**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS**
**SOCI 3240 | Fall 2023**
T/Th 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Curry Hall 211

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Office Hours: Tuesdays from 12:30-3pm and by appointment via Zoom

## Course Description and Objectives

This course provides an introduction to qualitative research methods. While much sociological research relies on data collected by others, this course provides insights into the theories and practices that guide original qualitative data collection on our social world. Students will begin by learning the principles of qualitative methods and research design, and then become familiar with common qualitative research methods, including ethnography, in-depth interviewing, focus groups, and content analysis. Throughout the course, students will have the opportunity to collect and analyze their own original qualitative data with the goal of communicating complex findings and developing data literacy.

## Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
- Understand the purpose and value of qualitative methods
- Become familiar with different methods in qualitative research
- Collect and analyze original qualitative data
- Demonstrate the ability to analyze qualitative data
- Develop data literacy and understand the constraints of scientific claims-making

## Prerequisites:

A basic understanding of sociology is required for this class. Students must have completed SOCI 1510 and hold advanced (junior of senior) standing to be eligible for this course. This course is required for Sociology majors, with a grade of C or better for graduation.

## Materials

The required book is available at the UNT Bookstore and online.

> Luker, Kristin. 2008. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences: Research in an Age of Info-glut.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Additional required readings will be available through the UNT Library website. On very rare occasion, I will post a reading directly to Canvas. Please note that by default, I will ask you to access readings directly through the library since posting full PDFs violates copyright laws. You will need to use your EUID and password to access them. Please reach out in advance if you are having any issues with access.

## Course Requirements & Grades

The final grade in the course has different ways to evaluate student learning. The assessment in this class involves two exams (30%), four data collection assignments (40%), and regular discussions and in-class activities to encourage your engagement and participation (30%).

| Type | Details | % |
|------|---------|---|
| Exams | 2 exams x 15% ea. | 30 |
| Participation | 15 weeks x 2% per week | 30 |
| Assignments | 4 assignments x 10% ea. | 40 |
| **Total** | | **100** |

The following scale is used to calculate final grades:
    A = 89.5-100
    B = 79.5-89.4
    C = 69.5-79.4
    D = 60-69.4
    F = <60

### Exams

Two exams will cover both the readings and other materials presented in class. Each exam is worth 15% of your grade and comprise of 30% of your final grade. Please mark your calendars for the dates listed in Canvas. The dates of these exams will not change. Exams will be a combination of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer. None are cumulative. There is no final exam in this class.

### Participation

Participation is worth 30% of your total grade, which breaks down to 2% each week. This will be assessed in two ways: 1) attendance and 2) in-class discussion and exercises. Attendance is mandatory and will follow the policies listed below. Each week, there will also be exercises in class that are designed to assess progress towards learning objectives and prepare for the assignments and exams.

### Assignments

There are four assignments in this course, which will allow you to collect and then analyze your own qualitative data. These are each worth 10% of your grade, for a total of 40%. Each are worth 100 points, and will be graded according to a rubric, which you can view in advance on Canvas.

- Assignment #1: Ethnographic Fieldnote
- Assignment #2: In-depth Interview
- Assignment #3: Content Analysis
- Assignment #4: Coding Qualitative Data

We will hold in-class workshops before the assignments are due to discuss the requirements and brainstorm sites, ideas, and people.

## Course Policies

Attendance

Research has shown that students who attend class are more likely to be successful. Students are thus expected to attend all class meetings unless you have an excused absence such as active military service, religious holy day, official university function (as stated in the Student Attendance and Authorized Absences Policy), or a contagious illness. Each student may take two personal absences during the semester for something other than these issues. You **must** communicate with me prior to being absent so we can discuss and mitigate the impact of the absence on your learning.

On the first day, we will establish a seating chart for our indoor classroom. You are expected to sit in your assigned seat for all indoor seminars. If you are unable to attend class in person, I will happily accommodate this by providing lecture notes, recording class sessions, and providing a Zoom alternative, if possible.

Communication Policy

The instructor will reply to emails within 24 hours and within the time frame of 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Please plan accordingly before exams and due dates. Before emailing, please 1) check the syllabus; 2) refer to your class notes; and/or 3) ask a classmate directly or via the General Q&A discussion board on Canvas. Students are expected to regularly check Canvas. Please set your communication preferences so that you are notified of announcements and grade submissions.

Student Behavior & Classroom Environment

I strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and civility in the classroom. I value the many perspectives students bring to our campus. I encourage students to participate by expressing your opinions, asking questions, and presenting outside information to deepen your engagement with course material.

Please do your part to facilitate a stimulating and rewarding learning environment. This involves being respectful of one another, having an open mind, and being willing to have your ideas challenged. Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. This includes racist, sexist, classist, homophobic, or ableist language. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please let me know immediately.

Like UNT, I do not tolerate identity-based discrimination, harassment, and retaliation so we will work as a class to collaborate in ways that encourage inclusivity. I may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The University's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including University

and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. Visit UNT's Code of Student Conduct (https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct) to learn more.

Due Dates and Grading

All due dates, assignments, and rubrics will be announced in class and can also be found on Canvas.

All work you produce on assignments, papers, and exams must be your own. If you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. All written assignments will be evaluated with Turnitin (https://www.turnitin.com), which sends both the student and instructor an originality report.

You earn the grade you receive in this class. I do not curve or scale exams, assignments, or final grades. No extra credit will be offered. If you become concerned about your grades, meet with me immediately.

Except in extreme circumstances, I do not give incompletes. Students must request an incomplete in writing at least one week before final exam week. Please include documentation of the reason that the course cannot be completed before the end of the semester. Please note that I can only considered these requests if at least 50% of course exams and assignments have been completed with a passing grade.

Late Work

Under ordinary circumstances, no makeup exams will be given and no late work will be accepted. If you need extensions, please reach out *in advance*. Assignments and exams may be rescheduled only under exceptional circumstances (instances of disability, illness, or emergency) and with *prior* instructor consent. Please let me know as soon as possible if you need to reschedule an exam.

Students requiring accommodations for exams should speak with me after obtaining an accommodation form from the Office of Disability Access. This should be done within the first two weeks of class.

Mental and Physical Health and Safety

Please self-monitor and do not come to campus or go out in public if you have any symptoms of COVID-19, or any contagious illness. If you are ill or have extenuating circumstances that impact your attendance, please reach out to me as soon as possible—ideally before missing a class or due date—and I will make appropriate accommodations.

You are welcome to wear a face covering when indoors to protect yourself and others from COVID infection. I strongly encourage all students to follow any CDC guidelines regarding safety measures, which could change based on community health conditions. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to me as soon as possible.

If you are struggling in other ways that impact your academic performance, please reach out to the UNT CARE team (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care-team), which connects students with resources and services. You can reach out individually or make a report for someone you are worried about at https://report.unt.edu.

Making a Suggestion or a Complaint

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor and then the departmental chair. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident.

## Accommodations

Students with Disabilities

It is my goal to foster an inclusive learning environment in this class. UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website (https://disability.unt.edu/).

If you require accommodations, please notify me during the first week of classes, or as soon as possible, by presenting a letter from Office of Disability Access. If you need more information about accommodations, please review the UNT Policy 16.001 or contact Office of Disability Access (http://disability.unt.edu) at 940-565-4323.

Student Athletes

Athletes must provide me with a game schedule for the semester, signed by the coach, in the first week of class in order to be eligible for an excused absence.

Religious Holy Days

If you plan to miss class to observe a religious holiday, UNT policy states that you must notify the instructor with as much advanced notice as possible. If, with proper notice, you miss a class, assignment, or exam, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable timeframe. For more information, see the University-wide policy of religious observances (https://edo.unt.edu/religious-observances).

## Academic Honesty

All students are expected to abide by the UNT Code of Student Conduct: "As a student-centered public research university, the University of North Texas has established standards of conduct to foster a safe environment conducive to learning and development. Students and university student

groups are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that demonstrates respect for the rights and property of others and upholds the integrity of the university community." You are responsible for understanding the Code of Student Conduct (http://policy.unt.edu/policy/07-012).

All work you produce on assignments, papers, and exams must be your own work. If you use words or ideas that are not your own (or that you have used in previous class), you must cite your sources otherwise you will be guilty of plagiarism and subject to academic disciplinary action, including failure of the course. All written assignments will be evaluated with Turnitin (https://www.turnitin.com), which sends both the student and instructor an originality report.

The use of artificial intelligence for idea generation or to write short prompts or papers is a growing concern in academia. The department has already had several incidences of AI plagiarism. Do not use AI in this course. I assure you it will not promote your growth as a student or your understanding of qualitative research methods.

You a responsible for understanding what constitutes such violation, according to UNT Policy 6.003, available here: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-003. If you are not familiar with a citation method, seek assistance from the instructor or the free University writing lab: http://www.unt.edu/writinglab/.

Please maintain a high standard of individual honor and integrity. Collaboration of any kind on exams will result in a failing grade for the exam. Cheating of any kind of assignments will also result in a failing grade. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on an exam or assignment, and submitting a written assignment from a previous course without prior permission of both instructors. Scholastic dishonesty will be reported to the appropriate administrators in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

## Getting Help

Technical Assistance

This class is in person relies heavily on Canvas. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

**UIT Help Desk**:      http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm
**Email**:                    helpdesk@unt.edu
**Phone**:                   940-565-2324
**In Person**:              Sage Hall, Room 130
**Walk-In Availability**:  8am-9pm
**Telephone Availability**:
- Sunday: noon-midnight
- Monday-Thursday: 8am-midnight
- Friday: 8am-8pm
- Saturday: 9am-5pm
**Laptop Checkout**:      8am-7pm

For additional support, visit Canvas Technical Help (https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328)

Student Support Services

- Registrar (https://registrar.unt.edu/registration)
- Financial Aid (https://financialaid.unt.edu/)
- Student Legal Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-legal-services)
- Career Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/career-center)
- Multicultural Center (https://edo.unt.edu/multicultural-center)
- Counseling and Testing Services (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/counseling-and-testing-services)
- Student Affairs Care Team (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/care)
- Student Health and Wellness Center (https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/student-health-and-wellness-center)
- Pride Alliance (https://edo.unt.edu/pridealliance)

Academic Support Services

- Academic Resource Center (https://clear.unt.edu/canvas/student-resources)
- Academic Success Center (https://success.unt.edu/asc)
- UNT Libraries (https://library.unt.edu/)
- Writing Lab (http://writingcenter.unt.edu/)

**Understanding Sexual Harassment**

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UNT community have a responsibility to uphold this mission of the university and contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. For more information, see the policy: https://policy.unt.edu/policy/16-005.

Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies make it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, please refer to the appropriate resources: http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/sexual-misconduct

If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached

at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565- 2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

## Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency; for example, related to severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence. In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

## Retention of Student Records

Student records pertaining to this course are maintained in a secure location by the instructor of record. All records such as exams, answer sheets (with keys), and written papers submitted during the duration of the course are kept for at least one calendar year after course completion. Course work completed via the Canvas online system, including grading information and comments, is also stored in a safe electronic environment for one year. Students have the right to view their individual record; however, information about student's records will not be divulged to other individuals without proper written consent. Students are encouraged to review the Public Information Policy and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) laws and the University's policy. See UNT Policy 10.10, Records Management and Retention for additional information.

## Access to Information - Eagle Connect

Students' access point for business and academic services at UNT is located at: my.unt.edu. All official communication from the University will be delivered to a student's Eagle Connect account. For more information, please visit the website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward e-mail Eagle Connect (https://it.unt.edu/eagleconnect).

## Student Evaluation Administration Dates

Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The survey will be made available during the final weeks of class to provide students with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. Students will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Please look for the email in your UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete the survey. Once students complete the survey they will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the SPOT website (http://spot.unt.edu/) or email spot@unt.edu.

## Important Notice for F-1 Students taking Distance Education Courses

To read detailed Immigration and Customs Enforcement regulations for F-1 students taking online courses, please go to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations website (http://www.ecfr.gov/). The specific portion concerning distance education courses is located at Title 8 CFR 214.2 Paragraph (f)(6)(i)(G).

The paragraph reads:

> (G) For F-1 students enrolled in classes for credit or classroom hours, no more than the equivalent of one class or three credits per session, term, semester, trimester, or quarter may be counted toward the full course of study requirement if the class is taken on-line or through distance education and does not require the student's physical attendance for classes, examination or other purposes integral to completion of the class. An on-line or distance education course is a course that is offered principally through the use of television, audio, or computer transmission including open broadcast, closed circuit, cable, microwave, or satellite, audio conferencing, or computer conferencing. If the F-1 student's course of study is in a language study program, no on-line or distance education classes may be considered to count toward a student's full course of study requirement.

**Course Overview:**

Part 1: What are qualitative methods?
- Week 1: Introduction
- Week 2: Theoretical foundations
- Week 3: Topic selection

Part 2: Research design, evaluation, and ethics
- Week 4: Ethics and the IRB
- Week 5: Research design and evaluation
- Week 6: Exam 1

Part 3: Data collection
- Week 7: Ethnography and field notes
- Week 8: Reflexivity, positionality and safety
  - Assignment 1 due
- Week 9: In-depth interviews
- Week 10: Conducting an interview
- Week 11: Exam 2
  - Assignment 2 due

Part 4: Coding and data analysis
- Week 12: Content analysis
- Week 13: Data analysis
  - Assignment 3 due
- Week 14: Qualitative coding
- Week 15: Writing and publishing with qualitative data
  - Assignment 4 due