

University of Connecticut
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Committee on Curricula and Courses

Proposal to Add a New Undergraduate Course

Last revised: December 8, 2003

See "[Instructions for completing CLAS CC&C forms](#)" for general instructions and specific notes.

1. Date: **2/19/2014**
2. Department requesting this course: **Urban and Community Studies**
3. Semester and year in which course will be first offered: **Fall 2014**

Final catalog Listing (see [Note A](#)):

Assemble this after you have completed the components below. This listing should not contain any information that is not listed below! See Note A for examples of how undergraduate and graduate courses are listed.

URBN 2302. Qualitative Methods in Urban and Community Studies

Either semester. Three credits. Open to sophomores.

An introduction to qualitative methods used in urban social research. Students will learn interdisciplinary techniques for data collection and analysis, including: visual and narrative analysis, participant observation, interviewing, and archival research.

Items included in catalog Listing:

Obligatory Items

1. Standard abbreviation for Department or Program (see [Note O](#)): **URBN**
2. Course Number (see [Note B](#)): **2302**
If using a specific number (e.g. "254" instead of "2XX"), have you checked with the Registrar that this number is available for use? **X** Yes ___ No
3. Course Title: Qualitative Methods in Urban and Community Studies
4. Semester offered (see [Note C](#)): **Fall, Spring**
5. Number of Credits (see [Note D](#)): **3**
6. Course description (second paragraph of catalog entry -- see [Note K](#)): **An introduction to qualitative methods used in urban social research. Students will learn interdisciplinary techniques for data collection and analysis, including: visual and narrative analysis, participant observation, interviewing, and archival research.**

Optional Items

7. Number of Class Periods, if not standard (see [Note E](#)): **NA**
8. Prerequisites, if applicable (see [Note F](#)): **NA**
9. Recommended Preparation, if applicable (see [Note G](#)): **NA**

10. Consent of Instructor, if applicable (see Note T) **NA**
11. Exclusions, if applicable (see Note H): **NA**
12. Repetition for credit, if applicable (see Note I): **NA**
13. Instructor(s) names if they will appear in catalog copy (see Note J): **NA**
14. Open to Sophomores (see Note U): **Yes**
15. Skill Codes "W", "Q", or "C" (see Note T): **NA**
16. S/U grading (see Note W): **NA**

Justification

1. Reasons for adding this course: (see Note L) **Urban and Community Studies research incorporates both quantitative and qualitative techniques. We recently added a quantitative focused course (URBN 2301Q) and would like now to add a qualitative focused course. Students are required to take at least one methods course, but by offering both a quantitative and qualitative course, students and their academic advisor can select the course that best fits their career objectives. The course had been taught as a variable topics course in previous years on the Waterbury campus, and this Spring it is being offered on the Storrs campus as a variable topics course. Student response has been positive.**
2. Academic Merit (see Note L): **Students will learn qualitative analysis skills useful for researching urban problems.**
3. Overlapping Courses (see Note M): **None**
4. Number of Students Expected: **60/year**
5. Number and Size of Section: **1 section per year on Storrs; every other year on Greater Hartford and Waterbury campuses. Because of the project-based nature of the material, classes will be capped at 40 students per section.**
6. Effects on Other Departments (see Note N): **None expected. Representatives from Geography, Political Science, and Sociology have been notified and none suggested any conflict.**
7. Effects on Regional Campuses: **The course will be offered every other year on the Greater Hartford and/or Waterbury campuses, the two regional campuses offering the Urban and Community Studies major.**
8. Staffing (see Note P): **The UCS program has faculty qualified to teach the course.**
9. Dates approved by (see Note Q):
Department Curriculum Committee: **2/5/2014**
Department Faculty: **2/18/2014**
10. Name, Phone Number, and e-mail address of principal contact person:
Edith Barrett
Director, Urban and Community Studies
860-570-9029
Edith.barrett@uconn.edu

SAMPLE SYLLABUS (Rosa, Spring 2014)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course serves as an introduction to a wide range of qualitative methods used in urban social research. The class is structured around interdisciplinary techniques for fieldwork and data collection including: visual and narrative analysis, participant observation, interviewing, and archival research. Students will have the opportunity to collect and analyze a variety of data through project-based assignments and will learn about the practicalities, ethics, and relevance of research in the social sciences.

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND CALENDAR (SUBJECT TO ALTERATION)

PART 1: MAKING SENSE OF METHOD

Week 1 (January 27-31): Introduction; knowledge claims; epistemology and ontology; research design frameworks

Week 2 (February 3-7): Changing paradigms of qualitative research; understanding the positionality of the researcher; research ethics

Week 3 (February 10-14): Case study research; mixed-method approaches; relationship between research and social policy; selecting a research topic

PART 2: INTERVIEW METHODS

Week 4 (February 17-21): Sampling, design and strategy; introduction to recording equipment and Audacity program for audio editing; introduction to f5 program for transcription

Week 5 (February 24-28): Strategies for planning and conducting semi-structured interviews; creating an interview guide; filtering data; preparing for follow-up interviews

PART 3: ARCHIVAL RESEARCH METHODS

Week 6 (March 3-7): Distinguishing and utilizing primary and secondary data; orientation to the Alternative Press Collection at the Dodd Center; methods of using the internet as archive

Week 7 (March 10-14): Evaluating the validity, credibility, and biases of sources; filtering and coding data, using Zotero for citation management

March 14: Final project research proposal due

Week 8 (March 17-21): SPRING BREAK

PART 4: ETHNOGRAPHIC METHODS

Week 9 (March 24-28): Revisiting the Chicago School of sociology; participant observation; effectively recording field notes

Week 10 (March 31- April 4): Producing and analyzing audiovisual materials; analyzing environmental behavior; frontiers for doing ethnographic research on the internet

PART 5: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Week 11 (April 7-11): Managing, organizing, and coding data

Week 12 (April 14-18): Narrative/Discourse Analysis; reflexivity, subjectivity and objectivity

Week 13 (April 21-25): Making truth claims: questions of validity and verifiability; data analysis workshop

Week 14 (April 28-30): Final project presentations

April 30: Final Project due

ASSIGNMENT DETAILS

Final Project Paper and Presentation (Paper due April 30; presentations April 30 and during final exam session)

You will be expected to conduct an original qualitative research project utilizing at least two of the methods explored in the course of the semester. The paper should relate to a particular research question relating to urban life and *will likely require off-campus fieldwork*. Students should consider potential research questions and/or topics from the beginning of the semester. A two-page proposal outlining your topic and research methods will be due on March 14. The structure and guidelines for the paper will be handed out early in the semester, and special emphasis will be placed on the methods of data collection and analysis. The final result will be a 10-page paper and a 15-minute presentation. (40 points)