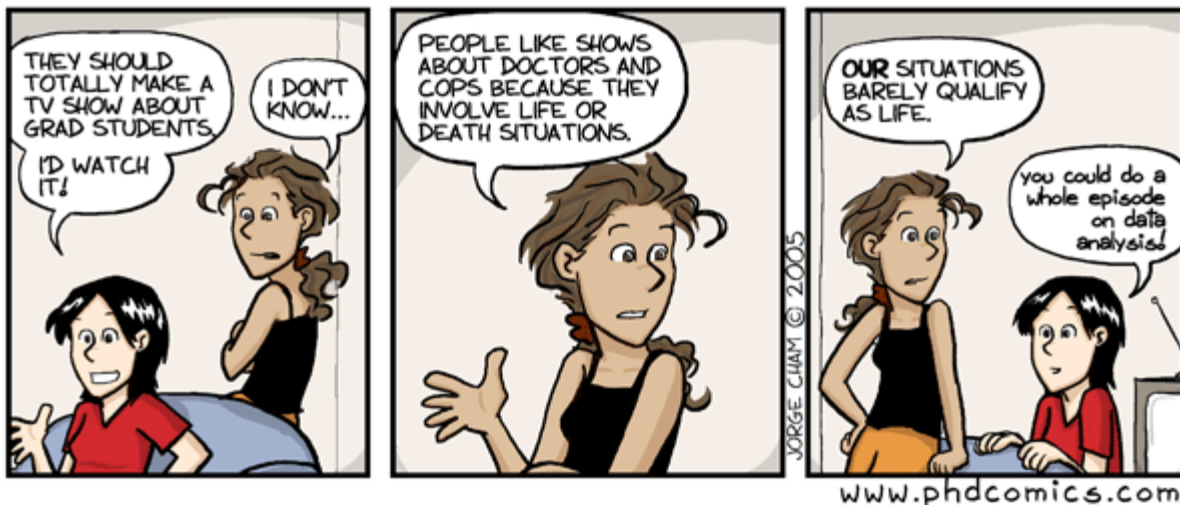


McGill University, Department of Geography

GEOG 509
Qualitative methods in geography
Fall 2014

-- Abridged Course Details --

Note: this course is designed for geography graduate students. If you are an undergraduate or a graduate student from a different department, and are interested in this course, you will need to talk to me first to be able to enrol, and it will be far more helpful if you already have some fieldwork experience.



Professor Sarah Turner

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Classes: Thursdays 2.35pm- 5.25pm

INTRODUCTION

This course will provide you with knowledge of a range of qualitative methods geographers make use of and the debates surrounding their use, as well as an understanding of the epistemological underpinnings of methodological choices. As such, the course is designed to give you a foundation of a range of theories, practices and interpretations surrounding human geography methods.

OUTCOMES

What am I going to learn and what skills will I acquire?

By the end of the course, students should:

1. have gained a critical understanding of methodological and theoretical issues involved in qualitative research in geography;
2. be able to choose which methods are the most appropriate to use in different circumstances;
3. be able to critique the use of a number of methods in a range of different and diverse situations.

It is hoped that by the end of the course, students will have also acquired or improved the following skills:

1. the ability to critically analyse pieces of academic writing;
2. the ability to articulate their understanding of different methodological approaches and the issues and debates surrounding their use,
3. the ability to reflect upon a specific method that they have practiced, and the ability to see its strengths and weaknesses in comparison with other methods.
4. the ability to prepare and present relevant and well polished seminars in a group environment.

How will the course be organised?

The course will be based on a series of seminars and group discussions run by Prof Turner and students. In class we will debate and critique a range of methodological concerns and topics such as:

- ❖ rigour,
- ❖ theoretical frameworks for qualitative methods,
- ❖ research relations,
- ❖ ethics,
- ❖ positionality and critical reflexivity,
- ❖ trouble shooting in the field,
- ❖ analysis- basic principles and innovative approaches,
- ❖ representing results.

In your own written work and in group presentations you will also cover a **broad range of qualitative methods**.

Students will be expected to have a *major* input in classes in discussions.