

GEOG 836: Critical Methods of Inquiry

Fall 2022 • Mondays, 11:30am - 2:30pm • Mackintosh-Corry E229

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar introduces students to qualitative research methods and various modes of critical inquiry. The course is designed to assist graduate level researchers in developing and refining methods that can be applied towards their own theses and dissertations. Our approach will centre upon in-class discussions of weekly materials (readings, films, documentaries, podcasts), in which students will be encouraged to critically evaluate how different modes of knowing and producing knowledge interact. Research methods will include interviews, oral history, archival research, discourse analysis, participatory research and observation, and secondary textual research. Settler-Indigenous relations with respect to research will be a continuous theme throughout the semester. As the goal of the course is to strengthen research methods, students will have opportunities to apply these lessons to their own graduate work. By the end of the course, students will have established familiarity with a variety of qualitative research methods and experience in applying them to their own studies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Gain proficiency in a variety of qualitative research methods;
- become familiar with core elements of research design and research ethics;
- hone critical thinking skills concerning the development and application of research methods;
- apply lessons from the course to their own research.

ONLINE TEXTBOOKS, READINGS, AND FILMS

Unless otherwise noted, all sources for this course are available electronically via the Queen's University Library. Students will require an active Queen's University Library account to access most of these sources, and are strongly encouraged to acquaint themselves with the following resources:

- Films: National Film Board of Canada
Link: <https://www.nfb.ca/>

Although these are not the only online databases students will be required to consult in order to complete their course work, a majority of the readings for this course are freely available to Queen's University students via these databases.

REFERENCE RESOURCES

There is no textbook required for this course. However, students are encouraged to visit the course reserves at the Queen's library (main floor, information desk) to consult some of the following texts on qualitative methods and human geography.

Iain Hay and Megan Cope, eds. 2021. *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography, 5th Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Clifford, N. J., Cope, M., Gillespie, T W., French, S. (eds). 2016. *Key Methods in Geography, Third edition*. London: SAGE.

EMAIL POLICY

Email is also the most effective form of communicating questions and other information to the instructor. Emails received after 6 p.m., EST, on weekdays will likely not receive a response until the following morning.

THE TIMES WE ARE LIVING IN

This syllabus provides a general structure of the course as planned, but it remains subject to alterations as we go along. My hope is to tailor some of the future readings to the interests of the group at large. Any changes to the readings, however, will be announced well in advance of the week for which they are assigned.

In addition, I ask that we all remain flexible in our approach to the work and to one another. COVID has affected us differently, and we must be always approach one another with respect and sensitivity. For my part, I try always to be open and responsive to student requests for additional assistance, whether it be clarification or help with course materials. I will also do my best to accommodate requests for extensions, where needed, provided the requests are reasonable. If at any point in the semester you feel you are getting behind in the readings or the assignments, I encourage you to reach out to me.

GRADING

Assignment	Weighting	Due Date
In-Class participation	20%	N/A
Discussion lead	15%	TBD
Book review	20%	03 October
Reflection(s)	15%	07 November
Final Paper	30%	21 November/05 December

DISCUSSION PARTICIPATION (20%)

We will meet each week to discuss readings and course materials. These will be informal discussions in which you are encouraged to share your thoughts and opinions of issues that get your attention, or to raise questions for the group at large. Evaluation is based on demonstration that you've read and considered the subject matter, as well as on your engagement in the discussion. I am more interested in the thoughtfulness – or quality – of discussion than the volume of it, and speaking often will not necessarily translate into a higher mark!

Not all students share the same comfort level speaking in group settings. If you are having difficulty with this format, please let me know and we may be able to arrange an alternative means for you to demonstrate your thinking and participation.

DISCUSSION LEAD (15%)

You will also be tasked with leading group discussion for one of the weeks throughout the course. Given the number of students and the total number of weeks, you will likely be paired with a fellow student to lead the discussion for that week. You will be expected to prepare several questions from the weekly readings, and to pose these questions to the group at large (possibly in smaller break-out groups). You may also propose activities for the group that engage students with issues or questions that you have raised.

ASSIGNMENT 1: BOOK REVIEW (20%)

Length: 2000-2500 words

Due: 03 October 2022

Writing book reviews is an excellent way to hone your reading and writing skills. For many students, book reviews also present early opportunities for publishing in academic journals – not to mention a source of free books!

For this assignment, you are to prepare a review of two books that address subjects that relate to this course. Unlike conventional multi-book reviews, however, here you are asked to compare books from two different generations of scholarship: one a contemporary work, one a “classic” of the field. (There is no firm definition of a “classic,” so the term is flexible!) While the focus of the assignment is more heavily weighted to the contemporary scholarship, you are expected to show how earlier works, debates, and trends have contributed to the more recent work.

ASSIGNMENT 2: REFLECTION (15%)

Length: 1500-2000 words

Due: 07 November 2022

For this assignment you are asked to reflect upon a reading, film, or other class resource that you have found to be particularly helpful or informative. The purpose of the assignment is to get away – somewhat, though not entirely – from academic “rigour,” and to reflect from personal experience. You may wish to reflect on a single reading or film that we’ve shared in class, or on a broader topic or theme more generally.

This assignment can be presented in one of several formats. You may choose a more conventional written essay, though you are also free to present your reflection as a podcast, oral presentation, short video/film, or by another means.

ASSIGNMENT 3: FINAL ASSIGNMENT (30%)

Length: TBD

Due: 21 November (Draft) / 05 December 2022

The terms and details of the final assignment will be discussed in-class early in the semester.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: 05 September

Labour Day

** No class this week

Week 2: 12 September

Qualitative Research: Methodology versus Method

[FILM] Sandiford, Mark. 2006. "Qallunnaat! Why White People Are Funny." National Film Board of Canada. Available online at: https://www.nfb.ca/film/qallunnaat_why_white_people_are_funny/

âpihtawikosisân. "Beyond territorial acknowledgments." *âpihtawikosisân: Law. Language. Culture*. September 23, 2016. Available online at: <https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/>

Stephen Marche. "Canada's Impossible Acknowledgment." *The New Yorker* 07 September 2016. Available online at: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/canadas-impossible-acknowledgment>

Week 3: 19 September

Feminist Geographies and Methodologies of Empowerment

Rose, Gillian. 1997. "Situating Knowledges: Positionality, Reflexivities, and Other Tactics." *Progress in Human Geography* 21(3): 305-320.

Sundberg, Juanita. 2003. "Masculinist Epistemologies and the Politics of Fieldwork in Latin Americanist Geography." *The Professional Geographer*, Vol. 55 (2): 180-190.

Sharp, Joanne. 2009. "Geography and gender: what belongs to feminist geography? Emotion, power and change." *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 33 (1): 74-80.

Week 4: 26 September

Indigenous Methodologies & Mapping

Smith, L. T. 2012. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. London: Zed Books.

Simpson, A. 2014. "Ethnographic Refusal, Anthropological Need," in *Mowhawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press): 95-114.

Potts, K and Brown, L. 2005. Becoming an anti-oppressive researcher. *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous and Anti-Oppressive Approaches*. In L. Brown and S. Strega (eds.), pp. 255-286. Toronto: Canada Scholars' Press.

Canada. 2018. Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans – TCPS 2. “Chapter 9 – Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada.” Available online: https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique_tcps2-eptc2_2018.html

Week 5: 03 October

Place in Research

Massey, D. 1994. “A Global Sense of Place,” in *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: 146-156.

Cresswell, T. 2004. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing.

Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie. 2015. *Place in Research: Theory, Methodology, and Methods*. New York: Routledge: 75-125.

Week 6: 10 October

Reading Week

** No class this week

Week 7: 17 October

Textual analysis & Discourse analysis

** Possibly no class this week

Loretta Lees. 2004. “Urban geography: discourse analysis and urban research.” *Progress in Human Geography* 28(1): 101–107.

TBD

Week 8: 24 October

Black Geographies

Ruth Wilson Gilmore. 2002. Fatal Couplings of Power and Difference: Notes on Racism and Geography. *The Professional Geographer* 54(1): 15-24.

McKittrick, Katherine. 2006. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Week 9: 31 October

Interviews and Oral Histories

Hitchings, Russell and Latham, Alan. 2020. “Qualitative methods I: On current conventions in interview research.” *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol.44 (2): 389-398.

TBD

Swamp Ward Oral History Project: <https://swampwardhistory.com/>

Week 10: 07 November

Historical Geography and Stories

Emilie Cameron. 2015. *Far Off Metal River*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Chamberlain, J. E. 2003. *If This Is Your Land, Where Are Your Stories?* Toronto: A. A. Knopf Canada.

Week 11: 14 November

Participatory Research & Ethnography

Tuck, E. and K. W. Yang. 2015. *Youth Resistance Research and Theories of Change*. New York: Routledge.

Castleden, H., Morgan, V. S., Lamb, C. 2012. "I spent the first year drinking tea": Exploring Canadian university researchers' perspectives on community-based participatory research involving Indigenous peoples. *The Canadian Geographer*, Vol. 56 (2): 160-179.

Week 12: 21 November

Documentary and Film

TBD

** Draft final assignment due

Week 13: 28 November

Knowledge Mobilization and Digital Humanities

TBD

Week 14: 05 December

Final Class - No readings

** Final assignment due

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Queen's students, faculty, administrators and staff therefore all have responsibilities for supporting and upholding the fundamental values of academic integrity. Academic integrity is constituted by the five core fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility (see <http://www.academicintegrity.org>) and by the quality of courage. These values and qualities are central to the building, nurturing and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with and adhering to the regulations concerning academic integrity. General information on academic integrity is available at Academic Integrity @ Queen's University (<https://www.queensu.ca/academicintegrity/>), along with Faculty or School specific information. Departures from academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification. Actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning, to loss of grades on an assignment, to failure of a course, to requirement to withdraw from the university.

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Accommodations for Disabilities

Queen's University is committed to achieving full accessibility for people with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you are a student with a disability and think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Queen's Student Accessibility Services (QSAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, including important deadlines, please visit the QSAS website at: <http://www.queensu.ca/studentwellness/accessibility-services/>