

Qualitative Research Methods in Criminology

Criminology 321-3 / Fall 2022

The Course

Crim 321 will begin with consideration of elements that characterize Qualitative approaches to research and the inferential logic they share with more Quantitative approaches. This will be followed by discussion of some of the types of research questions, objectives and relationships that tend to prevail in qualitative research; the unique challenges that Qualitative research poses for both ethics and ethics regulation; and an examination of the major methods that have dominated qualitative social science, including (1) interviews and oral histories; (2) observation and ethnography; and (3) qualitative analysis of video and textual sources.

The Professor

Your instructor is Dr. Ted Palys. The best ways to get in touch are to:

- Send an email to palys@sfu.ca
- Come by my office (SWH-10334) during office hours
- Leave an urgent message with the secretary in the Criminology General Office, at 778-782-3213

Designated office hours for the Fall semester are Thursday and Friday from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM. Other times can be arranged by appointment.

The easiest and most reliable way of getting in touch is via email. However, email should not be used to replace office hours: it should be limited to arranging an appointment or making queries that can be answered in a couple of sentences or fewer.

Teaching Assistants

The TAs for Crim 321 this semester are **Ashley Peckford** and **Juliana Babic**. They will inform you about office hours and modes of contact when you meet them in tutorial.

Readings

Your reading resources for the semester include:

- *Qualitative Research Methods (2nd edition)* by Monica Hennink, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey (2020).
- Readings accessible via the internet through links on the course web page

You are expected to do the assigned reading(s) ahead of the class/tutorial for which the reading is scheduled to be discussed, and to be ready to ask/answer questions and participate in discussion. The course web page is the place to see what readings are required when.

Lectures

We meet Thursdays from 10:30 AM to 12:20 PM in SWH 10041. Classes will mix lecture, discussion and audiovisual material. It is important that you keep up with the readings in order to be able to ask questions and partake in discussion. Lectures are not taped. However, copies of edited power-point notes will be made available through the course web page, normally within a day or two of class.

Tutorials

Tutorials will be devoted to responding to any questions you may have about the course readings, engaging in research “exercises” to develop your research skills, and discussing your term research projects. There are no “participation” points associated with attendance at tutorials but you are ill-advised to miss them.

Course Web Page

A course web page will be maintained throughout the semester that contains copies of any handouts, weekly powerpoint summaries, notices of general interest to the class, links related to the course, study questions for text chapters, and anything else that seems useful to place there. The course web page also will be the definitive source of where we are in the course and what topics we cover in class, so do check it periodically or whenever you are unsure of what to prepare. The URL is <http://www.sfu.ca/~palys/crim321.htm>.

Course Email

The course email address is *crim321-d1@sfu.ca*. The main ways that I will distribute information to the class (other than in the class itself) are by sending an email to the entire class via our course email and/or placing the information on the course web page. If your SFU email address is the one you normally use, no problem. However, if you use a server other than SFU (e.g., Shaw, Telus, Protonmail, Gmail), then you must arrange for your SFU email to be forwarded to the address of your choice.

Term Research Project

Doing a piece of research is the best way to understand the complexities that are involved and to show not only that you have learned the research techniques and general principles that we will cover in this course, but also that you understand how to apply them in the context of a particular study. You will do one semester-long **research project** in this course, which will contribute a total of **35%** to your final grade in the course.

Project Specifications

Your project this semester will be to do an oral history with at least one person on some topic of interest to you, and then to write up the results of that research. You will learn more about oral history and interviewing as the semester progresses, but note for now that your project must be primarily “**qualitative**” as understood within this course and that your core method must involve an **oral history interview**. The topic does not need to be explicitly "criminological;" the important thing is to find someone you can interview at some length and to get started early.

Proposal and Ethics Review

*Before you start formally collecting data, you need to submit a **1-2 page proposal**, due no later than **6 October**, that identifies as much as possible your topic area, the procedures you will follow, the sample this will involve, and any ethics issues you have considered in the formulation of your proposal. You will submit this to your professor electronically at palys@sfu.ca. Use any word processing program you wish, although MSWord is preferred. Before sending the file, please save it using the following filename convention: crim321_proposal_lastname_firstname so that I can archive and retrieve it easily.*

Approval of your proposal will be contingent on you showing that you understand how criminology's professional standards with respect to research ethics apply to your area of research, and that your research is consistent with those principles as well as SFU's ethics policy. In most cases, this will involve you explaining what you will do to ensure **informed consent**, that **confidentiality** considerations have been addressed, and that you have identified and addressed any of the **unique issues** that arise in the context of your particular research (e.g., conflict of interest; freedom of choice).

If your proposal is approved first time you submit, you will receive 5% toward your final grade in the course. If your proposal is not approved, you will have to re-submit the proposal as soon thereafter as you can, and I will return it to you as soon as I can after that. If approved on the second round, you will receive 4% toward your final grade in the course. If not approved, you will have to re-submit a third proposal worth 3%. This pattern will continue until you have submitted a proposal that is approved. Note that, according to the SFU ethics policy, ***you cannot begin formally gathering data until you have received ethics approval.***

The Final Research Report

The research report you submit at the end of the semester will be about **15** long -- double-spaced, in 12-pitch font – no more than **5000 words**. This excludes appendices, references, and any figures, tables, pictures or other graphic material. You can use ASA, APA or legal/historical style – the three most commonly used in criminology – but once you have chosen a style, use it consistently. Further guidelines will be posted on the course web page later in the semester and your projects will be a frequent topic for discussion at tutorials.

A hard copy of the final paper is **due** on the Monday after our last class, **05 December 2022**. We will give you submission instructions later in the semester. Late papers lose 10% per day. Make sure that you keep copies of any field notes, recording tapes and other research materials that

you accumulate in the course of doing your study until you have received a final grade in the course, as you may be asked to produce these to verify aspects of your research.

Exams

There will be two exams — a mid-term (worth 35% of your final grade) and a final (worth 30% of your final grade). The mid-term will be held in class on October 20th. The final will be scheduled by SFU/Admin some time after the semester begins. It will be a 2-hour exam held at a location to be announced, and will deal only with material covered in the second half of the course. Both exams will include material from the text, articles available through course page links, and lecture material.

Exceptional/Unanticipated Circumstances

Receiving the complete course schedule from the outset allows you to plan your time to meet all the course requirements. However, in any given semester, things sometimes happen that none of us could have anticipated, are beyond anyone's control, and preclude some person's ability to follow the course schedule. Exceptions can be made *only* in those unanticipated and exceptional circumstances as long as you: (a) inform me at the earliest possible opportunity what has happened; (b) provide appropriate and detailed documentation (normally a note from a medical authority) at the earliest possible opportunity that makes it clear the event meets the criteria and clearly precluded your ability to meet the class schedule; and (c) take steps to rectify the omission as soon as possible. Note that this material must be submitted to me directly; the TAs are not authorized to make decisions on those matters.

Evaluation Summary

Requirement	Due Date	Value
Research Proposal/Ethics Review	06 Oct	05%
Mid-Term Exam	20 Oct	35%
Term Research Project	05 Dec	30%
Final Exam	TBA	30%
TOTAL		100%