

SOCI 601: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS II

McGill University

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Office Hours: Fridays 3:00 – 5:00 pm (appointment sign-up sheet on office door)

Course Description and Goals

- How should you frame your research question(s)? In other words: what the heck are you trying to understand and what is mysterious about it?
- Do your methods match your research question(s)? In other words: will your research design allow you to gather the kinds of data you need to answer the question(s) you have in mind?
- Who are you talking to? In other words: what bodies of literature are relevant to your project and how should you respond to them?
- Why should anybody care about your project? In other words: how can you make a contribution to your discipline, public knowledge, or social welfare?

You have probably asked yourself some, if not all, of these questions at some point in your graduate career. A successful researcher has to address and come up with solutions to these questions in order to get research funding, publish, and get an academic job. In this class, the second in a sequence of qualitative methods courses that begin with SOCI 600, you will analyze how other researchers have tried to deal with these issues by reading their work and talking to them (guest lectures). In the process, you will devise strategies for your own research and further develop a research paper or dissertation prospectus.

Course Requirements

Leading Class Discussion

You will lead class discussion twice during the semester. Presentations should last approximately 10 minutes and include: 1) a brief summary of the assigned piece, with attention to *how* the author's methodology did or did not allow them to create an empirically sound argument 2) discussion questions for the class.

Weekly Memos

For every week that we have assigned readings, you are asked to write a short memo (no longer than 1 single spaced page). Please summarize the main question(s), thesis, and methods of the assigned readings. You can also chose to raise any *methodological* issues you had with the reading. Please upload your memo to the appropriate MyCourses folder by 5pm the day prior to class.

Project Presentation(s)

You will be asked to present various aspects of your project on an ongoing basis throughout the semester. The final day of the course, you will also do a longer presentation tracing the evolution of the project over the semester.

Final Project

Possibility 1: Draft Dissertation Proposal

You may choose to write a first draft of what will eventually become your dissertation proposal. If you choose this route, you must write this proposal in consultation with your academic advisor. You will be required to meet with your advisor at least twice during the semester, prior to turning in your final project. You will be asked to provide proof of these meetings in the form of short summaries of your conversations. These consultations are mandatory since it is ultimately your advisor who will or will not approve your dissertation prospectus.

Possibility 2: Research Paper

You may choose to write a research paper if you have original data that you wish to analyze. The research paper must follow the generic format of a publishable article: introduction with question and thesis, literature review with theoretical contribution, methods section, presentation of findings, and conclusion.

Course Policies

Ethics

- You are responsible for behaving respectfully towards your Instructor and your fellow students. Aggressive and condescending behavior towards others will not be tolerated.
- McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism, and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures. See <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest> and <http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/academicrights/integrity/cheating> for more information.

Written Materials

- In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit written work in either English or French.
- All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, stapled, 12 point Times New Roman, with one-inch margins on all sides. You must include in-line citations and a bibliography. Please use a standard bibliographic format (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.).

MyCourses

- There is an online site for this course on MyCourses. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the site and knowing how to use it. This includes: reading class announcements, posting assignments, checking your grades, and engaging in online discussions.

Section I. Making a contribution

Week 1 How do it work?

- Issa Kohler-Hausman. 2013. "Misdemeanor Justice: Control without Conviction." *American Journal of Sociology*, 119 (2): 351-393.
- Tianna Paschel. 2010. "The Right to Difference: Explaining Colombia's Shift from Color Blindness to the Law of Black Communities." *American Journal of Sociology*, 116 (3): 729-769.

Week 2 Tracing global flows

- Kimberly Hoang. 2015. *Dealing in Desire: Asian Ascendancy, Western Decline, and the Hidden Currencies of Global Sex Work*. University of California Press.

Discussant:

Project presenter:

Week 3 Identifying invisible social processes

- Randol Contreras. 2013. *The Stickup Kids: Race, Drugs, Violence and the American Dream*. University of California Press.

Discussant:

Project presenter:

Week 4 Library visit with Nikki Tummons

- How to conduct literature review and make the most out of library resources

Week 5 Revising theory with new cases

- Tariq Thachil. 2014. *Elite parties, poor voters: How social services win votes in India*. Cambridge University Press.

Discussant:

Project presenter:

Week 6 Capturing long-term effects

- Annette Laureau. 2011. *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. University of California Press.

Discussant:

Project presenter:

Week 7 NO CLASS

Week 8 Challenging conventional understandings

- Matt Desmond. 2007. *On the Fireline: Living and Dying with Wildland Firefighters*. University of Chicago Press.

Discussant:

Project presenter:

Section II. Managing methodological challenges

Week 9 Disrupting academic orthodoxy

- Eric Foner. 1984. "Why Is There No Socialism in the United States?" *History Workshop Journal*, 17: 57–80.
- Barry Eidlin. 2016. "Why is there no labor party in the United States?" *American Sociological Review*.

Week 10 Elaine Weiner

Week 11 Studying competing actors in a social field

- Matt Desmond. 2014. "Relational Ethnography." *Theory and Society*, 43: 547-579.
- Jan Doering. In process. "Community Organizations and the Politics of Crime and Race." Chapter from book manuscript.

Week 12 Matt Lange

- Matthew Lange. 2009. *Lineages of Despotism and Development: British Colonialism and State Power*. University of Chicago Press. (pdf on MyCourses)

Week 13 Workshop Final Projects