COURSE OVERVIEW

Through readings and dialogue, we ponder how qualitative, participatory, Indigenous and other non-conventional methodologies of critical inquiry open up possibilities for research by confronting the socio-politico-historical power relations of knowledge production, studying the how and why of every-day lived experiences and the structures that shape/are shaped by them. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged, through critical inquiry and reflexive practice, to question whose knowledge is recognized (or excluded), and under what conditions is knowledge produced, legitimized, communicated, and acted upon.

While there is no prerequisite, I assume that graduate students taking this course will already have had an introduction to qualitative research methods during their undergraduate training or applied professional experience and have some degree of theoretical social science literacy in this line of inquiry. If they have not, then I recommend that they read the following text in advance of taking this course to become familiar with the ‘how to’ of conducting qualitative inquiry, so that we may focus more on participatory, critical, and Indigenous modes of methods of inquiry: Hay, Iain. (Ed). (2016). Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography (4th Ed). Oxford University Press.

I have designed this course to further develop your critical thinking and applied skills in terms of the nature and scope of qualitative, participatory, and Indigenous methodologies in the social sciences, challenge traditional (conventional, positivist) knowledge production by engaging with creative, innovative, and decolonizing modes of data collection and analyses, and give graduate students a range of theoretical (and to an extent, practical) foundations to build on.

*On the first day of class, we will review and, where appropriate, revise the objectives noted here so as to meet your own individual- and collectively-identified key learning objectives for our time together.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Develop a refined understanding of the historiography of the production of knowledge within and beyond the academy.
2. Explore a range of qualitative, participatory, and Indigenous modes of inquiry that can be used to gain always-partial understanding of social and natural phenomenon;
3. Advance theoretical literacy and a certain degree of methodological competency in the crafts of qualitative, participatory, and Indigenist inquiry;
4. Consider power, place and privilege, the socio-political dynamics of research, relationality, temporality, positionality and knowledge/place/time concerning the ethical process of research involving human participants; and
5. Analyze and evaluate quality/rigour in qualitative, participatory, and Indigenous analyses.

COURSE TOPICS

Production of knowledge; Reflexivity, Positionality, and Intersectionality; Ethics and Relational Accountability; Methodologies and Methods; Community-Engaged and Activist Research; Designing Research, from Idea/Need to Outcome/Output; Data Analysis; Sharing our Knowledge with Multiple Audiences

COURSE READINGS

4. Plus approximately 6 journal articles each week, resulting in about 125 pages/week of reading.