

Political Science 694: Proseminar in Qualitative Methods

Winter 2002

9:00 – 10:30 am Tuesdays and Thursdays

Professor Ann Chih Lin

Office: Ford School of Public Policy Annex, 1015 E. Huron, Rm. 315

Ph:764-7507

Email:annlin@umich.edu

Office hours: Wednesday 9:45 am-11:45 pm and 1:45-5:45 pm

This proseminar is an introduction to the use of qualitative methods in political science with a particular focus on techniques. You will gain hands-on experience in participant observation, interviewing and the use of archival material. Analytical techniques, theory building and the written presentation of qualitative research will be discussed and practiced. In addition, we will consider ethics, epistemology and research design.

This course has been designed to teach a range of approaches to qualitative research including both positivist and interpretive work. Epistemological discussion is welcome, necessary and unavoidable. The course begins with a consideration of different epistemological approaches to research and you will be asked to think about these approaches throughout the course. You should not, however, consider our discussions to be a substitute for a full-fledged treatment of the philosophy of science.

There is a great deal to be covered in a short time in this course. As a result some topics will not be covered and no topic will be treated exhaustively. We do not cover techniques, such as content analysis, for the quantitative treatment of qualitative data. Students who are interested in these methods are encouraged to take the courses offered through the Survey Research Center at ISR. You also will not have the opportunity to develop dissertation proposals or other individual projects as part of the class assignments. Students who wish to do so might consider more advanced qualitative methods courses offered in this or other departments.

I expect and welcome students who are interested in qualitative methods in any subfield of political science. While constraints of time and money prevent us from visiting other parts of the world to practice fieldwork techniques, many of the examples of qualitative work used in the course are drawn from subfields other than American Politics. I encourage you to discuss differences you perceive in the use of qualitative methods across subfields and disciplines, and to bring concerns about doing research in different settings to the class discussions.

Our research topic for this term will be popular reactions to the tragedies of September 11. We will look at press coverage and other kinds of written, visual, or audio documents; interview people about their reactions and experiences of the last several months, and attend public events with some relationship to the tragedies or the ongoing war in Afghanistan. The aim is not to produce comprehensive group or individual projects, but to allow the class to reference the same ideas and issues in their hands-on exploration of the class material.

Course Requirements

1. READ.

The following books are being used in this course. We will be reading a substantial portion of each book. They are available for purchase at Shaman Drum Bookshop, 313 S. State Street. These books are NOT on reserve.

Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. (University of Chicago, 1995)

Martha S. Feldman, *Strategies for Interpreting Qualitative Data* (Sage 1995)

Michael R. Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques* (Sage, 1993)

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. (Aldine de Gruyter, 1967)

David Morgan, *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, 2nd Ed. (Sage 1997)

Joan E. Sieber, *Planning Ethically Responsible Research* (Sage 1992)

Most of the other book chapters/excerpts for the course have been placed on Electronic Reserve. You can access these from the website:

A few book chapters which could not be placed on Electronic Reserve are in a coursepack available from Excel , 1117 S. University.

2. PRACTICE.

The following is a list of the assignments for this course and the grading system.

Assignments

At least one fieldnote or transcript must be finished by Friday, March 15 and submitted to "Assignments" on the Coursetools website. The other fieldnotes and transcripts are not due during the term but must be included in your portfolio.

Fieldnotes

Over the course of the semester every student will write **two** sets of fieldnotes based on in-person observation of events associated with the aftermath of Sept. 11. If possible, try to make one event one that you observe, and another one that you participate in.

Interview transcripts

Over the course of the semester every student will conduct **two** interviews about reactions to Sept. 11. One interview should be taped (if possible). During this interview you should take some notes on such things as the setting and expressions of the interviewee. These notes should be fairly minimal as you will want to be focusing on the conversation. The other interview may be taped, but the transcript will be made entirely from notes and memory. Be sure to write on each transcript whether you worked from tape or notes. All transcripts should be made as soon after the interviews as possible. Both should be included in your portfolio.

With the exception of the IRB (due Tues., 2/12) and the assignment group that you choose (ONE from March 21, March 26, March 28, April 2, or April 4) you may skip any ONE of the following assignments (research questions, interview questionnaire, document memo, or writing sample).

Due Saturday, Jan 20: **Research questions and strategies**

Propose a theoretical question about the popular reaction to September 11. You will not be required to pursue this for your paper (though you may want to), so feel free to think broadly. Explain how you might answer this question with a quantitative study. Then explain how some aspect of the question might be answered by taking a positivist approach, an interpretive approach, and a critical approach. I am not looking for a full-blown research design, but for your understanding of the match between question and research approach.

Please submit your assignment to the "Discussion" area of our Coursetools webpage.

Due Tues., Feb 5: **Interview questionnaire**

Write 5-6 interview questions that you plan to ask about the popular reaction to Sept 11. Be sure to specify who the questions are designed for: a foreign student? a ROTC member? a peace activist? Be careful about wording and order. Bring a copy of the questionnaire to class.

Due Tues., Feb 12: **IRB application**

Your IRB application must be submitted to the IRB office by the end of the day today. Also turn in a copy to me via the "Assignment" area of Coursetools. **THIS ASSIGNMENT MAY NOT BE SKIPPED.**

Due Mon., Mar 11: **Document memo**

Using the techniques discussed in the readings, create a memo discussing some aspect of the documents that you examined. This memo should explain the coding (if any) that you did, the reasons why you found a particular theme to be salient, and any associated questions the memoing raises. Submit the memo via "Assignments" on Coursetools by the end of the day on Monday. We will discuss samples in class on Tues., 2/12.

March 19, March 21, April 2, April 4, April 9: **Analysis and research design**

Prepare a handout that your classmates can use for reference during your presentation. Bring hard copies of the handout to class, and also submit it via "Assignments" on Coursetools.

March 19 and March 21:

Show your attempt at one of the analysis techniques covered in the day's readings, and discuss some of the questions or difficulties that you confronted while applying it. You should bring in a handout illustrating the analysis technique.

April 2, April 4, and April 9:

Apply the principles in today's reading to a research design for a project using qualitative data that you are doing or might do. You can propose a research project on the aftermath of Sept 11, or you can discuss another project. You should bring in a handout listing the research question, the main aspects of the design, and any information the class needs to understand your application.

Due Sat., April 6 or Sat., April 13: **Writing sample**

You will be assigned to one of these due dates. Write a section (500-1500 words in length) of your final paper, based on the observation, interviews and documentary evidence that you have gathered and analyzed about popular reactions to Sept. 11. The section you write should report on the analysis of some of your data.

Post the paper on the course website by Saturday and return to the website Sunday or Monday to read the papers in the group that you are assigned to.

The following assignments are due by 10 am on Monday, April 22 if you would like comments, or by 10 am Thursday, April 25 if you would not.

Portfolio

I will read and comment on, but not grade, the assignments in the class. You have the option of revising any assignment that you would like to. At the end of the class, create a portfolio that includes all the assignments (include only the revised version if you revise), two sets of fieldnotes and two sets of transcripts (as described above), and any analysis, document summary sheets

(no need to include the actual documents unless they're small), and other material you use to create the final paper. **The portfolio will count for 50% of your grade.**

Final Paper

Your final paper is an interim report on a research project that could grow from the initial data collection we have done in the class. The paper should cover every aspect of the course. It should pose a question, discuss the appropriate epistemological approach to answering it, and discuss the data that have been and still need to be gathered. It should also include analysis of some of the data that have been gathered and a discussion of how this analysis helps to answer the question. Finally, it should discuss issues of reliability and validity with reference to the data and the design you have chosen, as well as any other design issues, as appropriate. 10 pages is the limit for the paper. **The paper will count for 30% of your grade.**

Class Participation

Attendance at class and active participation in discussions is a vital part of this class. **It will count for 20% of your grade.**

3. ATTEND CLASS

The following is the schedule of classes and readings. Readings with no asterisks come from the books that you have been asked to purchase. Readings marked with one asterisk (*) are available on Electronic Reserve. Readings marked with two asterisks (**) are in the coursepack.

Tues., 1/8 Introduction

Thurs., 1/10 What is a Research Question?

Tues., 1/15: Positivist and interpretive approaches to qualitative research

**Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry* (Princeton, 1994), p.1-49, 99-114.

* Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (Basic, 1973), Ch. 1.

*Ann Chih Lin, "Bridging Positivist and Interpretive Approaches to Qualitative Methods," *Policy Studies Journal* 26:1(1998): 162-167 (excerpt).

*Jennifer Hochschild, *What's Fair: American Beliefs about Distributive Justice* (Harvard 1981), Ch. 5, 9.

Thurs., 1/17: Critical theory, grounded theory, and qualitative research

*Joan Acker, Kate Barry, and Johanna Esseveld, "Objectivity and Truth: Problems in Doing Feminist Research," in Fonow and Cook, *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research* (Indiana, 1991).

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. p. 10-43.

*Paul Willis, *Learning to Work: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, (Columbia, 1977), Ch. 3.

*James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, (Yale, 1985), Ch. 1-2.

Sat., 1/20: Research question assignment due to Coursetools!

Tues., 1/22: Research approaches

Read and be prepared to discuss your classmates' research questions from Coursetools.

Thurs., 1/24: Research ethics: Risks and benefits

Joan Sieber, *Planning Ethically Responsible Research*, p. 75-108, 124-140.

*Lisa Belkin, "The Clues are in the Blood," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 26, 1998.

Come prepared to discuss the possible risks and benefits of research on the popular reaction to Sept 11, using the categories on p. 80 and p. 104.

Tues., 1/29: Research ethics : Informed consent

Joan Sieber, *Planning Ethically Responsible Research*, p. 3-17, 44-63.

Ann Chih Lin, Human Subjects Approval Application for "Political Socialization and Participation Among Arab Immigrants to the United States." **On course website.**

*Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing* (Sage 1995), Ch. 5. (p. 93-121)

Thurs., 1/31: Interviewing: Writing the questionnaire

*Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing*, Ch. 9. (p. 196-225)

**James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium, *The Active Interview* (Sage 1995), p. 7-18, 30-65, 73-80.

Tues., 2/5: Interviewing: Building skills

Bring a copy of your interview questionnaire to class!

Thurs., 2/7: Interviewing: Truth and Lies

*Ann Chih Lin, *Reform in the Making* (Princeton, 2000), Appendix 2

*Paul Stoller, p 125-130 in *The Taste of Ethnographic Things*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

*Susan Eckstein, "Appendix A" in *The Poverty of Revolution: The State and the Urban Poor in Mexico* (Princeton, 1977).

*Richard White, *Remembering Ahanagan*, p. 3-6, 149-152, 249-281.

Tues., 2/12: Participant Observation

Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chapters 1 and 2.

*John Lofland and Lyn Lofland, *Analyzing Social Settings* (Wadsworth 1995), p. 46-65.

REMEMBER THAT YOUR IRB APPLICATION IS DUE TODAY!

Thurs., 2/14: Participant Observation

Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chapters 3-5.

*Richard Fenno, "Notes on Method: Participant Observation" in *Homestyle: House Members in their Districts*, p. 249-295.

Tues., 2/19: Focus Groups (I)

David Morgan, *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, Ch. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

*Roberta Sigel, *Ambition and Accommodation: How Women View Gender Relations* (Chicago, 1996), Ch. 2 and Ch. 4.

Thurs., 2/21: Focus Groups (II)

David Morgan, *Focus Groups as Qualitative Research*, Ch. 3.

Tues., 2/26 – Thurs., 2/28: SPRING BREAK!

Tues., 3/5: Documents (Text)

Michael R. Hill, *Archival Strategies and Techniques* (Sage, 1993), Ch. 2, 4-6, 8, 10-11, and Appendix.

*Barbara Tuchman, "Problems in Writing the Biography of General Stillwell" in *Practicing History*, Alfred A Knopf, 1981.

Thurs., 3/7: Introduction to Analysis

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Chapters 5 and 6.

*A. Michael Huberman and Matthew B. Miles, "Data Management and Analysis Methods", Chapter 27 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Denzin and Lincoln, Sage, 1994.

Mon., 3/11: Document Memo due!**Tues., 3/12: Comparing Documents**

We will discuss selected document memos in class.

Thurs., 3/14: Documents (Photo and video)

**Nira Granott Farber, "Through the Camera's Lens: Video as a Research Tool" in *Constructionist Learning*, MIT Media Laboratory.

*Douglas Harper, "On the Authority of the Image" Chapter 25 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (Sage, 1994).

*Caroline Wang and Mary Ann Burris, "Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment," *Health Education and Behavior* 24(3):369-87 (June 1997)

Tues., 3/19: Analysis: Coding and Memoing

Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz and Linda Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chapters 4 and 6.

Thurs., 3/21: Analysis : Beyond the Memo

Martha S. Feldman, *Strategies for Interpreting Qualitative Data*, (Sage 1995).

*Matthew Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*, Chapter VI and VII.

Tues., 3/26: Writing

*John Lofland and Lyn Lofland, *Analyzing Social Settings* (Wadsworth 1995), p. 149-178.

Robert M. Emerson, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, Ch. 7.

Thurs., 3/28: Reading Qualitative Research

TBA

Tues., 4/2: Research Design: Case Studies

*Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research*, Chapter 1- 2

Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Chapter 3.

**Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, Chapter 6.

*Timothy McKeown, "Case Studies and the Statistical Worldview: Review of KKV", *International Organization* 53(1):161-190 (Winter 1999) **Available via Proquest.**

Thurs., 4/4: Research Design: Combining qualitative and quantitative research

*Todd Jick, "Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action" *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24(4): 602-611.

*Jennifer Greene and Valerie J. Caracelli, *Advances in Mixed-Method Evaluation: The Challenges and Benefits of Integrating Diverse Paradigms* (Jossey-Bass, 1997), p. 5-46.

Saturday, 4/6: Writing assignments for April 11 group due

Tues., 4/9: Research Design: Reliability and Validity

*David L. Altheide and John M. Johnson, "Criteria for Assessing Interpretive Validity in Qualitative Research", Chapter 30 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Denzin and Lincoln, Sage, 1994.

**Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*, Chapter 4.

*Robert Adcock and David Collier, "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *American Political Science Review* 95 (3):529-546 (September 2001)

*Ann Chih Lin, "Bridging Positivist and Interpretive Approaches to Qualitative Methods" p. 167 to end.

Thurs., 4/11: Writing

Read the writing samples for today.

Saturday, 4/13: Writing assignments for April 16 group due

Tues., 4/16: Writing

Read the writing samples for today.

Mon., 4/22, 10:00 am: Paper and Portfolio Due Date for Comments

Thursday, 4/25, 10:00 am: Paper and Portfolio Due Date without Comments