



SOCIOLOGY 479: Field Studies in Sociology

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 ethnographies of social life in the San Luis Valley. 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.). However, the majority of class time will be dedicated to preparing for, and interviewing, local residents of the SLV. Together, we will use excerpts from these interviews, as well as footage from field visits, to compile a course video titled, *Voces del Valle* or Voices of the Valley. Finally, the course will include fieldtrips to locations in the San Luis Valley.

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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Department of Sociology
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W 2:00-5:00
Cooper Rm., Neilson Library

Textbooks: Readings will be provided through the course website (benjaminjameswaddell.com).

Assignments/Exams:

Reflections (20%): Each week students will turn in brief reflection on the previous week's interview. The reflection should address those issues that students found most interesting and Reflectionable. Students should also address potential connections between assigned readings and the content of the interview. Reflections should be between 1-2 pages in length. Do note that your reflections will play an instrumental role in shaping the course project, *Voces del Valle* or Voices of the Valley, which we will work on together throughout the semester.

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

Come each week prepared to share with us:

- (1) What you learned from the readings
- (2) What you found interesting about the readings
- (3) How you think the readings relate to the individual we are interviewing for that week and/or your own research.

Finally, each student will be expected to attend at least two Lifeways lectures during the semester. You can choose any two. We would suggest that you select lectures that relate specifically the theme of your final project.

Final Project (30%): In this course students will conduct an original qualitative study that implements visual, audio, and/or written components. Students are urged to begin their projects early in the semester. More details concerning this assignment are available on the course website. Do know, however, that students will be expected to submit a formal proposal early in the semester. Moreover, we will discuss your projects at length in class.

Final Presentation (10%): In this course students will conduct an original qualitative study. Students are urged to begin their projects early in the semester. The paper should be written in ASA style. More details concerning this assignment will be available on the course website. You can also view the Prezi video on "writing a qualitative research paper for college." The video has examples, proper citations for ASA, and a good layout for an ethnographic research paper. Please see: <http://prezi.com/user/t7ohn7lhwwgg/>

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. It should go without saying; however, students should, under no circumstances,

walk into a live interview late.

Extra Credit: For the 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.

Voces del Valle Project: Throughout the semester we will work as a group to create a short video—20-25 minutes—that recompiles information gathered during the interviews that we conduct in class and during site visits. The purpose of the video is to visually capture the unique cultural nuances of the San Luis Valley. This is a class project that will require the full participation of everyone in order to be successful. It is my hope that by the end of the semester you will be proud to be associated with *Voces del Valle*!

Date	Topic	Interviewee	Reading /Assignments
01/21	-Introduction to course		-Syllabus (benjaminjameswaddell.com) -Discuss final projects
01/28	-Hispanic history in the SLV	-Charlie Jaquez	-Watch prezi “choosing an ethnographic topic to research.” -Read, “The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant in Costilla County.” -Read, “The Hispano Homeland.” -Watch, “Barbara Walters interviewing style.” http://goo.gl/miwOid -Watch, “Shooting an interview.” http://goo.gl/vu00j5
02/04	-Hispanic history, chicana movement, and education in the SLV	-Lillian Gomez	-Read, “Latina Education in Life in Rural Southern Colorado, 1920-1945.” -Watch prezi “Ethnographic field notes.” -Reflection 1 due in class.
02/11	-Field visit to Antonito	-Aaron Abeyta	-Watch, “A Letter to Mumper.” http://goo.gl/wnrli2

