

Interdisciplinary Programmes

Academic year 2019-2020

Social Inquiry and Qualitative Methods for International Affairs and Development

MINT160 - Spring - 6 ECTS

Tuesday 12h15 - 14h00

Course Description

This course seeks to provide students with the concepts, techniques and practical skills to undertake original research for their MIA and MDEV theses. It will begin by critically asking what it means to undertake (inter- or cross-) disciplinary research “on”, “in”, and/or “for” international affairs and development. The course will then focus on the design of qualitative studies, emphasising in particular the practical skills of data collection (document analysis, interview techniques, observation) and analysis (coding). Offering a comparative perspective on social inquiry across a number of relevant social-scientific disciplines and in relation to quantitative approaches, the course will discuss effective writing and presentation skills, evaluations and assessments in practitioner circles, research ethics, and the relationship between the social sciences and public life.

> Lecturer

Oliver Jütersonke
oliver.jutersonke@graduateinstitute.ch

Office: P2-842
Office hours: by appointment

> ASSISTANTS

Aikokul Arzieva
aikokul.arzieva@graduateinstitute.ch

Office: P1-555
Office hours: Tuesday, 16:15-18:00

Anna B. Kis
anna.bkis@graduateinstitute.ch
Office: P1-655
Office hours: Wednesday, 14:15-16:00

Marie Kostrz
marie.kostrz@graduateinstitute.ch
Office: P1-555
Office hours: Monday, 16:15-18:00

John Parker
john.parker@graduateinstitute.ch
Office: P1-555
Office hours: Thursday, 14:15-16:00

Syllabus

The course will consist of weekly lectures (with guest appearances) and three sets of mandatory tutorials with the course assistants, all of whom will hold weekly office hours. You are also welcome to contact me by email to make an appointment, although your first point of call should be the course assistants.

Attendance is compulsory for first-year MIA and MDEV students, and will count towards 15% of the final grade for the course. This includes attending the three tutorial sessions. Absences need to be justified in advance and announced to Anna B. Kis by email.

A closed-book exam in Week 13 will count for 50% of the overall grade, with a further 35% given for a thesis research outline in two parts due in Week 6 (15%) and Week 12 (20%).

More guidance regarding the format and expectations of all these assignments will be given throughout the course.

Readings

There is a wealth of literature on research design and qualitative methods. Not all of it is good or particularly accessible. While a few core texts are assigned each week (see below), and additional materials will be referred to in class, I encourage you to read around the topics and methods that interest you – I am happy to suggest such readings upon request.

If you are looking to read a book in full, a useful one to get you into the swing of things would be Kristin Luker, *Salsa-Dancing in the Social Sciences* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2008). Another book worth having on the shelf is Howard S. Becker, *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Research While You're Doing It* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1998). I will also draw on Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (London: SAGE, 2006), as well as Peregrine Schwartz-Shea and Dvora Yanow, *Interpretive Research Design: Concepts and Processes* (New York NY: Routledge, 2012).

Course outline

Week 1 (18 February 2020)

Introductions and course overview.

- Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research", in Denzin and Lincoln (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition (Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE, 2005), 1-32.

Week 2 (25 February 2020)

What is an interdisciplinary thesis topic?

- Carolina Adler et al., "Conceptualizing the Transfer of Knowledge Across Cases in Transdisciplinary Research", *Sustainable Science* 13:1 (2018), 179-190.
- Joshua Guetzkow, Michèle Lamont & Grégoire Mallard, "What is Originality in the Humanities and the Social Sciences?", *American Sociological Review* 69 (2004), 190-212.
- Jörgen Sandberg and Mats Alvesson, "Ways of constructing research questions: gap-spotting or problematization?", *Organization* 18:1 (2011), 23-44.

Week 3 (3 March 2020)

Identifying and justifying research agendas.

- Christ Hart, *Doing a Literature Review* (London: Sage, 1998), Chapter 2: Reviewing and the Research Imagination, pp. 26-43.

In preparation for class, please briefly study and bring along (electronically will do):

- Joe Soss, "Lessons of Welfare: Policy Design, Political Learning, and Political Action", *The American Political Science Review* 93:2 (1999), 363-380.
- Sudha Vasani, "Ethnography of the Forest Guard: Contrasting Discourses, Conflicting Roles and Policy Implementation", *Economic and Political Weekly* 37:40 (2002), 4125-4133.

Week 4 (10 March 2020)

Developing a research agenda across time and space (Guest speaker: Dennis Rodgers).

- William H. Sewell, Jr., "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille", *Theory and Society* 25 (1996): 841-881.
- Ronald Aminzade, "Historical Sociology and Time", *Sociological Methods & Research* 20:4 (1992), 456-480.

An interesting text that pursues some of these themes further is Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

The first set of mandatory tutorials will be scheduled after session 4.

Week 5 (17 March 2020)

Working with data: primary and secondary sources.

- Cameron G. Thies, "A Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in the Study of International Relations", *International Studies Perspectives* 3 (2002), 351-372.
- Jutta Weldes, "High Politics and Low Data", in *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research and the Interpretative Turn* (New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 176-186.

A challenging but certainly worthwhile book on the subject of desk research in the 21st century is Andrew Abbott, *Digital Paper: A Manual for Research and Writing with Library and Internet Materials* (Chicago IL and London: Chicago University Press, 2014).

Week 6 (24 March 2020)

Qualitative research design and abductive logic.

- Howard S. Becker, "The Epistemology of Qualitative Research", in Richard Jessor et al. (eds.), *Ethnography and Human Development: Context and Meaning in Social Inquiry* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 53-71.
- Kathy Chamaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (London: SAGE, 2006), 1-41.

For those wishing to tackle the original texts on abduction, have a look at the work of Charles Sanders Peirce, for instance: "Deduction, Induction and Hypothesis" (1878) and "Pragmatism as the Logic of Abduction" (1903), which can be found in several editions of Peirce's work, including *The Essential Peirce: Selected Philosophical Writings* (Bloomington and Indianapolis IN: Indiana University Press, 1992 and 1998).

Some of the core sociological texts we will refer to are Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969); and

Alfred Schuetz, "Common-Sense and Scientific Interpretation of Human Action", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 14:1 (1953), 1-38.

Please submit the first part of your thesis outline (worth 15%) in hardcopy at the beginning of class.

Week 7 (31 March 2020)

Questions, cases, and samples.

- Robert E. Stake, “Qualitative Case Studies”, in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition (Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE, 2005), 443-466.
- Mario Luis Small, “‘How Many Cases Do I Need?’ On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research”, *Ethnography* 10:1 (2009), 5-38.
- Patrick Biernacki and Dan Waldorf, “Snowball Sampling: Problems and Techniques of Chain Referral Sampling”, *Sociological Methods & Research* 10 (1981), 141-163.

The second set of mandatory tutorials will be scheduled after session 7.

Week 8 (7 April 2020)

Accessing the field, safety, and research ethics (Guest speaker: Rebecca Tapscott).

- Jeffrey Kaufmann, “The Informant as Resolute Overseer”, *History in Africa* 29 (2002), 231-235.
- Sarah Marie Hall, “‘Private Life’ and ‘Work Life’: Difficulties and Dilemmas when Making and Maintaining Friendships with Ethnographic Participants”, *Area* 41:3 (2009), 263-272.
- Gina Yannitell Reinhardt, “I Don’t Know Monica Lewinsky, and I’m Not in the CIA. Now How about that Interview?” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 42:2 (2009), 295-298.
- David Mandiyanike, “The Dilemma of Conducting Research Back in Your Own Country as a Returning Student – Reflections of Research Fieldwork in Zimbabwe”, *Area* 41:1 (2009), 64-71.
- Dorothea Hilhorst et al., *Security Guidelines for Field Researchers in Complex, Remote and Hazardous Places* (The Hague: International Institute of Social Studies, 2016), available at: <http://library.wur.nl/WebQuery/wurpubs/fulltext/401380>

William Foote Whyte’s *Street Corner Society: The Social Structure of an Italian Slum*, 4th edition (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993), is worth reading in full, and in particular the new methodological annex on pp. 279-373. Another great read is Paul Rabinow’s *Reflections on Fieldwork in Morocco* (Berkeley CA: University of California Press, 1977), reprinted in 2007.

Easter break

Week 9 (21 April 2020)

Talking to people – the art of the qualitative interview.

- Joseph C. Hermanowicz, “The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed”, *Qualitative Sociology* 25:4 (2002), 479-499.
- Lisa Groger, Pamela S. Mayberry and Jane K. Straker, “What We Didn’t Learn Because of Who Would Not Talk to Us”, *Qualitative Health Research* 9:6 (1999), 829-835.

- Laura R. Woliver, "Ethical dilemmas in personal interviewing", *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35.4 (2002), 677-678.
- Joel D. Aberbach, & Bert A. Rockman, "Conducting and coding elite interviews", *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35:4 (2002), 673-676.
- Maysoon Sukarieh and Stuart Tannock, "On the Problem of Over-researched Communities: The Case of the Shatila Palestinian Refugee Camp in Lebanon", *Sociology* 47:3 (2012), 494-508.

There is a growing literature discussing the merits and challenges of resorting to the telephone and VoIP when conducting interviews. Additional readings on this issue will be shared in class. For a discussion of focus groups, see David L. Morgan, "Focus Groups", *Annual Review of Sociology* 22 (1996), 129-152.

Another good book on interviews is Layna Mosley (ed.), *Interview research in political science* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2013). See also the Jaber F. Gubrium *et al.* (eds.), *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* (London: Sage, 2012).

Week 10 (28 April 2020)

Observing people, institutions and social settings.

- Phil Jones et al., "Exploring Space and Place With Walking Interviews", *Journal of Research Practice* 4:2 (2008), D2.
- Lorraine Bayard de Volo & Edward Schatz, "From the inside out: Ethnographic methods in political research", *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37:2 (2004), 267-271.

We will also discuss:

- Carol Cohn, "Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals", *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 12:4 (1987), 687-718.
- Iver B. Neumann, "'A Speech That the Entire Ministry May Stand for,' or: Why Diplomats Never Produce Anything New", *International Political Sociology* 1 (2007), 183-200.
- Michael N. Barnett, "The UN Security Council, Indifference, and Genocide in Rwanda", *Cultural Anthropology* 12:4 (1997), 551-578.

Also useful as background reading is Barbara B. Kawulich, "Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method", *FQS: Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 6:2 (2005), Art. 43.

Week 11 (5 May 2020)

Transcribing, coding, analysing (Guest speaker: Kaleigh Carlson).

- Cindy M. Bird, "How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription", *Qualitative Inquiry* 11:2 (2005), 226-248.
- Kathy Chamaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (London: SAGE, 2006), 42-71.

- L. G. Crane, M. B. Lombard and E. M. Tenz, "More Than Just Translation: Challenges and Opportunities in Translingual Research", *Social Geography* 4 (2009), 39-46.

An additional text is Nicholas H. Wolfinger, "On writing fieldnotes: collection strategies and background expectancies", *Qualitative Research* 2:1 (2002), 85-95.

Week 12 (12 May 2020)

Social science, applied research, and the challenges of resonating with non-academic audiences.

- Craig Calhoun, “Social Science for Public Knowledge” (2009), SSRC Public Sphere, available at: <http://publicsphere.ssrc.org/calhoun-social-science-for-public-knowledge/>
- Bruno Stöckli, Urs Wiesmann and Jon-Andri Lys, *A Guide for Transboundary Research Partnerships* (Bern: Swiss Commission for Research Partnerships with Developing Countries (KFPE), 2014). Available at: https://naturalsciences.ch/uuid/564b67b9-c39d-5184-9a94-e0b129244761?r=20170706115333_1499301166_3898d31d-7a25-55d7-8208-d9cbeada1d05
- Rosalind Eyben, “Uncovering the Politics of “Evidence” and “Results”. A Framing Paper for Development Practitioners”. Available at: <http://bigpushforward.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/The-politics-of-evidence-11-April-20133.pdf>

Please submit the full version of your research outlines (worth 20%) in hardcopy at the beginning of class

The third set of mandatory tutorials will be scheduled after session 12

Session 13 (19 May 2020)

In-class exam.

The exam will cover all of the previous 12 weeks and is worth 50% of the overall grade. Please remember this is a closed-book exam. Further details will be given in class.

Session 14 (26 May 2019)

Concluding session.

The session will feature exam corrections, a discussion of the thesis outlines, as well as a few practical tips on the forthcoming thesis research and the Capstone projects.