Sociology 413.01
Intermediate Qualitative Research Methods
WINTER 2012

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Bruce Arnold*
                   drarnold@ucalgary.ca
OFFICE: SS 912
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 12:00-1:30 & Thursdays 12:00-1:00 & 3:30-4:30 (or appointments at mutually convenient times).
PHONE: 220-6508.
CLASS: SS 010 Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:15

* Please note the instructor does not use email for substantive or content related course issues because it is an inefficient means for communication and teaching. Instead, the instructor is available at various times weekly throughout the term to personally assist you. Please use the email above to report an absence from class or to set up an appointment during office hours.

* For student study resources see   http://soci.ucalgary.ca/18/jfstud.htm
* Some changes may be made to course deadlines, timing, format, and content by the instructor.
* Concerns about evaluations and grades must be first put in writing, including the grounds and rationale for said concerns, and submitted to the instructor in advance of a meeting being scheduled.

Course Goals and Organization: This is a highly interactive, challenging, and rewarding course designed as an underlined upper-level undergraduate "Inquiry-Based" **seminar** with a **lecture component**. Course goals and expectations for students are based on this design. All students in this course will have at least the Sociology 313 (Introduction to Research Methods) pre-requisite so it is expected that there already exists a basic understanding of research methods issues (e.g. research design, causality, sampling, operationalization-measurement, validity-reliability, some data collection techniques) and that students will contribute to the class through regular class discussions. Please read this syllabus carefully to make sure you understand what the student expectations and course goals are. I look forward to contributing to your reaching of these goals! (See **IMPORTANT** section re research project data collection below – page 5). *And we will have some fun in the process - really!*

Your instructor is a resource you can access throughout the term during office hours, special appointments at mutually convenient times, or before and after class. It is my pleasure to assist you with the research issues and challenges in this course.

Specific Course Goals include:

1. Identify key differences between qualitative and quantitative paradigms in terms of paradigm assumptions.
2. Articulate the key characteristics of a qualitative research study.
3. Understand the place of theory and literature in a qualitative study.
4. Define and identify the key characteristics of five approaches of qualitative inquiry: autobiography, the interview, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology.
5. Discuss potential ethical issues that can occur when conducting qualitative research.
6. Understand the role of researcher in qualitative research.
7. Identify a researchable problem and develop research questions and a purpose statement for a qualitative research project.
8. Use appropriate qualitative data collection procedures including observations, interviews, document and visual material review.

9. Introduction to qualitative data analysis procedures including 12 coding techniques with practical examples and applications of a selected sample of these techniques.
10. Identify and conduct verification procedures for the qualitative project.
11. Select appropriate narrative strategies and styles for reporting qualitative findings.
12. Extend qualitative research to include mixed-methodologies
13. Use selected features of advanced qualitative software (NVivo9) as analytic tool
14. To be able to evaluate a qualitative research project (yours and others).
15. To learn to work effectively in research, knowledge building, and decision-making teams.
16. To develop systematic critical, analytical, and problem solving thinking skills.
17. To develop time management, positive motivational, and personal academic goal setting skills.
18. Acquire the basic skills to independently undertake independent study courses, an Honors Thesis and develop the foundations for post-graduate research.
19. To develop intellectual humility, ways of using doubt as a resource, and exploring curiosity.

Topics will include:

- Philosophical, Paradigm, and Interpretive Frameworks
- Qualitative Research Designs
- Selected Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry and Data Collection (e.g., narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, ethnographic research)
- Data coding, analysis, and interpretation
- Extending Qualitative Research to Mixed-Methods
  Introduction to, and practical (hands-on) applications of, Nvivo9 qualitative analytical software. Students will be required do download the one month (one time only) free trial version of this software for in class exercises and their final team research project data analysis. see*http://www.qsrinternational.com/products_free-trial-software.aspx*

This course makes full use of students learning by doing (participating), engaging the course materials and issues, focusing on thinking skills, and student's existing knowledge and experiential basis. This is also known as **"inquiry-based learning"** (See Blackboard for more details) and a teaching priority at the U of C. Team based learning is emphasized in this course to develop individual and team decision-making and problem solving skills. Methodological techniques and analytical skills are introduced and practices so they may be applied to other university courses and work and volunteer activities outside the classroom. Students are also expected to develop academic and civil responsibilities as members of this class and research teams. Instructor's notes and PowerPoint slides are not posted on Blackboard. Taking systematic notes and sharing them among team member builds thinking skill essential for qualitative (and other) research undertakings.

The three major methodological approaches in qualitative research are: (1) post-positivist, (2) interpretive (e.g., subjective meanings, phenomenology, and symbolic interaction), and (3) critical - e.g., postmodernism, post-structuralism, feminism, social justice. While all approaches offer important contributions, this course will focus on only the first two of these approaches and examples of how they are used in mixed-methodologies.

Methodological **THINKING** is introduced in this course and is often one of the more transferable skills underlying methodologies. Also called "critical" thinking, it is a mode of thinking - about any subject, content, or problem - in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing it. This type of thinking will include: (1) raising vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely; (2) gathering and assessing relevant information and using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively, or visa versa; (3) coming to well reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards; (4)

thinking with an open mind within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; (5) and, communicating effectively with others in figuring out solutions to progressively more complex problems.

This course requires students to actively engage the materials before and during each class – time management and personal motivation are therefore important. More details will be given during the course as time management can be a challenge.

Part I: The first part of this course will introduce some general issues as well as some data collection techniques during class. Exercises will be used to learn how these can be used and to identify problems that arise during the research process.

Part II: The second part of this course will focus on "doing" research by applying data coding-analysis techniques and their applications, including the use of Nvivo9 as a data analysis tool. Research teams will undertake a small research project, applying what we learn during the term, with the guidance of the instructor.

Required Readings:

1. Hesse-Biber, S. & Leavy P. (2011). **The Practice of Qualitative Research (2nd Edition).** Sage Publications (1 & 2 are "bundled" to reduce student costs)
2. Saldana, J. (2009). **The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers**. Sage Publications.
3. **Required articles and other readings** will be posted on Blackboard (PDF format) at the beginning and throughout the course.

EVALUATION

Course evaluation will be based upon:

> ➤ **Team Mixed-Methods Research & Presentations**: TBA – last few weeks of term (35%)
> ➤ **Team Mixed-Methods Research & Presentations - The Proposal:** Due Tuesday, March 13th (5%)
> ➤ **Team Coding Exercise Presentation(s): TBA** (10%)
> ➤ **Participation** (5%)
> ➤ **Mid-term Exam:** Feb. 16th (35%)
> ➤ **Final in-class Exam**: Last class, Thursday, April 12th (10%)

Research-Assignment Teams: Working in teams develops a wide variety of essential critical thinking skills, self-assessment skills, collaborative skills, innovation, and some challenges. Students will be assigned to research teams and will undertake all course work as team members except for the Ethics course and exams. All team membership changes must have the approval of Dr. Arnold.

For the research assignment, student teams will be required to provide a research proposal (see below) prior to approval. The proposal will also be examined by other teams for discussion purposes so students can learn from each others' methodological thinking. More information will be given in class.

Each student's responsibility is to organize and equally contribute to all team projects. All members of a team are assigned a team grade except in situations where: (1) individual team members have not contributed equally to the research efforts; (2) individual has demonstrated they are unable to work in a team environment. In either case student working alone will then complete course

assignments on their own and the instructor will evaluate the individual student's work based on the same evaluation criteria as the rest of the class. It will be at the instructor's discretion to attend to situations where some team members are not fully attending to their team responsibilities. When team conflict cannot be resolved it may be necessary, in some instances, for students may be re-assigned to individual research projects. Team work (dynamics) requires various considerations so strategies will be discussed in class.

Two Exams: These will include multiple choice, short-answer, fill in the blanks, or work-concept identification questions drawn from all materials presented in class, readings, and class discussion and presentations. Students are advised to take careful and timely notes throughout the class and collaborate with this undertaking with research team members. It is also advised to study in groups.

(1) The mid-term exam will be on all course material, discussions, presentations, and assignments up to the date of the exam.

(2) The final in-class examination will include questions drawn from **all** class work, readings, discussion, assignments, since the mid-term exam, including team research presentations. More information will be given in class.

Team Coding Exercise Presentation(s): Each research team will be assigned a coding exercise that may have two components: *written and visual text coding*. The first will include locating an appropriate document (in consultation with the instructor), such as magazine or newspaper article, for applying the coding technique. The visual component will involve taking a photo or using a photo image for coding-analysis. The team will distribute the coding (uncoded) material to each class member one class prior to their presentation. The team will then make a 15 minute in-class presentation of their coding procedures, decision-making, and problem solving. Do not violate copyright for any materials. More details will be given in class.

Research Proposal: Specific topics must be formally approved by the instructor by March 6th. Research teams will provide a short research proposal to the instructor for approval and a copy to other teams for supportive class discussion. The student narratives (see below) will be the only source of data for this assignment (sorry, no exceptions are possible).

Team Research Presentation: For the professional *research presentation* of 20 minutes, students are expected, in consultation with the instructor, to work in a team environment to present their mixed-methods research assignment. More detailed information will be given in class early in the term. This is an important part of the course as it allows teams and individuals students "hands-on" research experience, including exposure to many of the challenges and decision-making processes that naturally arise "doing" research.

Class Presentation Handout: A 2-3 page (only) singles-spaced point-form outline of the presentation will be submitted to the instructor and all students at the beginning of the class presentation. Arrangements can be made for teaching aids to assist in presentations when necessary (e.g. Powerpoint).

Combined individual effort = team grade: A team grade will be assigned to each team member. *All team members must provide an **equal** part of the in-class presentation to receive a grade. All team members must be present and participate in the presentations.* More details and a handout will be given in-class and the instructor will assist you with this assignment. Team members who are unable to keep up-to-date with other team members may be given an alternative assignment (i.e. complete the assignment independently). Please find a method for working as an effective team. More

information will be given in class regarding content, structure, and acceptable presentational style. Please use your instructor for team research issues and strategies.

Computer requirements: This research assignment will require at least one student in each team to download the one-month free evaluation copy of Nvivo9 to analyze their data. Students will benefit from having at least one team member with a Windows (XP, Vista, 7) based lap top who can bring it to class for learning Nvivo software and coding and data analysis during class-time. Unfortunately, Nvivo9 is not compatible with Mac computers unless you have the (expensive) "parallels" & Windows software options installed**. This free one month (only) download is only available <u>once</u> so do not download it until instructed to do so.** It is highly recommended that teams work from one Windows based computer only so please schedule research analysis meetings well in advance. Dr. Arnold has a computer, with Nvivo9 installed, exclusively for student use in his office (See Dr. Arnold if you wish to do your project from this computer so mutually convenient times can be scheduled)

Team Research Project Data - *IMPORTANT*: The course <u>begins</u> with the immediate collection of autoethnographic data for each student. Students will use Word software to complete at least 20 page double-spaced 12 font (minimum, more is encouraged) early in the term (due as an email attachment no later than Tuesday, Feb. 14th - more information will be given in class) Students are to report **only** (when in doubt, don't report) what they feel comfortable with regarding their contribution. <u>Confidentiality will be strictly adhered to at all times and students will remove any and all identifying characteristics from these narratives</u> and submit them to Dr. Arnold who will integrate all these Word files into one (Word) narrative which will serve as the <u>only</u> data for the team research presentation. All students must use conventional use of upper and lower cases, and carefully spell-check their autoethnographies. More details regarding the data collection will be given in class and students are encouraged to ask questions as early as possible.

Students in this course will be required an informed consent form regarding ethnographic narrative data collection, its use in this course, and confidentiality. Ethics and consent will be discussed in the first class and all students will have an opportunity to ask questions and address any concerns that arise.

All students must complete this autoethnographic data collection <u>on time</u> to participate in the team research presentation later in the term. Incomplete or late data submissions will not be accepted. Students unable to submit complete data as required by the deadline will be given an alternative research assignment at the discretion of the instructor. Autoethnographic data will be used for teaching purposes only. Data files must be in rtf format (only) and labeled LAST NAME FIRST INITIAL GENDER 413 DATA. Rtf (i.e., Arnold B M 413data.rtf). Your name is <u>not</u> to be included inside the document! More details will be given in class regarding confidentiality etc.

Students are to report **<u>only what they feel comfortable</u>** in contributing to this narrative data set. More information will be given in class, an opportunity ask any questions, and an informed consent form for participating in this data collection. Students are also providing informed consent for this project by their continued registration in this course. More information and an informed consent to be signed by students will be given in class during the first week of this term. And, all student narrative data must be kept confidential, stored in a secured location (e.g., password protected computer), and deleted from all sources by the last day of classes. No alternatives for this part of the course will be offered. ***Carefully consider this requirement prior to continued enrollment in this class. All data must be completely destroyed from all sources no later than the last class of this term.***

Participation: Students are expected to be fully prepared to engage the class materials to <u>contribute</u> to all classes (please recall this is a SEMINAR based course). Speaking in class can be awkward so we will spend some time developing this mode of learning. We will all therefore be able to learn, make mistakes, and work together.

(1) Students will be asked during the course to thoughtfully comment on specific assigned readings and or issues discussed in class. Again, this is for students to learn how to apply course material and issues and so all students are on "the same page" and are therefore better prepared to learn from the classes, labs, and be better equipped for exams and research projects.
(2) Students are expected to initiate and ask thoughtful questions and respond to questions throughout the course.
(3) There will be numerous in-class informal exercises requiring work in class and some preparation prior to specific classes. Most chapters in the text will be accompanied by an article and small assignment.

Students' Responsibilities: This course syllabus provides details of all course assignments, requirements, rules and regulations. Each student is responsible for knowing all of its contents and complying with all details herein. All questions regarding this course should be brought to the attention of the instructor as soon as possible to avoid any delay or inconvenience to any and all students. It's important we all work together so all students have the same opportunities. It is necessary to check Blackboard on a regular basis (e.g. a few times a week). When it doubt, ask your instructor for clarification, ask questions before, during, and after class or during office hours.

<u>A deadline is a deadline.</u> Time management is both essential and tricky and we will speak to this throughout the term. Please note late work <u>may</u> be considered but with an **automatic** <u>10% per day</u> (including weekends) late penalty starting immediately after the due deadline (include narrative data submission deadline). All delays regarding completing course assignments and examinations must be accompanied by official documentation to avoid late penalties. Assignments are due in class only (no course work can be submitted to the main Sociology Department office for any reason due to Departmental rules). Students should keep a duplicate copy of assignments for their records. Date and type of make-up examination will be at the discretion of the instructor – make-up exam dates are set by the Department of Sociology. All course work must be complete, by the final quiz date, to receive a passing grade in this course. All of the above are essential for providing equal opportunities for all members of this course and are not intended to cause any hardships.

Continued Registration in this course indicates <u>full acceptance</u> of the terms and conditions stated in this syllabus and which have been presented in class. It is the student's responsibility to bring any questions or concerns regarding course content or structure to the attention of the instructor during the first week of class.

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Emergency evacuations:

In the case of fire or other emergency evacuation of this classroom/lab, please proceed to the assembly point by [*check link to find assembly point for your building*]: *http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/node/75*]

Deferrals:

If possible, you must provide *advance* notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a "make up" test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a "make up" test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department.

Please note that requests to defer a final examination or to defer term work past the end of a term go through the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U of C Calendar. You can find the forms you need online:

Deferred Final Exam Application:

http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/APP%20FOR%20DF%20EXAM_0.pdf

Deferred Term Work Form:

http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf

You must submit these deferral forms to the Faculty of Arts Associate Dean (Students) through the UPO office: Undergraduate Programs Office, 4th Floor, MacEwan Student Centre. Only the Associate Dean approves requests for deferrals which extend beyond the end of a term. Instructors are not involved in such decisions. To make an appointment with the Associate Dean, phone (403) 220-8155.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required. The required research assignment for this course has been reviewed and approved by the Department of Sociology's Ethics Committee.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offences. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Safewalk: The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call

220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

***Academic Accommodation*:** Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, phone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

Handing in papers outside of class, return of final papers, and release of final grades:

1. When students are unable to submit papers in class, they should make arrangements to hand in their papers directly to the instructor or teaching assistant. Papers will not be accepted in the main Sociology Department office.
2. Final papers will not be returned through the main Sociology Department office. The Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place (i.e. outside an instructor's office, the department office etc.) Students who want their final papers returned by mail must attach a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the paper. Otherwise final papers will be available for pick-up only during the instructor's office hours at the end of this term or at the beginning of the next term.
3. Final grades are not posted by the Sociology Department. They are available only online.