

SOCI 307: Qualitative Methods  
Monday 9:45am and Wednesday 8:15am  
Dr. Lynda Harling Stalker

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Office hours: Mondays – Wednesdays 1-2 pm

Imagine a jewel...



The jewel is cut with many facets that glint and sparkle when light hits it just right. It reflects and refracts that light. The cutting of the jewel is complex and requires skill and intuition to create and hone-in on the beauty of the gemstone. Research is like a gemstone. Like a gemstone, research can provide unexpected beauty. You have the rough research problem that requires astuteness, openness, empathy, and humility to create something beautiful. As researchers it is our task to use these skills to look at the different facets of our gemstone to provide insights and “trouble” existing categories. This course will provide you with the opportunity to develop these skills as you qualitatively, reflexively, and creatively research a facet of the social world at St. FX.

The objectives of this course are for students to:

- Reflexively understand who they are as social researchers;
- Learn different ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches to qualitative research;
- Develop skills in different qualitative research methods;
- Create a research proposal;
- Collect and analyse data on an element of the social world at St FX; and
- Write a research paper that has the potential to be published.

A word of caution... this course is a difficult course. There will be times when you will feel overwhelmed, out of your depth, and uncertain that you will complete the work. But please trust that if you do the work, it will become the best course you will have taken at St FX.



JENNIFER MASON  
QUALITATIVE  
RESEARCHING

Third Edition



Textbook:

We will be using Jennifer Mason's *Qualitative Researching, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition*. It should be available at the Campus Store. Supplementary readings will be available on the course webpage.

## **Assignments:**

**Reflexive piece (15%):** In this 5-page, 1250-word, paper you will answer the questions posed in Chapter One. Particular attention will be placed on those that deal with *ontology* and *epistemology*. This will allow you to establish who you are as a researcher. DUE February 3

**Research Proposal and Ethics application (if required) (30%):** In this minimum 7-page, 1750-word, paper you will outline the research project you will undertake at StFX. This will include a strong thesis statement, a brief literature review, the intellectual puzzle, proposed methodology and methods, and any practical considerations that need to be made. ETHICS DUE February 28; PROPOSAL DUE March 10

**Final research paper (40%):** This is the culmination of the research you undertook. This is a minimum 12-page, 3000-word, paper that articulates the findings and contributions you make to sociological debates and knowledge. In this paper you will present a strong thesis, a refined literature review, the methodology and methods you employed, analysis of the data generated, and an articulate conclusion. DUE TBD

**Participation (15%):** To be successful at this course you will need to fully engage with the material and class discussions. Participation means not just attending class but demonstrating that you have read the material, you are discussing the material and bringing questions, and you show curiosity. While not all of us are comfortable with speaking out, there are ways to show you are present and they will be noted. You may also find that over time, and as we get to know one another, actively participating in class will become easier.

**Late penalties:** It is expected that students will hand in their work at the beginning of class time on the due date. For every day that work is handed in late (including weekends), students will be assigned a 5% deduction to their grade.

**Awareness:** Plagiarism and cheating will not be tolerated in this class. If you are unsure what either of these entails and the penalties associated with them, please consult the university's Academic Calendar.

The classroom is one that embodies respect and dignity. Please be sure to give this to the professor, visitors, and fellow students. This means that disagreements and questions about ideas are welcome, but not personal attacks and slurs. Also,

St. FX is located on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq peoples.

please put mobile technology away during class time. The “glow” of cell phones and the like is distracting to all around. If your friends, mother, or grandfather don’t like the fact that that you didn’t answer their SnapChat right away, please let them know that they are more than welcome to contact Dr. Harling Stalker, and she will explain the classroom policy. Please don’t make Dr. Harling Stalker have to do this: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Bu3Z3Xdynw>

**Accommodation:** If you require accommodation, please see Dr. Harling Stalker as soon as possible.

**Drop date** for 2022 is March 22.

## **Class schedule and assigned readings**

January 17	Introduction to the class
January 20	What is qualitative about qualitative methods? <a href="#">David Silverman</a>
January 24	Research, empathy and guiding lamps <a href="#">R.W. Connell</a> <a href="#">Richard Sennett</a>
January 27	Reflexivity, ontology and epistemology <a href="#">Chapter One</a>
January 31	Intellectual puzzles and research questions <a href="#">Chapter One</a>
February 3	Groundwork to research <a href="#">Chapter Two</a>
<b>REFLEXIVE PAPER DUE February 3</b>	
February 7	Research design <a href="#">Chapter Two</a>
February 10	Sampling and selecting <a href="#">Chapter Three</a>
February 14	Ethics <a href="#">Chapter Four</a>
February 17	Ethics <a href="#">Chapter Four</a>
BREAK	
February 28	Facet Research
March 3	Interviewing

## Chapter Five

### **ETHICS DUE February 28**

March 7 Interviewing

## Chapter Five

March 10 Observing

## Chapter Six

### **PROPOSALS DUE March 10**

March 14 Observing

## Chapter Six

March 17 Creativity

## Chapter Seven

March 21 Creativity

## Chapter Seven

March 24 Analysing Data

## Chapter Eight

March 28 Analysing Data

## Chapter Eight

March 31 Crafting arguments

## Chapter Nine

April 4 Crafting arguments

## Chapter Nine

April 7 Writing a final paper

April 11 Make-up snow day / writing

April 14 Review and Q&A