



Studio 2: Chelsea, 2014—meeting people where they are

# GSD 5216 ANALYTIC METHODS: QUALITATIVE SYLLABUS DRAFT OCTOBER 2021

Fall 2021; Location: Zoom with link on Canvas; Room 516 if in person  
Time: M/W 9:10-10:00am approx. Synchronous + 50 Minutes per week asynchronous for main section  
with alternative, smaller, more intensive session at a time TBD

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Office Hours Sign-up: <http://annforsyth.net/for-students/logistics/>

Web Site:

<https://www.gsd.harvard.edu/course/analytic-methods-of-urban-planning-qualitative-fall-2021/>

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## 2. COURSE AIMS

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### OVERVIEW

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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.

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### 1. BASIC TIMETABLE

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Topic and Week	Assignments due Wednesdays before the start of class except where noted
1: Qualitative methods in practice and research	
2: Arguing/Ethics	1: Arguing: Diagrams (Oct 27)
3: Collecting	2: Collecting: Content Analysis (Nov 3)
4: Observing	3: Observing: Fieldwork (Nov 10)
5: Asking	4: Asking: Surveys (Nov 17)
6: Engaging	5: Engaging: Visual Culture (Tuesday Nov 23, 6 pm)
7: Implementing qualitative investigations	6: Implementing (Dec 1)
Review and Exam Period	7: Reflecting and Proposing (Fri Dec 10, 6pm)

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

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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 engagement with diverse urban places and populations.
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 urban planning ethics more generally.

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### 3. LOGISTICS

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#### READINGS

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Required textbooks will be in the library and, apart from the downloadable PAS report, can be bought at the coop. They are all available 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. 2020. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy: Beyond the Numbers*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge.
- Garcia, I; A. Garfinkel-Castro, and D. Pfeiffer. 2019. *Planning with Diverse Communities*. APA PAS Report 593.<https://www.planning.org/publications/report/9165143/> (Free to APA members, and APA membership is free to all students)
- Skodval, M. and Cornish, F. 2015. *Qualitative Research for Development: A Guide for Practitioners*. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing.

One additional book is **required but** 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 via the library (accessed through Canvas).

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

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

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#### CLASS RHYTHM

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The class agenda will vary from day to day but will typically have the structure below. There will also be one group tutorial.

**We will likely also have two sections.** The main class will be at the time posted on the GSD web site and syllabus. In the first week I will see if people want to be part of a smaller section at another time—this will have more intensive discussion.

#### Synchronous:

##### Class 1

- Class group discussions about a **relevant question for the week, e.g., on the readings or videos**, reporting out to a class discussion and/or a collaboration document (10 mins).
- Mix of lecture, Q&A, breakout groups (discussions, work on google docs), and polls on material for that week (30mins).
- Class group discussions about lessons learned (10 mins).

##### Class 2

- Class group discussions **about the assignment**, reporting out to a discussion or collaboration document (10 mins/class).
- Mix of lecture, breakout groups (discussions, work on google docs), and polls on material for that week **and also** introduce materials for doing the next week's assignment (i.e. we start covering material the week before it is due) (30-35 mins).
- Class group discussions about lessons learned (5-10 mins).

#### Asynchronous:

- Basics Video(s): Key points for this week (40-65 minutes).

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- Previews of the following week's assignment (video) and readings (online slides) (5-10 mins).
  - Q&A about how to do assignments via discussion with peers and faculty/reviewing good assignments from prior weeks in the gallery (5 mins).
  - Also do readings and assignments as is normal in any class.

**Scheduled:**

- Meet with Ann in small groups for 30 minutes once during the class—with signup on a Google doc (turns out to average about 5 mins per week).

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**OTHER**

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**CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR**

I have lots of office hours—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. 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. The GSAS describes this well <https://gsas.harvard.edu/codes-conduct/academic-integrity>. 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 this class I allow you to do assignments based on problems you are addressing in another class (e.g. an observation of something relevant for studio). Generally using work done in this class in studio, **with the knowledge of the studio instructor**, is OK but more generally using “same or similar work to more than one course must receive written permission from all instructors involved in advance of the assignment due date” (<https://gsas.harvard.edu/codes-conduct/academic-integrity>). If in any doubt, get in touch.

**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 class. 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”**

Normally I have a policy that you can't use electronic devices in the classroom. This is because I want you to be fully present. With online components that isn't possible but please read the following articles to see why your full attention is important and that even with online learning it may be worth taking hand-written notes.

- Dynarski, 2017, For Note Taking, Low-Tech Is Often Best:  
[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))
- May and Elder, 2018, Efficient, Helpful, or Distracting? A Literature Review of Media Multitasking in Relation to Academic Performance  
<https://educationaltechnologyjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41239-018-0096-z>

FYI, There are some advantages of technology and from time to time if there is a very vibrant chat we may post on Canvas (checking there are no private messages)!

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## 4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING SUMMARY

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### ASSIGNMENTS, READINGS, AND TUTORIALS

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The class will be assessed on the **best four of seven** assignments 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. All assignments are 4 standard 8.5\*11-inch pages in length.**

There are also **weekly readings that you need to do 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.**

Finally, once during semester you need to sign up for a **30-minute in-person group tutorial** with Ann. A sign-up sheet will be available linked to the modules on Canvas.

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### TIMELINESS

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**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.

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### WHAT ANN PROMISES IN RETURN

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If students do the work described in this syllabus in a timely manner, I promise return work promptly with comments. **The comments are on the rubric, the comments area, and on the assignment itself in Canvas, so look in all those places including under “submission details”.** I will also give you opportunities for feedback about the course. This link has the instructions:

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

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## 5. PRELIMINARY COURSE SCHEDULE

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### WEEK 1, OCT 20: QUALITATIVE METHODS IN PRACTICE AND RESEARCH/ETHICS

**Topics (in Basics Video and/or Class Session):**

- 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
- Research ethics, human subjects, and professional ethics
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “arguing” assignment and readings, Basics Video **[Video]**
- **Meetings:** Sign up for 30-minute tutorial twice during the semester

**Readings:**

**Article-length readings:**

- Balakrishnan, S. and Forsyth, A. 2019. Qualitative Research Methods. In S. Guhathakurta, N. Green Leigh, S.P. French, and B.S. Stiftel. *International Handbook on Planning Education*. New York: Routledge. **(Draft chapter in files section of canvas)**

**Short readings:**

- AICP Code of Ethics. 2016: <https://www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode.htm> **(particularly principles and rules)**. Currently being updated.

- 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/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018#toc\\_\\_95](https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/national-statement-ethical-conduct-human-research-2007-updated-2018#toc__95)

## WEEK 2, OCT 25/27: ARGUING

### Topics (in Basics Video and/or Class Session):

- **Assignment due:** Arguing
- Research ethics, human subjects, and professional ethics, continued
- Making an argument—Booth et al. version
- Designing research/investigation to make an argument
- Conceptual frameworks, logic models, etc.
- Audience/investigator role and position
- Presenting/reporting qualitative information
- Making an argument about the future
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “collecting” assignment and reading, Basics Video **[Video]**

### Readings:

- **Case Preparation:** Dudley Case on Canvas (in module).
- Booth, W. et al. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. **Section III Making an argument. Pages 105-172.**
- Bours, D. C. McGinn, and P. Pringle. 2014. *Guidance Note 3: Theory of Change Approach to Climate Change Adaptation Programming*. University of Oxford UKCIP. <https://www.ukcip.org.uk/wp-content/PDFs/MandE-Guidance-Note3.pdf> [Note M&E = monitoring and evaluation]
- 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*. **[skim]**

## WEEK 3, NOV 1/3: COLLECTING

### Topics (in Basics Video and/or Class Session):

- **Assignment due:** Collecting
- Existing information—the big picture
- Accessing primary sources
- Organizing data
- Analyzing collected materials
- The (literature) review
- **Guest:** TBD on Library Resources
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “observing” assignment and readings, Basics Video **[Video]**

### Readings:

#### Article-length readings (to help you with the assignment) :

- Gaber, J. 2020. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy*. **Chapter 5: Content analysis and meta-analysis, beginning to end of section titled “Reliability”.**
- Hsieh, H.F., S. Shannon. 2005. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research* 15, 9: 1277-88.

#### 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>

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- Forsyth A. 2009. Making Sense of Information: Using Sources in Planning School: <http://www.planetizen.com/node/40408>

#### WEEK 4, NOV 8/10: OBSERVING/CULTURAL COMPETENCY

##### Topics (in Basics Video and/or Class Session):

- **Assignment due:** Observing (note we will discuss the assignment BEFORE you hand it in, on Monday)
- Spectrum of observations
- Classic examples: J. Jacobs, Lynch, Whyte, A. Jacobs, L. Peattie
- Organizing and analyzing observations
- Photography
- Outsider perspectives and cultural competency/humility
- **Activity:** Environmental autobiography
- **Case:** Universal design and cultural competency, Australia
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “asking” assignment and readings, Basics Video [Video]

##### Readings:

- Gaber J. 2020. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy*. Chapter 2: Field research (beginning to end of “Case Study #1: Site Reconnaissance: North 27<sup>th</sup> Street Multiethnic Enclave”); Chapter 3: Photographic research (read the first part then skim the cases—mainly looking at the photos).
- Skodval, M. and Cornish, F. 2015. *Qualitative Research for Development: A Guide for Practitioners*. Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing. Chapter 6 Photovoice [Skim]
- Garcia, I. 2020. Cultural Insights for Planners: Understanding the Terms Hispanic, Latino, and Latinx. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Online First.
- Garcia, I; A. Garfinkel-Castro, and D. Pfeiffer. 2019. *Planning with Diverse Communities*. APA PAS Report 593. Sections: Towards Culturally Competent Places and Planners, Planners as Allies to Communities of Color, and About this Report (pages 15—20)  
<https://www.planning.org/publications/report/9165143/>
- **Case Preparation:** Penrith Case on Canvas (in module).

#### WEEK 5, NOV 15/17: ASKING

##### Topics (in Basics Video and/or Class Session):

- **Assignment 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” assignment and readings, Basics Video [Video]

##### Readings:

- Gaber J. 2020. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy*. Chapter 4: Focus group research (part, from beginning to the end of the section on “Questions of Validity...”).
- Leech B.L. 2002. Asking questions: techniques for semi-structured interviews. *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35, 4: pages 665-668.
- Fowler F. 2013. *Survey Research Methods*. Fifth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapters 5 Methods of Data Collection and 6: Designing Questions to be Good Measures (pages 61-98).

#### WEEK 6, NOV 22: ENGAGING

##### Topics (in Basics Video and/or Class Session):

- **Assignment due:** Engaging
- Basic landscape of participation



- Planning engagement
- Specifically visual methods
- Engagement about the future (e.g. climate change) or with people who are distant
- Engaging with each other—team process/methods
- **Case:** Preservation in Shankleville, Texas (Roberts and Kelly reading)
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “evaluating” assignment and readings, Basics Video **[Video]**

#### Readings:

##### Skim and dip into these for the assignment

- Community Planning. 2015. Methods. [http://www.communityplanning.net/methods/methods\\_a-z.php](http://www.communityplanning.net/methods/methods_a-z.php)
- American Planning Association. 2020. *Online Public Engagement Resources*. <https://planning.org/knowledgebase/onlineengagement/>
- 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.**
- Garcia, I; A. Garfinkel-Castro, and D. Pfeiffer. 2019. *Planning with Diverse Communities*. APA PAS Report 593. **Chapter 4: Engaging diverse communities** <https://www.planning.org/publications/report/9165143/>

#### Two readings:

- Herd, M. 2019. *A Planners Guide to Meeting Facilitation: Executive Summary*. PAS Report 595. [https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download\\_pdf/PAS-Report-595.pdf](https://planning-org-uploaded-media.s3.amazonaws.com/publication/download_pdf/PAS-Report-595.pdf) **[Executive Summary Only]**
- Roberts, A. and G. Kelly. 2019. Remixing as Praxis: Arnstein’s Ladder Through the Grassroots Preservationist’s Lens. *Journal of the American Planning Association* 85, 3: 301-320. **Important—we will use in class.**

### WEEK 7, NOV 29/DEC 1: IMPLEMENTING QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATIONS

#### Topics (in Basics Video and/or Class Session):

- **Assignment due:** Implementing
- The research process revisited
- Formats:
  - Case studies
  - Evaluations
  - Policy analyses
  - Assessments
  - Scenarios
  - Histories
- Mixed methods approach
- **Preparation:** Introduction to “reflecting” assignment, Basics Video **[Video]**

#### Readings:

- Gaber J. 2020. *Qualitative Analysis for Planning and Policy*. **Chapter 6: Getting the Big Picture (beginning up to the end of the section on “Doing Mixed Methods Research” i.e. up to the validity section).**
- Yin, R.K. 2015. Case Studies. *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd Edition. 3: 194-201. [online]
- **Teaching Case: Dudley part 2.**

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## 6. ASSIGNMENTS

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All assignments are 4 pages maximum (standard 8.5\*11 inch pages).



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Instruction videos are online and the associated PDFs often had additional examples with annotations about why they were successful.

Remember, handing in something for partial credit is always better than handing in nothing (grade = 0). Particularly in the first weeks of class err on the side of handing things in.

You will be sharing reflections on your assignments in class each week shortly after you have handed it in. If you want to add something to the assignment after that **DO NOT** resubmit—rather click on the assignment, then “submission details” and then write a comment in the “Add a Comment” box. Do **NOT** change the actual assignment.

### 1: ARGUING: DIAGRAMS

While you can make diagrams in multiple static ways--by hand, illustrator, PowerPoint--actual diagramming software can make it easier to make revisions. Gliffy <https://www.gliffy.com/> and Cacoo <https://app.cacoo.com/> are two of many options with free versions.

#### 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. Reflect on the process of creating the diagram. **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, make it really clear what changed, and label diagrams.

#### OPTION 2: BIG IDEA [THEORY OF CHANGE OR LOGIC MODEL]

Develop a theory of change diagram or maybe a logic model for 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 Theory of Change model along the lines proposed in the reading (or a logic model if you like). 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. Reflect on the process of creating the diagram. **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, make it really clear what changed, and label diagrams.

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## 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/or Hsieh and Shannon**.
- Present your specific approach and findings in 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 identify 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), do not just count words but look at meaning or context, explain how they sample the documents, describe how long the documents were, cite the sources, and reflect on content analysis in planning including how to use the work better and in what contexts it would be most appropriate.

## 3: OBSERVING: COMPLETE/UNSTRUCTURED FIELDWORK

### BIG IDEA

This exercise will help you observe a physical or virtual place and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of complete and unstructured observation as a method of data collection in planning. While I **love** checklists, and have designed many, often planners rush in with a detailed checklist rather than observe the place for what it is.

### OVERVIEW OF EXERCISE

- Select a real or virtual 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, virtual or in person**, for example one of the community meetings in the site of your studio. (The City of Boston has a lengthy list including virtual meetings: <http://www.bostonplans.org/news-calendar/calendar>). It is OK to watch a pre-recorded meeting e.g., <https://www.youtube.com/user/BostonCable/videos>.
  - **A shared space** if possible:
    - Somewhere that sells inexpensive food, where people on limited incomes might go.
    - A transit station such as a busy bus stop or train station.
    - A public park, plaza, or playground.
- **For an in-person visit**, go 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. **If it is a real place do not merely walk around for an hour, rather stay in one place for at least 30 minutes.**
- **If it is virtual**, take about the same amount of time, observe what happens in terms of activities, what you can see (such as other people, in what kinds of locations), what people are doing,

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what materials people are given. Take at least some notes by hand (or do at least some sketches by hand). Be careful about privacy if doing a screen capture.

- The assignment is to provide a rich description of text and images stating **what it feels like to be in the physical or virtual place**—what is happening, its physical or virtual character, social processes, etc.—**and the implications for planning**. You should also state your initial and final thoughts about the physical or virtual place. That is you do have something of a checklist i.e.:
  - Initial impressions
  - Feeling of the place
  - Physical virtual character—elements?
  - Social processes—who is doing what?
  - Events/happenings
  - Final impressions
  - Planning implications
- 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 food place, 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 is at the end of this syllabus, but feel free to find your own. In some circumstances I allow you to look at ballot questions—please check with me first.

##### 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

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- Design 1-3 survey questions using Fowler as a guide. It can be a paper questionnaire, a verbal interview-based survey, 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 a 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 **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

### 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. This means providing them an opportunity to do more than be informed about something. Think about are who you will work with, with what change in mind, using what overall process, and what activities. You can do different activities with different groups.
- 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 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. If there are a lot of components, go into more detail about one or two.
- Explain why it is appealing and relevant and what might be its weaknesses, including ethical considerations and limits to influence. This should refer to readings 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, show how engagement influences the larger planning project/process, 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.**

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## 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**.
  - It should **NOT** be merely a literature review.
- 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 (see Assignment 1).
- Key points to cover include (a) how you will gain access to data and (b) (briefly) why you chose these methods and not others.
- References can be in addition to the normal maximum of 4 pages (you should cite the sources of the strategies). **Illustrations are welcome. 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 and refer to readings, 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.
- Booth et al. have a terrific section on designing a research project.

## 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.

### 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 5 or 6.

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#### 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 (research/investigation/engagement) yours represents.**
- **The redrafting will extend your prior work and use 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.

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## 7. CRUCIAL ADVICE ON GRADES AND PRODUCING QUALITY WORK

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### GRADING NUMBERS

The GSD uses an unusual grading approach: The grade of "Pass" is the standard mark for recognizing satisfactory work **and most 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%+

**We grade fairly hard but bump people up at the end. A 90 is a very good grade in this class. Remember we also 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. I **make comments on assignments in two places**--in the comment box under the rubric on Canvas AND on the assignment itself. For the latter open your assignment file in Canvas to see the comments which are text floating on top of the page.

	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	Easy to read fonts. Graphics that are legible and convey information well.	Adequate font size or shape. Adequate graphics though there may be	Tiny and hard to read fonts; graphics that are either difficult to understand or do not



	Very good (High Pass)	Good (Pass)	OK (Low Pass)	Needs Work (Not passing)
	well. Layout that is striking and imaginative		weaknesses in content and/or execution	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.

### 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).

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.

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## 8. ADDITIONAL READINGS

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### TOOLS, MANUALS, AND ARTICLES

- Appleyard, D. 1981. *Livable Streets*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Becker H. 1986. *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
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- Creswell, J.W. 2007. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design, Second Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
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- Krizek, K, A. Forsyth, A.W. Agrawal. 2010 . *PABS Users Guide*. San José, CA: Mineta Transportation Institute.  
[http://transweb.sjsu.edu/MTIportal/research/publications/documents/2907\\_manual.pdf](http://transweb.sjsu.edu/MTIportal/research/publications/documents/2907_manual.pdf)
- Krueger R. 2009. *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research*. Los Angeles: Sage.
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- Marcus, C.C. 1975. *Easter Hill Village*. New York: Free Press.
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- Yin, R.K. 2009. *Case Study Research* Fourth Edition. Los Angeles: Sage.

#### **SURVEYS FOR ASSIGNMENT 4**

- **A terrific general site is the Metroquest Survey of the Month blog:**  
<https://metroquest.com/tag/online-survey/> A number have demo versions for you to try.

#### **USA**

- Cambridge Community Health Assessment: <http://www.cambridgepublichealth.org/policy-practice/public-health-accreditation/assessment.php> (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. (survey towards end of full report).
- City of Boston. N.d. City of Boston Open Space Plan Update: A Survey Questionnaire. [https://www.cityofboston.gov/parks/OpenSpace\\_07draft/OSPSurveyEnglish.pdf](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](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfh1Yc7C8WMWva8bKx7Ogq0xBNSCAk7F_aSD1FtPnR-JQ69BA/viewform)
- Geneva Opinions. Nd. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TKVZ3FT>
- MIT. 2016. Commuting Survey. <http://web.mit.edu/ir/surveys/commuting.html>
- Roxbury Engagement Survey. 2015. <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScJQz8FkfgB5uhDKeAPtqTxn8o3O0d3NUZBK7L81vbNVfDBMw/viewform>
- Santa Cruz Neighbors. No date. Sample Neighborhood Survey. [http://www.santacruzneighbors.com/files/form\\_sampleneighborhoodsurvey.pdf](http://www.santacruzneighbors.com/files/form_sampleneighborhoodsurvey.pdf)
- 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**

- City of Townsville. No date. Sustainability and the Sustainable City. [http://www.soe-townsville.org/sustainable/THYS\\_questionnaire\\_16pp.pdf](http://www.soe-townsville.org/sustainable/THYS_questionnaire_16pp.pdf)
- Medstead Parish Council. 2007. Medstead Parish Plan: Questionnaire. <http://www.medstead.hampshire.org.uk/quest.htm>
- Parcent (Spain). 2013. Questionnaire: Public Participation General Plan, English Version: [http://www.parcent.es/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/41\\_Questionnaire\\_English\\_2013.pdf](http://www.parcent.es/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/41_Questionnaire_English_2013.pdf)

#### **BACKGROUND READINGS**

- For online surveys--does not always hold for paper/in person surveys  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/curiosity/4-tips-for-writing-matrix-questions/>

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- Long and overlaps a lot with Fowler but has good examples: <http://www.pewresearch.org/methodology/u-s-survey-research/questionnaire-design/>