, Observation Assignment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 2/11</td>
<td>Reading: Warren &amp; Karner Ch. 3, “Sidewalk” (PDF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Film: “Sidewalk”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Monday 2/16</td>
<td><strong>Field Notes and Practice Observation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 2/18</td>
<td>Reading: Warren &amp; Karner Chapts. 4 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Film “Sidewalk”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Monday 2/23</td>
<td><strong>Discuss Observation #1, Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 2/25</td>
<td>Bring Observation #1 to class for peer evaluation Monday 2/23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Warren &amp; Karner Ch. 2, Blee (PDF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monday 3/2</td>
<td><strong>Designing Qualitative Research</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 3/4</td>
<td>3/2 Observations #1 and #2 due in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reading: Warren &amp; Karner Ch. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Monday 3/9</td>
<td><strong>Annotated Bibliographies/Interviews</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 3/11</td>
<td>Monday, 3/9 Research Question Due in Class, Bring Two Copies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Monday 3/16</td>
<td><strong>Interviews Guides</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Wednesday 3/18</td>
<td>Reading: Warren &amp; Karner Ch. 7, “The Great Interview” (PDF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monday 3/23</td>
<td>No class: Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wednesday 3/25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 10   | Monday 3/30    | Interviews continued, Reading Qualitative Research  
NO CLASS MONDAY 3/30  
Wednesday 4/1 Guest Speaker, Erlinda Yanez  
Reading: To Be announced                                                                                           |
|      | Wednesday 4/1  |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 11   | Monday 4/6     | Interviews  
Reading: Tuan “Neither Real Americans nor Real Asians” (PDF)                                                                                                                                |
|      | Wednesday 4/8  |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 12   | Monday 4/13    | Textual and Visual data  
Annotated Bibliographies due in class 4/13  
Reading: Warren & Karner Ch. 8, “Graffiti on the Great Plains” (PDF)                                                                    |
|      | Wednesday 4/15 |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 13   | Monday 4/20    | Textual and Visual data  
Midterm Exam, Monday 4/20                                                                                                                                   |
|      | Wednesday 4/22 |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 14   | Monday 4/27    | Action Research  
BRING INTERVIEW #1 TO CLASS Monday 4/27  
Reading: Rios, “Navigating the Thin Line between Education and Incarceration” (PDF)                                                                 |
|      | Wednesday 4/29 |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 15   | Monday 5/4     | Writing Up Research  
Reading: Warren & Karner Ch. 9                                                                                                                                         |
|      | Wednesday 5/6  |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 16   | Monday 5/11    | Writing up Research, Wrap-up  
Wednesday 5/13 No class- Instead I will hold extra office hours to discuss final projects.                                                                                             |
|      | Wednesday 5/13 | Interview Projects Due via Canvas Tuesday, May 19th by 5pm  
NO LATE PAPERS WILL BE ACCEPTED  
No reading                                                                                                      |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>