GEOG 5003 F – Critical Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry

Fall 2026 - Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

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- **Professor:** Rosie Kerr, BSc, Med, PhD
- **Email:** rosiekerr@cunet.carleton.ca
- **Office Hours:** Mondays 9:30-11:30am, Loeb B350
- **Class:** Weekly Seminar, Mondays 11:35am-2:25pm,
- **Brightspace course page:** https://brightspace.carleton.ca/d2l/home/453045

Course Description

Development of critical skills and exploration of critical issues in qualitative research by considering the relationship between theory and method. Engaged scholarship and participatory, community-based, action research. Practical experience with interviews, narrative vignettes, focus groups, observation, visual methods, discourse analysis, coding and thematic analysis.

Preclusions

Graduate student standing, or permission of the Department of Geography & Environmental Studies. *Open to students from all disciplines*

Learning Outcomes

⇒ 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
⇒ 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 post structural, Indigenous and feminist literature on qualitative methodologies

Texts & Course Materials

Required text: Hay, Iain (ed.) (2021). Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography. 5th Edition. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press.

- A hard copy of this text has been placed on reserve at MacOdrum Library. The text is also available for purchase at the Carleton University Bookstore. Students are not required to purchase textbooks or other learning materials for this course.
- Required readings are detailed in the Course Outline. Some readings will be available through MacOdrum Library (either as electronic holdings or on reserve); most readings with public URLs will be available online through Brightspace.

Course Calendar: [subject to change]
September 14: Introductions & Practicing Qualitative Research
September 21: Research Design/Developing Research Questions
September 28: Ethical Considerations *Guest: Ethics Carleton*
October 5: Feminist Geographies, Power & Performativity
October 12: Thanksgiving: *NO CLASS*
October 19: Decolonizing Research, *Guest: Natalia Ruiz Cuartes, Guelph University*
October 26: Fall Break, *NO CLASS*
November 2: Indigenous Research Methodologies
November 9: Case Study & Discourse Analysis
November 16: Interviews, Focus Groups, Go-Alongs: *Guest: Danielle Klassens, Waterloo*
Methods Primer Due
November 23: Personal Narratives; **Methods Primer Presentations**
November 30: Visual Modes of Analysis; NVivo guest speaker
December 7: Participant Observation and Critical Ethnography, **Final Project Presentations**
December 11: (FRIDAY): Engaged Scholarship: Participatory and Action Research & Communicating Research; **Final project due**

Assignments and Evaluation:

- Participation 20%
- Reading Discussant (2 x 10%) 20%
- Method Primer 25%
- TCPS2-Core Tutorial 5%
- Major Project Total: 30%

Participation (20%)
Representing 20% of your total grade, your participation will be evaluated in equal measure as follows: Attendance: the number of classes attended; multiplied by participation (a qualitative assessment of your contribution to class). 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.

Reading Discussant (20%) (2 X 10%)
During the first two weeks of term, each student will be assigned three designated readings for which they will act as discussant. Please upload presentation files/links to Brightspace under Assignments. This assignment will be completed three times during the term. Feedback will be given for all three, but only the top two will count towards your grade. The discussant will guide the class through the reading, aiming to take ~ 25 minutes, engaging with and responding to the content. Circulate discussion questions by e-mail to your peers and instructor at least two days in advance of class. Your role is: to discuss key contributions, identify poignant passages, make connections to class content, generate interdisciplinary insights, clarify jargon, and contest/discuss assertions.

Methods Primer (25%)
Due: Nov 16th; Present to Class November 23rd
Explore in-depth one qualitative method and develop a primer that will be compiled alongside other student submissions, for distribution to the class. Briefly present the method to class on November 23rd. Choice of selected methods will be given to students in class so each student explores a different method. Your role is:
• Explain what the method entails.
• Cite examples where this method has been particularly effective.
• Explain possibilities and constraints associated with this method.
• Summarize key considerations for successful adoption.
• Reflect on other methods that might complement the method selected.
• Identify key resources consulted.
• Identify relevant online resources.

Document specifications: Word document should be: 2 pages minimum, 5 pages maximum, single- spaced, 12-point font. Please submit presentation file and document via Brightspace under assignments. All files will be combined into a pdf and sent via email to all students.

TCPS2-Core Tutorial (5%)
Complete the on-line course required for Research Ethics Board approval for research with human subjects. Due on or before December 11th. Takes approximately 4 hours to complete. Submit certificate of completion via email: rosiekerr@cunet.carleton.ca

Major Project: Paper and Presentation (30%)
Final projects will be individually negotiated to serve the student's best interests – to meet specific learning objectives. The project will have a written paper and will also be presented to the class.

Document specifications: Word document of 3000-6000 words. Include in-text citations or footnotes. Include a citation list in a consistent format. Submit presentation file and final project file via Brightspace under assignments

Important Dates:
• October 19 - November 9: Make an office hours appointment to initial discussions with instructor to determine parameters of final project.
• December 7: presentations to the class.
• December 11: Final projects are due

Please note:

- In this graduate level course, students are expected to complete the readings and participate and contribute to class discussions. Frequent group activities will occur during class time, and dialogue and collaboration is encouraged.
- Please ensure that you have read your assignments and papers through thoroughly for spelling, grammar and clarity.

- I do not have a preference for citation/formatting style as long as it is consistent throughout your document.
- Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Please contact me via email. rosiekerr@cunet.carleton.ca
- 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.
- If you wish to appeal a grade please follow the procedures outlined here: https://carleton.ca/registrar/appeal-of-grade/.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Students may use AI tools for generating ideas for assignment topics, clarifying challenging concepts, or getting started on projects. Some acceptable uses include:

- Brainstorming ideas (e.g., generating essay topics with ChatGPT, using Microsoft Word's Smart Lookup to find inspiration and related topics).
- Creating outlines (e.g., using AI to structure an essay or presentation flow, using Microsoft Word's Outline View with AI suggestions).
- Providing explanations of complex concepts (e.g., using AI to explain a difficult theory, e.g., using Microsoft Word's Researcher tool to find relevant information). However, **the generated text cannot be used directly in your essay**. You must put the explanation into your own words.

Documenting use of AI: AI is a tool, but one that you need to acknowledge using. It is necessary to document your use of AI in this course, using the following guidelines:

- AI-generated text must not be included in the text of your assignments. The text must be edited and put in your own words
- Review, edit, and ensure the accuracy and originality of final submissions.
- Please include a paragraph at the end of any assignment that uses AI explaining what you used the AI for and what prompts you used to get the results. Failure to do so violates academic integrity policy.

Note: Students can also access resources related to citing Generative AI on the MacOdrum Library website.

Why have I adopted this policy? This policy supports the use of AI as a supplementary tool, helping students develop ideas and structure their work while emphasizing the importance of transparency and personal engagement with the content. AI can be used for inspiration and foundational support, and encourages students to critically assess and refine AI-generated material.

As our understanding of the uses of AI and its relationship to student work and academic integrity continue to evolve, students are required to discuss their use of AI in any circumstance not described here with the course instructor to ensure it supports the learning goals for the course.

Statement on Academic Integrity

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:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else, including the unauthorized use of generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT)
- 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
- failing to acknowledge sources with 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 follows a rigorous process for academic integrity allegations, including reviewing documents and interviewing the student, when an instructor suspects a violation has been committed. Penalties for violations may include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Reusing your own work: If you wish to re-use your own work (partially or fully) from a different course you are required to seek the instructors permission before doing so. You may be required to cite your own work.

Working with others: Working with a partner on an assignment is subject to approval by the instructor if it is deemed mutually beneficial.

Generative AI: The policy outlined above related to generative AI must be followed to maintain academic integrity

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 (on and off campus)

- Crisis/Urgent Counselling Support: 613-520-6674 (Mon-Fri, 8:30-4:30)
- 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/
- 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)."

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. You may **not** request medical notes or documentation.
- Consult the Academic Consideration Policy for instructors information page for more details.

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