

Spring Quarter 2024:

Qualitative Methods for International Policy and Development

Tuesday 3.30 – 4.50 pm/ Thursday 3.30 – 4.50 pm (Room: Keller tbd)

Course description

Qualitative research offers policymakers multifaceted, nuanced and rich insight into the issues they are seeking to impactfully address with their policies, for example in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A qualitative perspective helps to draw out complexities and connections that identify trade-offs that come with all policy choices. Practical skills on how to conduct qualitative research, evaluate it for its rigour, assess what it can contribute to policy debates, and package it for the highest impact and evidence uptake are crucial in the policy sphere.

Aims of the course and learning outcomes

The course aims to equip students with the knowledge and practical skills needed to conduct and interpret qualitative research and evaluate the strength of the empirical findings. It does so by getting deep into the question of what makes good qualitative research and how it can be translated for better policies—and then asking students to design their own qualitative research project. This means students will apply learnings about qualitative inquiry, drafting a research design as well as collecting, analysing and packaging qualitative data. Specifically, the course aims to

- sensitize students to different knowledge philosophies appropriate to different types of questions so that they can recognize how different types of policy-relevant knowledge are created, and how such knowledge can be utilised to assess claims regarding the strength of evidence;
- equip students with skills needed to critique qualitative research for its rigour and assess trade-offs between quantitative and qualitative research;
- introduce students to a range of qualitative research methods and assess their applicability to different research questions using the research flow framework;
- familiarize students with examples of qualitative studies on issues relevant to international development policy or life in Chicago.

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

- evaluate the rigour of qualitative research;
- compare the applicability of different types of qualitative research for different research questions and purposes;
- recognize the role of qualitative research in public policy and analyse policy implications of qualitative research findings;
- design a qualitative research project and apply qualitative research methods.

Who is this course for?

This course is for students without prior experience of qualitative research, or for students who might have experience conducting formative qualitative research in preparation of quantitative research. The course is explicitly designed to act as a learning accompaniment to quantitative courses students might have taken at Harris, with the aim to offer students exposure to how issues they might have encountered in quantitative classes at Harris are reflected in qualitative research, and how qualitative knowledge helps broaden and nuance perspectives on the complexity of an issue.

In addition to training students in analytical skills, this course is committed to being a practicum through application of the methodological knowledge needed to conduct qualitative research, from choosing a research question, assessing what type of design works best, how to collect the data, how to analyse and present it and what steps are necessary for theory formation. Students will work on their own research project in weeks 4 - 9.

But, above all else, this course is for students who are curious about the world around them, who want to understand how to better address complex problems, and who love observation as well as hearing people's stories about the lives they lead.

Design of the course

The course is designed to make qualitative research come to life by being hands on, with a short, often reflective, assignment almost every week. Most of these assignments are building blocks for the final research assignments. More detail on the assignments can be found in the weekly schedule; how they are graded is outlined below in the section on assignments. The class schedule marks whether assignments are part of the overall participation grade or whether they will form a separate part of students' grades.

About your instructor

Mareike Schomerus, (PhD, London School of Economics and Political Science) is Vice President at Busara. She was formerly Director of Programme [Politics and Governance](#) at ODI in London (formerly Overseas Development Institute), and Research Director of the [Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium](#) (SLRC), also at ODI. At Busara, she heads the Center's work that links behavioral science, governance, fragility and violent conflict. She is a widely published researcher with a body of work on violent conflict, political contestation and peace processes in South Sudan and Uganda and across borders, as well as behavioral mechanisms in post-conflict recovery, for which she has developed a body of work on the '[mental landscape](#)' of lives in or

after situations of violence conflict. In addition to conducting and leading academic research, she has conducted applied research for a wide range of international organisations. She is the co-editor of two volumes (on [African secessionism](#) and [South Sudan's borderlands](#) (Palgrave Macmillan 2020, 2013) and author of the monographs *The Lord's Resistance Army: Violence and Peacemaking in Africa* (Cambridge University Press 2021) and *Lives Amid Violence: Transforming Development in the Wake of Conflict* (Bloomsbury, 2023). At Harris, she also teaches a course on behavioral experiments for international development policy. She is currently writing the textbook *Research Design in Politics and International Relations* with Anouk S. Rigterink for SAGE Publications.

Kairvy Grewal is the seasoned TA of this course, supporting your learning for the third year in a row. Kairvy will hold office hours (to be announced).

How this class will work

Class meeting time and location

The class meets in person Tuesday and Thursday (3.30 – 4.50pm) in Keller (room tbd). Typically, Tuesdays will be devoted to introducing the material for the week; Thursday will be seminar- or workshop style. But this can always be mixed up, with activities possible on either day. Attendance is mandatory on both Tuesdays and Thursdays. Your presence in the class room is really important as this is a course that relies on reflection, discussion, connection and practice. However, in case of sickness, students need to notify the TA of absences, particularly if having to isolate due to Covid. In such a case, the TA will provide the zoom link to the class. When attending class via Zoom, students are expected to mute their microphones and activate their cameras when possible. Class recordings can be made available upon prior request only.

We are also doing an informal field trip for a couple of hours between 9am and noon on April 18. This is not mandatory, but it will be fun and support your learning.

Up-to-date information on UChicago's attendance policies may be found at:

- <https://goforward.uchicago.edu/>
- <https://teachingremotely.uchicago.edu/>
- <https://learningremotely.uchicago.edu/>

Canvas and other teaching tools

We will use Canvas as the main teaching tool and way to communicate. All readings will be uploaded here, organised by week. The Canvas calendar will also give you the relevant dates.

Office hours and how to contact the instructors

For all *matters related to the content of the course* (questions on readings, feedback, brainstorming), please get in touch with Kairvy Grewal.

For all *matters related to running the course* (readings, Canvas, logistical questions), please get in touch with the technical TA (tbd)

Mareike will have office hours in Keller (room tbd) at the following times:

- Wednesdays (March 20 – May 15), 3 – 5pm

Sign-up sheets for 15 min slots will be on Canvas. If you have trouble making any of these slots work, please reach out separately. However, it might help to plan ahead and sign up for a slot in advance if you know you might have questions at a particular time in the quarter. It is usually really tough to put on extra office hours in the last weeks of term, so please do plan ahead. However, at the same time, please do not blanket sign up for as many slots as possible but be thoughtful about when you might need help. If you have signed up for a slot and can no longer make it, please be courteous to your fellow students and delete your name so someone else can take your slot. Students who have missed two appointments without cancelling with reasonable time for others to take the slot might no longer be allowed to sign up to an office hour slot. Please just don't do it.

To make the best use of your time in an office hour, it is often helpful to come prepared with a specific question or concern, regardless of whether it is related directly to the course or, for example, your career planning.

You can contact Mareike at mareikeschomerus@uchicago.edu.

Assignments and assessment

Students' grade will be made up of the following:

Short assignments graded (30%): There will be two (very) short graded assignments. These are designed to support students in working towards their final research paper, but they will be graded as stand-alone contributions.

Due dates for short graded assignments: April 19, May 10

Research paper (45%): The final research paper of no more than 2000 words in length will consist of an outline of the research question; research design with brief justification of case selection, theoretical approach (including brief literature overview) and methods; preliminary insights from sample interviews and suggested policy-relevant preliminary findings. A detailed template will be provided. Students should endeavour to discuss their approach with the instructor at least once during office hours.

Due date: May 24

Class Participation 25% (comprised of attendance, class participation, assignments marked as 'participation', concept map): Students are expected to attend class and actively contribute to discussions and class activities, maybe at times taking the lead in the discussions or sharing their reflections on the reading and learning that they have noted down in the concept map that all students develop (for which instructions will be given). In addition, 10% of the participation grade will be informed by five short assignments that are marked as 'participation'. These will not be individually graded with a numbered grade, but on an indicative scale that is used to provide an insight into students' engagement with the class material. They will also help guide feedback discussions during office hours.

***Due dates: Participation assignments: March 22, March 29, April 12, April 26, May 3;
Reading map: May 24***

All assignments should be submitted as soft copies via Canvas in 12-point font with a standard margin of about one inch/2.5 centimeters. Assignments that are longer than the stated length will have points deducted for each page that overruns the page or paragraph limit. The page limit includes references (which can be included in smaller font footnotes); word limits include the title of the assignment. The reason why this is such a strict policy is because particularly in the policy world, people’s tolerance for reading beyond expected length is very limited, so learning how to be succinct is part of this course.

Assignments are always due on Fridays at the end of the day (yes, that can mean midnight). This is to give you the chance to have a weekend and to give us a chance to give you feedback as swiftly as possible so that you can use it the following week. The first assignment (due March 22) will not get feedback.

Late submissions will be subject to deduction of one half-grade per day. If you are running into problems, do let the technical TA know first.

Organizing your quarter: Important dates and ideas for planning ahead

This section gives you a general sense of how to plan your workload for the quarter. The course is roughly divided into three sections: introductory weeks where we lay a lot of the foundational knowledge; research design weeks where you start working on your research project; and data collection and analysis weeks, where you need to schedule interviews with people.

	Part 1: Foundations (weeks 1, 2, 3)	Part 2: Research design and interview setup (weeks 4, 5, 6)	Part 3: Data collection, analysis, write up (weeks 7, 8, 9, 10)
Scheduling	Emphasis on reading and class work.	Your assignments will start to focus on your research design. In week 5, you have to identify up to three interviewees (at least two) and confirm by week 6 that they are available. It’s a good idea to make sure you schedule interviews with people for early in week 7 and early in week 9. In week 5, we will also have a (very local!) field trip) on April 18.	Week 7 – 9 should be your interview weeks: schedule two interviews with each of your at least two/ at most three respondents, one week apart. Week 9 could be devoted to analysis and week 10 to write up, with your final assignment and concept map due on May 24.
Deadlines	March 22: Qualitative insights according to the bots (500 words) March 29: Who am I? (500 words)	April 12: What do you want to know? (500 words) April 19: Research Design (800 words)	May 3: Coding your data (500 words) May 10: Abstract (160 words including title) May 24: Preliminary research (2000 words);

		April 26: Refining your interview approach (500 words)	Concept map: (additional reflection 200 words)
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Grading policies

How does grading work in a qualitative course?

Qualitative assessment might be very different from what you are used to. While we will talk about the many ways in which the quality of qualitative work can be recognised to support you in submitting your best work, the process of assessment is often based on the depth and progress within your thinking that is observable to the instructors. In qualitative work, rather than having points deducted for giving a wrong answer, you earn points by grappling with your material and task in rigorous and thoughtful ways. However, there is a certain discretionary room for the instructor to place your work in context with that of others in the class. This also means that this course does not share grading rubrics with students. The assignments will receive very clear instructions, so following those instructions with depth and reflection should help in doing your best work. For qualitative work, working to grading rubrics really limits the discretionary room to assess original work.

Grading is done on the following grading scale: A >92%; A- 90-92%; B+ 87-89%; B 83-86%; B- 80-82%; C+ 77-79%; C 73-76%; C- 70-72%; D 60-69%, F - <60%.

How to submit your assignments

All assignments should be submitted as soft copies via Canvas in 12-point font with a standard margin of about one inch/2.5 centimeters. Assignments that are longer than the stated page limit will have points deducted for each page that overruns the page or paragraph limit. The page limit includes references (which can be included in smaller font footnotes). The reason why we are strict on the page limit is that particularly in the policy world, people's tolerance for reading beyond expected length is very limited. Thus, learning how to be succinct is part of this course.

Late submissions

Late submissions will be subject to deduction of one half-grade per day. Extensions can only be granted if requested in a timely manner before the deadline and with a viable reason, such as sickness. Students will receive feedback, usually as voice notes, on their assignments within a week of the deadline.

Pass/Fail Policy

If you are considering a pass/fail option, please speak to the instructor.

Course outline: Readings, topics, and schedules

Readings

We will be reading articles, book chapters, reports and newspaper articles (and listen to a podcast). The readings each week are split into so-called 'Tools Readings', which are readings that elaborate the craft and technical aspects of qualitative research. Each week also has readings

called ‘Delving into qualitative worlds’, which will familiarize you with how qualitative research on a particular theme is written up.

For the Tools Readings, a number of books make a few appearances and are useful (enjoyable, even!) reference books for you. These are:

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Rubin, A. T. 2021. *Rocking qualitative social science: An irreverent guide to rigorous research*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

Small M. L. & McCrory Calarco, J. 2022. *Qualitative Literacy: A guide to evaluating ethnographic and interview research*, Oakland, CA, University of California Press.

Sword, Helen (2012) *Stylish Academic Writing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

We are also turning to a classic piece of qualitative research on a part of the world you all know very well. Numerous chapters are assigned from:

Duneier, M. 1992. *Slim’s Table: Race, Respectability and Masculinity*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Most readings listed here are available online or through library access. We will upload readings to Canvas for ease of access.

Week 1 (March 19/21): Substance

To understand social change, political tension or challenges in international development, different types of knowledge are crucial. The course’s introductory week focuses on the relationship between international development policy and qualitative research. Using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we examine for what policy questions qualitative research is best suited and what level of scientific evidence it can provide in the eyes of a policy-maker committed to evidence-based policy.

Tool Readings

Irwin, Neil (2017 (March 17)) What if Sociologists Had as Much Influence as Economists? *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/17/upshot/what-if-sociologists-had-as-much-influence-as-economists.html>)

Rubin, A. T. 2021. *Rocking qualitative social science: An irreverent guide to rigorous research*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

Chapter 2. What exactly are qualitative methods?

Chapter 4. On Belay: Connecting your work to an anchor

United Nations 2015. *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1)*, New York, NY, United Nations.

Delving into qualitative worlds: Unpacking human connection

Tack, Anjanette M. Chan, and Mario L. Small. 2017. "Making Friends in Violent Neighborhoods: Strategies among Elementary School Childr." *Sociological Science* 4 (10). doi: DOI 10.15195/v4.a10.

Assignment 1 (participation): Qualitative insights according to the bots (500 words)

Using the research topic that we focused on during class, prompt ChatGPT to write a piece of qualitative research on the research topic in 500 words. File this piece as part of your concept map/ spark file that you are setting up as discussed in class.

Due date: March 22

Week 2 (March 26/28): Mindset

What is the researcher's mindset? How can it help in identifying and evaluating international development challenges? This week, we unpack how such a mindset can support problem-driven research that is anchored in the real world, rather than focusing on a split between methodological approaches. To help us grapple with the research problems in the coming weeks, we clarify how the type of answer one seeks determines whether one seeks description, causal inference or interpretation—and how applying the notion of the 'Research Flow' can help match question and methodological approaches.

Tool Readings

BASIC CONCEPTS from Sociology and Anthropology - Tools to think with.

https://ocw.mit.edu/courses/anthropology/21a-245j-power-interpersonal-organizational-and-global-dimensions-fall-2005/study-materials/basic_conc.pdf.

Rigterink, Anouk S., and Mareike Schomerus. 2026 (forthcoming). "Chapter 3: The Research Process (early stage draft chapter: not for circulation)." In *Research Design in Politics and International Relations*. London: SAGE Publications.

Rubin, A. T. 2021. *Rocking qualitative social science: An irreverent guide to rigorous research*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

11. Living on the sharp end: Dealing with skeptics of qualitative research

Small M. L. & McCrory Calarco, J. 2022. *Qualitative Literacy: A guide to evaluating ethnographic and interview research*, Oakland, CA, University of California Press.

Chapter: Self-Awareness

Schwartz, M. A. 2008. The importance of stupidity in scientific research. *J Cell Sci*, 12, 1771.

Delving into qualitative worlds: Querying big ideas and big personalities

Munk, Nina (2013) *The Idealist: Jeffrey Sachs and the quest to end poverty*. New York, NY: Anchor Books. Part 1 and 2

Assignment 2 (participation): Who am I? (500 words)

Write no more than 500 words to introduce yourself. Structure this introduction using some of the concepts introduced in the 'Basic concepts from sociology and anthropology' reading and some of the issue areas that the SDGs identify. You could, for example, talk about your culture and how it has been shaped or how it has shaped who you are. What are your values? What are the norms by which you live your life and how did they come to be? How have you encountered issues of the Sustainable Development Goals? How do you think about your current role or

identity? In what social structures did you grow up? Write the assignment providing a level of information that you are happy for others to read as we will use these in class.

Due date: March 29

Week 3 (April 2/ 4): Questioning

Using the ‘Research Flow’ framework, we will think about research problems beyond methodological divides towards a process that clarifies the type of answers sought, and what research design and method tools are best suited to find those answers. We will focus on different approaches to qualitative research, dispel the myth that qualitative research is just a matter of asking open-ended questions of a few people, and grapple with possible shortcomings of a chosen design and how to mitigate those. We will also look in detail at ethical implications of qualitative research and the behavior of the qualitative researcher, who often spends considerable time interviewing people about challenging experiences in their lives.

Tool Readings

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapter 3. Designing a Qualitative Study

Rubin, A. T. 2021. *Rocking qualitative social science: An irreverent guide to rigorous research*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

3. Picking your proj: Identifying your research question

Delving into qualitative worlds: Health and well-being

Duneier, M. 1992. *Slim’s Table: Race, Respectability and Masculinity*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Part One: The Caring Community

1.Slim and Bart

Week 4 (April 9/11): Encountering

In qualitative research, the researcher encounters two people at once: the research respondent and the self. This week, we will focus on a number of key elements that shape how research turns out, or that help position a piece of qualitative research more meaningfully in an ongoing debate. We will focus on time and temporality, discourse, the role of document analysis, identifying bias as well as unpacking positionality and how this might shape research dynamics and the various options for data collection.

Tool Readings

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapters 6. Introducing and Focusing the Study

Jaynes, Gerald D., David E. Apter, Herbert J. Gans, William Kornblum, Ruth Horowitz, James F. Short, Gerald D. Suttles & Robert E. Washington (2009) *The Chicago School and the roots of urban ethnography: An intergenerational conversation with Gerald D. Jaynes, David E. Apter, Herbert J. Gans, William Kornblum, Ruth Horowitz, James F. Short, Jr, Gerald D. Suttles and Robert E. Washington.* *Ethnography* 10(4): 375-396.

Small M. L. & McCrory Calarco, J. 2022. *Qualitative Literacy: A guide to evaluating ethnographic and interview research*, Oakland, CA, University of California Press.

Cognitive Empathy

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai (2021, 3rd edition) *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Zed Books.

Chapters 2 and 3 (Research through imperial eyes; Colonizing knowledges).

Lewis-Kraus, G. 2016. The Trials of Alice Goffman. *New York Times*.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20170827031721/https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/17/magazine/the-trials-of-alice-goffman.html>

Rubin, A. T. 2021. *Rocking qualitative social science: An irreverent guide to rigorous research*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

6. Starting on the right foot: Making and justifying your case selection

7. Flaking out the rope: How to check your sample

Delving into qualitative worlds: Secure and just societies

Duneier, M. 1992. *Slim's Table: Race, Respectability and Masculinity*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Part Three: Membership in Society

6. The Need for Contact with Society

Assignment 3 (participation): What do you want to know? (500 words)

From this week onwards, all assignments will focus on developing your research project. Using insights you have gained on life in Chicago and challenges highlighted in the SDGs, go on a research topic hunt. Walk around your neighborhood with the aim to identify something that you want to know about the people in it and their experience of one of the SDGs. Read local news sites to see whether there are any relevant hot topics. Note down three ideas (one paragraph each, no more than 500 words total), covering a research question, justifying why you find the question interesting for a better understanding of the focus SDG, what broader insights you hope to get from pursuing that question and identifying who could be your research subject.

Due date: April 12

Week 5 (April 16/18): Asking

This week focuses on many practical aspects of conducting your research study. We will particularly zoom in on techniques and tricks for data collection and how to counter the common urge in qualitative research to ask a lot of questions without much focus. One way to avoid this urge is to be clear about the framing of the issue and the role of theory.

Field trip: We'll be going on a humble, social and inquisitive mini-field trip between 9am and noon on April 18 (you pick one 90 min section during this time). More details to follow!

Tool Readings:

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Sage.

7. Data Collection

Small M. L. & McCrory Calarco, J. 2022. *Qualitative Literacy: A guide to evaluating ethnographic and interview research*, Oakland, CA, University of California Press.

Heterogeneity

Rubin, A. T. 2021. *Rocking qualitative social science: An irreverent guide to rigorous research*, Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press.

10. Placing Pro: Making causal claims with qualitative data

In addition, please browse the University of Chicago research ethics website to familiarise yourself with the kind of questions that an ethical review board would ask of research involving humans. You can start a submission on the website to take yourself through the process (but don't submit it). Please come to class prepared to discuss anything you noticed about this process. The relevant websites are:

<https://aura.uchicago.edu/>

<https://sbsirb.uchicago.edu/>

Delving into qualitative worlds: Cities and communities

Duneier, M. 1992. *Slim's Table: Race, Respectability and Masculinity*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.

Part Two: The Moral Community

3. Valois as a 'Black Metropolis'

Assignment 4 (graded): Research Design (800 words)

This week asks you to focus your research project. Please write a research design (no more than 800 words), also called a research blueprint. This needs to include your research question, what key concepts you will link this to and what the broader implications of your findings might be, where your question sits in the literature, what methodological approach/ type of answer you have chosen, what data you will gather and how, identifying up to three interviewees (at least two), and a preliminary set of up to ten interview questions. These interview questions should be resolutely qualitative: Open-ended and asked with a clear sense of what the narrative answers you might get will contribute to your process of answering your research question.

Due date: April 19

Week 6 (April 23/25): Embedding

This week we return to the question of how qualitative research is embedded in a policy process. Research tends to be influential for policy if it offers a rigorous and widely-relatable theory—but

how is such a theory derived from qualitative research? We also examine the role of qualitative research to evaluate the impact of a policy and identify obstacles to policy uptake, and how to use the language of research to reach into practice.

Tool readings

Small M. L. & McCrory Calarco, J. 2022. *Qualitative Literacy: A guide to evaluating ethnographic and interview research*, Oakland, CA, University of California Press.

Palpability

Delving into qualitative worlds: The extraordinary ordinary

Comfort, Megan L. 2003. "In The Tube At San Quentin: The "Secondary Prisonization" of Women Visiting Inmates." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 32 (1):77-107. doi: 10.1177/0891241602238939.

Assignment 5 (participation): Refining your interview approach (500 words)

Based on this week's feedback and learning, write up ten revised interview questions. Please add a brief interview schedule: Who will you interview, when and under what conditions? Confirm that they are available and happy to be interviewed by you twice (with two weeks in between), detailing how you have asked them for informed consent (total length: no more than 500 words)

Due date: April 26

Week 7 (April 30/ May 2): Analysing

This week, we look at different methods of data analysis and how each might suit the type of answer sought. It is a very practical week to avoid the feeling (well-known by many researchers) of sitting at a desk, wondering what to do. We will develop different ways to code your qualitative data, adjusting the process according to your research methodology and approach.

Tool Readings:

Chrisinger, D. & Brodsky, L. 2023. *Because Data Can't Speak for Itself: A Practical Guide to Telling Persuasive Policy Stories*, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press.

Part 3: Persistence: Using data to solve wicked problems with integrity

Lester, Jessica Nina, Yonjoo Cho, and Chad R. Lochmiller. 2020. "Learning to Do Qualitative Data Analysis: A Starting Point." *Human Resource Development Review* 19 (1):94-106. doi: 10.1177/1534484320903890.

Pugh, Allison J. (2013) What good are interviews for thinking about culture? Demystifying interpretive analysis. *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 1(1): 42-68.

Small M. L. & McCrory Calarco, J. 2022. *Qualitative Literacy: A guide to evaluating ethnographic and interview research*, Oakland, CA, University of California Press.

Follow-up

Delving into qualitative worlds: Insights and ideas

Schomerus, Mareike (2023) *Lives Amid Violence: Transforming Development in the Wake of Conflict*. London: Bloomsbury.

Chapter 5: Vertical columns of accelerated air: The mental landscape

Assignment 6: Coding your data (participation) (500 words)

Using insights from class discussions, develop a method for coding your data and briefly describe it in no more than 500 words. Elaborate on how your key will help you to situate your interview data within the concepts you are using and how it will guide you towards gaining an answer to your research question.

Due date: May 3

Week 8 (May 7/9): Telling

This week focuses on how to use the analysis of your qualitative data to delve into the craft of writing it up to deliver a coherent and readable set of rigorous research findings, using the power of good research writing. We will think about different formats your write up can take and what are useful tricks to present this research in the most effective way.

Tool Readings

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. . Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapter 9. Writing a Qualitative Study

Chrisinger, D. & Brodsky, L. 2023. *Because Data Can't Speak for Itself: A Practical Guide to Telling Persuasive Policy Stories*, Baltimore, MD, Johns Hopkins University Press.

Part 1: People: Telling Stories with Data about People for People

Gilgun, Jane F. (2005) "Grab" and Good Science: Writing Up the Results of Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Health Research* 15: 256-262.

Smith, A. 2015. How PowerPoint is killing critical thought. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/sep/23/powerpoint-thought-students-bullet-points-information>

Sword, Helen (2012) *Stylish Academic Writing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

(Despite what the somewhat dry title suggests, this is a highly readable analysis of how academic language can fall short of delivering the best impact. You might not be able to read the whole book this week, but I would propose that you browse the chapters to see which interest you most—and then continue to use the insights from this book for the rest of your writing career.)

Delving into qualitative worlds: Framing

Ames, Morgan G. (2019) *The Charisma Machine: The Life, Death, and Legacy of One Laptop per Child*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Introduction, Chapters 3 and 4, Appendix B.

Assignment 7 (graded): Abstract (160 words including title)

Write an abstract of how you are framing your research paper. Summarize its main argument, its method and implications for the SDG-driven debate in which you are situating your findings. (word limit: 160 including title).

Due date: May 10

Week 9 (May 14/16): Using

This is the week when many of our learnings from this course come together. As you are writing up your research, we are returning to the question of what the elements are that can make qualitative research relevant for policy. A number of themes more commonly discussed regarding quantitative research will become prominent this week, such as how qualitative research can offer validation and reliability.

Tool Readings

Creswell, John W. & Cheryl Poth (2018) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Sage.

Chapter 10. Standards of Validation and Evaluation

Erickson, Frederick (2009) Four Points Concerning Policy-Oriented Qualitative Research. In: Norman K. Denzin & Michael D. Giardina (eds) *Qualitative Inquiry and Social Justice: Toward a Politics of Hope*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sallee, Margaret W. & Julee T. Flood (2012) Using Qualitative Research to Bridge Research, Policy, and Practice. *Theory into Practice* 51(2): 137-144.

Small, M. L. 2022. Why I Rewrite. *Sociologica*, 16, 35-38.

Smit, Brigitte (2003) Can Qualitative Research Inform Policy Implementation? Evidence and Arguments from a Developing Country Context. *FQS Social Research* 4(3).

Swedberg, Richard (2016) Before theory comes theorizing or how to make social science more interesting. *The British Journal of Sociology* 67(1): 5-22.

Week 10: No class, preparation of final submission

Assignment 8/ Final paper (graded): Preliminary research (2000 words)

Your final research paper should be no more than 2000 words in length. Some of the building blocks of the paper are drawn from assignments of previous week. The paper should cover the following:

- Abstract
- Introduction highlighting relevance of research question to current SDG debates/ literature
- Elaboration of research question
- Research methodology and implemented methods
- Limitations and reflections on your process and learning
- Preliminary findings and emerging argument
- Conclusion with possible policy implications.

Due date: May 24

Assignment 9/ Concept map (participation): (additional reflection of 200 words)

Submit your final concept map, including your initial ChatGPT assignment, your notes and sparks along the way and a final 200-word reflection on your learning between what ChatGPT offered and what knowledge you created.

Due date: May 24

General Resources Available to Students

UChicago and the Harris School offer a wide range of support programs for students. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the resources listed below or talk to your instructor.

For your wellbeing:

- <https://wellness.uchicago.edu/>
- [student health services](#).
- Counseling services: <https://wellness.uchicago.edu/mental-health/>. ***Students needing urgent mental health care can speak with clinicians over the phone 24/7 by calling the Therapist-on-Call at 773.702.3625.***

For your learning:

- <https://learningremotely.uchicago.edu/learning-resources/>
- <https://harris.uchicago.edu/student-life/dean-of-students-office/academic-support-programs>

Harris School and University of Chicago Policies

Below, you can find an overview of general university policies (including on academic dishonesty), as well as on how to treat audio and video recordings of classes.

- General [University Policies](#)
- [Academic Polices](#) at the University
- [Harris School Policies](#)
- Policies on audio and video recordings:
<https://teachingremotely.uchicago.edu/recording-policy/>
<https://teachingremotely.uchicago.edu/recording-deletion-policy/>

Academic Integrity

All University of Chicago students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic Integrity and honesty. Among other things, this means that students shall not represent another's work as their own, use un-allowed materials during exams, or otherwise gain unfair academic advantage.

- The University's policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty are described [here](#). The University's approach is that "it is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another's statements or ideas as one's own work. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously."

- The Harris School’s student policies are available on the [policies page of our website](#).
 - The *Academic Honesty and Plagiarism* section expresses the main principles.
 - Detailed guidelines for more specialized student work (e.g., problem sets including computer code) are offered in the sub-section titled *Harris Integrity Policy for Problem Sets Involving Code*.
- Harris’s specific procedures for handling suspected violations of these policies are available in the section *Harris Procedures for Allegations of Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Dishonesty*.
- In addition to disciplinary sanctions, instructors will impose a grade penalty for students who have committed academic dishonesty.
 - The student will receive a grade of 0 on the assignment in question.

Disability Accommodations

The University’s policies regarding students with disabilities are available [here](#). The University of Chicago is committed to ensuring equitable access to our academic programs and services. Students with disabilities who have been approved for the use of academic accommodations by Student Disability Services (SDS) and need a reasonable accommodation(s) to participate fully in this course must follow the [procedures established by the Harris School of Public Policy](#).

Timely notifications are required to ensure that your accommodations can be implemented. Currently registered students are asked to notify the Harris Student Disability Liaison, Eman Alsamara (ealsamara@uchicago.edu) of their access requests by the end of the first week of the quarter. The Harris Student Disability Liaison will work with the student and instructor to coordinate the implementation of student accommodations. *Harris students are not required to submit their accommodations letter to the instructor*. Students from other divisions in the University must submit their accommodations letter to Eman Alsamara (ealsamara@uchicago.edu) in the Harris Dean of Students Office.

Students who are facing extenuating circumstances at any point during the quarter should reach out to their Academic Advisor in the Dean of Students Office for support. If you feel you need accommodations on an ongoing basis, contact Student Disability Services. To contact SDS: website: disabilities.uchicago.edu phone: (773) 702-6000 email: disabilities@uchicago.edu.

Diversity and Inclusion

The Harris School welcomes, values, and respects students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, and we believe that rigorous inquiry and effective public policy problem-solving requires the expression and understanding of diverse viewpoints, experiences, and traditions. The University and the Harris School have developed distinct but overlapping principles and guidelines to insure that we remain a place where difficult issues are discussed with kindness and respect for all.

- The University’s policies are available [here](#). Specifically, the University identifies the [freedom of expression](#) as being “vital to our shared goal of the pursuit of knowledge, as is the right of all members of the community to explore new ideas and learn from one another. To preserve an environment of spirited and open debate, we should all have the opportunity to contribute to intellectual exchanges and participate fully in the life of the University.”

- The Harris School’s commitments to lively, principled, and respectful engagement are available [here](#): “The Harris School of Public Policy welcomes and respects students, faculty, and staff from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives as part of our commitment to building an inclusive community. *Fostering an environment that encourages rigorous inquiry and effective public policy problem-solving requires the involvement and understanding of diverse viewpoints, experiences, and traditions.* As a leading public policy school, Harris holds diversity as a core value. That includes not only diversity of opinion, but diversity along a broad spectrum of factors, including race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability status, religion, socio-economic background, and social or political belief. Recognizing the value of diversity and inclusion is essential to combating discrimination, addressing disparities, and cultivating ethical and clear-eyed policy leadership.”
- Since English language proficiency also varies within the student body, instructors are also encouraged to affirmatively communicate to students, particularly international students, how class participation features in the classroom experience and affects final course grades, since some students have limited experience expressing their ideas in English. Other course components, such as regular TA sessions, TA or instructor office hours, etc. should also be carefully explained since some international students have had little to no previous exposure to the U.S. academic system.

Video and Audio Recordings

The University has developed specific policies and procedures regarding the use of video/audio recordings: these policies are explicitly described in the University’s [student manual](#) as well as in the guidelines for instructors available [here](#). Perhaps the key components of this policy are worth spelling out in your syllabus:

By attending course sessions, students acknowledge that:

- i. They will not: (i) record, share, or disseminate University of Chicago course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats; (ii) retain such materials after the end of the course; or (iii) use such materials for any purpose other than in connection with participation in the course.*
- ii. They will not share links to University of Chicago course sessions with any persons not authorized to be in the course session. Sharing course materials with persons authorized to be in the relevant course is permitted. Syllabi, handouts, slides, and other documents may be shared at the discretion of the instructor.*
- iii. Course recordings, content, and materials may be covered by copyrights held by the University, the instructor, or third parties. Any unauthorized use of such recordings or course materials may violate such copyrights.*
- iv. Any violation of this policy will be referred to the Area Dean of Students.*