



**Brescia University College
Department of Sociology
Qualitative Methods
Sociology 3307F
Fall 2020**

Instructor: Dr. Rebecca Collins-Nelsen

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Class Times: Online Asynchronous

Office Hours: By appointment

Office: Online

Antirequisites: Sociology 3310F/G or Sociology 3311F/G.

Prerequisites: Enrolment in a Sociology Honours Specialization with a minimum grade of 60% in Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B or the former 231. If not in an Honours Specialization, a minimum grade of 70% in Sociology 2205A/B and 2206A/B or the former 231.

Course Description

This course is designed to teach students about a variety of qualitative research methods that are used to analyze the social world. This course will also explore how qualitative research fits in with broader debates in sociology such as the purpose of sociological research, how to research ethically, and what role reflexivity plays in research. Further, students will learn about specific qualitative practices such as interviewing, content analyses, observation, ethnographies, and case studies. Students will also get a chance to apply the knowledge they learn in class by collecting and analyzing data for their own small research project and through various class activities. Throughout this course students will be challenged to apply their “sociological imagination” as they engage in hands on research and analysis.

Learning Outcomes

When you have completed this course you should be able to:

- Recognize, make distinctions, and evaluate different qualitative research approaches
(Related Brescia Competencies: Critical Thinking)

- Understand the practical and ethical responsibilities that are involved with being a qualitative researcher (Related Brescia Competencies: Social Awareness and Engagement; Self-Awareness and Engagement)
- Formulate effective research questions that can be answered using qualitative research methods (Related Brescia Competencies: Problem Solving)
- Conduct a literature review and design a small research project (Related Brescia Competencies: Inquiry and Analysis; Problem Solving)
- Gather and analyze data using sociological techniques (Related Brescia Competencies: Problem Solving; Valuing)
- Effectively communicate the findings from a small research project in written form (Related Brescia Competencies: Inquiry and Analysis; Communication)

Teaching Methodology and Expectations of Students

Every Monday I will post a short lecture to the OWL “Resources” tab of me speaking over a PowerPoint presentation that relates to the topic of that week (please see the course schedule below for weekly topics). You will be expected to do the readings that pertain to that week and watch the posted lecture. There are also activities associated with each week and therefore it is important that you keep up with the course content on a weekly basis. The weekly activities are meant to have you engage with and apply the content you have learned that week. They will always be due on **Friday at 5:00pm of each week**. Sometimes this will take the form of online discussion in the “Forum” tab of OWL and other times this will be a short applied activity to be uploaded on the “Assignment” tab of OWL. These kinds of conversations and applications are crucial to developing your identity as a researcher. The lectures will be on the shorter side so that the activities and online discussion will serve as the equivalent of our in-class contact time. Additionally, I am available for synchronous communication and encourage students (and groups) to reach out to me if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or simply would like to chat about something that you find interesting from the course!

Required Reading Materials

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy. 2017. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Third Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

* The following readings will be posted on OWL. The main points from the readings *in italics* below and on the course schedule will be discussed in lecture, however these readings are **not required** and are simply provided for students who are interested in reading further. The number that corresponds to the readings below can be found in the “Course Schedule” on the week which they will be discussed.

1. Charmaz, Kathy. 2004. “Premises, Principles and Practices in Qualitative Research: Revisiting the Foundations.” *Qualitative Health Research* 14(7): 976-993.
2. Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. “Introduction” pp. 1-18 in *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
3. Baez, Benjamin. 2002. “Confidentiality in Qualitative Research: Reflections on Secrets, Power and Agency.” *Qualitative Research* 2(1): 35-58.
4. Campos, Paul. 2015 (August 21). “Alice Goffman’s Implausible Ethnography: ‘On the Run’ Reveals the Flaws in how Sociology is Sometimes Produced, Evaluated, and Rewarded.” *Chronical of Higher Education*.
5. Khan, Shamus and Colin Jerolmack. 2003. “Saying Meritocracy and Doing Privilege.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 54 (1): 9-19
6. DeVault, Marjorie and Liza McCoy. 2004. “Institutional Ethnography: Using Interviews to Investigate Ruling Relations” pp. 191-205 in *Critical Strategies for Social Research*, edited by William K. Carroll. Canadian Scholars’ Press.
7. Broom, Alex, Kelly Hand and Philip Tovey. 2009. “The Role of Gender, Environment and Individual Biography in Shaping Qualitative Interview Data.” *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 12(1): 51 –65.
8. Elliott, Jane. 2005. “The Researcher as Narrator: Reflexivity in Qualitative And Quantitative Research.” Pp 152-59 in *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, edited Jane Elliott. London: Sage.
9. McCorkel, Jill A. and Kristen Meyers. 2003. “What Difference Does Difference Make? Position and Privilege in the Field.” *Qualitative Sociology* 26(2): 199 - 231
10. Williams, Christine L. 1992. “The Glass Escalator: Hidden Advantages for Men in the ‘Female’ Professions” *Social Problems*. 39(3): 253-267.
11. Wingfield, Adia. 2009. “Racializing the Glass Escalator: Reconsidering Men’s Experiences in Women’s Work.” *Gender & Society* 23(1):5-26.

It is essential that students keep up the readings schedule as lectures and online class discussion are designed under the assumption that students have read the required material.

Grading Scheme

		Applicable Brescia Competencies
Applied Learning Exercises	20%	Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Inquiry and Analysis, Communication
Online Discussion	20%	Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Inquiry and Analysis, Communication
Research Proposal	25%	Critical Thinking, Communication, Valuing, Self-Awareness and Development, Problem Solving
Final Paper	35%	Critical Thinking, Communication, Inquiry and Analysis, Self-Awareness and Development, Social Awareness and Engagement

Applied Learning Exercises

There will be several applied learning exercises throughout the semester whereby students will be asked to apply what they have learned through readings and lectures to short exercises (eg. upload intro video, complete a certificate on ethics, participate in observational research, content analysis, and coding). More information about each activity is posted on OWL under the “Assignments” tab.

Online Discussion

There are many subjects within qualitative research where there is no “right” answer. Rather, there are debates and where one lies in these debates relates to personal preferences, approaches, and ideologies. It is important to have discussions about where you stand in order to develop your identities as researchers. Qualitative research also requires a lot of reflection which these discussion will help to encourage. Additionally, engaging with myself and peers is an important way to learn and therefore some back and forth discussion will be required. Online discussion will be graded on quantity but also quality and discussions ought to be thoughtful and engage with

course material. I will provide discussion prompts on the Monday of each week where an online discussion is the scheduled activity and you will have until the Friday of that week at 5:00pm to participate.

Research Proposal

Each student will be expected to hand in a research proposal for a small qualitative research project. Proposals are due on **October 23rd**. Most of the work leading up to the proposal will be done in groups but each student is expected to individually hand in a proposal. The proposals will include an introduction, research questions, an annotated bibliography, a discussion regarding ethics, letter of information, consent form, and interview guide. Some of those components will be consistent among the group members and others will be written individually. There will be a 5% late penalty per day if the proposal is handed in late. More information regarding this assignment is posted on OWL under the “Assignments” tab.

Final Paper

The final research paper will be a culmination of the work that has been accomplished throughout the course. The final paper will be due on **December 11th**. Students will analyze the primary data that they have collected over the course of this class to write their final paper. The final paper will include an introduction (that incorporates relevant lit), a methods section, and an analysis section. While much of the work throughout the project is done in collaboration with group members the analysis of the final paper must reflect each student’s own interpretation of the interview data. There will be a 5% late penalty per day if the paper is handed in late. More information regarding the final paper is posted on OWL.

Copyright and Intellectual Property

PowerPoint lecture slides and notes, lists of readings, in-class activities, assignment guidelines, and other components of the course materials are typically the intellectual property of the instructor. Unauthorized reproduction through audio-recording, video-recording, photographing, sharing on social media, or posting on course-sharing websites is an infringement of copyright and is prohibited. Such action may be considered a Code of Conduct violation and lead to sanctions.

Course Schedule

Fall Semester			
Week	Topic	Readings	Activity
Week 1 (Sept. 14 ^h)	Introduction to Qualitative Research and Paradigmatic Approaches	Ch. 1 and 2	- Create intro video on OWL
Week 2 (Sept. 21 st)	Premises, Principles, Practices, and Design of Qualitative Research	Ch. 3 and Article 1	- Online Discussion - Groups should be formed
Week 3 (Sept. 28 th)	Practical and Ethical Considerations	Ch. 4	- Complete TCPS 2 Certificate
Week 4 (Oct. 5 th)	Ethical Debates: Colonialism, Confidentiality, and Secrecy in Qualitative Research	Articles 2, 3 and 4	- Online Discussion
Week 5 (Oct. 12 th)	Interviewing as Data Collection: In-Depth Interviewing, Focus Groups and Learning to Listen	Ch. 5 and 6 <i>Article 5</i>	- Online Discussion
Week 6 (Oct. 19th)	Ethnographies and Institutional Ethnographies	Ch. 7 and Article 6	- Research Proposals DUE
Week 7 (Oct. 26 th)	Case Studies and Content Analysis	Ch. 8 and 9	- Content Analysis Activity - should start recruitment
Week 8 (Nov. 2nd)	FALL READING WEEK	No Reading	- No Activity
Week 9 (Nov. 9 th)	Mixed Methods Approaches and Reflexivity	Ch. 10 and Articles 7, 8 and 9	- Observation activity
Week 10 (Nov 16 th)	Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data	Ch. 11 Article 10 and 11	- Coding Activity

Week 11 (Nov. 28 th)	Writing and Representation of Qualitative Data	Ch.12	- Online Discussion - Interviews should be complete
Week 12 (Nov. 30 th)	Time for Analysis and Write-Up	No Reading	- Online Discussion
Week 13 (Dec. 7th)	Time for Analysis and Write-Up	No Reading	- Final Paper DUE

2020-21 BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

1. POLICY REGARDING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

The complete policy regarding [Accommodation for Illness - Undergraduate Students](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12) can be found at http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12.

Students who have long-term or chronic medical conditions which may impede their ability to complete academic responsibilities should seek Academic Accommodation through Student Accessibility Services

(http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?PolicyCategoryID=1&Command=showCategory&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_10).

Personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are **not** grounds for academic accommodation.

Students who experience an illness or extenuating circumstance sufficiently severe to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

1. Submitting a **Self-Reported Absence** form provided that the conditions for submission are met;
2. For medical absences, submitting a **Student Medical Certificate (SMC)** signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner;
3. For non-medical absences, submitting **appropriate documentation** (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to their Academic Advisor. Students are encouraged to contact their Academic Advisor to clarify what documentation is acceptable.

Requests for Academic Consideration Using the Self-Reported Absence Portal

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance of 48 hours or less that is sufficiently severe to render them unable to meet academic requirements should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours. Note that the excused absence includes all courses and academic requirements within the up to 48 hours, it is not intended to provide an excused absence from a single course while students fulfill their academic responsibilities in other courses during that time.

The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

1. Students will be allowed a **maximum of two self-reported absences** between September and April and one self-reported absence between May and August;

2. The duration of the absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30 am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30 pm;
3. The excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48 hour period if the student undertakes significant academic responsibilities (writes a test, submits a paper) during that time;
4. Self-reported absences will **not** be allowed for scheduled final examinations; midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations scheduled during the final week of term;
5. Self-report absences may **not** be used for assessments worth more than 30% of any course;
6. Any absences in excess of 48 hours will require students to present a Student Medical Certificate (SMC), or appropriate documentation;
7. Students **must** communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form** to clarify how they will fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence.

Request for Academic Consideration for a Medical Absence

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation.

Academic accommodation for illness will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated.

The following conditions apply for students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds:

1. Students must submit their Student Medical Certificate (SMC) along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities. An SMC can be downloaded from http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf ;
2. In cases where there might be an extended absence or serious issue, students should submit their documentation promptly and consult their Academic Advisor for advice during their recovery period;
3. Whenever possible, students who require academic accommodation should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, scheduled tests or examinations, and other academic requirements;
4. Students **must** communicate with their instructors **no later than 24 hours** after the end of the period covered by the SMC to clarify how they will fulfil the academic expectations they may have missed during the absence;
5. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office/Academic Advisor in consultation with the course instructor(s). Academic accommodation may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements, arranging Special Exams (make-ups), re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawal without academic penalty.

The [full policy on requesting accommodation due to illness](http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12) can be viewed at:

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_12

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal challenge that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis.

Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds are not normally considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines; please refer to the [Registrar's website](http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/), <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm?SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Please note that for asynchronous online courses, attendance or participation requirements maybe different than for synchronous or in-person courses.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work, and arrange academic accommodations if appropriate and warranted.

It is important to note that the Academic Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory (http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=5&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#SubHeading_68).

4. SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence at: http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_20.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Scholastic Discipline for Undergraduate Students in the Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Academic Dean's Office, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal is to be sent to the School Chair. If the response of the Chair is considered unsatisfactory to the student, they may then submit a written appeal to the Office of the Dean. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the Dean, they may appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA), if there are sufficient grounds for the appeal and if the matter falls within the jurisdiction of the SRBA. For information on academic appeals consult your Academic Advisor or see the Student Academic Appeals – Undergraduate in the Academic Calendar

http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_14.

Note that final course marks are not official until the Academic Dean has reviewed and signed the final grade report for the course. If course marks deviate from acceptable and appropriate standards, the Academic Dean may require grades to be adjusted to align them with accepted grading practices.

6. PREREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from the Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisite(s).

7. SUPPORT

Support Services

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/>. Students can access supports through Brescia's Student Life Centre (<http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/student-life/>) and Learning Skills Services at Western (<https://www.uwo.ca/sdc/learning/>)

Mental Health and Wellness

Students may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning, such as increased anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, feeling down or lost, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation.

Services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can obtain information about how to obtain help for yourself or others through **Mental Health & Wellness at Brescia** (<http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/mental-health-wellness/>) and **Health and Wellness at Western**, http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/index.html.

Sexual Violence

All members of the Brescia University College community have a right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of sexual violence. Brescia University College recognizes that the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Violence is of particular importance in the university environment. Sexual Violence is strictly prohibited and unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Brescia is committed to preventing Sexual Violence and creating a safe space for anyone in the Brescia community who has experienced Sexual Violence.

If you or someone you know has experienced any form of Sexual Violence, you may access resources at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/sexual-violence/>.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.
