

**SOCI 6004**  
**Advanced Qualitative Methods**  
**Spring 2025**

Department of Sociology  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Instructor: Prof. Jin Sun  
Office/Office hour: Sino Building 429, Wednesday 2:15 pm-3:15 pm  
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Time/Location: Sino Building 429, Wednesday 11:30 am-2:15 pm  
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**Course Description:**

In this course, doctoral students will learn to investigate the society using a variety of qualitative methods in a way that gives voice to the people we are studying. The goal is to let students experience the ways that qualitative sociologists do research. Prior knowledge of qualitative methods is required for this class. Students should have a workable knowledge in main qualitative methods.

**Learning Outcome**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Develop skills around how to collect, manage, analyze, and interpret qualitative research data (LO1),
- Formulate research questions and choose a qualitative research design to examine those questions (LO2),
- Understand and meet the standards for conducting survey and behavioral research ethics (SBRE) (LO3), and,
- Design a research proposal using in-depth interview, focus group interview, participant observation, fieldwork, or other qualitative methods (LO4).

**Course Registration and Add/Drop Policy**

Students seeking a course waiver shall consult Ph.D. supervisors and obtain approval from the graduate division head before registering. Auditing is not permitted.

CU Students: “Students shall add/drop courses for each term during the add/drop period of respective programmes, normally in the first 2 weeks of each academic term.”

<https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/page/CourseSelectionandAddDrop2425>

Non-CU students: “You are only allowed to add/drop any subjects within the first two weeks of commencement of each term, i.e. 6-20 January 2025 for 2024-25, Term 2.”

<https://www.gs.cuhk.edu.hk/page/CrossInstitCrsRPg>

## Assessment:

- A) Attend all class sessions (10%)
- B) Contribute to weekly discussions in W2-11 (30%; 3% for each): summarizing how leading scholars most relevant to your proposal address methods & data
- C) Research Proposal (55%): The main expectation is to produce a research proposal based on preliminary qualitative research conducted during the semester.

The proposal (50%) should include the following **seven elements**:

- 1) A research question, supported by some references to the literature. What is the puzzle? What is this a case of? What is the research question?
- 2) Engaging the readers with the literature. What literature are you speaking to or adding a contribution to? What analytical tools and data do you use to do so?
- 3) A description of the research site, including people and activities involved.
- 4) A description of your data and data-gathering processes
- 5) A description of your method for gaining access to the site and establishing field relationships. Observer effects on the data. Ethical problems encountered.
- 6) A description of your approach to data analysis.
- 7) Your findings. How do the findings relate to your problem statement? Do they confirm, refute, or suggest a reformulation of the research question? What do these early findings suggest about what you would need to do for this research?

Please present your proposal **(5%) in W13.**

The final proposal should be submitted via VeriGuide (in .docx format) in W14. It should not exceed 10 pages in length (single-spaced), excluding appendixes and bibliography.

- D) 12 Steps (S) that lead up to the final research proposal (5%).
  - S1: Self-Introduction (0%)
  - S2: What is Qualitative Sociology? (0%)
  - S3: Complete the SBRE training **(5%)**; Understand *how to use Qualitative Data*
  - S4: Present a Research Plan in this semester (0%)
  - S5: try to define a tentative research question (0%)
  - S6: Prepare Interview Questions (0%)
  - S7: structural design (0%)
  - S8: comparative study? (0%)
  - S9: historical/comparative-historical study? (0%)
  - S10: qualitative data analysis/quantifying data (0%)
  - S11: presenting qualitative findings (0%)
  - S12: publishing qualitative work (0%)

Use of generative AI tools

Approach 1 - All use of AI tools is prohibited in assignments and assessment tasks.

## **Grade Description:**

- **A:** Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
- **A-:** Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- **B+/B/B-:** Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, with high performance on some compensating for less satisfactory performance on others.
- **C+/C/C-:** Satisfactory performance on most learning outcomes, with possible minor weaknesses.
- **D+/D:** Barely satisfactory performance on several learning outcomes.
- **F:** Unsatisfactory performance on several learning outcomes, or failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

**[Note: B- or lower for any use of generative AI tools]**

## **Statement on Academic Honesty**

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

For the final proposal, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures. Each student should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions should there be any plagiarized contents irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed directly or indirectly to the plagiarized contents.

For the final proposal that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.

Assignments without the properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide (<https://academic2.veriguide.org/portalcuhk/>).

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submission. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

**Recommended Readings:**

Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2014. Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. 7th edition. Pearson.

[https://letrunghieutvu.yolasite.com/resources/w-lawrence-neuman-social-research-methods\\_-qualitative-and-quantitative-approaches-pearson-education-limited-2013.pdf](https://letrunghieutvu.yolasite.com/resources/w-lawrence-neuman-social-research-methods_-qualitative-and-quantitative-approaches-pearson-education-limited-2013.pdf)

Dunleavy, Patrick. 2003. Authoring a PhD: How to Plan, Draft, Write and Finish a Doctoral Thesis or Dissertation. Palgrave Macmillan. [Online access via CUHK library](#). (帕特里克·邓利维. 博士论文写作技巧. 出版社: 东北财经大学出版社. 2009) [Baidu Pan]

**Course Schedule**

1. Introduction, 8/1
2. Research design/paradigm in qualitative sociology, 15/1
3. Research ethics in qualitative sociology, 22/1
4. Research plan, process & causation in qualitative sociology, 5/2
5. Research question in qualitative sociology, 12/2
6. Interview questions & qualitative methods, 19/2
7. Sampling, sampling methods and structural analysis, 26/2
8. Comparative method in qualitative sociology, 12/3
9. Historical/Comparative-Historical methods, 19/3
10. Qualitative data analysis and quantifying data, 26/3
11. Presenting qualitative findings, 2/4
12. Publishing qualitative work, 9/4
13. Final presentation, 16/4

## Week 1: Introduction

S1: Self-introduction. Describe your proposed topic for the final proposal, your proposed fieldwork site(s), and your methods, data and supervisor(s) for the dissertation. Please fill the information in the [online survey](#) (i.e., the session(s) to lead discussions, the Sample article/monograph for the rest of the semester). (0%)

### Optional Reading:

金耀基. 2023 (1963). 從傳統到現代:中國現代化與中國現代文明的建構.中華書局  
周晓虹. 2021. 重建中国社会学: 40 位社会学家口述实录 (1979—2019). 北京: 商务印书馆.

金耀基: 探索现代中国的伟大转型

李沛良: 中国社会学的重建与“两岸三地”的交流

赵鼎新: 在动荡的时代中锚定历史

周雪光: 本土与国际间的“越界旅行”

周敏: 从唐人街开启的移民研究生涯

谢宇: 格物致知, 观世穷理

张静. 2019. 中国社会学四十年. 北京: 商务印书馆.

王淑英、李勁華、張德勝. 2023: 三代人. 商務印書館 (香港)

## Week 2: Research Design/Paradigm in Qualitative Sociology

S2: What is Qualitative Sociology?

Please choose a representative article or monograph of your supervisor(s) (or equivalent) using qualitative methods [hereafter “the Sample”]. In **7-8 ppt slides**, please identify and present its **seven elements** briefly for 10-15 minutes. (5%)

赵鼎新. 2021. 什么是社会学. 三联书店. 总论 [Baidu Pan]

## Week 3: Research Ethics in Qualitative Sociology

S3: Complete the SBRE online training (5%). Discuss the learnings and findings of the research ethics in the Sample. How did the Sample use *Qualitative Data*? Did any data involve potential research ethics, and how did the author(s) of the Sample solve or avoid it? (i.e., Element #5) (0%)

Ali, Syed and Philip Cohen, eds. 2016. “How to do Ethnography Right,” Contexts  
<https://contexts.org/blog/how-to-do-ethnography-right/>

## Week 4: Research Plan, Process & Causation in Qualitative Sociology

S4: Present what is the research plan in the Sample for 5-10 minutes. Present a proposed **Research Plan** (and/or any elements) for your proposal for 5-10 minutes. This is to preliminarily explain your plan throughout the semester in **3-5 slides**. (0%)

Dunleavy (2003). Chapter 1.

Strategies for Qualitative Interviews:

[https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/interview\\_strategies.pdf](https://sociology.fas.harvard.edu/files/sociology/files/interview_strategies.pdf)

Ng, Kwai Hang, and Xin He. 2017. [Methodological Appendix](#). In *Embedded Courts: Judicial Decision-Making in China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### **Week 5: Research Question in Qualitative Sociology**

S5: present what is the research question/proposed theory in the Sample for 5-10 minutes.

You may present its key theoretical concepts/framework/debates. (0%)

Then, try to define a tentative Research Question (0%). Propose some possibilities for the research topic, setting, scene, locale, etc. Be prepared to present your tentative research question for 5-10 minutes to the class for discussion. Addressing the definition to Research Question, please refer to 2.1 at Dunleavy (2003).

Ng, Kwai Hang, and Xin He. 2017. [Chapter 1](#). In *Embedded Courts: Judicial Decision-Making in China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### **Week 6: Interview Questions & Qualitative Methods**

S6: present what are interview questions in the Sample for 5-10 minutes. You may also present its empirical data, informants, sources of data/interview/survey, how to access into the fieldwork, and interview questions or focus group questions used in the field sites. You need to elaborate how these questions are relevant to the research question/ key theoretical concepts/framework in the sample.

Then, present your preliminary interview questions for 5-10 minutes. We will further discuss the interview questions of each student in class. You may need to present informants, sources of data/interview/survey, how to access into the fieldwork, and interview questions or focus group questions used in the field sites. You need to elaborate how these questions are relevant to the research question/ key theoretical concepts/framework in your proposed study.

赵鼎新. 2021. 质性社会学研究的差异性发问和发问艺术. 社会学研究. [Blackboard]

贺欣. 2021. 街头的研究者——法律与社会科学笔记. 北京大学出版社.

### **Week 7: Sampling, Sampling Methods and Structural Analysis**

S7: present how the empirical section in the Sample is structured and supported by sampling analysis of empirical evidence for 5-10 minutes. (0%)

Then, present how your preliminary article is planned to be structured and supported by sampling analysis of empirical evidence for 5-10 minutes. We will further discuss the research's structural design for each student in class. (0%)

Zhou, Xueguang. 2022. *The Logic of Governance in China: an organizational approach*. Cambridge University Press. (周雪光. 2017. 中国国家治理的制度逻辑)

[https://web.stanford.edu/~xgzhou/zhou\\_book2017.pdf](https://web.stanford.edu/~xgzhou/zhou_book2017.pdf)

Dunleavy (2003). Chapter 3.

赵鼎新. 2021. 什么是社会学. 三联书店. 第二章 [Baidu Pan]

### **Week 8: Comparative Method in Qualitative Sociology**

S8: present how the empirical section in the Sample (or an article or monograph in the list of references at the end of the syllabus) conducted a comparative study for 5-10 minutes. (0%)

Then, discuss whether a comparative study is planned to be used in your project for 5-10 minutes. (0%)

Conduct a Round of Preliminary Interviews and Revise your Interview Questions.

Recruit 5-10 adults/friends with whom you don't know their answers for an open-ended interview, each for 30 minutes. It is preferred to select pilot interviewees with the setting that will be the subject of your final report. Record your interview with them and keep a field note diary. Revise interview questions for your proposal.

Liu, Sida, and Hongqi Wu. 2016. "The Ecology of Organizational Growth: Chinese Law Firms in the Age of Globalization." *American Journal of Sociology* 122(3): 798-837.

Halliday, Terence C., and Bruce G. Carruthers. "The recursivity of law: Global norm making and national lawmaking in the globalization of corporate insolvency regimes." *American Journal of Sociology* 112.4 (2007): 1135-1202.

### **Week 9: Historical/Comparative-Historical Methods in Qualitative Sociology**

S9: present how the empirical section in the Sample (or an article or monograph in the list of references at the end of the syllabus) conducted a historical/comparative-historical study for 5-10 minutes. (0%)

Then, discuss whether a historical/comparative-historical study is planned to be used in your project for 5-10 minutes. (0%)

Present the reflection and preliminary findings in the Preliminary Interview. (0%)

Conduct a Round of Interviews. Revise your Interview Questions and draft proposal.

Steinmetz, George. "The Colonial State as a Social Field: Ethnographic Capital and Native Policy in the German Overseas Empire before 1914." *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 4 (2008): 589-612.

### **Week 10: Qualitative Data Analysis and Quantifying Data**

S10: present how the empirical section in the Sample (or an article or monograph in the list of references at the end of the syllabus) conducted a Qualitative data analysis or treated with quantifying data for 5-10 minutes. (0%)

Then, discuss whether Qualitative data analysis or quantifying data is planned to be used in your proposal for 5-10 minutes. Analyze your qualitative data and elaborate any difficulties you encountered in qualitative data analysis in the presentation. (0%)

Michelson, Ethan. "Lawyers, political embeddedness, and institutional continuity in China's transition from socialism." *American Journal of Sociology* 113.2 (2007): 352-414.

Michelson, Ethan. "Decoupling: Marital violence and the struggle to divorce in China." *American journal of sociology* 125.2 (2019): 325-381.

### **Week 11: Presenting Qualitative Findings**

S11: present how the empirical section in the Sample (or an article or monograph in the list of references at the end of the syllabus) presented qualitative findings for 5-10 minutes. (0%)

Then, discuss how such skills are planned to be used in your proposal for 5-10 minutes. You may also present some of your qualitative data and elaborate any difficulties you encountered in presenting qualitative data. (0%)

Dunleavy (2003). Chapters 4 & 7.

Liu, Nicole Ning, Carlos Wing-Hung Lo, Xueyong Zhan, and Wei Wang. "Campaign-style enforcement and regulatory compliance." *Public Administration Review* 75, no. 1 (2015): 85-95.

### **Week 12: Publishing Qualitative Work**

S12: briefly discuss about how to publish qualitative work. (0%)

Please use this week to further revise your research proposal.

Dunleavy (2003). Chapter 9.

Shaffer, G., 2021. *Emerging powers and the world trading system: the past and future of international economic law*. Cambridge University Press.

Block-Lieb, Susan, and Terence C. Halliday. *Global lawmakers: International organizations in the crafting of world markets*. Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Liu, Sida, and Terence C. Halliday. *Criminal defense in China: The politics of lawyers at work*. Cambridge University Press, 2016.

### **Week 13: Final Presentation**

Present your proposal (5%).

***Credit: Qualitative Social Analysis by Michèle Lamont; Research Design and Proposal Writing by Graziella Moraes Silva.***

***Note: This syllabus is subject to further adjustments and amendments, which will be communicated via email. Please make sure to check your email regularly before each session.***



### List of References:

- Andreas, Joel. "The Structure of Charismatic Mobilization: A Case Study of Rebellion during the Chinese Cultural Revolution." *American Sociological Review* 72, no. 3 (2007): 434–58.
- Benavot, Aaron, Yun-Kyung Cha, David Kamens, John W. Meyer, and Suk-Ying Wong. "Knowledge for the Masses: World Models and National Curricula, 1920-1986." *American Sociological Review* 56, no. 1 (1991): 85–100.
- Block-Lieb, Susan, and Terence C. Halliday. *Global lawmakers: International organizations in the crafting of world markets*. Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Braithwaite, J. and P. Drahos. *Global Business Regulation*. Cambridge University Press, 2000
- Chan, Cheris Shun-ching. "Invigorating the content in social embeddedness: An ethnography of life insurance transactions in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 115.3 (2009): 712-754.
- Guthrie, Douglas. "Between markets and politics: Organizational responses to reform in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 102.5 (1997): 1258-1304.
- Halliday, Terence C., and Bruce G. Carruthers. "The recursivity of law: Global norm making and national lawmaking in the globalization of corporate insolvency regimes." *American Journal of Sociology* 112.4 (2007): 1135-1202.
- Halliday, T. and Carruthers, B., 2009. *Bankrupt: global lawmaking and systemic financial crisis*. Stanford University Press.
- He, Xin. 2021. *Divorce in China: Institutional Constraints and Gendered Outcomes*. New York: New York University Press.
- He, Xin, and Jing Feng. 2021. "Unfamiliarity and Procedural Justice: Litigants' Attitudes Toward Civil Justice in Southern China." *Law & Society Review* 55(1): 104-138.
- Hurst, William. 2009. *The Chinese worker after socialism*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hurst, William. 2018. *Ruling before the law: the politics of legal regimes in China and Indonesia*. Cambridge University Press.
- Mallard, Grégoire. "Crafting the nuclear regime complex (1950–1975): dynamics of harmonization of opaque treaty rules." *European Journal of International Law* 25.2 (2014): 445-472.
- Mallard, Grégoire, and Jin Sun. "Viral Governance: How Unilateral US Sanctions Changed the Rules of Financial Capitalism." *American Journal of Sociology* 128.1 (2022): 144-188.
- Ng, Kwai Hang. *The Common Law in Two Voices: Language, Law and the Post-Colonial Predicament in Hong Kong*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009
- Ng, Kwai Hang, and Xin He. "The institutional and cultural logics of legal commensuration: blood money and negotiated justice in China." *American journal of sociology* 122.4 (2017): 1104-1143.
- Otis, Eileen M. "Beyond the Industrial Paradigm: Market-Embedded Labor and the Gender Organization of Global Service Work in China." *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 1 (2008): 15–36.
- Shaffer, G., 2021. *Emerging powers and the world trading system: the past and future of international economic law*. Cambridge University Press.

- Spires, Anthony J. "Contingent symbiosis and civil society in an authoritarian state: Understanding the survival of China's grassroots NGOs." *American journal of sociology* 117.1 (2011): 1-45.
- Steinmetz, George. "The Colonial State as a Social Field: Ethnographic Capital and Native Policy in the German Overseas Empire before 1914." *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 4 (2008): 589–612.
- Sun, Yanfei. "The rise of Protestantism in post-Mao China: State and religion in historical perspective." *American Journal of Sociology* 122.6 (2017): 1664-1725.
- Wang, Liping. "From Masterly Brokers to Compliant Protégées: The Frontier Governance System and the Rise of Ethnic Confrontation in China-Inner Mongolia, 1900–1930." *American Journal of Sociology* 120.6 (2015): 1641-1689.
- Watters, John K. and Patrick Biernacki, 1989. "Targeted Sampling: Options for the Study of Hidden Populations." *Social Problems* 36 (4): 416-430.
- Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press.
- Xu, Xiaohong. "Belonging Before Believing: Group Ethos and Bloc Recruitment in the Making of Chinese Communism." *American Sociological Review* 78, no. 5 (2013): 773–96.
- Yang, Dali L. 1996. *Calamity and Reform in China: State, Rural Society, and Institutional Change since the Great Leap Famine*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Yang, Fenggang, and Helen Rose Ebaugh. "Transformations in New Immigrant Religions and Their Global Implications." *American Sociological Review* 66, no. 2 (2001): 269–88.
- Zhang, Yang. "Why Elites Rebel: Elite Insurrections during the Taiping Civil War in China." *American Journal of Sociology* 127.1 (2021): 60-101.
- Zhao, Dingxin. 2015. *The Confucian-Legalist State: A New Theory of Chinese History*. Oxford University Press.
- Zhou, Min. "Growing up American: The challenge confronting immigrant children and children of immigrants." *Annual review of sociology* 23, no. 1 (1997): 63-95.
- Zhou, Min. *Chinatown: The socioeconomic potential of an urban enclave*. Temple University Press, 2010.

### **Optional reading for qualitative methods:**

- Abend, Gabriel. 2013. "Styles of Causal Thought: An Empirical Investigation." *American Journal of Sociology*. 119 (3): 602-654.
- Deluca, Stefanie, Susan Clampet-Lundquist and Kathryn Edin. "Want to Improve your Qualitative Research? Try Using Representative Sampling and Working in Teams"
- Lamont, Michèle. 2009. *How Professors Think*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lamont, Michèle, and Patricia White. 2008. *The Evaluation of Systematic Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences*. National Science Foundation.
- Lamont, Michèle, and Ann Swidler. 2014. "Methodological Pluralism and the Possibilities and Limits of Interviewing". *Qualitative Sociology* 37 (2):153-171.
- Luker, Kristin. 2008. *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 99-190.
- Rubin, Herbert and Irene Rubin. 2005. "Designing Main Questions and Probes." Pp. 152-72 in *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data* (second edition). California: Sage.

### **Optional reading for computational qualitative methods:**

- Nelson, Laura K. "Computational grounded theory: A methodological framework." *Sociological Methods & Research* 49, no. 1 (2020): 3-42.
- Radford, Jason, and David Lazer. "Big data for sociological research." *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Sociology* (2019): 417-443.
- Friese, Susanne. 2019. Qualitative data analysis with ATLAS.ti. [https://julac-cuhk.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/852JULAC\\_CUHK/16slfhk/alma991040021079703407](https://julac-cuhk.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/852JULAC_CUHK/16slfhk/alma991040021079703407)
- <https://www.lib.cuhk.edu.hk/en/research/digital-scholarship/tools/>
- <https://atlasti.com/video-tutorials>
- <https://atlasti.com/video-tutorials/atlas-ti-web-video-tutorials>
- [https://www.youtube.com/@ATLAS.ti\\_QDAsoftware](https://www.youtube.com/@ATLAS.ti_QDAsoftware)