

MES NECU 5030 FA

Theory and Methodology: Qualitative Methods

Environmental studies often involve both natural and social sciences, so we will be looking at methods for both types of research. For the fall semester you will be examining Qualitative Methods (and Mixed Methods) for research with Dr. Martha Dowsley. In the winter semester, Dr. Adam Cornwell will be working with you on Quantitative Methods. Qualitative methods generally involve humans and aim to understand things that cannot be assigned a number. For example, qualitative methods can be used to explain processes, and answer questions like why and how. Qualitative research is also often used in mixed methods approaches to studying humans. They may be used before the quantitative research phase to ascertain the key topics and probable answers that help in the design of quantitative research instruments. Qualitative methods may also be used after quantitative data are collected and examined to help explain the quantitative data. Thus, both qualitative and quantitative data are useful in studying environmental issues, and researchers need to be aware of methods used in both.

Learning Outcomes

Content

- Be able to identify various qualitative research methods and assess their suitability for different research questions and research populations
- Understand key issues in research ethics, obtain Canadian research ethics certification (TCPS2)
- Gain experience in using inductive and deductive qualitative data collection methods through conducting a group project
- Analyze qualitative data and write up a report to publication standard
- Write and submit a book review to an academic journal

Professional Development

- Become an apprentice researcher developing critical thinking in examining the works of others, conducting independent research, generating arguments using data, and presenting arguments in writing and oral presentations
- Determine if qualitative methods will be useful for your thesis, and if so, make progress on designing a research instrument for your data collection

Evaluation

| TCPS2 Ethics Certificate | Must pass to continue course |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Assignment 1 | 5% |
| Assignment 2 | 20% |
| Assignment 3 | 35% |
| Seminar Leadership | 10% |
| Book Review | 10% |
| Participation | 20% |

Readings

Purchase at Campus Book Store:

Tanner, Adrian. 1979. *Bringing Home Animals: Religious Ideology and Mode of Production of the Mistassini Cree Hunters*. New York: St. Martin's Press. (Read before week 6)

Various other readings will be made available as PDFs.

Ethics Certification

All research involving human subjects is governed by a set of ethics. In Canada the Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research involving humans is used (TCPS2).

Review the presentation entitled "TCPS2...what does it mean for you" under internal resources on the LU research ethics and integrity website: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/research-and-innovation/ethics/human-subjects/resources>.

Then follow the link to the Federal Government's TCPS2 tutorials (<http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/>) and complete the tutorial. Download the certificate and submit a copy to the professor: mdowsley@lakeheadu.ca, with your name in the subject line. Keep a copy for yourself for future use as well.

Assignment 1 Participant Observation

5%

Goals: Practise participant observation and inductive reasoning

Assess your participant observation skills by comparing your data with that of others

Reflect on how to improve your skills

In groups of 2-3 conduct a fieldtrip to practise participant observation. Select a site where you will be able to participate in something you have not done much before (ex. bowling, church). Observe carefully using all your senses. Afterwards, take notes about your observations and your participation, including your feelings and thoughts. DO NOT TALK TO OTHER GROUP MEMBERS. Bring your notes to class to discuss with your group. As a group, discuss what was observed from an inductive perspective, and compare your observations. Present to the class some inductive analysis of the event you participated in and some reflection on your individual learning about the method.

Marking scheme: (5%)

- 2% peer evaluation of your behaviour on the fieldtrip – did you try to fit in by participating and acting appropriately? If you encountered difficulties, did you try to overcome them? Did you really pay attention to things?
- 1% discussion/presentation participation
- 2% self-reflection – are you clearly examining your own behaviours and comparing them to best practises throughout this assignment?

Assignment 2 Interviews

20%

Goals: Practise interview skills; Practise deductive qualitative research design

As a class, read and discuss how cognitive development occurs in young adults and how these developmental stages link to undergraduate experiences. Develop an interview schedule (list of questions/activities) to gather data from undergrads in order to test a scheme your class will develop from the literature on undergraduate cognitive development (begin your work using Baxter Magolda and King 2007). Pre-test the interview with a peer and modify as needed (5%). Conduct interviews with undergraduates, transcribe and upload your data (10%). Provide a transcript to each participant, and produce a debriefing letter to the research participants as a group explaining the study and the initial results (3%). Give a presentation to the undergraduate class on the results and analysis (2%).

Assignment 3 Qualitative Data Analysis, Writing and Presentation

35%

Goals: Practise research analysis; Write a qualitative paper of publishable quality

Select a data set, examine it and use open coding to organize it, and begin analysis. You may use the data from Assignment 2 or talk to the professor or your supervisor. Use the academic literature to frame your paper theoretically with between 4 and 7 references beyond those assigned in class (10%). Write your paper (15-20 pages) (15%). Peer review the papers of two others, have your paper peer-reviewed, respond to reviews (5%). Formally resent your paper, the reviews you received and your revisions to the class (5%).

Seminar

10%

Goals: Practise public speaking, leadership and guiding a discussion

Each student will lead a ½ hour seminar on one of the reading topics of the course. Two weeks before your seminar, provide to the professor/post on the website 2 other readings as pdfs or links, along with a few homework questions to guide the reading (2%). In class, give a short presentation on the topic (5-7 powerpoint slides) (5%) and then lead a discussion on the readings using the homework questions as a starting point (3%). Be sure to include both how the data is collected and how it is analyzed for the technique you choose.

Research hint: check out journals that provide readings for the other methods topics. These journals may contain papers useful for your seminar. Also check out the main journals in your field. It's perfectly fine to focus on your field for your seminar! Just make sure you can draw generalities that will interest your peers.

Book Review

10%

Goals: Practise academic writing; experience peer review; potentially gain an academic publication

Students will select a book to review from a list provided by journal editors. Information on the format of book reviews will be provided. Students will write a review (8%) and have it peer reviewed in class (reviewing for others = 2%). Writing is an iterative process, so several revisions are expected. Once the review is acceptable to the class and professor, we will submit it to the journal for possible publication.

| Date | What's Due? | Readings and Seminar Leader | Class Activities |
|------------|---|--|--|
| 1. Sept 11 | | Baxter Magolda et al. 2012 Baxter Magolda 1998 | 1. Introduction What is research? Qualitative research, go over reading topics 2. Choose a book to review 3. Make Group for Assignment 1, Select seminar topics, discuss ethics, |
| 2. Sept 18 | Ethics certificate (TCPS II) Buy Tanner | Agar Baxter Magolda and King 2007 Background/associated research: select 2 refs to help you develop an interview instrument. informally present your interview tool ideas to class | 1. Discuss readings, Ethics and Assignments 2 and 3, Ethnography as a research method 2. Develop an interview instrument for Assignment 2 |
| 3. Sept 25 | Assignment 1 Participant Observation (bring your notes) Assignment 2 Prepare draft questions <u>Tanner</u> : be ½ finished book | Seminar: Interviewing Winchester 1996 2 more readings from Seminar Leader | 1. Meet with group, prepare presentation for Assignment 1 (1/2 hr) 2. Present and discuss (1/2 hr) 3. Seminar (1/2 hr) 4. For Assignment 2, Pre-test questions on each other (~1.5 hrs) 5. Discuss Tanner and Ethnography |
| 4. Oct 2 | Submit Assignment 2 interview schedule <u>Complete Tanner</u> | | 1. Discuss Tanner and Ethnography 2. Watch The Mistassini Cree on the NFB website. It is based on Tanner's work. What strikes you about the movie? How is it different from the book? |
| Oct 9 | Reading week | | |
| 5. Oct 16 | Submit 1st Version of Book Review Bring the book!! | | 1. Discuss assignment 2 interview materials, make any corrections as necessary, print and interview undergrads over next 2-3 weeks 2. Peer review each other's 1 st version of the book reviews, provide comments focused on writing style 3. Trade books and arrange to email version 2 of your report to your reading partner so they have a clean copy to comment on next class after they look at your book |
| 6. Oct 23 | Submit 2nd Version of Book Review | Seminar: Focus Groups Morgan 1997a; b, 2 more readings | Reading partners give feedback on content of book report, as well as writing |

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| | | Seminar: Mixed Methods: Denscombe 2008, Johnson 2007, Dowsley 2015 | Seminar: Focus Groups (1/2 hr) Seminar: Mixed Methods (1/2 hr) |
| 7. Oct 30 | Submit 3rd Version of Book Review Before next class, upload all interview transcripts from Assignment 2 | Seminar: Indigenous Research Approaches: Koster et al. 2012, 2 more readings Tobias: Chief Kerry's Moose Qualitative Thesis proposal: Bunce 2015 | Seminar (1/2 hr) Discuss Applied Land Use and Occupancy studies (1 hour) Qualitative analysis discussion and work (2 hours) Book Review – a final peer review, provide 4 th version to prof |
| 8. Nov 6 | Have your background literature drafted for Assignment 3 Initial analysis for Assignment 3 | Read a qualitative thesis and compare PhD to Master's PhD: Sakakibara Master's: ask Dowsley or your supervisor for one in your field Qualitative Analysis: Burnard et al. 2008 | Discuss Master's vs PhD and methods used in theses (1 hour) Qualitative analysis and discussion Continue working on book review as needed, individually with prof |
| 9. Nov 13 | Bring your Near/Completed analysis for Assignment 3 | Seminar: Oral Traditions and Archaeology , another 'mixed method' Scott 2003 | Discuss drafts of Assignment 3 Seminar (½ hr) |
| 10. Nov 20 | Bring 2 hard copies of your completed draft for Assignment 3 for peer review | Seminar: Case Study Xiao and Smith 2006, Dowsley and Wenzel 2008 | 1. Peer review assignment 3 2. Seminar (½ hr) |
| 11. Nov 27 | Submit ass. 3 peer reviews By end of this week complete presentation and info sheets for undergrad research participants | Seminar: Complexity Stroink 2013; Berkes 2009 | 1. Return Assignment 3 peer reviews 2. Seminar (½ hr) |
| 12. Dec 4 | Assignment 3 | | 1. Presentations 20 min. each |