



**Brescia University College**  
**Department of Sociology**  
**The Craft of Inquiry**  
**Sociology 4496E**  
**Fall 2017/Winter 2018**

**Instructor:** Rebecca Collins-Nelsen

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**Class Times:** Wednesdays 2:30 pm – 5:30 pm in BR – UH252

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 1:25pm – 2:25 pm or by appointment   **Office:** UH-352

**Prerequisites:** Enrollment in fourth year of one of the Honors Specializations or Honors Double Majors in Sociology, Community Development, or Family Studies, or permission of the instructor.

**Course Description**

This course is designed to provide you with the tools to apply qualitative, ethnographic research and interpretive theory to a sociologically relevant topic of interest to you. Throughout the course you will be guided as you develop and execute your own sociological research project. In doing so, you will construct research questions and a research design, discuss and consider ethical issues, engage with relevant literature, and collect and analyse data in your chosen area of interest. These tasks will force you to critically engage with and combine relevant theories and methods discussed in class in order to produce an empirical project about our social world. As a discipline, sociology is rife with competing theoretical and methodological debates, and conducting first-hand research is a crucial step in developing and establishing your identities as sociologists.

**Learning Outcomes**

- Recognize, evaluate, and discuss various relevant issues about sociological theory and research (Critical Thinking)
- Understand the practical and ethical responsibilities that are involved with being a qualitative researcher (Social Awareness and Engagement; Self-Awareness and Engagement; Valuing)

- Formulate effective research questions that can be answered using qualitative research methods (Problem Solving)
- Conduct a literature review and design a research project (Inquiry and Analysis; Problem Solving)
- Gather and analyze ethnographic data using observational and in-depth interviewing techniques (Problem Solving; Valuing; Communication)
- Analyze data using qualitative coding techniques (Inquiry and Analysis; Critical Thinking)
- Construct conceptual ideas through inductive reasoning (Critical Thinking; Social Awareness and Engagement)
- Effectively communicate the findings from a research project in presentation and written form (Inquiry and Analysis; Communication)

### **Required Reading Materials**

1. Aurini, J, Heath, M, & Howells, S. 2016. *The How To of Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE Publications. **(AHH)**
2. Puddephatt, A., Shaffir, W. & Kleinknecht, S. (eds). 2009. *Ethnographies Revisited: Constructing Theory in the Field*. London and New York: Routledge. **(PSK)**
3. Articles and book chapters posted on OWL (See Course Schedule below for author names and OWL for a list with full citations)

*It is essential that readings are done prior to class as class discussions are designed under the assumption that students have read the required material.*

**Grading Scheme**

		<b>Applicable Brescia Competencies</b>
<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>	Communication, Critical Thinking, Self-Awareness and Development, Social Awareness and Engagement, Valuing
<b>Seminar Presentations</b>	<b>10%</b>	Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Social Awareness and Engagement, Communication, Inquiry and Analysis
<b>Research Proposal/Ethics Application</b>	<b>20%</b>	Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, Social Awareness and Engagement, Communication, Inquiry and Analysis
<b>Transcriptions and Reflections</b>	<b>20%</b>	Critical Thinking, Communication, Inquiry and Analysis, Self-Awareness and Development
<b>Research Presentation</b>	<b>10%</b>	Critical Thinking, Communication, Inquiry and Analysis
<b>Final Research Paper</b>	<b>30%</b>	Critical Thinking, Communication, Inquiry and Analysis

**Class Participation**

As an upper year course, this class will rely heavily on student discussion and participation. The class will be held in a seminar style in order to facilitate rich discussion about issues and debates in social science research. Discussions will be based on the assigned readings as well as on the sharing of personal experiences and reflections from our research projects. Together we will establish an open and respectful sharing environment.

**Seminar Presentations**

Twice throughout the year, each student will provide a brief presentation of a reading and facilitate a discussion based on the themes from that reading. The readings that are available for these presentations are italicized in the class schedule below. This will help you engage thoroughly with the reading material, steer discussion, and enable the seminar style of the classroom. Detailed information will be provided in class, including a discussion of the sign-up process.

**Research Proposal/Ethics Application – DUE Oct. 27th**

The research proposal and ethics application are the first step in what will eventually amount to the culminating research paper. The proposals will include an introduction, research questions and an annotated bibliography (with a minimum of 6 academic resources). You are also required to hand in an ethics application based on the UWO ethics form which will also include a copy of your letter of information, consent form, and interview guide. Although interpretive research requires constant reflection and adaptation it is helpful to have a well thought out research plan before entering the field. This will also allow me to provide initial feedback in order to ensure that your

proposed research project is appropriate and manageable. More details will be provided in class and posted on OWL. Please upload a copy to turnitin.com and bring a hardcopy to class.

### **Transcripts and Reflections – DUE Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> and Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>**

You will be asked to submit interview and field note transcripts, along with methodological, conceptual, and substantive reflections, twice throughout the year. This will allow you to stay on track in terms of a timeline for this project and for me to further provide feedback as your project unfolds. The expectation is that you will submit 3 transcripts per due date (i.e., 3 interview transcripts, 3 field note transcripts, or a combination of 3 interview and field note transcripts).

### **Research Presentation – GIVEN on Mar. 28<sup>th</sup> and Apr. 4<sup>th</sup>**

The presentations will take place in class on Mar. 28<sup>th</sup> and Apr. 4<sup>th</sup>. We will follow a conference like format where each student will get 15 minutes to present their research paper, followed by a 5 minute questions and answer period. This will allow you to develop conference presentation skills in a supportive environment and may also help you identify areas in your research that may require further clarification for you final research paper.

### **Final Research Paper**

Your final research paper will take on the format of an academic journal article. As such, it will include an abstract, introduction, literature review, methods, findings, conclusion, and references. Your paper should follow ASA style guidelines. Please upload a copy to turnitin.com and bring a hardcopy to class.

\*As you will learn in class, good research on the social world requires constant reflection and consideration. Thus, even though the course components are set up in steps the expectation is that you think of this as a continuing and on-going project. If you have run into a barrier of any kind you need to let me know right away so that we can figure out a plan to ensure that the research is not stalled in any way. There will be a 5% late penalty per day for any course component that is handed in late. Detailed expectations for each step will be provided in class and posted on OWL.

**Course Schedule***Note: This schedule is subject to minor changes*

<b>Fall Semester</b>			
<b>Day</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Seminar Presentations and Due Dates</b>
Sept. 13 <sup>th</sup>	Course Overview and Introduction	None	None
Sept. 20 <sup>th</sup>	Interpretive Research	1. AHH Ch.1	None
Sept. 27 <sup>st</sup>	Research Questions and Designs	1. AHH Ch.2 2. AHH Ch.3	None
Oct. 4 <sup>th</sup>	Ethical Issues	1. <i>Lenza (2004)</i> 2. <i>Campos(2015)</i>	Seminar Presentations
<b>Oct. 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Fall Reading Week</b>	<b>No Readings</b>	None
Oct. 18 <sup>th</sup>	Positionality and Reflexivity	1. <i>McCorkel and Myers (2003)</i> 2. <i>Smith (Ch.2)</i> 3. <i>Band-Winterstein, Doron, and Naim (2014)</i>	Seminar Presentations
Oct. 27 <sup>th</sup>	Interpretive Ethnography and Epistemology	1. Edwards (1990) 2. Denzin (1997)	<b>Research Proposal and Ethics Application DUE</b>
Nov. 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Field Observation - Entering the Field	1. AHH Ch.6 2. <i>Bettie (2003)</i> 3. <i>Baca Zinn (2001)</i>	None
Nov. 9 <sup>th</sup>	Field Observation – Making Observations	1. <i>Khan and Jerolmack (2013)</i> 2. <i>Bacchiddu (2004)</i>	Seminar Presentations
Nov. 16 <sup>th</sup>	In-Depth Interviewing Part 1	1. AHH Ch.4 2. <i>Venkatesh (2008)</i>	None
Nov. 23 <sup>rd</sup>	In-Depth Interviewing Part 2	1. <i>Anderson and Jack (1991)</i> 2. <i>Devault (2004)</i>	Seminar Presentations
Nov. 30 <sup>th</sup>	Probing, Content Mapping and Content Mining	1. Rhodes (2000) 2. Ricthie and Lewis (2003)	None
Dec. 6 <sup>th</sup>	Group Discussion: Checking In with Each Other	1. Becker (1967)	<b>Data Transcript #1 DUE</b>
<b>Winter Semester</b>			
Jan. 10 <sup>th</sup>	Theorizing and Conceptual Development	1. PSK Intro.	Seminar Presentations

Jan. 17 <sup>th</sup>	Grounded Theory	1. <i>PSK – Karp</i> 2. <i>PSK – Chamaz</i>	Seminar Presentations
Jan. 24 <sup>th</sup>	Sensitizing Concepts	1. <i>PSK – Faulkner</i> 2. <i>PSK – Albas and Albas</i>	Seminar Presentations
Jan. 31 <sup>st</sup>	Extending Theoretical Frames	1. <i>PSK – Denzin</i> 2. <i>PSK- Pinch</i>	Seminar Presentations
Feb. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Conceptualizing Community and Social Organization	1. <i>PSK – Heilman</i> 2. <i>PSK – Adler and Adler</i>	Seminar Presentations
Feb. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Analyzing Ethnographic Data and Writing a Research Paper	1. AHH Ch.8 2. AHH Ch.9	<b>Data Transcript #2 DUE</b>
<b>Feb. 21<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>Winter Reading Week</b>	<b>No Readings</b>	<b>None</b>
Feb. 28 <sup>th</sup>	Challenging the Established Wisdom	1. <i>PSK – Loseke</i> 2. <i>PSK – Dunn</i>	Seminar Presentations
Mar. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Theorizing from Alternative Data	1. <i>PSK – Richardson</i> 2. <i>PSK- Pawluch</i>	Seminar Presentations
Mar. 14 <sup>th</sup>	Work Session/Discussion	No Readings	None
Mar. 21 <sup>st</sup>	Leaving the Field	1. Shaffir and Stebbins (1991) 2. Shaffir and Stebbins (1991)	Seminar Presentations
Mar. 28 <sup>th</sup>	Presentations	No Readings	Research Presentations
Apr. 4 <sup>th</sup>	Presentations	No Readings	Research Presentation
Apr. 11 <sup>th</sup>	Course Wrap-Up and Discussion	No Readings	<b>Final Research Paper DUE</b>
<b>Final Exam</b> during final exam period – Date and Location set by Registrar’s Office			

## 2017-18 BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

### 1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student’s overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation for illness will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Minor ailments typically treated by over-the-counter medications will not normally be accommodated. Documentation shall be submitted as soon as possible to the student’s Academic Advisor indicating the period of illness and when the student should be able to resume academic responsibilities. Students must submit their documentation along with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested no later than two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities.

Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are **not** grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded from: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf). The student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full policy on requesting accommodation due to illness can be viewed at:

<http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017/pg117.html>

## 2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/> or the list of official dates <http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017/pg7.html> ). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory (<http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017/pg130.html> )

## 3. ABSENCES

**Short Absences:** If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

**Extended Absences:** If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

## 4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf).

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

### **Plagiarism:**

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

### **Computer-marked Tests/exams:**

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

## **5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS**

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Student Academic Appeals under Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar (<http://westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2017/pg112.html>).

Note that final course marks are not official until the Academic Dean has reviewed and signed the final grade report for the course. If course marks deviate from acceptable and appropriate standards, the Academic Dean may require grades to be adjusted to align them with accepted grading practices ([http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/evaluation\\_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/evaluation_undergrad.pdf) and [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/exam/finalgrades.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/finalgrades.pdf)).

## **6. PREREQUISITES**



Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisite(s).

## **7. SUPPORT**

### **Support Services**

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar-services/>. The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>.

### **Mental Health and Wellness**

Students may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to your learning, such as increased anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, feeling down or lost, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. Services are available to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. You can learn more about mental health and wellness at Brescia at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/mental-health-wellness/>. Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental\_Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### **Sexual Violence**

All members of the Brescia University College community have a right to work and study in an environment that is free from any form of sexual violence. Brescia University College recognizes that the prevention of, and response to, Sexual Violence is of particular importance in the university environment. Sexual Violence is strictly prohibited and unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Brescia is committed to preventing Sexual Violence and creating a safe space for anyone in the Brescia community who has experienced Sexual Violence.

If you or someone you know has experienced any form of Sexual Violence, you may access resources at <http://brescia.uwo.ca/life/sexual-violence/>.

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Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University of Western Ontario.