

San José State University
Department of Sociology and Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
SOC1 105: Qualitative Research Methods
Spring 2024 Course Syllabus

COURSE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Instructor:	Dr. Jesi Faust
Office Location:	DMH 237A
Telephone:	N/A
Email:	jesi.faust@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	Mondays from 12:00-1:00 PM
Class Days/Time:	Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00-10:15 AM
Classroom:	DMH 162

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to Sociology 105! This course will give students an introduction to a range of qualitative research methods. Over the course of the semester, we will cover strategies for data collection and analysis of data approaches such as in-depth, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and ethnography. Students will learn how to propose research questions that can be investigated using qualitative methods, develop an understanding for how to respond to ethical issues related to human subjects, explore the different data gathering techniques associated with particular methods, investigate multiple analytic approaches, and become familiar with various styles of interpretation of qualitative data.

We will be asking ourselves the following questions throughout the course: What is research? Why do we use qualitative methods? What kinds of questions should be answered qualitative research methodologies? What are different kinds of qualitative research methods? How do we conduct ethnographic research? How do we conduct an in-depth, semi-structured interview? How do we conduct ethical research? How does a researcher's background and positionality influence how they go about conducting qualitative research, interacting with research participants, collecting data, and what can a qualitative researcher learn from others? How do qualitative researchers analyze data and write it up in a paper? How are qualitative research findings then disseminated to the larger public? What purpose does sharing qualitative research serve? What influence can social

science research have on public policy? How can qualitative research methodological skills be leveraged in a career (whether research focused or not)?

IMPORTANT: This is a CommUniverCity service learning course. This means our course will be focused around a community identified need. We will be conducting research and service activities outside of regularly scheduled class time for approx. 10 hours over the course of the semester. If you are unable or unwilling to commit to this, please contact me immediately.

COURSE FORMAT

This class meets in person in DMH 162.

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, etc. may be found on Canvas. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU (or other communication systems as indicated by the instructor). To log onto Canvas, go to <https://one.sjsu.edu/>

Student Learning Outcomes

A student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

1. Understand what makes for a good “sociological puzzle,” and how to put that puzzle in dialogue with the existing literature.
2. Determine which method(s) are best suited for answering a particular research question.
3. Observe their social world carefully and systematically.
4. Engage in participant observation/ethnographic observations.
5. Record and analyze data gathered from ethnographic participant observations and in-depth, semi structured interviews.
6. Critically read, critique, and assess existing qualitative research.
7. Write-up research findings in well-written and organized reports.

Ultimately, I hope that what you learn in this course is information that you will carry with you into whatever career field you enter. Whether or not you realize it, knowing how to collect data, analyze it, and present it to others, are skills that are extremely valuable in the “real world” and literally any career field you enter into following your time here at SJSU. I believe my role is to help you understand what it means to “learn to see” as a qualitative researcher. My goal is that you will leave this class having an appreciation for qualitative inquiry as well as an understanding for why it is needed. I want this course to open a pathway for you to become a strong qualitative researcher. With that being said, conducting qualitative research is laborious, time consuming, and writing intensive. It takes time to collect data, critically analyze data, write-up preliminary memos, and then complete a final paper. Trust me, I know! Earning a Ph.D. involves writing a dissertation. I’m happy to talk more about this process and will share research that I have conducted on the experiences of college students as they juggle competing demands of family and college. Before you get to the writing stage of a research project, you must conduct original research, which can take years to collect, transcribe, code, and analyze. This course only lasts for a semester and is a survey course of qualitative methodology, so don’t worry, we will

fast-track the research and writing phase. ☺ As you develop a greater understanding of the qualitative research process, you may learn things that confirm your hunches about “how things work” but you should also be prepared to encounter things that challenge those hunches. I am here to guide you on your qualitative research journey.

YOU WILL LEARN BY DOING!

You will have the opportunity to gain qualitative research skills through a research project (to be completed outside of class) as well as by examining and critiquing real qualitative studies of a broad range of qualitative scholarship. Conducting hands-on qualitative research will allow you to enhance your skills across the entire design process, from developing research questions and an interview guide, to collecting data, to analyzing and evaluating data, and presenting findings to an audience of your peers.

Required Text:

Lareau, Annette. *Listening to people: A practical guide to interviewing, participant observation, data analysis, and writing it all up*. University of Chicago Press, 2021.

Course Requirements and Assignments:

Participation 30%: Being present and participating in class is absolutely key to your success in this class. The majority of the class will consist of discussions, group and individual activities, as well as “lab time” where you will be able to work on your research project individually or in groups. Occasionally class will take place outside of the regular classroom including visits to the library, computer labs, and other on campus locations as well as online. Participation will be measured through graded participation assignments which will take place in class 1-2 times per week. There are no make ups for these assignments unless by specific arrangement from the instructor due to an excused absence. Your lowest 2 participation grades will be dropped to account for absences due to illness, mental health, family issues or other reasons. Sometimes these will be group assignments completed in class, other times they will be submitted via discussion board during class. You may only submit participation assignments via discussion board if you are physically present in class or by prior arrangement due to an excused absence. There will also be several opportunities to make up missed participation points through extra credit.

Group Assignments 30%: During the first week of class you will form groups of three people. Together you will come up with a research focus related to the community identified need which is the focus of the class. As a group, you will complete three assignments including creating an interview/survey, analyzing the results of that interview/survey, and doing a final presentation at the end of class. Detailed descriptions of these assignments can be found on our course canva page.

Survey/Interview design due 2/11 11:59 pm	100 pts
Survey results report due 3/17 11:59 pm	100 pts

Presentation due 4/28 11:59 pm	400 pts
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Individual Assignments 40%: In addition to your group assignments, you will complete five individual assignments. You will pick a specific aspect of your group research focus related to the community identified need which is the focus of the class and dive deeper into that aspect of the research. You may choose to focus on gender, sexuality, race, class, any combination of the above or other factors. These assignments will build on each other to culminate in your final report.

Annotated Bibliography due 2/18 11:59 pm	100 pts
Prospectus due 3/10 11:59 pm	100 pts
Literature Review due 3/31 11:59 pm	100 pts
Participant Observation Report Due 4/14 11:59 pm	100 pts
Final Report due 5/19 11:59 pm	400 pts

LATE POLICY

I will accept assignments turned in to me before class up until one week past the due date (it will be set up on Canvas to accept the assignment up to one week past the due date). I will not accept assignments through email. If you turn in the assignment late, you will receive partial credit, up to one half of the full credit for the assignment.

PHONE: I do not check the phone assigned to me, so please see me in class or during office hours for any important issues.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page](#) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

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](#).

GRADING

Percentage	Grade Assigned
100 or higher	A+
93-99	A
90-92	A
88-89	B+
83-87	B
80-82	B

78-79	C+
73-77	C
70-72	C
68-69	D+
63-67	D
60-62	D
59-	F

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus

Course Calendar

Week 1	
Wednesday 1/24	
Week 2 Introduction	
Readings: Chapter 1 Listening to People	
Monday 1/29	
Wednesday 1/31	
Assignments due: None	
Week 3 Survey and Interview Design	
Readings: Chapter 2 Listening to People	
Monday 2/5	Use class time to meet with your group members either online or in person and work on your survey/interview design. No in person class session. Progress report due via discussion board.

Wednesday 2/7	
Assignments due: Survey/Interview design due 2/11 11:59 pm (group assignment)	
Week 4 Academic Research and Building a Bibliography	
Readings: Chapter 3 Listening to People	
Monday 2/12	Make an account and download Zotero and the Zotero connector before class. The software is completely free and can be found here https://www.zotero.org/
Wednesday 2/14	
Assignments due: Annotated Bibliography due 2/18	
Week 5 Archival Research and the Importance of History	
Readings: Chapter 4 Listening to People	
Monday 2/19	Library field trip We will meet at a TBD location in the library rather than the regular classroom
Wednesday 2/21	
Assignments due: None	
Week 6 Conducting Interviews	
Readings: Chapter 5 Listening to People	
Monday 2/26	
Wednesday 2/28	No in person class. Instead, your job is to interview someone on campus (turn in notes online via discussion board)
Assignments due: None	
Week 7 Ethnography, Ethics, and Participant Observation	
Readings: Chapter 6 Listening to People	
Monday 3/4	
Wednesday 3/6	
Assignments due: Prospectus due 3/10 11:59 pm	

Week 8 Analyzing Results	
Readings: Chapter 7 Listening to People	
Monday 3/11	
Wednesday 3/13	
Assignments due: Survey results report due 3/17 11:59 pm (group assignment)	
Week 9 Research and Writing	
Readings: Chapter 8 Listening to People	
Monday 3/18	
Wednesday 3/20	
Assignments due: None	
Week 10 Research and Writing Cont.	
Readings: Chapter 9 Listening to People	
Monday 3/25	
Wednesday 3/27	
Assignments due: Literature Review due 3/31 11:59 pm	
Week 11 SPRING BREAK	
Readings: None	
Monday 4/1	No class
Wednesday 4/3	No class
Assignments due: None	
Week 12	
Readings: Chapter 10 Listening to People	
Monday 4/8	

Wednesday 4/10	
Assignments due: Participant Observation Report Due 4/14 11:59 pm	
Week 13 Presenting Research and Visualizing Data	
Readings: None	
Monday 4/15	
Wednesday 4/17	
Assignments due: None	
Week 14 Drawing Conclusions	
Readings: None	
Monday 4/22	
Wednesday 4/24	
Assignments due: Presentation due 4/28 11:59 pm (group assignment)	
Week 15 Presentations	
Readings: None	
Monday 4/29	
Wednesday 5/1	
Assignments due:	
Week 16 Presentations	
Readings: None	
Monday 5/6	
Wednesday 5/8	
Assignments due: None	
Week 17 BONUS MONDAY	

Readings: None

Monday
5/13

Assignments due: Final Report due 5/19 11:59 pm