

SOCI 307: Qualitative Methods  
Monday 9:45am and Wednesday 8:15am  
Dr. Lynda Harling Stalker  
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Office Hours: Mondays 11am-12pm; Tuesdays 9:30-11:30am; Wednesdays 2-3pm; or by appointment

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.

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

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.

In this class we will be using Microsoft Teams as our learning platform. There will not be a Moodle page for this class. The readings, except for AGG, will be found here. Teams is also where you will upload your assignments (except for the postcard one). If you have not received notification that you have access to the Team or have joined the class late, please let Dr. Harling Stalker know.

## **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 September 26

**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 October 19; PROPOSAL DUE October 26

**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, 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.

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**Drop date:** Students may drop a course, online in Banner, on or before November 2. After this date students are not permitted to drop courses without permission from their Dean (please see 3.1 in academic calendar for policy regarding course drops).

### **Class schedule and assigned readings**

September 7	Introduction to the class
September 12	What is qualitative about qualitative methods? <a href="#">David Silverman</a>
September 14	Research, empathy and guiding lamps <a href="#">R.W. Connell</a> <a href="#">Richard Sennett</a>
September 19	Reflexivity, ontology and epistemology <a href="#">Chapter One</a>
September 21	Intellectual puzzles and research questions <a href="#">Chapter One</a>
September 26	Groundwork to research <a href="#">Chapter Two</a>

### **REFLEXIVE PAPER DUE September 26**

September 28	Research design <a href="#">Chapter Two</a>
October 3	Sampling and selecting <a href="#">Chapter Three</a>
October 5	Ethics <a href="#">Chapter Four</a>
October 12	Ethics <a href="#">Chapter Four</a>

BREAK

October 17	Facet Research
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October 19            Interviewing  
   [Chapter Five](#)

**ETHICS DUE October 19**

October 24            Interviewing  
   [Chapter Five](#)

October 26            Observing  
   [Chapter Six](#)

**PROPOSALS DUE October 26**

October 31            Observing  
   [Chapter Six](#)

November 2            Creativity  
   [Chapter Seven](#)

November 14           Creativity  
   [Chapter Seven](#)

November 16           Analysing Data  
   [Chapter Eight](#)

November 21           Analysing Data  
   [Chapter Eight](#)

November 23           Crafting arguments  
   [Chapter Nine](#)

November 28           Crafting arguments  
   [Chapter Nine](#)

November 30           Writing a final paper

December 5            Review and Q&A