Project Based Learning in a Sociology Qualitative Research Course: Campus Climate and Students' Strategies for Success

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Land acknowledgement:
I would like to acknowledge that CSU San Bernardino sits in the traditional land of The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, a federally recognized tribe of Serrano people in San Bernardino County, California. The band is made up of the Yuhaviatam clan of Serrano people, who have traditionally lived in the San Bernardino Mountains. Tongva people have also resided and continue to reside in the Claremont area and well into what is now called Rancho Cucamonga. Today, San Bernardino is home to many Indigenous peoples from across the world (Thanks to James V. Fenelon, Professor of Sociology, Director of Center for Indigenous Peoples Studies for his generous input).

Information at a glance

| Paloma Villegas | Time:       | Office Hours:          | Course resources/Readings: |
|                | paloma.villegas | MW 2- 3:50PM           | CSUSB library &            |
Course Information
This course provides students with hands-on experience conducting qualitative research.

We will explore research ethics debates, evaluate existing research, the benefits and challenges of specific qualitative research methods, and reflect on how to disseminate findings.

Please Note: The course employs project-based learning teaching strategies, meaning you will be working in groups throughout the term on a project related to your lived experience.

What we will do in the class:
Through the course we will work to

- Familiarize ourselves with qualitative research methodologies, the types of questions they are used to answer, and their strengths and limitations.
- Understand ethical and social concerns related to conducting qualitative research.
- Synthesize academic literature on a particular topic.
- Employ different methods of data collection and interpretation.
- Develop critical thinking, analysis, writing, and reflection skills.

To develop these skills, the course balances brief lectures, discussion, independent and group work. Remember that the course extends beyond the classroom and I am available to answer any questions or chat about course topics.

Assignments (see description below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percent of grade</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation and Attendance</td>
<td>10 (.5% each)</td>
<td>Weeks 1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blog</td>
<td>10 total (1% each)</td>
<td>Once per week for a total of 10 posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research topic and list of documents to analyze</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>April 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>April 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content analysis</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>May 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Guide</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>May 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Analysis</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>May 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper and in-class reflection</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
**Participation & Attendance**

As co-collaborators in creating our learning space this term, we’ll be relying on each other’s informed, honest, and active involvement.

I hope you actively participate in this course. It is a great way for us to learn from each other. I try to include assignments, readings, and topics, that include authors and perspectives from diverse backgrounds. However, I welcome your feedback on ways this course can be made more inclusive, diverse, and equitable.

It’s important to remember that different communities possess culturally specific norms about how to best engage in a conversation, and for us to make room for this expression. I think for some students, speaking in public is difficult. If you have any concerns about this, come and see me so that together we can work out the best way for you to participate.

Remember to listen and support your colleagues in their discovery of new ideas, questions, and their articulation of thought. We’ll crowd source a list of conversational guidelines during the first week of classes.

Please note that research on this topic tells us that taking notes by hand improves recall and comprehension. However, I do not believe in banning technology in the classroom because it is ableist. It also assumes that students become distracted through their use of technology. Instead, my goal is to build an engaged and inclusive classroom together. Therefore, I ask that you consider your peers and use technology for course purposes only while we’re together.

**Attendance:**

Attendance is very important to the class as we will be working on your research projects regularly. Attendance (and participation) will be measured through small writing assignments during class. The timing will vary so please make every effort to be in class and on time.

**Blog:** You will keep a blog on Blackboard that provides insight on your understanding of qualitative methodologies, your project, and how published research fits with what you are seeing, hearing, and experiencing. The blog is meant to be reflective and will be prove helpful when you write your final project. You should write in it at least once a week for approximately 200 words. The deadline is Friday 11:59 pm. You can attach quotes from the readings, pictures or anything else you find useful from class discussions, your own reflections and your peers’.

**RESEARCH PROJECT**

Much of the work you will be doing will be group work. Collaboration is an important skill we will build in this course. However, should any issues arise in your group, please contact me as soon as possible so I can support you in finding an effective resolution.

**Research topic/ questions & documents to analyze**

You will begin by working in your group to identify a research topic and questions, as well as plan the type of data you will use for your content analysis. I will provide specific instructions and discuss assignment during class.

**Literature Review:**

For this assignment, you will identify and evaluate existing literature related to your research topic, focusing on the
research questions/goals posed; the research methods used; and findings provided. I will provide specific instructions and discuss assignment during class.

**Content analysis**
For this assignment you will be analyzing a set of documents (news articles, blog posts, images etc.) relevant to your chosen project. I will provide specific instructions and discuss assignment during class.

**Interview guide**
These are the questions you will ask participants during interviews. I will provide specific instructions and discuss assignment during class.

**Interview Analysis**
Once you have completed interviews, you will write up an analysis of the prominent themes that came up. I will provide specific instructions and discuss assignment during class.

**Final Paper and Reflection**
The culmination of your project will be your final paper. This will include an introduction, review of literature, methods, findings, Analysis, Conclusion and Recommendations. You will submit this during the final exam, where you will also write up a final reflection of your research process.

**GRADE SCALE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>86-89</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-85</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>65-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-64</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>&lt;60</td>
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**Total**
100 points for the course

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**Format for all written assignments**
- Double-spaced, 12-font
- 1-inch margins on all sides,
- Complete paragraphs
- No extra empty spaces between sections and paragraphs
- Include a title if appropriate
- Remember that regardless of how formal or informal the assignment, if you refer to anyone else's ideas, you should cite them. You can choose whatever citation style you prefer (examples include APA, MLA, ASA)

**Assignment Submission**
Assignments are due at the beginning of class through Blackboard. Remember to back up your work regularly to avoid computer issues. If you have technical difficulties please call (909) 537-7677.

**Late assignments**
Traumatic events and unforeseen circumstances occur. Should your
assignment be late, I encourage you to submit it as soon as you can for partial credit. Late penalty is 5% per day including weekends. I count the electronic submission date. Late Blackboard Blog posts are exempt from this policy they will receive a zero if late. Please do not submit late assignments at the department office staff or under my door. If you are able, please contact me should you feel your assignment will be late.

Grade Appeals
My goal is to grade work in a fair manner, however, mistakes can happen. If it’s a math error (e.g. grades not tallied up correctly) simply let me know. For more substantive appeals, carefully re-read your assignment, all guidelines and marking schemes, and all comments. You are welcome to submit appeals within a week of receiving your grade (should you need more time, please contact me). Submit a written explanation of why you think your grade should be increased with your original assignment, including all original comments.

Absences
If you have to miss any of our classes know that we will miss you. Please email me to let me know you’ll be absent so that I can support you and help you catch up afterwards

Honor Code
We commit ourselves to act with academic integrity this term – to be ethical in what we say and write, and to offer credit to others for thinking of ideas before us. I believe that everyone in my course is fundamentally honest, and I will help you learn the conventions of academic integrity, such as citing sources correctly and being clear about where our own words begin and end. If you’d like to read more about the university’s policy, visit https://www.csusb.edu/sites/csusb/files/%28FSD96-12.R2%29Academic_Dishonesty_0.pdf

A note: Videotaping and audio recording lectures is strictly forbidden without written permission from the instructor.

We are whole people, and will navigate the class as such:
I invite you to come have a conversation with me if you’re finding any aspect of this course challenging. There are lots of reasons someone might experience a challenge and I can help with many of them.

I try to design my classes to be accessible to everyone, but there may be things I haven’t thought of. I am happy to learn about these from you.

I have tried to anticipate where you may need a trigger warning, but if you have concerns or want to check that a particular trigger has been taken into account, please let me know. I am happy to provide that warning so that you can interact with class material safely, and on your own terms.

We may have strong emotional reactions to class material. I do not think of you as a brain in a jar but as a whole human being. Please come have
a conversation with me if you feel upset, confused, or angry

**Note-taking techniques**

**Campus services:**
Computer Lab, in-person assistance: https://www.csusb.edu/its/support/technology-support/computer-labs

Writing Center
For writing support, you can request a tutor from the CSBS Writing Lab (SB-354). http://csbswritinglab.csusb.edu/
There is also the CSUSB Writing Center (CE-310)
https://www.csusb.edu/writing-center/students

Services for Students with Disabilities
Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or Services for Students with Disabilities as soon as possible.
https://www.csusb.edu/ssd

The OBershaw DEN
The DEN serves to assist CSUSB students who face food insecurity or scarcity.
https://www.csusb.edu/community-engagement/den

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**Course schedule and topics**
Note: this is tentative, some changes may occur.

Key:

- **CB=** Course Book
- **CSUSB** – Find online through library system
- © Assigned reading
- ⚪️ Assignment due

| April 3 | Introductions
|        | What is qualitative research?
|        | Why qualitative methods?
|        | Critical Reading Strategies
|        | -Homework: Annotate Syllabus

| April 8 | Syllabus Annotation Results
|        | Research design
|        | Organize groups and Craft Group Contract |
Discuss first assignment

**Readings**
- **CB** Chapter 1

**April 10**
In class: Writing literature reviews
Visit from Librarian
Readings

 Assignment due: Research topic & documents to analyze

**April 15** Analyzing Texts

**Readings:**
- **CB** Chapter 8

**April 17**
Analyzing Texts continued

**Readings:**
- Chapter 9 – Read pages 209-230 and 227-239.

 Assignment due Literature Review **Friday April 19**

**April 22**
Ethics, positionality, and reflexivity

**Readings**
- **CB** Chapter 2
- **Internet** American Sociological Association, Code of Ethics http://www.asanet.org/code-ethics

Extra credit: CITI Training: https://www.csusb.edu/institutional-review-board/human-subjects-ethics-training
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 3</td>
<td>Content analysis due Friday May 3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>⚫ Interview Guide due</td>
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</table>
**May 13**  
Conduct interviews

**Readings:**  

**May 15**  
Transcription

No reading assigned but please bring a 1 page (double spaced) transcribed interview excerpt to discuss in class. Conduct interviews

**May 20**  
Analyzing Interviews

**Readings:**  
- Chapter 9

**May 22**  
Analyzing interviews

**Readings:**  

* Interview Analysis due

**May 27**  
Memorial day no class

**May 29**  
No formal class meeting  
Work on revising previous assignments for final paper

**Readings:**  
- CB Chapter 10

**June 3**  
Writing up  
Foregrounding a Research Framework in your Writing  

- CB Chapter 10

**June 5**  
Audience & Revision  
Writing for a Broad Audience

**Readings:**  
Read sample student papers  
https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/immigrantscarborough/fall-2017
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>May 10</strong> Audience &amp; Revision continued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No reading assigned. Bring your past assignments and final paper draft to work on in class.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Final exam date TBD</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✒ Paper Due</td>
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<tr>
<td>In class reflection</td>
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