



## **SOCIOLOGY 479: Qualitative Methods**

### **Course Description and Objectives:**

This course is designed to introduce students to qualitative methods in sociological research. We will explore different approaches to conducting qualitative research by broadly examining a variety of qualitative studies. In addition, students will become familiar with ethical issues related to research with human subjects, learn how to propose research questions, engage theoretical approaches to fieldwork, and apply methodological techniques in an original qualitative study. Course readings are drawn from methodological textbooks and articles on qualitative research as well from well-known ethnographies of social life in American cities. Class will be supplemented with substantive lectures and readings on topics designed to provide students with a general understanding of sociological issues discussed in ethnographies (e.g., poverty in inner-cities, effects of inequality, gender norms, etc.).

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

1. Examine a wide variety of qualitative methods.
2. Critically analyze an array of qualitative studies.
3. Conduct an original qualitative study.
4. Develop strong oral and written communication skills.
5. Foster analytical thinking.

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Adams State University  
Department of Sociology  
Spring 2014  
M 2:30-5:00  
MCD 304

### **Textbooks:**

Holmes, Seth. 2013. *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

Bourgois, Philippe. 2003. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. New York: the University of Cambridge. (Second Edition.)

Emerson, Robert M. et al. 2011. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press. (Second edition.)

## Assignments/Exams

**Memos (20%):** Each week students will turn in ethnographic memos. (11 memos in all.) Students will be provided with prompts for each memo. (See course website for full list of prompts.)

**Participation (20%):** In class I will expect each student to *be prepared* to discuss the main points of assigned readings. This course will depend heavily on *student-generated* discussion. In order to receive full participation students will be expected to reading *and* partake in classroom discussions.

**Quizzes (20%):** Four unannounced quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. Quizzes are designed to keep students honest. Do the readings and come to class and you will do fine.

**Final Paper (30%):** In this course students will conduct an original qualitative study. Students are urged to begin their projects early in the semester. More details concerning this assignment are available on the course website.

**Final Presentation (10%):** Each student will present his/her final project to the rest of the course. The presentation series will be held the week prior to finals. Presentations will be given in panels of four students. Each presenter will have 15 minutes to present his/her material. Questions from the audience will be fielded after each panel.

**Note:** This class will include both lecture and discussion; however, focus will be placed on the latter. For this reason it is expected that students *read* the assigned material *before class* so that they can actively participate in classroom discussions. It should go without saying but active participation requires students to be present in the classroom. If a student misses an extensive amount of class (more than 3 classes), his/her *overall* grade for the course will drop by one letter grade (from A to B, B to C, etc.) for each absence beyond 3. Please note, anyone that arrives to class more than 5 minutes late is considered absent for that particular class period.

**Extra Credit:** For writing assignment if you utilize the writing lab I will increase your final grade, for that particular assignment, by 5 percent (you will need to provide edited drafts with your final essay). This includes write-ups and reflections.

**Persons with Disabilities:** If you have any sort of disability or personal problem which prevents the fullest expression of your abilities, please let me know as soon as possible during the semester - before it interferes with your work - so that I can make a reasonable accommodation to your needs.

**Academic Misconduct:** Taking the easy way out will have real consequences in this class (check out turnitin.com). Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in academic dishonesty will be dropped from the course and formal charges will be brought before the Department Chair.

| Date  | Topic                                                                           | Reading /Assignments                                                                                                            |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 01/15 | -Introduction to course                                                         | -Syllabus (benjaminjameswaddell.com)<br>-Discuss final projects                                                                 |
| 01/22 | <i>-The Other Side of Immigration</i>                                           | -Roy Germano, "Analytic Filmmaking."<br>(roygermano.com; go to "research" tab and download)                                     |
| 01/29 | -Intro to Qualitative Methods<br>-Supply and Demand: Cocaine Market in Context. | -Emerson: Chapter 1.<br>-Bourgois: Intro<br>-Memo 1 due in class.                                                               |
| 02/05 | -Participant-Observation<br>-Cocaine at the Source                              | -Emerson: Chapter 2.<br>-Bourgois: Chapter 1<br>-Memo 2 due in class.                                                           |
| 02/12 | -Creating Scenes on a Page<br>-El Barrio, NYC                                   | -Emerson: Chapter 3.<br>-Bourgois: Chapter 2.<br>-Memo 3 due in class.                                                          |
| 02/19 | -Purpose and Style<br>-Managing Black Markets                                   | -Emerson: Chapter 4.<br>-Bourgois: Chapter 3<br>-Memo 4 due in class.                                                           |
| 02/26 | -Pursuing Members' Meanings<br>-Power Structures in el Barrio                   | -Emerson: Chapter 5.<br>-Bourgois: Chapter 4<br>-Memo 5 due in class.                                                           |
| 03/05 | -Processing Field Notes<br>-Learning to be a Criminal                           | -Emerson: Chapter 6.<br>-Bourgois: Chapter 5<br>-Memo 6 due in class.                                                           |
| 03/12 | -Writing an Ethnography<br>-Gender in el Barrio                                 | -Emerson: Chapter 7.<br>-Bourgois: Chapter 6.<br>-Memo 7 due in class.                                                          |
| 03/19 | -Qualitative Methods in Review<br>-Families in Context in el Barrio             | -Emerson: Chapter 8.<br>-Bourgois: Chapter 7<br>-Memo 8 due in class.                                                           |
| 03/26 | <i>-No Class</i>                                                                | -Spring Break.<br>-Work on Final Project.                                                                                       |
| 04/02 | -Field Workers                                                                  | -Holmes: Chapter 1 & 2.<br>-Memo 9 due in class.                                                                                |
| 04/09 | -Segregation on the Farm and the Poor                                           | -Holmes: Chapter 3 & 4.<br>-Memo 10 due in class.                                                                               |
| 04/16 | -Doctors and the Community                                                      | -Holmes: Chapter 5 & 6.<br>-Memo 11 due in class.                                                                               |
| 04/23 | -Policy Recommendations                                                         | -Holmes: Chapter 7.<br>-MacCoun and Reuter. "Does Europe Do it Better?" (Website.)<br>-Rough Draft of Final Essay due in class. |
| 04/30 | -Final Presentations                                                            | -Final Presentations.                                                                                                           |
| 05/07 | <b>-Final Essay Due.</b>                                                        | -Final Essay due in class.                                                                                                      |

