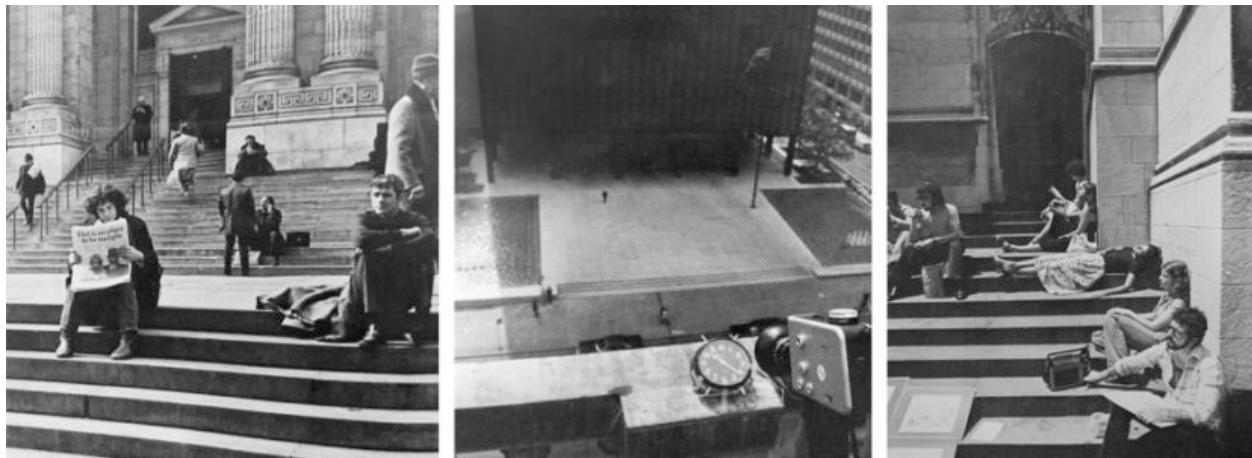


**Qualitative Methods in Urban Design and Planning**

Tuesdays 1:30-4:20 PM  
Bloedel Hall 286

Prof. Dylan Stevenson  
Office: 418 Gould Hall  
Office Hours: By appointment  
Grading: Letter Grade / 3 Credits

Email: [dylste@uw.edu](mailto:dylste@uw.edu)



**Course Description:**

This class surveys the use of qualitative methods in urban design and planning practice and research, especially in relationship to places and people. Students will learn theoretical foundations of qualitative research methods and apply them to a case study. The aim is to help students develop methodological and analytical skills that will be useful in research and in professional practice. While we will draw examples from a variety of research and practice situations, each year's course has a topic/site focus such as farmers' markets, P-Patches, food truck zones, parklets, or neighborhood public spaces. The purpose of a shared focus is to explore an in-depth a common theme and develop a shared research question(s) TBD each year.

*For example: Food truck zones – do “informal” practices enliven space in ways that is meaningful to people?*

In asking this question we are raising questions about the significance of “liveliness” and “meaning” and how we might define and measure them. A wide variety of qualitative methods can be drawn upon to help us understand and describe such phenomena. In this class we will identify, practice, and discuss appropriate methods, and combine them into a coherent research design in the form of a case study.

Students will be introduced to a range of qualitative methods. Discussions will include strengths and weaknesses of the methods, what each method suggests in terms of type of data to be collected, how best to analyze these data, and what the results are useful for.

**Required Texts:**

There are no required texts for this class and all readings will be uploaded to Canvas. However, it is highly recommended that obtain the following:

- Zeisel, John. 2006. *Inquiry by Design: Environment/Behavior/Neuroscience in Architecture, Interiors, Landscape, and Planning*. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company
- Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc.
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., Williams, J. M., Bizup, J., & FitzGerald, W. T. 2016. *The craft of research* (Fourth edition). The University of Chicago Press.

Other non-required possible reference books for the class:

- John Creswell and David Creswell. 2018. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage
- W. Lawrence Neuman. 2005. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Boston: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Jason Orne and Michael M. Bell. 2015. *An Invitation to Qualitative Fieldwork*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Ellen Perelman and Sara R. Curran, eds. 2006. *A Handbook for Social Science Field Research: Essays and Bibliographic Sources on Research Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

**Learning Goals and Outcomes:**

Through the completion of this course, students will have the ability to:

- Students will be introduced to a range of qualitative methods including strengths and weaknesses, and what each method suggests in terms of type of data to be collected, how best to analyze it, and what the results are useful for.
- Students will be introduced to the case study method and how to use it as an organizing frame and approach to conducting their research work.
- Students will practice reflexivity and triangulation.
- Students will gain understanding of how “validity” and “ethics” affect data collection, analysis, and presentation.

**Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken through in-class exercises unless otherwise stated. For most of the classes, students will participate in group-oriented, in-class assignments to foster teamwork, familiarity, and develop an understanding of the differing variables associated with the data collection process among individuals. Participation points will be based on the in-class assignments and discussions within the class.

**Teaching Philosophy:**

The classroom learning environment is intended to be a safe and protective space for you to explore, develop, and craft your skillsets so that you hopefully feel adequately prepared to employ the qualitative methods introduced in this class within your chosen profession. This course is heavily designed to train you through experiential learning which involves conducting site visits, employing qualitative research approaches, discussions, and working with other students. Since students are likely to be on different trajectories in their research journeys, a field site and topic have been predetermined for logistical purposes to allow students to learn qualitative research methods used in urban design and planning. The methods and experiences gained through this course should equip students to employ qualitative research methodologies as they continue on their respective research journeys.

**Requirements:**

The structure of the class is based on four elements:

1. Readings and class discussions,
2. Fieldwork homework assignments that have you use various methods to make sense of a phenomenon related to the class theme and questions,
3. In-Class Exercises to help organize and make sense of the data you collect from your fieldwork, and
4. A final case study write-up describing and analyzing a particular component to understand culture, drawing upon the variety of qualitative methods we have discussed and including a reflective account of your own experience as an investigator.

In the course, we will consider the following.

- The use of case studies and methods for analyzing data
- Using written archival materials
- Using visual materials including photographs, maps, and other media
- Observing environments and physical traces
- Observing environmental behavior
- Understanding transect walks
- Asking questions
- Using focused interviews
- Understanding standardized questionnaires

**Homework Assignments and Case Study Write-Up**

Each student will complete a series of nine homework assignments plus the case study write-up described above. The homework assignments will be brief, intended to illustrate quickly and economically the use of the various methods. These exercises are due before the class session at which they will be discussed. Come prepared to talk about your field experience and the method itself. Some homework submissions will be peer-reviewed.

**Late Submission Policy:**

Assignments are expected to be turned in by their respective due dates. All assignments submitted after the due date are subject to having up to 1 letter grade (10%) deduction per day after the original due date. For example, if an assignment is worth 10 points and is due January

15<sup>th</sup> and you submit it on January 16<sup>th</sup>, you are subject to receive up to a 1 1-point deduction from your assignment. A January 17<sup>th</sup> submission up to a 2-point deduction, etc.

### Syllabus:

This syllabus is a living document. The most recent version will be available at all times at the course website on Canvas. If a student has a concern regarding course workload it needs to be addressed immediately with the instructor.

### Course Evaluation:

Formal course evaluation occurs at the end of the quarter university-wide. If you are experiencing a problem with the class, please let me know as soon as possible, as I might be able to correct for changes if needed within the course of the class.

### Zoom Access:

Due to the limited number of class sessions, a remote option for this class will be unavailable.

### Grading:

Assignment	% of Grade
Participation	5
Homework Submissions (9 total)	30
In-Class Exercises (9 total)	30
Case Study Write-up	35
<i>Total</i>	<i>100</i>

### Grading Scale:

Final course grades will be calculated using the UW Graduate Grading Scale. Grades will NOT be curved and are based on a point system, shown as percents:

A	4.0	95-100 percent	Outstanding
A-	3.8	90-94 percent	Excellent
B+	3.4	85-89 percent	Competency achieved to high standard
B	3.0	80-84 percent	Competency achieved
B-	2.8	75-79 percent	Below Competency

### Schedule of Classes and Readings (Weeks differentiated by color):

Date	Topic	Tasks Due
<b>Week 1</b>		
March 26, 2024	<b>Introduction/Syllabus and class structure</b>  What are qualitative data? Topics and questions	Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). "Chapter 2: Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Frameworks" from <i>Qualitative inquiry &amp; research design: Choosing among five approaches</i> (Fourth edition). SAGE.  Morgan, G., & Smircich, L. (1980). <i>The Case for</i>

	<p>Making sense of Culture Case study: Chinatown- International District Site visits on own</p>	<p><i>Qualitative Research</i>. The Academy of Management Review, 5(4), 491–500. <a href="https://doi.org/10.2307/257453">https://doi.org/10.2307/257453</a></p> <p>Sternberg, E. (1994). <i>What is a Master's Thesis in Planning?</i> Journal of Planning Education and Research, 13(4), 284–289. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X9401300405">https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X9401300405</a></p> <p>Liu, Jeremy. 2020. “Making Places for Survival.” In <i>The Routledge Handbook of Placemaking</i>, 1st Edition, 45–55. Routledge.</p> <p><b>Exercise 1</b> – Introductions, research interests, places of inquiry</p> <p><b>Assignment 1</b> – Photo Collage and Impression Statement</p>
<b>Week 2</b>		
April 2, 2024	<p><b>Case Studies</b> - how and why we work with cases</p> <p><b>Archives</b> - seeing without visiting; moments in time</p>	<p>Sæter, O. (2011). <i>The Body and the Eye: Perspectives, Technologies, and Practices of Urbanism</i>. Space and Culture, 14(2), 183–196. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331210391137">https://doi.org/10.1177/1206331210391137</a></p> <p>Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). <i>Five Misunderstandings About Case-Study Research</i>. Qualitative Inquiry, 12(2), 219–245. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363">https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363</a></p> <p>Mukhija, V. (2010). <i>N of One plus Some: An Alternative Strategy for Conducting Single Case Research</i>. Journal of Planning Education and Research, 29(4), 416–426. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X10362770">https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X10362770</a></p> <p><b>Exercise 2</b> – Archives</p> <p><b>Assignment 2</b> – Place-based, Person-based historical documentation</p>
<b>Week 3</b>		
April 9, 2024	<p><b>Content Analysis 1</b> - making sense of written &amp; visual materials</p> <p><b>Physical Traces</b> - documenting a neighborhood &amp;</p>	<p>Zeisel, J. (1997). “Chapter 7: Observing Physical Traces” in <i>Inquiry by design: Tools for environment-behaviour research (Reprint)</i>. Cambridge Univ. Press.</p> <p>Jon Wagner, “Introduction: Information in and about Photographs;” John Collier, “Evaluating Visual Data,” and John Collier, “Visual Anthropology,” in Jon Wagner, ed., <i>Images of Information: Still</i></p>

	everyday uses	<p>Photography in the Social Sciences (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1979).</p> <p>Ryan, B. D. (2011). Reading Through a Plan: A Visual Interpretation of What Plans Mean and How They Innovate. Journal of the American Planning Association, 77(4), 309–327.</p> <p><b>Exercise 3</b> – Physical Traces &amp; Observing Behavior</p> <p><b>Assignment 3</b> – Sketchbooking Everyday-ness</p>
<b>Week 4</b>		
April 16, 2024	<p><b>Observing Environmental behavior</b></p> <p>Analyzing and <b>documenting people and places</b></p>	<p>Explore the <a href="https://photovoice.org/">https://photovoice.org/</a> webpage.</p> <p>Ronald Lee Fleming. 1990. “Questions to Ask a Space.” Places, 6(4), pp. 12-13.</p> <p>Bernard, H. Russell. 2002. “Field Notes: How Take Them, Code Them, Manage Them.” Pp. 365-389 in Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Altamira Press.</p> <p>John Zeisel. 2006. Chapter 8, “Observing Environmental Behavior.” Inquiry by Design: Tools for Environment-Behavior Research. New York: Cambridge University Press.</p> <p><b>Exercise 4</b> – Urban Anthropologists in a Room</p> <p><b>Assignment 4</b> – Thick Description Documentation</p>
<b>Week 5</b>		
April 23, 2024	<p><b>Interviewing</b> – asking questions</p> <p><b>Transect Walks</b> – touring a place with a local</p>	<p>Wildavsky, Aaron. 1993. “Chapter 5, “The Open-Ended, Semistructured Interview: An (Almost) Operational Guide.” In A. Wildavsky (ed.), Craftways: On the Organization of Scholarly Work. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.</p> <p>Leech, Beth. 2002. “Asking Questions: Techniques for Semistructured Interviews.” Political Science &amp; Politics 35(4): 665-668.</p> <p>Whyte, William Foote. 1984. “Interviewing Strategies and Tactics” Chapter 6 in Learning from the Field: A Guide from Experience. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.</p> <p><b>Exercise 5</b> – Asking Questions</p>

		<b>Assignment 5, 6, and 7 – Developing Questions, Interviewing, and Transcription</b>
<b>Week 6</b>		
April 30, 2024	<p><b>Key Informants and Panels</b> – asking questions</p> <p><b>Content Analysis 2</b> - why we ask questions</p>	<p>Anderson et. al. 2012. “Research Ethics Education for Community-Engaged Research”. Research Ethics Education.</p> <p>Detering and Waters. 2018. “Flexible Coding Approach. Sociological Research &amp; Methods.</p> <p>Decuir-Gunby. 2011. “Developing and Using a Codebook for the Analysis of Interview Data: An Example from a Professional Development Research Project”. Field Methods.</p> <p><b>Exercise 6</b> – Group Dialogue Sizes</p> <p><b>Assignment 5, 6, and 7 – Developing Questions, Interviewing, and Transcription</b></p>
<b>Week 7</b>		
May 7, 2024	<p><b>Questionnaires</b> – conducting a survey;</p> <p>Potential Guest Speaker</p>	<p>Zeisel, J. (1984). “<i>Chapter 10: Standardized Questionnaires</i>” from Inquiry by Design: Tools for Environment-Behavior Research. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.157-177.</p> <p>Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., &amp; Christian, L. M. (2014, 4th ed.). Chapters 1 &amp; 2 of Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method.</p> <p><b>Exercise 7</b> – Group Dialogue Sizes</p> <p><b>Assignment 5, 6, and 7 – Developing Questions, Interviewing, and Transcription</b></p>
<b>Week 8</b>		
May 14, 2024	<p>Developing and Choosing an <b>Analytical Approach</b></p> <p>Models &amp; simulation</p>	<p>Groat, L. N., &amp; Wang, D. (n.d.). “Chapter 10: Simulation Research” from Architectural Research Methods. Pp. 349-377.</p> <p>Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy and Patricia Leavy. 2006. “Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data.” Chapter 10 in The Practice of Qualitative Research. Sage Publications.</p> <p>Whyte, William Foote. 1984. “Focusing the Study and</p>

		<p>Analyzing the Data.” Chapter 5 in Learning from the Field: A Guide from Experience. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.</p> <p><b>Exercise 8</b> – Short Narrative Exercise</p> <p><b>Assignment 8</b> – Interview Transcript Coding</p>
<b>Week 9</b>		
May 21, 2024	From data to story	<p>Burnard et. al.. 1999. “Analysing and Presenting Qualitative Data”. British Dental Journal.</p> <p>Sandelowski, Margarete. 1998. “Writing a good read: strategies for re-presenting qualitative data”. Research in Nursing &amp; Health.</p> <p><b>Exercise 9</b> – Big Picture Discussions</p> <p><b>Assignment 9</b> – Data Storytelling</p>
<b>Week 10</b>		
May 28, 2024	<p>Illustrating stories</p> <p>Fine-tuning stories</p>	<p>Penrod, J. 2003. “Getting Funding: Writing a Successful Qualitative Small-Project Proposal”. Qualitative Health Research.</p> <p>Sandelowski, M. and Barraso, J. 2003. “Writing a Proposal for a Qualitative Research Methodology Project”. Qualitative Health Research.</p> <p>Vivar et. al.. 2007. “Getting Started with Qualitative Research: Developing a Research Proposal”. Nurse Research.</p> <p>Course evaluation</p>
<b>Week 11</b>		
June 9, 2024	Finals week	Case study write-up due during final exam period

### University Code of Academic Integrity:

The University takes academic integrity very seriously. Behaving with integrity is part of our responsibility to our shared learning community. If you’re uncertain about if something is academic misconduct, ask me. I am willing to discuss questions you might have.

Acts of academic misconduct may include but are not limited to:

- Cheating (working collaboratively on quizzes/exams and discussion submissions, sharing answers and previewing quizzes/exams)
- Plagiarism (representing the work of others as your own without giving appropriate credit to the original author(s))



- Unauthorized collaboration (working with each other on assignments)
- Concerns about these or other behaviors prohibited by the Student Conduct Code will be referred for investigation and adjudication by (include information for specific campus office).

Students found to have engaged in academic misconduct may receive a zero on the assignment (or other possible outcome).

### **Access and Accommodations:**

Your experience in this class is important to me. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please activate your accommodations via myDRS so we can discuss how they will be implemented in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), contact DRS directly to set up an Access Plan. DRS facilitates the interactive process that establishes reasonable accommodations. Contact DRS at [disability.uw.edu](https://disability.uw.edu).

### **Religious Accommodations:**

“Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW’s policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at Religious Accommodations Policy

(<https://registrar.washington.edu/staffandfaculty/religious-accommodations-policy/>).

Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the Religious Accommodations Request form (<https://registrar.washington.edu/students/religious-accommodations-request/>).”

### **Inclusivity Statement:**

We understand that our members represent a rich variety of backgrounds and perspectives. The department is committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity. While working together to build this community we ask all members to:

- Share their unique experiences, values, and beliefs.
- Be open to the views of others.
- Honor the uniqueness of their colleagues.
- Appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community.
- Value each other’s opinions and communicate in a respectful manner.
- Keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature.
- Use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the university community.

