Course Description
This course offers an introduction to qualitative research approaches and their practical applications in interdisciplinary research related to socio-ecological sustainability. Using a student-led learning format, we will undertake original research as well as read and critically assess qualitative research conducted in interdisciplinary contexts. We will discuss the relationship between research motivations, paradigms, and methodological choices, the process of ethics review, and fieldwork experiences in both academic and applied research settings. Careful examination of representation, voice, reflexivity and researcher positioning will form an important part of the course. The course includes activities and assessments related to qualitative research design, ethics approvals, fieldwork methods (including observation and fieldnotes, interviewing, oral history, focus groups, visual methods, archival research) and approaches to qualitative data analysis, including coding and writing up qualitative research. Students will design and carry out an original field research project incorporating qualitative methods.

Required Texts:

Expectations:
As a graduate seminar, this class operates through collective discussion and exploration of the issues surrounding the collection and interpretation of qualitative data. I expect that you will arrive to class prepared with a set of questions and comments related to the readings and assignments and that you will be ready to share these with the class. Please refer to the UBC Calendar for the University Policy on Academic Honesty and Standards http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=3,286,0,0

Submission of Work:
Please submit all written work to me via email as Word-compatible documents (please no PDFs). Due dates for assignments are intended to ensure your timely progression through the course learning objectives. In cases other than sudden illness, please let me know at least 48 hours in advance if you will need an extension; alternatively a 5% per day late penalty will unfortunately apply.
Grading:
Research Proposal 15%
Final Research Paper/Presentation 35%
Reviews and Exercises 40%
Participation 10%

Course Tasks and Assignments

Discussion Leaders (10% of course grade)

Discussion leaders are responsible for jointly organizing one brief (e.g. 20 min) presentation that includes a set of critical discussion questions and an activity related to the week's readings. Please **DO NOT** summarize the readings. We assume that all members of the class have read the material. Your task is to **critically examine and extend several main questions** that emerge from the material, identify key themes, ideas and/or contradictions, and offer the class a roadmap for discussion during the rest of the period. You are encouraged to bring in additional resources, case studies and/or examples from the literature or your own previous research or professional experience that would foster strengthened understanding and critical analysis of the topic at hand.

Please prepare a 1 page MAXIMUM handout for distribution to all members of the class outlining key themes, ideas, and short bibliography of additional resources. Please **contact me no later than Monday morning before the class to discuss** your activity and approach. Please **email a copy of your handout to me by 9 am on the day of class**.

Journal Article Review (10% total of course grade)

Choose a recent article (published in last five years) relevant to your research interests carried out **using qualitative methods**. Prepare a 1 page, single spaced, critical peer review of the article that includes: statement of the research question; identification of the theoretical and methodological framework and qualitative research methods employed; analytical strategy; and summary of main findings. Discuss article in terms of credibility, clarity, reliability and validity. How well does the methodology, data, and mode of analysis support the aims and scope of the research conducted, as well as the conclusions? In your role as “peer reviewer” for the journal, give a recommendation of “accept” “revise and resubmit” or “reject”. If a “revise and resubmit”, please indicate what would be required in a re-submission.

Please see me if you are unsure if your article choice is appropriate for this assignment.
# Detailed Course Outline

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Course Introduction</th>
<th>January 4</th>
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| • Introductions, course expectations, planning for the semester  
• Research Paradigms, Multi-Method Research, and Interdisciplinarity  
• Validity, Reliability, and Reflexivity |

*Please Review before Class:*  
Marshall and Rossman, Chapters 1-4

Recommended:  

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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Qualitative Research in Sustainability</th>
<th>January 11</th>
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*Please Review before Class:*  

When reading *Flammable*, it might help to keep these questions in mind:  
Define the empirical and theoretical objects of study. Can you identify several distinct research questions? Explore the relationship between the researcher(s) and the community. How were research sites chosen? What were the challenges faced in beginning research?

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<th>Week 3</th>
<th>Research Questions, Ethics and Logistics</th>
<th>January 18</th>
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| • Ethics and Consent in Qualitative Research [Guest Lecture, Jean Ruiz, UBC Office of Research Services]  
• Intro to Research Design/Formulating Research Questions |

*Please Complete the Tri-Council Policy Statement Ethics Tutorial (print certificate)*  
[https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/education-training/online-tutorials-training](https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/education-training/online-tutorials-training)
• NOTE: if you have previously completed the Tri-Council Tutorial, please
  o a) bring your certificate to class and
  o b) complete the Ethics for Social Science Research Module
    o http://www.mq.edu.au/ethics_training/login.php

Please Review before Class:
Marshall and Rossmann Chapters 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10
Maxwell Chapters 5-6-7
Northern Aboriginal Communities. International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5(2),
1–10.

Review some of the sample ethics applications at UBC RISE - in particular, the Ethics and
Focus Group Study [towards bottom of page]
https://ethics.research.ubc.ca/behavioural-research-ethics/breb-sample-forms-applications

Additional Resources:

Anthropology” Current Anthropology, Vol. 36, No. 3 pp. 409-440
Consent” Chapter 7, Approaches to Qualitative Research, Hesse-Biber & Leavy eds.
Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Janice Penrod, 2003, “Getting Funded: Writing a Successful Qualitative Small-Project
Proposal” Qualitative Health Research, Vol. 13 No. 6, July 2003. (FullText via SFU
Library)
Oaks: SAGE
Proposals Lawrence. SAGE
Seiber, Joan. Planning Ethically Responsible Research: A Guide for Students and Internal
Review Boards. SAGE

| Week 4 | A realist approach to qualitative research | Jan 25 |

Presentation of Research Topics for In-Class Feedback

Desai and Potter, 2006, “Participatory Methods and Approaches: Tackling the Two
challenges” (Pp 3-21) and “Small-N Case Studies: Putting the commons under a

8

Week 5  In the Field I: Representation and Power  February 1

Guest Lecture: Johnnie Manson

Please Review before Class:


Recommended:


Week 6  In the Field II: Participant Observation and Fieldnotes  Feb 8

Please Read before Class

Observation and Field notes in class exercise

Recommended:

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<th>Week 7</th>
<th>In the Field III: Interviews</th>
<th>Feb 15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Surveys and Interview Guides</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth interviewing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sampling</td>
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Seidman, 1998, “‘Technique isn’t everything, but it is a lot” in Interviewing as Qualitative Research. New York: Teacher’s College

Interviewing in-class exercise/ Create Interview Guide

Recommended:
Morgan, David. Focus Groups as Qualitative Research. Sage, 1996
Frickel and Schonlau, 2002, “Advantages and Disadvantages of Internet Research Surveys: Evidence from the Literature” Field Methods 14 (4)
McLellen et al 2003, Beyond the Qualitative Interview: Data Preparation and Transcription Field Methods Field Methods Vol. 15 (1) 63–84

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>READING WEEK</th>
<th>NO CLASS</th>
<th>Feb 22</th>
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<th>Week 9</th>
<th>Visual Methods and Mapping</th>
<th>March 1</th>
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Fieldnotes Exercise Due
Review images in Chapters 2 and 3 in Auyero and Swistun


Recommended:


**Week 10 Data Analysis I: Coding, Cases, Narratives March 8**

**Interview Progress Report Due**

Marshall and Rossman, Chap 8
Maxwell, Chapter 7, 9 and 10


Develop Concept Map (in class-exercise)

**Recommended:**


Lawler, 2002, "Narrative in Social Research" in May, ed. *Qualitative Research in Action*, SAGE


**Week 11**  **FIELDWORK AND ANALYSIS**  **March 15**

This week is unscheduled to allow you time to finalize fieldwork and begin data analysis.

**Interview Report due: March 15**

**Week 12**  **Data Analysis II: Validity and Generalization**  **March 22**

**Concept Map and Outline Due for Peer Review**

Maxwell, Chapter 8


Maxwell, 2004, Using Qualitative Methods for Casual Explanation, *Field Methods* 16(3) 243-264 (online)


**Recommended:**

Wolcott, Harry *Writing Up Qualitative Research*. SAGE, 2001

*Framework for assessing policy-oriented qualitative research*

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<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Final Project Presentations</th>
<th>March 29</th>
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*Draft Paper Due for Peer Review*

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<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Final Project Presentations</th>
<th>April 5</th>
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