



San José State
UNIVERSITY

JS 207: Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods

Fall, 2015

F 1:00 – 3:45 PM

MacQuarrie Hall 526

Instructor:	Dr. Bryce Westlake
Office Location:	MacQuarrie Hall 529
Telephone:	
Email:	Bryce.Westlake@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Monday 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm Friday 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Companion Website:	SJSU Canvas

JUSTICE STUDIES DEPARTMENT READING & WRITING PHILOSOPHY

The Department of Justice Studies is committed to scholarly excellence. Therefore, the Department promotes academic, critical, and creative engagement with language (i.e., reading and writing) throughout its curriculum. A sustained and intensive exploration of language prepares students to think critically and to act meaningfully in interrelated areas of their lives—personal, professional, economic, social, political, ethical, and cultural. Graduates of the Department of Justice Studies leave San José State University prepared to enter a range of careers and for advanced study in a variety of fields; they are prepared to more effectively identify and ameliorate injustice in their personal, professional and civic lives. Indeed, the impact of literacy is evident not only within the span of a specific course, semester, or academic program but also over the span of a lifetime.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Qualitative research methods used in Justice Studies. Includes relationship of empirical evidence to theory, ethics in conducting empirical research, methodological design, interviewing techniques, field methods, participant observation, and content analysis.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing; or instructor permission.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Understand and intelligently discuss the purpose and strengths of qualitative research, at an advanced level.
- Critically assess qualitative research in justice studies at an advanced level.
- Collect, analyze, and disseminate qualitative research in justice studies at a graduate level.

TEXTBOOKS

REQUIRED

Silverman, D., & Marvasti, A. (2008). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Comprehensive Guide*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Weekly Course Readings (Provided on Canvas).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

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. More details about student workload can be found in [University Policy S12-3](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf>.

ASSIGNMENTS

Critical Discussion (20%): All participants are expected to take an active role in each seminar as both learners and teachers. You are expected to complete the weekly required readings prior to each seminar. You are going to benefit the most from class discussions, explanations, and activities if you have some knowledge about the concepts studied each week. In each class you should demonstrate that you have read the assigned materials ahead of time, raise and discuss issues, and fully engage with the class. Discussion in seminars will focus on both the readings and on your research projects.

Study Evaluation (15%): You are required to evaluate an academic qualitative study related to the discipline of criminology. In 6-8 pages you will provide an analysis and critique of a selected piece of research that uses qualitative research methods. You are not required to integrate external research, although some articles might be helpful in assessing some of the various characteristics of the study you select. Academic studies will be provided. The evaluation is structured around a pre-determined set of questions.

Research Proposal (0%): Doing a piece of research is the best way to understand the complexities that are involved. You will conduct a one semester-long research project in this course. Before collecting data, you must submit a research proposal to me, due as soon as possible but no later than **Sept. 11/15**, that identifies your topic area, the method(s) you will follow, the sampling technique you will use, and the ethical issues you have considered in the formulation of your proposal. Additional details regarding this proposal will be provided in seminar.

Your proposals will be returned to you by email. If your proposal is not approved, you will need to re-submit it as soon thereafter as you can (preferably within 48 to 72 hours), and I will return it to you as soon as I can after that. This pattern will continue until you have submitted a proposal that is approved. **You cannot gather data until you have received ethics approval.**

Approval will be contingent on you showing that you understand how criminology's professional standards with respect to research ethics apply in your research context. In addition, you must demonstrate that your proposed project meets the requirements of minimal risk. In most cases, your proposal should focus how you will ensure **informed consent**, and protect participant **confidentiality**. You will also be expected to identify any **unique issues** that might arise in the context of your particular research (e.g., conflict of interest; conflict of roles; freedom of choice). I anticipate that even once your proposals are approved, research ethics will continue to be an important discussion throughout the remainder of the course.

Term Paper & Presentation (65%): Students will write an original, qualitative, research paper and orally present their research to the department in a clear and concise. Time limits will be determined at a later time. The submitted research report will be 20-25 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font Times New Roman OR 11-point font Arial. The paper is to follow APA format, including bibliography, abstract, cover page, etc. The 25 page maximum excludes appendices, references, figures, and tables.

The topic does not need to be explicitly "criminological"; the important thing is to find a research site, or group of people, or phenomenon that interests you, and about which/whom you would like to know more. The more you are sincerely curious about your research, the more enjoyable it will be for you, and the better your eventual report will be for those who read it. Options for projects will be discussed in seminar.

Grading

In order to receive a grade for this course, all course requirements must be met and every assignment must be completed. Failure to complete any one assignment may result in a failing grade for the course. Deadlines are firm. Late assignments/papers will not be accepted for full credit (without extenuating personal circumstances due to own or family health; or other university recognized excuse). In such cases, appropriate documentation must be shown to the instructor. **Late assignments/papers will lose 10% for every calendar day that they are late**, including weekend days.

97-100%	A+	77-79	C+
94-96	A	74-76	C
90-93	A-	70-73	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
84-86	B	64-66	D
80-83	B-	60-63	D-
0-59	F		

The final course grade will be based on a 100-point scale. Since the grade is based on mastery of the material, it is theoretically possible for everyone to earn an A.

Note that "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.” See [University Policy F13-1](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F13-1.pdf> for more details.

CLASSROOM PROTOCOL

- (1) Turn off your cell phone or pager in class.
- (2) Do not come to class late or leave class early. If you have to arrive in class late regularly, I advise you not to take this course.
- (3) Do not chat with your classmates in class unless you are expected to have discussions in a small group.
- (4) Respect your classmates’ ideas and opinions, even when they are different from yours.

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](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf) 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](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html), 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/. 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.”
- “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 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the [Accessible Education Center \(AEC\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/aec) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec> to establish a record of their disability.

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.

LIBRARY LIAISON

Silke Higgins, silke.higgins@sjsu.edu, (408) 808-2118
<http://libguides.sjsu.edu/justicestudies>

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 10th 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 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.

SJSU COUNSELING SERVICES

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th 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>.

SEMINAR IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS (JS 207) FALL, 2015, COURSE SCHEDULE

This course schedule is subject to change with fair notice, at the instructor's discretion. All reading assignments listed should be completed prior to class on that date. Additional readings may be assigned.

Week	Date	Topics	Assignment Due
1	August 21	Introduction: Defining Qualitative Method	
2	August 28	The Qualitative Research Process	
3	September 4	Designing Qualitative Research: Matching the Question to Method & Data	
4	September 11	Ethical Issues in Research	Research Protocol
5	September 18	Assessing Validity and Reliability	
6	September 25	Evaluating Qualitative Research: Making Sense of Your Data	Study Evaluation
7	October 2	Interviews/Oral History	
8	October 9	Honoring Voice	
9	October 16	Content Analysis/(Auto)Ethnography	
10	October 23	Emotionality	
11	October 30	Internet Mediated Research	
12	November 6	Class Presentation	
13	November 13	Class Presentation	
14	November 20	Library Session (No Scheduled Class)	
15	November 27	No Class (Thanksgiving)	
16	December 4	Conducting Credible Research	Final Paper
17	December 14	Course Review Session and Reflection	