

**Department of Geography and Environmental Studies**  
**GEOG 5003 (*Critical Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry*) /**  
**CDNS 5002F (*Interdisciplinary Methods*)**

**Course Syllabus / Fall Term 2025**

**Course on Brightspace:**

<https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/373298>

**Instructor:** Patricia Ballamingie, B.A.H., M.E.S., Ph.D.  
Professor, Geography & Environmental Studies/  
Institute of Political Economy

**Office:** Loeb Building, B Tower, Room B450B

**Office Hours:** By appointment.

**Phone:** (613) 805-1460 (cell)

**E-mail:** [patricia.ballamingie@carleton.ca](mailto:patricia.ballamingie@carleton.ca)

**Web site:** <http://www2.carleton.ca/geography/staff-faculty/ballamingie-patricia/>

**Seminar:** Mondays, 2:35 p.m.-5:25 p.m.

**Location:** TBA

**Calendar description:** Development of critical skills in qualitative research by considering the relationship between theory and method. Focus on engaged scholarship and participatory, community-based, action research. Practical experience with select methods, including: interviews, personal narratives, focus groups, participant observation, archival research, discourse analysis, and visual methodologies.

**Prerequisite:** Graduate student standing, or permission of the Department of Geography & Environmental Studies. [Open to students from all disciplines.](#)

**Format:** Seminar, three hours per week.

### **Learning Objectives**

- To hone the critical skills necessary to conduct rigorous, ethical, qualitative research in the social sciences.
- To develop a methodological approach that remains sensitive to the construction of knowledge in the research process.
- To understand the merits and constraints associated with various qualitative methods (including surveys, semi-structured interviews, personal narratives, ethnography, focus groups, participant observation, archival research, visual methodologies, discourse analysis and participatory research).
- To appreciate the need for engaged scholarship, and community-based research.
- To explore themes such as: relationship between power, knowledge, and discourse; theorization of identity, involving multiple axes of social differentiation (e.g., gender, race, class, etc.); relationship between theory and method; and adoption of mixed methods.
- To understand power dynamics in the research relationship, and to mitigate imbalances through strategies of reflexivity, situation, transparency, accountability and reciprocity.
- To survey critical insights from the poststructural, postcolonial and feminist literature on qualitative methodologies.

## Tentative Outline

1. Introduction: Practicing Qualitative Research (September 8)
2. Research Design (September 15)
3. The Politics of Constructing Knowledge I: Ethical Considerations (September 22)
4. The Politics of Constructing Knowledge II: Power and Performativity (September 29)
5. The Politics of Constructing Knowledge III: Decolonizing Research (October 6)  
----- October 13 (no class, Thanksgiving Day)  
----- October 20 (no class, Fall Break)
6. Methods I: Case Study and Discourse Analysis (October 27)
7. Methods II: Interviews and Focus Groups (November 3)
8. Methods III: Personal Narratives (November 10)
9. Methods IV: Visual Modes of Analysis (November 17)
10. Methods V: Participant Observation and Critical Ethnography (November 24)
11. Engaged Scholarship: Participatory and Activist Research (December 1)
12. Conclusions: Working with Qualitative Data (December 5) [Fall Term ends, Monday schedule]

## Readings

Required readings are detailed in the Course Outline. Most readings with public URLs will be available online through Brightspace. All other readings will be available through MacOdrum Library (either as electronic holdings or on reserve).

## Distribution of Grades:

Evaluation:	Value:
Participation	20%
A1: Reading Discussant (2 x 10%)	20%
A2: Method Primer	25%
TCPS2-Core Tutorial	5%
Major Project	30%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

Your confidential grades will be sent by e-mail as soon as they are available. Please notify your professor of any omissions and/or inaccuracies. Detailed guidelines for each assignment and project will be available through Brightspace.

Assignments will generally be issued and received online, through Brightspace. Late assignments will be accepted without penalty if accompanied by a doctor's note. Otherwise, if you are late for a due date, hand the assignment as soon as you are able for small penalty (it is still well worth your while to complete all course work).

While you are encouraged to work cooperatively with your peers, identical assignments will be considered grounds for an allegation of Instructional Offense. Work submitted must be in your own words. Any reference to the work of others should be carefully acknowledged with full credit given to the source.

## Participation

Representing 20% of your total grade, your participation will be evaluated in equal measure as follows:

- ❑ **Attendance** (a simple tally of the number of classes attended); multiplied by,
- ❑ **Participation** (a qualitative assessment of your contribution to class).

NB In a graduate-level, seminar setting, it is imperative that students complete the assigned readings prior to class; attend all classes; engage positively and respectfully in class discussions and group work; raise questions; complete voluntary activities when requested; bring in relevant materials to share with peers; and maintain their personal integrity and academic honesty throughout.

## Grades

In accordance with the Carleton University Calendar, the letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100	B+ = 77-79	C+ = 67-69	D+ = 56-59
A = 85-89	B = 73-76	C = 63-66	D = 53-56
A - = 80-84	B - = 70-72	C - = 60-62	D - = 50-52
F = Below 50			

WDN =	Withdrawn from the course
ABS =	Student absent from final exam
DEF =	Deferred
FND =	Failed, no Deferred (Student could not pass the course even with 100% on final exam)

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

## Academic Standing and Conduct

Students must familiarize themselves with the regulations concerning academic standing and conduct.

- For grad students, see the 2025/2026 *Carleton University Graduate Calendar*:  
<http://calendar.carleton.ca/grad/>

## Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

If you use generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Microsoft Copilot, etc.) to produce assessed content, please do so with extreme caution. You will still be held to the highest standards of academic integrity, and thus responsible for any plagiarism, AI hallucinations, and inaccurate or fabricated references. I expect you to use these tools in an ethically sound manner, to be explicit and transparent about their use, and to seek approval first. We will discuss expectations around the ethical use of AI in one of the first classes of the term.

Students can access resources related to [citing Generative AI on the MacOdrum Library website](https://library.carleton.ca/guides/help/generative-ai-chatgpt-and-citations):  
<https://library.carleton.ca/guides/help/generative-ai-chatgpt-and-citations>

## Academic Integrity Policy

### PLAGIARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include (but are not limited to): books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and,
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of “F” for the course.

- NB You may submit a piece of work that has been submitted in the context of another course, provided you are transparent in its use, seek permission from the instructor, and delineate duplications/extensions from the previous submission.

- NB Unless explicitly permitted, either generally or for a specific assignment, any use of generative AI tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, images, summaries, videos, etc.) is a violation of academic integrity standards. Keep your various drafts so that you can demonstrate the integrity and progress of your work.
- Guidelines for any group or collaborative work will be clearly delineated in the relevant assignment.

### Statement on Student Mental Health

As a student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. For more information, please consult <https://wellness.carleton.ca/>

### Emergency Resources

- **Suicide Crisis Helpline:** call or text 9-8-8, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- **For immediate danger or urgent medical support:** call 9-1-1

### Carleton Resources

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
- **Health & Counselling Services:** <https://carleton.ca/health/>
- **Paul Menton Centre:** <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
- **Academic Advising Centre (AAC):** <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
- **Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS):** <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
- **Equity & Inclusivity Communities:** <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

### Off-Campus Resources

- **Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region:** call 613-238-3311, text 343-306-5550, or connect online at <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
- **Mental Health Crisis Service:** call 613-722-6914 or toll-free 1-866-996-0991, or connect online at <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
- **Empower Me Counselling Service:** call 1-844-741-6389 or connect online at <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
- **Good2Talk:** call 1-866-925-5454 or connect online at <https://good2talk.ca/>
- **The Walk-In Counselling Clinic:** for online or on-site service <https://walkincounselling.com>

### Requests for Academic Accommodations

Carleton is committed to providing academic accessibility for all individuals. You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. The accommodation request processes, including information about the Academic Consideration Policy for Students in Medical and Other Extenuating Circumstances, are outlined on the Academic Accommodations website ([students.carleton.ca/course-outline](https://students.carleton.ca/course-outline)).

You should provide any **additional information** on your requirements for short-term informal accommodations.

- If you require supporting documentation for short-term considerations, you may only request the [Academic Consideration for Coursework form \(https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-coursework-form/\)](https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-coursework-form/). You may **not** request medical notes or documentation.
- Consult the [Academic Consideration Policy for instructors \(https://i.carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-policy/\)](https://i.carleton.ca/registrar/academic-consideration-policy/) information page for more details.