



GSD 5216 ANALYTIC METHODS: QUALITATIVE 2018 SYLLABUS DRAFT

Fall 2018, Location: Gund 518; Time: Tu/Th 10:00-11:30 am
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Office Hours: Typically Mondays 4-6; Wednesdays 3-5; Fridays 3:30-5:30,
Sign-up: <http://annforsyth.net/for-students/logistics/>
Web Site: <http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/course/analytic-methods-qualitative-fall-2018/>

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1. BASIC TIMETABLE

	Assignments due Thursdays before the start of class except where noted
Week 1: Qualitative methods in practice and research	
Week 2: Arguing	1: Arguing: Diagrams (Oct 25)
Week 3: Collecting	2: Collecting: Content Analysis (Nov 1)
Week 4: Observing	3: Observing: Fieldwork (Nov 8)
Week 5: Asking	3: Asking: Surveys (Nov 15)
Week 6: Engaging	4: Engaging: Visual Culture (due Tuesday Nov 20, 5pm)
Week 7: Implementing qualitative investigations	6: Implementing (Nov 29)
Review and Exam Period	7: Reflecting and Proposing (December 10, 5pm)

2. COURSE AIMS

OVERVIEW

How can planners understand places in a rich, meaningful, and yet systematic way? This module examines how qualitative approaches can be used in planning practice and research. Qualitative methods are particularly useful in answering why and how questions; investigating differing perceptions and values; understanding unique situations; and helping describe complex situations.

Focused on learning-by-doing, the class examines how to design a qualitative research project and reviews a range of data collection and analysis methods useful in community and organizational environments. With the aid of well-thought-out conceptual frameworks, qualitative research can be designed to make a coherent and meaningful argument. Students learn about collecting and reviewing artifacts, observing places, asking questions, engaging with diverse groups, and using visual techniques. Such data are frequently organized into specific kinds of outputs including case studies, scenarios, and evaluations. Students will try out these approaches in weekly exercises.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

By the end of the class students will be able to:

1. Identify the range of qualitative methods commonly used in planning practice globally, including methods planners use themselves and those used in research planners commission and/or read.
2. Use different qualitative data collection and analytical approaches.
3. Comprehend the strengths and limitations of qualitative approaches and how they can be combined with other methods (mixed-method approaches).
4. Understand how qualitative methods can aid more complex and systematic understanding of urban places.
5. Critically assess qualitative research designs and outputs.
6. Design common forms of qualitative studies e.g. assessing existing conditions, evaluating an intervention, preparing a case study, developing future scenarios.
7. Appreciate ethical issues in qualitative research and their relationship to planning ethics more generally.

3. LOGISTICS

READINGS

There will be three required text books which will be in the library and can be bought at the coop or online.

- Booth W., G.G. Colomb, J. M. Williams, J. Bizup, and W.T. Fitzgerald. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. Fourth Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gaber J. and S. Gaber. 2007. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy: Beyond the Numbers*. Chicago: Planners Press. **Use discount code from APA (via your free student membership)**
<https://www.planning.org/books/>
- Skodval, M. and Cornish, F. 2015. *Qualitative Research for Development: a Guide for Practitioners*. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing.

One additional book is **required readings but you could get away using the reserve copy** as it is only used for one week.

- Fowler F. 2013. *Survey Research Methods*. Fifth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other required readings will be available online and in the library.

One final book is **recommend** but I have not ordered into the coop. It is available online in second hand and eBook editions for about \$5 each.

- Turabian, Kate. 2007. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Recommended.

OTHER

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR

I have lots of office hours in 309 Gund—about 3-4 times as many as is typical. To sign up for office hours go to <http://annforsyth.net/>, click on the “office hours” link on the top right, and follow the instructions. You can also just turn up at office hours but may need to wait. If you just pop by outside office hours I’m typically busy with other work and will just ask you to sign up for the next available slot.

There is a great deal of advice for students at <http://annforsyth.net/for-students/>. It may answer your question.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to adhere to high standards of academic integrity as outlined in university policy: <http://courses.dce.harvard.edu/~phils4/honesty.html>. Pay particular attention to the resources on plagiarism at the bottom.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with me (Ann) by the end of the second week of the term. Failure to do so may result in my inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although faculty members are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.

TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

I do not grade participation, only outputs, but when you are in the classroom you are expected to be fully present. For that reason anyone who wishes to use an electronic device during class time (apart from specific collaborative working time) will need to meet with me outside of class and explain why it is absolutely necessary. Such devices include phones, laptops, tablets, and other gadgets capable of connecting to the internet or phone system. Unless you have explicit permission from me you will need to turn off and store such devices.

The one exception is the class on library resources where you should bring a laptop.

To learn more about why this is useful please see:

- Professor Stephen Chew's five terrific short videos on metacognition: <http://www.samford.edu/how-to-study/>.
- This article is also useful: <http://m.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>
- And this one from the Harvard GSE: [https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/08/note-taking-low-tech-often-best?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=09.05.2017%20\(1\)](https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/17/08/note-taking-low-tech-often-best?utm_source=SilverpopMailing&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=09.05.2017%20(1))

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING SUMMARY

HOMEWORKS AND READINGS

The class will be assessed on the best five of seven homeworks explained in detail at the end of the syllabus. They are due at the **beginning of class** on the course web site. **LATE PAPERS ARE NOT ACCEPTED.**

There are also **weekly readings and you are expected to do them before class**. They will help you and we will discuss them. **However, some are long—in those cases read the introduction and conclusion and skim the rest.**

TIMELINESS

Short illnesses, family events, etc. should be dealt with using the flexibility of being able to drop paper grades for short assignments. That is, assume you will be sick some time; an illness of a day or two is not an excuse for a late paper. Those with religious holidays that make it impossible to hand in something need to inform Ann Forsyth in writing at least a week in advance. If you do have a significant illness that incapacitates you for **several weeks** you need to inform Ann Forsyth ASAP.

WHAT ANN PROMISES IN RETURN

If students do the work described in this syllabus in a timely manner, I promise return work promptly with comments, or rather I will return marked up grade sheets. I will also give you opportunities for feedback about the course. I typically comment on the papers within canvas—and you can find comments under "submission details". This link has the instructions:

<https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10542-4212352349>

5. TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1, OCT 18: QUALITATIVE METHODS IN PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

Topics:

- Class introduction
- Domain of qualitative work

- The research process—research (generalizable knowledge) vs. investigation (project-specific, practice-oriented)
- How qualitative research has formed, and re-formed, the field including classic studies

Readings (read by Thursday):

- Balakrishnan, S. and Forsyth, A. 2018. Qualitative Research Methods. In S. Guhathakurta, N. Green Leigh, S.P. French, and B.S. Stiftel. *International Handbook on Planning Education*. New York: Routledge

WEEK 2, OCT 23/25: ETHICS + LIBRARY RESOURCES

Topics:

- Research ethics, human subjects, and professional ethics
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “arguing” homework
- **Guest:** Sara Dickinson, Loeb Library

Readings (next week is a heavy week and this week light—read ahead):

- AICP Code of Ethics: <https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode.htm> (particularly principles and rules)
- American Planning Association. 1992. Ethical Principles in Planning <https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicalprinciples/>
- Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council. 2015. *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.

Section 1: Values and principles of ethical conduct: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/section-1-values-and-principles-ethical-conduct>; **Introduction (short section only) Chapter 3.1: Qualitative methods:** <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/book/chapter-3-1-qualitative-methods>

WEEK 3, OCT 30/NOV 1: ARGUING

Topics:

- **Homework due/discussion Thursday:** Arguing
- Making an argument—Booth et al. version
- Designing research/investigation to make an argument
- Conceptual frameworks, logic models, etc.
- Audience/investigator role
- Presenting/reporting qualitative information
- Making an argument about the future
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “collecting” homework

Readings:

- Booth et al. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. **Section III Making an argument. Pages 105-172.**
- University of Kansas. 2015. *Community Tool Box*. Ch.2, S1. **Developing a Logic Model or Theory of Change.** <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/overview/models-for-community-health-and-development/logic-model-development/main>

WEEK 4, NOV 6/8: COLLECTING

Topics:

- **Homework due/discussion Thursday:** Collecting
- Existing information—the big picture
- Accessing primary sources
- Organizing data
- Analyzing collected materials
- The (literature) review
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “observing” homework

Readings:

- Gaber J. and S. Gaber. 2007. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy*. **Chapter 5: Content analysis and meta-analysis, pages 103-122.**
- Hsieh, H.F., S. Shannon. 2005. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research* 15, 9: 1277-188.

The next three are very short:

- Skodval, M. and Cornish, F. 2015. *Qualitative Research for Development: a Guide for Practitioners*. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing. **Part of chapter 7: Computer-assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software, pages 177-182.**
- Forsyth A. 2008. Skills in Planning: Writing Literature Reviews: <http://www.planetizen.com/node/36600>
- Forsyth A. 2009. Making Sense of Information: Using Sources in Planning School: <http://www.planetizen.com/node/40408>

WEEK 5, NOV 13/15: OBSERVING

Topics:

- **Homework due/discussion Thursday:** Observing
- Spectrum of observations
- Classic examples
- Organizing and analyzing observations
- Photography
- Outsider perspectives and cultural competency
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “asking” homework

Readings:

- Gaber J. and S. Gaber. 2007. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy*. **Chapter 2: Field research (part, pages 17-25, 32-41); Chapter 3: Photographic research (part, pages 45-67).**
- Skodval, M. and Cornish, F. 2015. *Qualitative Research for Development: a Guide for Practitioners*. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing. **Chapter 6 Photovoice [Skim]**
- Jacobs A. 1985. *Looking at Cities*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press. **Chapter 1: Starting to Look (pages 1-13).**
- University of Kansas. 2015. *Community Tool Box*. **27, 7: Building culturally competent organizations:** <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/culture/cultural-competence/culturally-competent-organizations/main> [skim]

WEEK 6, NOV 20: ASKING

Topics:

- **Homework due:** Asking
- The range of surveys and interviews
- Interview and survey design—semi-structured and structured
- Recap on sampling
- Steps in implementing surveys, interviews, and group methods
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “engaging” homework

Readings:

- Gaber J. and S. Gaber. 2007. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy*. **Chapter 4: Focus group research (part, pages 73-90).**
- Leech B.L. 2002. Asking questions: techniques for semistructured interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35, 4: pages **665-668.**

WEEK 7, NOV 27/29: ENGAGING

Topics:

- **Homework due/discussion Thursday:** Engaging
- Basic landscape of participation
 - What: levels of influence, burden/complexity
 - Who: populations, participation fatigue
- Planning engagement
- Specifically visual methods
- Engaging with each other—team process/methods
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “evaluating” homework

Readings:

Two web sites you dip into and a chapter you skim:

- Participation Compass. 2015. <http://participationcompass.org/> [**spend a little time investigating**]
- Community Planning. 2015. Methods. http://www.communityplanning.net/methods/methods_a-z.php [**spend a little time investigating**]
- Skodval, M. and Cornish, F. 2015. *Qualitative Research for Development: a Guide for Practitioners*. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing. **Chapter 5 Participatory data collection methods. [Skim]**

Two longer readings:

- Allen, R, and C. S. Slotterback. 2017. Building immigrant engagement practice in urban planning: the case of Somali refugees in the Twin Cities. *Journal of Urban Affairs*. Online ahead of publication.
- Katzenback, J.R. and D. K. Smith. 1993. The discipline of teams. *Harvard Business Review* reprinted 2005, July: 162-171.

WEEK 8, DEC 4: IMPLEMENTING QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Topics:

- **Homework due next week:** Implementing
- The research process revisited
- Formats:
 - Case studies
 - Evaluations
 - Policy analyses
 - Assessments
 - Scenarios
 - Histories
- Mixed methods approaches
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “reflecting” homework

Readings:

- Gaber J. and S. Gaber. 2007. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy*. **Chapter 6: Getting the Big Picture, pages 135-147).**
- Yin, R.K. 2015. Case Studies. *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd Edition. 3: 194-201 [online in library]

6. HOMEWORKS

All homeworks are 4 pages maximum. Sometimes there are additional requirements (below).

1: ARGUING: DIAGRAMS

OPTION 1: BIG IDEA [BOOTH ET AL. ARGUMENT]

Analyze the argument structure in a short document you are using in another class.

EXERCISE

- Obtain a document you are using in another class, one that makes an argument. It can be an academic paper though it can be helpful to use a practice document—such as an urban plan—so you can understand arguments in practice.
- Diagram the overall argument or a key passage using an approach similar to Booth et al. Also create an alternative diagram or two showing a better argument e.g. stronger evidence, warrants, etc.
- Write up to 1 page discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the argument and how it could be strengthened. **That is, only 1 page of text.** The total should be a maximum of 4 pages (3 of diagrams, 1 of text). Most will be 3 pages.
- Better papers provide information about the document's context/audience, explain their diagrams clearly, cover all the parts of the argument (e.g. warrants, responses) or mention what is missing, provide an alternative diagram, and label diagrams.

OPTION 2: BIG IDEA [LOGIC MODEL]

Develop a logic model from a plan or policy document you are using in another class.

EXERCISE

- Obtain a document you are using in another class, one that makes a proposal for an intervention. A practice document is best.
- Create a logic model along the lines proposed in the KSU reading. Also create an alternative diagram or two showing a better model.
- Write up to 1 page discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal and how it could be strengthened. **That is, only 1 page of text.** The total should be a maximum of 4 pages (3 of diagrams, 1 of text). Most will be 3 pages.
- Better papers provide information about the document's context/audience, explain their diagrams clearly, cover all the parts of the model (e.g. resources, short and long term effects) or mention what is missing, provide an alternative diagram, and label diagrams.

2: COLLECTING: CONTENT ANALYSIS

BIG IDEA

Perform a content analysis of an archival document, plan, or planning report (i.e. not an academic study).

EXERCISE

- Find an existing document or series of short documents that interest you (e.g. that you are using in another course such as studio). For example there are several planning documents relevant to the sites of the first semester studio.
- Cite the source of the document or database used.
- Explain the document(s)—length, context, main aims.
- Perform a content analysis on it as outlined in **Gaber and Gaber and/or Hsieh and Shannon.**
- Present your specific approach and findings in a charts and/or graphs.

- Your findings should include a reflection of up to one page on uses for content analysis more generally in planning, including strengths, weaknesses, and how to improve your own analysis with more time.
- Better answers define terms/concepts to examine using theory or an initial scan, look at longer documents or have more than one iteration analyzing a short document or group of documents (e.g. investigating something that turned up in the first analysis).

3: OBSERVING: COMPLETE/UNSTRUCTURED FIELDWORK

BIG IDEA

This exercise will help you observe a place and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of complete and unstructured observation as a method of data collection in planning. Very often planners rush in with a checklist rather than observe the place for what it is.

OVERVIEW OF EXERCISE

- Select a place to observe, preferably somewhere relevant to another course e.g. studio (this can really help with data collection). It can be:
 - A public meeting, for example one of the community meetings in the site of your studio.
 - Somewhere that sells inexpensive food you can visit in person and sit down either in the store/restaurant or on a bench or chair immediately outside. Think places with meals under \$8-10 where construction workers, parents with small children, or older people on limited incomes might go.
 - A transit station such as a bus terminal or T stop.
 - A public park, plaza, or playground.
- Visit it for approximately 1-2 hours (or the length of the public meeting if it is longer) and observe it using only your own observations (note taking), sketches and diagrams (optional but useful), and a camera (if possible and appropriate). You can engage in informal conversation as well. **Do not merely walk around for an hour, rather say in one place for at least 30 minutes.**
- The assignment is to provide a rich description of text and images stating **what it feels like to be in the place**—what is happening, its physical character, etc.—**and the implications for planning.** You should also state your initial and final thoughts about the place.
- Photos, diagrams, and sketches should be annotated or captioned.
- All options would look at social interactions. If you choose the meeting you will comment a bit more on the structure of the meeting; for the restaurant, transit station, or park it would be more about the place.
- The rich description should conclude with a reflection of up to a page on what you learned from the exercise, its relevance for planning investigations, and the strengths and limitations of complete/unstructured observation.
- Better assignments really get into observing the details of the place/meeting, **explain how a series of such observations could provide useful data for planning, link their assignments to course readings and discussions, and explain ways to overcome limitations in terms of the observational method. If you have done observations before your reflection will presumably be of a very high quality.**

4: ASKING: SURVEYS

OPTION 1: BIG IDEA [SURVEY CRITIQUE]

Take an existing survey, critique it, and redesign at least one question.

EXERCISE

- Obtain an existing online or mail survey that may be related to a current project of yours. If there is no relevant survey then pick one of those in the resource list below. Do NOT pick an interview guide—rather pick a survey designed for quantitative analysis.
- Using text and illustrations (e.g. parts of surveys) (a) critique the survey (strengths and weaknesses, drawing on Fowler and other course resources) and (b) choose one or more questions to redesign **explaining your logic**. It can be helpful to give a couple of versions of a re-design.
- Better answers orient the reader to the overall survey (length, topics, flow, question types, layout, audience), consider intended audience in their critiques, and mock up the revision graphically.

RESOURCES

A list of potential surveys are at the end of this syllabus, but feel free to find your own

OPTION 2: BIG IDEA [SURVEY DESIGN]

For a current project or student activity, design 1-3 survey questions and pilot them with others in the class.

EXERCISE

- Design 1-3 survey questions using Fowler as a guide. It can be a paper questionnaire, a verbal interview, or an online one (I suggest trying out <https://harvard.az1.qualtrics.com/ControlPanel/>)
- Test or pilot it with approximately 5 people.
- The pilot will include their doing the survey and answering an additional few questions about what was clear, confusing, etc. It is often most useful to get these responses more qualitatively e.g. via verbal remarks, notes on the paper form, or an open ended response box.
- Using text and illustrations (e.g. parts of the survey) (a) reflect on the survey (strengths and weaknesses, drawing on Fowler and other course resources) and (b) redesign one or more questions to redesign **explaining your logic**. It can be helpful to give a couple of versions of a re-design.
- Better answers orient the reader to the overall survey (explain what it is about, what else might be asked in the full version, and the audience), reflect on the pilot comments, and mock up the revision graphically.

5: ENGAGING: VISUAL CULTURE (DUE 5PM ON TUESDAY)

BIG IDEA

Design an approach to collecting data/engaging communities with planning issues that is culturally responsive and uses broadly visual methods. This will help prepare you for second semester core studio, at least in terms of knowing what you don't know.

EXERCISE

- In the context of specific project, and a specific set of questions you need to answer, devise an approach to collecting qualitative data while engaging community members with planning issues.
- The project can be:
 - A neighborhood planning exercise such as a studio.
 - A student group activity (e.g. the Community Development Project).
 - An internship, work, or activist project.
 - Another activity with my written permission.

- It should be able to reach those with low incomes or otherwise hard to engage (e.g. the very old, those with disabilities, speaking non-dominant languages, etc.). This about how to access such populations, make the process interesting for them, and also to minimize burden and participation fatigue.
- You should explain the approach in some depth—showing how it is visual/graphical, how it answers the questions you are posing, and the steps you'd need to take to carry it out in that area. Methods might be mapping, responding to images, creating models, etc.
- Explain why it is appealing and relevant and what might be its weaknesses, including ethical considerations. This should refer to reading and other class materials.
- References can be in addition to the normal maximum of 4 pages (you should cite the sources of the strategies). **Illustrations welcomed.**
- Better answers really use the engagement resources in the class to move beyond what the author already knows, set out the steps clearly, include information about how to analyze/synthesize results, and thoughtfully balance the need for simple processes with the benefits of multi-stage or iterative approaches (that allow additional learning). **They also make the paper readable via headings, subheadings, bullets, and illustrations.**

6: IMPLEMENTING A STUDY: DESIGNING A RESEARCH PROJECT OR INVESTIGATION

BIG IDEA

This exercise is to use qualitative methods in planning research and practice, designing a study for formal academic research or practical investigation.

EXERCISE

- Either redesign a project you have already completed or design one you intend to do. Examples of projects you can design include:
 - **Evaluating** your studio project proposal (you can then build this into the proposal in terms of indicators of success).
 - Developing a **case study** that helps a student group activity (e.g. precedents for the Community Development Project or the Black in Design conference theme).
 - **Assessing** your studio project in terms of some existing framework/set of indicators (e.g. LEED-ND). This can then be included in the project.
 - Developing plausible alternative **scenarios** of the future contexts in which your studio or other project may need to survive. (This is trickier.)
 - Creating an initial proposal for a **thesis or independent study**.
- State the key question, the problem it is answering, conceptual framework or theory (this is about what variables matter, why, and how), data collection and analysis methods, and a timeline.
 - The conceptual framework can be a verbal statement but a simple diagram showing how input or independent variables relate to outcomes can be helpful. This can be done by hand or in a software like Gliffy.
- Key points to cover include (a) how you will gain access to data and (b) (briefly) why you chose these methods and not others.
- **Also state if this is academic research or practical investigation.**
- Better answers will make it clear why this is important question, actually diagram the conceptual framework/theory/variables, reflect topics dealt with in the class, use multiple methods to triangulate, have appropriate levels of reliability and validity built in, and consider research ethics. Better answers will not just use a survey.

7: REFLECTING AND PROPOSING

OPTION 1: BIG IDEA [REFLECTION]

This exercise is to reflect on how to use qualitative approaches in planning.

EXERCISE

- Create a separate reflection paper of text plus optional diagrams (4 pages max).
- The reflection will deal with how useful qualitative methods may or may not be in planning.
- It should **not be just a narrative** but rather should be structured as a set of lessons, propositions, questions, or similar. These will be supplemented with narrative text explaining how you came to these questions.
- Better answers will be very clearly structured, show substantial reflection, clearly tied to class content, and include some sort of diagrams/illustrations if at all possible.

OPTION 2: BIG IDEA [REFINED PROPOSAL]

This exercise is to refine one of the prior assignments to write a more substantial research/investigation/engagement proposal. Typically you will refine Assignments 6 or 7.

EXERCISE

- Redraft and earlier paper to create a proposal, in which case you can go up to 6-8 single spaced pages **plus** references. **Indicate clearly which option yours represents.**
- **The redrafting will be focused on creating a practical investigation, research proposal, or engagement approach that extends your prior work and uses qualitative methods.**
- Better answers will show substantial changes to the original, clearly tied to class content. In the past many students have not updated much but with twice the length this is really a requirement.

CRUCIAL ADVICE ON GRADES AND PRODUCING QUALITY WORK

GRADING NUMBERS

The GSD uses an unusual grading approach: The grade of "Pass" is the standard mark for recognizing satisfactory work **and the vast majority of students in any class receive a pass**—around 80%. "Distinction" and "High Pass" are reserved for work of clearly exceptional merit. "Low Pass" indicates a performance that, although deficient in some respects, meets minimal course standards" (<http://www.gsd.harvard.edu/#/gsd-resources/registrar/grading/grades.html>). To make it easier for students to track their progress I will assign numerical grades that can then be converted to the GSD system.

- High pass 90%+
- Pass 75%+
- Low pass 65%+

Remember you drop your worst grades.

GRADING CRITERIA

I typically grade in two ways. First I check you did all parts of the assignment using criteria taken directly from the assignment descriptions—**if it's a bullet, it will be an item I look for though I may combine some bullets in actual grading (some are really steps along the way to a larger product).**

Second I assess how well you completed the work using the matrix below.

	Very good (High Pass)	Good (Pass)	OK (Low Pass)	Needs Work (Not passing)
Overall	Hits on almost all of basic content (what this is depends on the assignment) + Memorable	Hits on almost all of the basic content + Writing Interesting to read	Hits on some basic content	Hits on a small amount of basic content (one item) and/or Numerous digressions/errors
Argument	Argument is coherent, well organized, interesting, well qualified, with adequate evidence, and memorable—engages the reader with a lively mind	Argument is coherent, well organized, interesting, well qualified, with adequate evidence	Argument is fairly coherent and well organized with some evidence and qualifications	Some confusion/vagueness/parts that don't make sense/missed the point
Sources	Sources are cited (using author/date page); used critically*	Sources are cited; some are used critically	Some sources are missing	Sources are not cited
Writing	Writing/graphics largely free from errors	Perhaps some writing errors, but none critical for comprehension	More than a few writing errors that may impede comprehension	Many careless writing errors that may impede comprehension
Graphics and layout	Easy to read fonts. Graphics that are legible and convey information well. Layout that is striking and imaginative	Easy to read fonts. Graphics that are legible and convey information well.	Adequate font size or shape. Adequate graphics though there may be weaknesses in content and/or execution	Tiny and hard to read fonts; graphics that are either difficult to understand or do not convey useful information

*Critical use of sources reflects consciousness of the sources of evidence and methods used in the source and whether they can answer a question appropriately.

This link is also helpful in providing a more global view of grading:
<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/GradingPapers.html>

FONTS AND LAYOUT

I have set page limits not word limits for this class. I don't care about the line spacing but text should typically be no smaller than Arial 10pt or Times Roman 11pt. You might use something smaller for a label. You need to provide adequate margins to allow easy comprehension and to provide space for comments in grading. Do not put too many characters on a line. Typically comprehension is easier with ragged layouts—that is don't line up both sides of text but let the spacing between characters fall more naturally. Also, remember that faculty are typically older than you and our eyesight is often worse—it's a real strain to read tiny fonts and your materials will be treated much less sympathetically if they are hard to read.

WRITING INSTRUCTIONS

I advise students to do one of the following activities before handing in any project: (a) put the piece aside for at least a few hours and then go back and edit it for clarity, or (b) get a sympathetic friend to edit it for clarity, or (c) read it out loud and change any sentences that don't make sense. I do this in my own work as a consideration to those who are reading it (and a few things still slip through)!

Where you cite sources you should use the author-date-page or parenthetical reference/reference list style of citation generally used in the social sciences. For example in the text you list only the author,

date and page e.g. (Goldsmith 1994, 3). You then list the full details for the source alphabetically by author's name in a reference list at the end—if it is a class required reading, however, you can just refer to it in the text and no need to note it in the reference list. If you cite a web site, I need the full URL.

All quotes quoted directly should include the page number in the citation e.g. (Goldsmith 1994, 3). Also cite with a page number all ideas not quoted directly but coming from a specific part of a document. Only when you refer very generally to an entire work should you merely cite the author and date, for example, (Marris 1987).

For more information see a style manual such as Kate Turabian's (2007) *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) although you should note that she shows two kinds of citation (footnote and bibliography, and parenthetical reference/reference list) and it is the second of these that I prefer.

I am very concerned that findings are based explicitly on evidence. You will receive a low grade if you fail to cite sources or if they are not listed systematically in the reference list. More about evidence is explained in Booth et al.'s (2008) *Craft of Research* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Please be familiar with Harvard's web site on plagiarism: <https://usingsources.fas.harvard.edu/avoiding-plagiarism>. It is inappropriate to use any form of plagiarism. The GSD's own library has a useful web site as well: <http://guides.library.harvard.edu/gsd/write>

In addition if you wish to use work that overlaps with another class you can do so only if you have **written** permission from me. This will reflect an **in-person discussion with me** where we figure out how your work can reflect an equivalent effort to other students doing the same assignment.

If you need to use a copy editor to improve your writing, that is fine. However, they should be copy editing not writing the paper. Please let me know if you are using such a service. I won't grade you down for it but it will help my understanding of your work.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

TOOLS, MANUALS, AND ARTICLES

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Creswell, J.W. 2007. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

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http://transweb.sjsu.edu/MTIportal/research/publications/documents/2907_manual.pdf
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SURVEYS FOR ASSIGNMENT 4 USA

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- City of Boston. N.d. City of Boston Open Space Plan Update: A Survey Questionnaire. https://www.cityofboston.gov/parks/OpenSpace_07draft/OSPSurveyEnglish.pdf
- Envision Cambridge Survey 04: Our Vision and Core Values. 2016. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfh1Yc7C8WMWva8bKx7Ogq0xBNSCAk7F_aSD1FtPnR-JQ69BA/viewform
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- Somerville Happiness Survey: <https://data.somervillema.gov/Happiness/Somerville-Happiness-Survey-responses-2011-2013-20/w898-3dfm> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site.

ABROAD

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- Parcent (Spain). 2013. Questionnaire: Public Participation General Plan, English Version: http://www.parcent.es/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/41_Questionnaire_English_2013.pdf