Course description and objectives
This course covers both epistemological and methodological issues relevant to urban affairs and planning. It begins with a discussion of some of the major epistemological issues and debates about knowledge production, distribution, and consumption, including discussions of the philosophy, sociology, and economics of knowledge.

It then surveys several particular methods of knowledge production. These methods differ in the types of phenomena used as “data,” their data gathering techniques, their modes of evaluating data, and their presumptions about the voice and position of the researcher.

Student learning outcomes
By the end of the semester, students should have familiarity both with epistemological debates about knowledge production as well as with specific methodological practices used in urban affairs and planning.

Required textbooks and other course materials
The following book is available from the UTA bookstore:


All readings listed in the syllabus that are not in the Denzin and Lincoln book are available for download from the course Blackboard site. For some weeks, there is a lot of assigned reading (exceeding the typical 100 pages/week) — students are not necessarily expected to read everything assigned, but the point of the listed readings is to provide students’ exposure to some of the classic essays, as well as essays from the textbook, on the weekly topic.

Course requirements and descriptions of major assignments and exams with due dates
Grades are based on the following four (five for Ph.D. students) requirements (see the Grading Policy section of this syllabus for how course grade is calculated):

1. Attendance and participation: This course is a seminar. Students are required to attend class, read the assigned readings prior to the class in which they are discussed, and make quality contributions to in-class discussion. Each week one student will be assigned to lead the discussion by summarizing the readings and also making some cogent and provocative remarks about them. (10% of course grade)
2. Research exercises: After the midterm exam, there will be two practice exercises in which students will practice a particular research method and then present their experiences to the class. (20% of course grade)

3. Critical summary (Ph.D. students only): Doctoral students are required to conduct a library database search for five refereed academic journal articles that use qualitative research methods all on the same topic — topic is of your choice. (One strategy to follow in tracking down articles on a topic is, once you have found one or two good articles, to check their reference list for other related articles.) Students are to write an Annotated Bibliography of all five journal articles. Then, students are to select one of the articles to read in depth and write a double-spaced, ±4 page critical summary of it. In your paper, use the first paragraph or two to summarize the methodological gist of the paper, identifying the epistemological position of the paper, the paradigm within which the author is working, the research question, the data used, the stated research methods, and the conclusions drawn. In crafting this summary, do not plagiarize (see below for a discussion of plagiarism). In the remainder of your paper, through your own critical reading of the article, identify the following:
   - the voice or positionality of the author (what voice does the author use? what effect does this voice have in the author’s presentation of the argument? where is the author in the paper? how does s/he claim authority in presenting the argument?);
   - the author’s imagined readers (who is the intended audience? how might the paper exclude some audiences?);
   - how the author treats the subjects and objects of research;
   - the rhetorical devices deployed by the author to make his/her case (how is the argument presented? what norms of social science writing does the author use to make his/her argument?).

In writing your critical summary, be sure not to give your opinion about the article but rather use the epistemological and methodological discussions from the course readings and discussions to critically evaluate the article. Your paper and bibliography which should be formatted according to one of the formatting styles listed below. You are also required to make a short in-class presentation of your critical summary. Critical summaries and presentations are due April 21. (Part of the 30% for in-class exercises and participation)

4. Midterm exam: A take-home midterm covers material up to that point in the course. The take-home midterm is picked up in class on February 24, and due no later than 8:50 p.m. on March 3. Please submit printed copies only (no e-copies of the exam are accepted). (35% of course grade)

5. Term paper and term paper proposal:
   a. Term paper proposal: All students are required to submit a memo outlining their final term paper. The memo must include a theoretical question conducive to qualitative analysis; an outline of the qualitative research design you propose to use to answer your research question including what data you propose to use; statement of the researcher’s (your) voice or positionality, and your audience (reader); and an initial bibliography. Among other sources, be sure to use your textbook for bibliographical sources, including chapters not assigned for class. The memo is due February 24. (Credit for the memo will be included in the credit for the final term paper)

   b. Term paper: All students are required to research and write a final term paper in which you develop and carry out a qualitative research project designed to answer a research question on a topic of your choice. The question may turn into your thesis or dissertation project or it may just be practice. The paper must include discussion of the research question, framing paradigm, researcher’s voice (or positionality) and audience (or reader), proposed methods, description of the kinds of data used, and initial findings. The focus of the paper is a discussion, application, and critical evaluation of your chosen methodology (do not focus on your topic; rather focus on your methodology). So, be sure
to discuss the method you are using, why you chose that method, what it elucidates as well as what it obscures about your topic. Papers should be roughly 15 double-spaced pages, including a bibliography, in 10-12 point font with 1-inch margins all around. Your paper and bibliography must conform to one of the formatting styles listed below. You are also required to make a short in-class presentation summarizing your term paper. Term papers and in-class presentations are due April 28. (35% of course grade)

NOTES:
a. Written assignments and presentations for this class must be of professional quality. This means carefully editing and proof-reading all written work for typing, stylistic, spelling, and grammatical errors, and for clarity of thought. These things will affect your grade. If you have questions about style, consult The Chicago Manual of Style or Strunk & White’s The Elements of Style. Your bibliographical references must conform to the format listed in The Chicago Manual of Style, or be consistent with some other bibliographic style (such as American Psychological Association, or Modern Languages Association). If you would like help with a paper draft, any UTA student can use the UTA Writing Center which can be reached at http://www.uta.edu/owl/ or 272-2601.

b. Plagiarism in research is not only unethical but is prohibited by UTA (see http://www.uta.edu/conduct/academic-integrity/index.php). Novice researchers sometimes plagiarize because they often do not know how and when it is appropriate to cite the work of another researcher. The most common examples of plagiarism include:

• word for word copying of sentences or paragraphs without clearly citing the source
• closely paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs without clearly citing the source
• using another person’s ideas, work, data, or research without appropriate acknowledgment or citation of the source

There are many useful websites and books that provide more information about plagiarism. It is also advised to take the UTA Library’s tutorial on plagiarism, http://library.uta.edu/plagiarism/. Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this course.

🔗 Course grading policy

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research exercises and in-class presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical summary and in-class presentation (doctoral students only):</td>
<td>part of the above 30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term paper (including proposal) and in-class presentation</td>
<td>35%</td>
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Letter grades on the midterm, critical summaries (Ph.D. students), and term research paper are based on the rubric described in the Paper Grading Rubric section of this syllabus. An “A” on the term paper means a paper that is suitable for submission to a student-run peer-reviewed journal (such as UCLA’s student-run journal, Critical Planning — more info, see: http://gsa.asucla.ucla.edu/services/publications/critical-planning) and/or for a nationally-competitive award for Best Student Paper (such as ACSP’s Edward McClure Award — more info, see: http://www.acsp.org/awards/edward-mcclure-award).

🔗 Calendar

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 13</td>
<td>Introduction — discussion of course objectives and requirements</td>
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January 20  MLK day — no class

January 27  Overview of Qualitative Research and Methodology

Readings:


F. Erickson, “A history of qualitative inquiry in social and educational research,” ch. 3 in Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 43-59.


February 3  What Is Knowledge? The History and Sociology of Knowledge

Readings:


February 10  Postmodern, Post-Structuralist, and Marxist Epistemologies

Readings:


February 17 Feminist, Ethnic, and Postcolonial Epistemologies

Readings:

V. Olesen, “Feminist qualitative research in the millennium’s first decade: developments, challenges, prospects,” ch.7 in Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 129-146.


C.B. Dillard and C. Okpaloaka, “The sacred and spiritual nature of endarkened transnational feminist praxis in qualitative research,” ch.8 in Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 147-162.

February 24 The Politics and Economics of Knowledge

Pick up take-home midterm exam

Term paper memo due

Readings:

M. Levin and D. Greenwood, “Revitalizing universities by reinventing the social sciences: buldung and action research,” ch. 2 in Denzin and Lincoln, p.. 27-42.


S. Finley, “Critical arts-based inquiry,” ch. 26 in Denzin and Lincoln, p.. 435-450.

March 3 Take-Home Midterm Due by 8:50 p.m. Please submit printed copies only (no e-copies)

March 10 Spring Break
March 17  
**Interviews, Focus Groups, Case Studies**

Readings:


March 24  
**Ethnography, Participatory Action Research, Grounded Theory**

Presentations of last week’s practice exercise

Readings:


S.M. Gatson, “The methods, politics, and ethics of representation in online ethnography,” ch. 31 in Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 513-527.


M. Brydon-Miller, *et al*, “Jazz and the Banyan Tree: roots and riffs on participatory action research,” ch. 23 in Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 387-400.


March 31  Textual Analysis, Oral Histories, Interpretive Practice
Presentations of last week’s practice exercise

Readings:


April 7  Qualitative GIS
Presentations of last week’s practice exercise

Readings:


J. Davidson and S. di Gregorio, “Qualitative research and technology: in the midst of a revolution,” ch. 38 in Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 627-643.

April 14  Ethics in Research
Guest speaker: Robin Dickey, Research Compliance Officer, UTA
Presentations of last week’s practice exercise

Readings:


C. Christians, “Ethics and politics in qualitative research,” ch. 4 in ,Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 61-80.

G.S. Cannella and Y.S. Lincoln, “Ethics, research regulations and critical social science,” ch. 5 in Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 81-89.
April 21 The State of Qualitative Methods: Is Qualitative Research Scientific? Does Epistemology Matter?
Doctoral students’ presentations of critical summary
Doctoral students’ critical summary due

Readings:


J. Preissle, “Qualitative futures: where we might go from where we’ve been,” ch. 42 in Denzin and Lincoln, pp. 685-698.

April 28 In-Class Presentations of Final Research Projects
Final research papers due by 8:50 p.m.
The Stuff at the End of the Syllabus

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/).

Americans with Disabilities Act: The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at http://www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents’ Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at http://www.uta.edu/resources.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business.
regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located up the stairs. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Ideas</strong></th>
<th><strong>The A Paper</strong></th>
<th><strong>The B Paper</strong></th>
<th><strong>The C Paper</strong></th>
<th><strong>The D Paper</strong></th>
<th><strong>The F Paper</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Excels in responding to assignment. Interesting, demonstrates sophistication of thought. Central idea/thesis is clearly communicated, worth developing; limited enough to be manageable. Paper recognizes some complexity of its thesis; may acknowledge its contradictions, qualifications, or limits and follow out their logical implications. Understands and critically evaluates its sources, appropriately.</td>
<td>A solid paper, responding appropriately to assignment. Clearly states a thesis/central idea, but may have minor lapses in development. Begins to acknowledge the complexity of central idea and the possibility of other points of view. Shows careful reading of sources, but may not evaluate them critically. Attempts to define terms, not always successfully.</td>
<td>Adequate but weaker and less effective, possibly responding less well to assignment. Presents central idea in general terms, often depending on platitudes or clichés. Usually does not acknowledge other views. Shows basic comprehension of sources, perhaps with lapses in understanding. If it defines terms, often depends on dictionary definitions.</td>
<td>Does not have a clear central idea or does not respond appropriately to the assignment. Thesis may be too vague or obvious to be developed effectively. Paper may misunderstand sources.</td>
<td>Does not respond to the assignment, lacks a thesis or central idea, and may neglect to use sources where necessary.</td>
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| **Organization & coherence** | **Uses a logical structure appropriate to paper’s subject, purpose, audience, thesis, and disciplinary field.** Sophisticated transitional sentences often develop one idea from the previous one or identify their logical relations. It guides the reader through the chain of reasoning or progression of ideas. | Shows a logical progression of ideas and uses fairly sophisticated transitional devices; e.g., may move from least to more important idea. Some logical links may be faulty, but each paragraph clearly relates to paper’s central idea. | May list ideas or arrange them randomly rather than using any evident logical structure. May use transitions, but they are likely to be sequential (first, second, third) rather than logic-based. While each paragraph may relate to central idea, logic is not always clear. Paragraphs have topic sentences but may be overly general, and arrangement of sentences within paragraphs may lack coherence. | May have random organization, lacking internal paragraph coherence and using few or inappropriate transitions. Paragraphs may lack topic sentences or main ideas, or may be too general or too specific to be effective. Paragraphs may not all relate to paper’s thesis. | No appreciable organization; lacks transitions and coherence |

| **Support** | Uses evidence appropriately and effectively, providing sufficient evidence and explanation to convince. | Begins to offer reasons to support its points, perhaps using varied kinds of evidence. Begins to interpret the evidence and explain connections between evidence and main ideas. Its examples bear some relevance. | Often uses generalizations to support its points. May use examples, but they may be obvious or not relevant. Often depends on unsupported opinion or personal experience, or assumes that evidence speaks for itself and needs no application to the point being discussed. Often has lapses in logic. | Depends on clichés or overgeneralizations for support, or offers little evidence of any kind. May be personal narrative rather than essay, or summary rather than analysis. | Uses irrelevant details or lacks supporting evidence entirely. May be unduly brief. |

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<tr>
<th><strong>Style</strong></th>
<th>Chooses words for their precise meaning and uses an appropriate level of specificity. Sentence style fits paper’s audience and purpose. Sentences are varied, yet clearly structured and carefully focused, not long and rambling.</th>
<th>Generally uses words accurately and effectively, but may sometimes be too general. Sentences generally clear, well structured, and focused, though some may be awkward or ineffective.</th>
<th>Uses relatively vague and general words, may use some inappropriate language. Sentence structure generally correct, but sentences may be wordy, unfocused, repetitive, or confusing.</th>
<th>May be too vague and abstract, or very personal and specific. Usually contains several awkward or ungrammatical sentences; sentence structure is simple or monotonous.</th>
<th>Usually contains many awkward sentences, misuses words, employs inappropriate language.</th>
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<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Almost entirely free of spelling punctuation, and grammatical errors.</td>
<td>May contain a few errors, which may annoy the reader but not impede understanding.</td>
<td>Usually contains several mechanical errors, which may temporarily confuse the reader but not impede the overall understanding.</td>
<td>Usually contains either many mechanical errors or a few important errors that block the reader’s understanding and ability to see connections between thoughts.</td>
<td>Usually contains so many mechanical errors that it is impossible for the reader to follow the thinking from sentence to sentence.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Citation &amp; bibliographic practices</strong></td>
<td>Consistent, appropriate use of quotations and paraphrasing, with no hint of plagiarism. Uniform and appropriate handling of in-text citations (or footnotes). Well-organized reference list or bibliography with appropriate, consistent style.</td>
<td>Occasional, minor lapses in use of quotations and paraphrasing, with no hint of plagiarism. Minor inconsistency or inappropriate handling of citations. Reference list or bibliography has minor problems with organization or style.</td>
<td>More frequent minor lapses in use of quotations and paraphrasing, with no hint of plagiarism. Some minor inconsistency or mishandling of citations. Reference list or bibliography has more serious organizational or style problems.</td>
<td>Crude use of quotations or paraphrasing, perhaps with serious inconsistency or mishandling of citations. Plagiarism (including unintentional plagiarism) may be strongly suspected. Reference list or bibliography may have serious problems in organization or style.</td>
<td>Grievously defective use of quotations or paraphrasing or serious mishandling of citations. Plagiarism (even if unintentional) can be demonstrated. Reference list or bibliography deeply defective in organization or style.</td>
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Original rubric provided by UTA’s Office of Instructional Assessment (12-2010)