

ENST 5030 FA semester
Environmental Studies: Qualitative Methods
1:30 to 4:30 Mondays via Zoom

Environmental studies deal with complex challenges involving humans and the environment. Qualitative methods are generally applied to research involving humans, and aim to understand things that cannot be assigned a number. For example, qualitative methods can be used to explain processes, explore perceptions and answer questions like why and how. Qualitative research is also often used in mixed methods approaches to studying humans and the environment. They may be used before the quantitative research phase in a larger project to ascertain the key topics and range of probable answers that help in the design of quantitative research instruments. Qualitative methods may also be used after quantitative data is collected and analyzed 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. This course will also touch on some of the major theories that researchers are using in environmental studies in order to support students in their thesis work.

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) for research involving humans
- Gain experience in using inductive and deductive qualitative data collection methods
- Collect, analyze, and discuss qualitative data
- Become familiar with some of the current popular theories in qualitative environmental research

Professional Development

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

Logistics

We will meet every Monday afternoon through Zoom. The link is on the course site under calendar on the right side of the front page. Your professor is Dr. Martha Dowsley. To contact her, email mdowsley@lakeheadu.ca.

Evaluation

Assignment	Value
TCPS2 Ethics Certificate	Must pass to continue course
Assignment 1 Observational Study	15%
Assignment 2 Seminar Leadership (throughout the term)	40%
Assignment 3 Analysis of Interviews	30%
Assignment 4 Assessment of Case study of self-authorship	5%
Class Participation	10%

Date	What's Due?	Reading and Homework Due (all posted except Kleinknect)	Class Activities
1. Sept 14			1. Overview of course 2. Introduction to qualitative research
2. Sept 21	Ethics certificate (TCPS II) *Be sure you ordered/found an ethnography to read* (tell the prof your choice)	Introduction stuff: Dods 2004 Kleinknect: Intro, Ch 1 (and exercise 2 at the end of the chapter), Ch 2, Ch 5 TCPS2 ethics certificate (link below) Participant Observation Read Agar; Kleinknect Ch 18,19,20, 21 Tim lead us in discussing 18 and 19, Liam on 20, 21 Summarize and discuss each ch with us, then come up with an exercise to solidify our learning for 1 of your chapters Assignment 3 Baxter Magolda et al. 2012 Decreasing Authority Dependence during the first year of college Hodge et al. 2009 Engaged Learning: Enabling Self-Authorship and Effective Practise	1. Martha to lead discussion on Dods, Kleinknect 1, 2 and 5 2. Participant Observation Martha seminar on Agar Mini- Seminars by Liam and Tim Discuss observation assignment 3. Thesis discussion -planning, scholarships 4. Discuss term project on self-authorship
3. Sept 28	Assignment 1	Taking Field Notes Phillippi 2018 Interviewing Winchester 1996; Turner 2010; Kleinknect ch 22,23, 24 Liam find us another paper (or ch in K. section VI.) on Interviewing and email to us by Wednesday at midnight, plus get another paper and read yourself just to share with us Assignment 3 Baxter Magolda and King 2007 Interview Strategies for Assessing Self-Authorship	Assignment 1 presentations Interviewing Martha lead seminar on assigned readings, Mini seminar by Liam on the 2 papers he chose
4. Oct 5		Seminar: Focus Groups Morgan 1997a; b, Tim find us one paper to read by Wed. at midnight, plus find another to tell us about On youtube look up 'conducting focus groups'. Watch 5 or 6 of the videos and take notes on best practises. Choose one video to share with us in class. Research Ethics Kleinknect Ch 6, 7, 8	Seminar on Focus Groups – Martha and Tim Discussion of K. ethics chapters
5. Oct 19	Be prepared to assign the class readings related to your ethnography	Ethnography Reeves et al 2008 Read a student ethnographic thesis: Sakakibara 2007 Liam and Tim -find us a paper each about doing ethnographic research/writing ethnographies and tell us about it and generate some discussion	Ethnography Seminar - everyone *Assign the class 2 readings to supplement your ethnography –one on the theory and one on the case study

		Starting an ethnographic study Kleinknecht Ch 9, 10, 11, 12	
6. Oct 26	Formal Ethnography Seminar	Mixed Methods: Denscombe 2008, Johnson 2007 Qualitative Analysis: Burnard et al. 2008, Appleton 1995; Kleinknecht 32-36 Tim discuss 33-34; Liam discuss 35-36 (read all of them though!)	Ethnography seminars by Liam and Tim Seminar of Mixed methods Discuss qualitative data analysis
7. Nov 2		Seminar: Indigenous Research Approaches: Koster et al. 2012, Wilson 2001, Atalay 2006 Liam and Tim find us a paper and use it to generate a discussion Qualitative Thesis proposal: Bunce 2015 (consider how the project is qualitative, what methods will be used? How will the results be analyzed?)	Seminar on Indigenous research Discussion Research proposals
8. Nov 9	Assignment 4 due	Emotions and Data Collection Kleinknecht 13-17 Liam and Tim – Find 1 other paper each	Data collection challenges Discussion Assignment 4 findings
9. Nov 16		Seminar: Oral Traditions Scott 2003 Collecting other forms of data Kleinknecht 27-31 Liam 28-29, Tim 31-31 and Liam and Tim -find 1 other paper each – marks for creative methods!	Seminar on Oral Traditions Seminar on Other types of data
10. Nov 23		Seminar: Case Study Xiao and Smith 2006, Baxter and Jack 2008 Kleinknecht Leaving the Field Ch 37-40. Pick on chapter and find a supporting paper, lead the discussion on them both in class	Seminar on Case studies
11. Nov 30		Seminar: Complexity Stroink 2013; Berkes 2009; Peloquin and Berkes 2009 Find another paper each to share Self-reflection: Baxter Magolda 1998 Graduate School intellectual development	1. Seminar on complexity theory 2. Discussion of how students develop during graduate school. How can we promote your development? Has the way you think changed in the last couple of years? In this semester? What is the nature of knowledge?
12. Dec 7	Assignment 3	Kleinknecht Section X ch 41-45 What methods could you use to disseminate your findings besides writing your thesis?	Presentations on Assignment 3 - 20 min each

Referencing

For any referencing for the course, please use Chicago Style (example paper posted on contents on website). Interviews also need to be referenced, but please use the assigned number for the interview, rather than the participant's name. This maintains confidentiality for the participants.

Hints for Presentation Visuals:

- Do not leave a slide up for more than 2-3 minutes

- Do not read from the slide, the text should be a summary and include terms, definitions etc. to enhance the audience's understanding of what you say
- Include relevant pictures and design
- Don't be afraid to ask the audience some questions during the presentation, or ask them to raise their hands etc. participation keeps the audience focused
- Rule of 3-30-3 for presentations can be applied – 3 seconds for the audience to be captured by your title/opening image and interested enough to continue paying attention. 30 seconds to give the overall point of the presentation – main question or intriguing information – why is this interesting? 3 minutes max. per idea – similar to the 2 min/slide rule above

TCPS2 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 administrative 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 under external resources – on-line tutorial (<https://tcps2core.ca/welcome>), create an account, and complete the tutorial. Download the certificate and submit a copy to the professor with your name in the subject line. Keep a copy for yourself for future use as well (you will need to submit with your research ethics plan and with your thesis).

Assignment 1 Participant Observation Study

15%

Goals: Practise observation and inductive reasoning; assess your strengths and weaknesses as a researcher.

A. Planning

Conduct a fieldtrip to practise participant observation. Select a site and write down some questions you hope to learn about through your study. Your main research question is: How has the pandemic changed this place?

B. Field Trip 1

Go to the site and observe carefully using all your senses for about 1 hour. Take notes about your observations and your participation (if any), including your feelings and thoughts. In some sites it might be acceptable to do this during your observations, in others you might need to wait until the end of the event or observation period.

C. Reflection and Writing

Review your readings and what you learned in class about participant observation. Reflect on your experience. Write up your notes as answers or partial answers to your questions, and perhaps as information that you hadn't thought you would learn. Consider: What else do you want to learn? What did you not get enough information on? Make a plan for a second field trip - jot down what you want to accomplish

D. Field trip 2

Return for another field trip. Gather more information related to your questions and stay open-minded for new ideas and information

E. Reflection and Writing

Add to your notes, clarifying etc. Indicate which field trip each main piece of information came from.

F. Create a presentation

Tell us what the answers to your questions were. But also tell us about your experience. What was difficult/easy/unexpected. What was challenging for you? What might you do differently next time? Give us about a 15 min presentation on your study.

Marking scheme (15%)

- 5% Field trip notes, reflection answers to questions (submit by email to prof 24 hours before presentation)
- 5% Presentation and discussion with the class

- 5% Debrief. After your presentation do some more self-reflection. Submit a 1-page single-spaced discussion of your behaviour/experience and reflect on your strengths and weaknesses as an observer– 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? Consider the feedback from the class discussion. Submit 72 hours after your presentation via email to the prof.

Assignment 2 Seminar Leadership

40%

Goal: practise public speaking, creating professional presentations, discussion leadership

You will take leadership of the class several times over the semester. You'll start out small with mini-seminars and then expand your skills.

Formal (graded) Seminars

A. Ethnography Seminar (10%)

Choose a full length Ethnography to read and present to the class. (Can find on university press web pages to order). The book will have both theory and a case study. A week before the class assign one reading on the theory and one on the case study to the class so we have some background. Lead a seminar for about 45 minutes about the ethnography.

B. Seminar on Assignment 3 (10%)

Assignment 3 Qualitative Data Analysis, Writing and Presentation

30%

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

As a class, read and discuss how cognitive development (Self-authorship) occurs in young adults and how these developmental stages link to undergraduate experiences. Previous classes have already gathered data from undergrads. Using the class data set, examine it and organize it, then analyze it according to a specific area of interest to you. Use the academic literature to frame your paper theoretically with between 5 and 7 references beyond those assigned in class (10%). Write your paper (12-15 pages) (20%). Formally present your paper to the class (seminar mark).

The goal of this exercise is to use some qualitative data, recognize its strengths and weaknesses so you can collect it better for your thesis. The topic was chosen to hopefully be of interest because it allows for some self reflection. One of the goals of graduate school is to change how you think.

Assignment 4 Analysis of Case Study of Self-Authorship

5%

Read the book (pdf) posted under Assignment 4 at the bottom of the contents on the course web site. Write a timeline with quotes showing how the author, Tara, developed self authorship. Indicate what marks each phase in the development (the gear diagram in Baxter Magolda et al. 2012 assigned for Class 2) and provide quotes from the book to support your assessment of where she is at that time (ex. Page 15-20 she is in Ea because she listens exclusively to the external source of her father... 'quote...', after page 20 she enters Eb because of the following incident...)