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**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS**  
**SOCI 3240 | Fall 2020**  
**Long Session Online Course**

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### **Course Description and Objectives**

This course provides an introduction to research using qualitative 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 developing data literacy and becoming a critical consumer of data. We will conclude this course by considering the many uses of qualitative research methods outside the academy.

### **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 or 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 posted on Canvas or available through the UNT Library website.

## Course Requirements & Grades

The final grade in the course has different ways to evaluate student learning. First, it includes short weekly quizzes (13%) and two exams (10%). Your final grade also includes four data collection assignments (40%), three workshops (12%), and regular discussions to measure your engagement, reading, and participation (25%).

A quick look at the breakdown shows you what is most important in this class. The majority of your grade will be based on the quality of your hands-on participation through assignments, discussions, and the workshops. These make up nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  (77%) of your final grade. Memorization and test-taking, measured through quizzes and exams, make up just under  $\frac{1}{4}$  of your final grade (23%).

Type	Details	Points	%
Exams	2 x 50 points ea.	100	10%
Quizzes	13 x 10 points ea.	130	13%
Discussions	10 x 25 points ea.	250	25%
Workshops	3 x 40 points ea.	120	12%
Assignments	4 x 100 points ea.	400	40%
Total		1,000 points	100%

The following scale is used to calculate final grades:

A = 895-1,000  
B = 795-899  
C = 695-799  
D = 595-699  
F = <595

### Exams

Two exams will cover both the readings and other materials presented in class. Each exam is worth 5% of your grade and all three comprise of 10% of your final grade. Please mark your calendars for the following dates: September 26 and November 7. The dates of these exams will not change.

Exams will be a combination of multiple choice, matching, true/false, and short answer. Students can use their notes and the book. The exams are timed (90 minutes) so you will need to have

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already completed the readings, studied the material, and organized your notes before you start. I highly recommend you take the exam on a computer, and not a smart phone. To account for technical difficulties, you will have two attempts to take the exam.

None of the exams are cumulative. There is no final exam in this class.

## **Quizzes**

Students will complete weekly comprehension quizzes to assess learning objectives and practice for the exams. Quizzes will review both the readings and other materials presented in class. Each quiz is worth 10 points, and all quizzes in total constitute 13% of your grade.

Like the exams, quizzes will be a combination of multiple choice, matching, true/false, and short answer. The quizzes are open-book and open-note. Quizzes are untimed but students get just one attempt to complete them. You will be able to see the correct answers after you submit them.

If you miss the due date, you can complete the quiz for partial credit (50% of the score you earn) until the last day of class.

## **Discussions**

Each week, students will contribute to a discussion board, which is used to assess student participation and engagement in the course. Discussions are assessed on both a post that responds directly to the prompt and two "minor posts" for peer feedback. More details on the requirements and evaluation can be found on Canvas.

## **Assignments**

There are four assignments in this course, which will allow you to collect and then analyze your own qualitative data. Each are worth 100 points, and will be graded according to a rubric, which you can view on Canvas.

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

## **Getting Help**

### Technical Assistance

Part of working in the online environment involves dealing with the inconveniences and frustration that can arise when technology breaks down or does not perform as expected. Here at UNT we have a Student Help Desk that you can contact for help with Canvas or other technology issues.

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**UIT Help Desk:** <http://www.unt.edu/helpdesk/index.htm>

**Email:** [helpdesk@unt.edu](mailto: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)  
(<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10554-4212710328>)

### Student Support Services

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

### Academic Support Services

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

## **Course Policies**

### Communication Policy

The instructor and TA(s) 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. Students are expected to regularly check

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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, both online and in the classroom. 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.

Student posts engaging in unacceptable behavior will be deleted from Canvas and result in a failing grade for the assignment. 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) (<https://deanofstudents.unt.edu/conduct>) to learn more.

### Assignment Policies

All due dates for assignments can be found on Canvas. Students should follow the directions for each assignment as stated online.

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) (<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.

### Late Work

Under ordinary circumstances, no makeup exams will be given and no late work will be accepted. There is one exception. You can complete the quiz for partial credit (50% of the score you earn) until the last day of class.

Exams may be rescheduled only under exceptional circumstances (written verification of disability, illness, or emergency) or with *prior* instructor consent. Please let me know as soon as

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possible if you need to reschedule an exam. The dates for all exams listed here will not change. Students requiring accommodations for exams should speak with me after obtaining an accommodation form from the Office of Disability Access.

### 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**

### COVID-19

This is an exceptional time in our lives, and a unique moment to be pursuing a college degree. If you are struggling in this class as a result of direct or indirect pressure related to COVID-19 and/or living life during a pandemic, please reach out to me ASAP so I can make accommodations.

UNT is also providing many resources to help us stay safe, which I hope you find useful. Here's a partial list of resources:

- [Personal safety practices](#)
- [Guidance for self-monitoring](#)
- [COVID-19 reporting resources](#)
- [Counseling and mental health services](#)

Finally, UNT has also established a COVID Hotline to help community members report and understand COVID-19 symptoms, testing information and/or results, as well as receive guidance on actions they may need to take following potential exposure. Individuals also can get help with questions related to COVID-19's impact on our university operations.

- 844-366-5892
- [COVID@unt.edu](mailto:COVID@unt.edu)

### 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/) (<https://disability.unt.edu/>).

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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) (<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) (<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) (<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.

You are 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.

## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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](https://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) (<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](mailto: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/) (<http://spot.unt.edu/>) or email [spot@unt.edu](mailto: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/) (<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.

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## **Course Overview:**

### **Module 1: What are qualitative methods?**

- Week 1: Introduction
- Week 2: Topic selection
- Week 3: Theoretical foundations

### **Module 2: Research design, evaluation, and ethics**

- Week 4: Research design and evaluation
- Week 5: Ethics and the IRB
  - Exam 1

### **Module 3: Data collection: Ethnography**

- Week 6: Ethnography
- Week 7: Writing ethnographic field notes (**Data collection workshop**)
- Week 8: Reflexivity, positionality and safety

### **Module 4: Data collection: Interviews**

- Week 9: In-depth interviews
- Week 10: Conducting an interview (**Data collection workshop**)
- Week 11: Focus groups
  - Exam 2

### **Module 5: Coding and data analysis**

- Week 12: Content analysis
- Week 13: **Coding workshop**
- Week 14: Writing with data

### **Conclusions**

- Week 15: Qualitative research in and beyond the academy