Mandatory: You must bring a laptop and an adequate USB stick each week to class.

Office Hours: 1:30-4 on Wednesdays, X67676, steinhof@hawaii.edu

Location: Saunders 242

Seminar in Qualitative Content Analysis

Course Description

This is a hands-on course in qualitative content analysis. It will cover a range of ways to analyze the content of qualitative data, both by hand and with the aid of computer software. Content analysis stands at the intersection of qualitative and quantitative methods in sociology. It begins with qualitative data, but often transforms the data into coded form for quantitative analysis. We will cover a range of approaches, with emphasis on making use of readily available general purpose software and free or readily available specialized software applications.

Students should come to the course with a qualitative content analysis project in mind, preferably one for which an appropriate and available data source has already been identified. The data source might be any kind of “text” (including visual images or other multimedia forms), in any language you can read, which you can treat as a body of data for systematic sociological analysis. You will work with your data throughout the course and produce a seminar paper in two drafts. If your data are from a larger project, you may need to work with a small subset in order to complete the seminar paper for the course. There will also be required class exercises so that you can try out various approaches that may not be appropriate for your particular data.

Because you will need to work on your project during the class, you should plan to bring a laptop to the class each week (with a USB key for backup). We will be using MS Word, Excel, and Access. If you do not have that software on your computer, you will need to get it. (The Bookstore offers a great deal on the full MS Office Pro 2007 package for $89.)

Course Goals

You will learn the following in this course:

1. the basic principles and procedures of qualitative content analysis in sociology, including the need for appropriate sampling and systematic data analysis in order to produce results that meet accepted sociological standards of reliability and validity;
2. how to devise a sampling strategy that will maximize the potential of your data analysis while remaining feasible in terms of time and effort;
3. the difference between tables in a text program, spreadsheets, statistical analysis programs using flatfile formats, relational database programs, and dedicated CAQDAS programs, and which is most appropriate for particular tasks;
4. how to do both deductive and inductive coding of qualitative data systematically and flexibly, using appropriate tools;
5. how to use general purpose text (MSWord), database (MSAccess), and image organizing (Picasa) software as tools for various aspects of data processing, coding, and analysis;
6. how to compare these general purpose tools to expensive dedicated CAQDAS packages and make informed decisions about which to use;
7. how to use other readily available software to extend the analysis, such as mapping concepts and relationships, and analyzing sequential or spatial patterns;
8. how to move coded data between programs easily in order to do more elaborate charting or quantitative analysis in Excel, SPSS, network analysis software, or GIS software;
9. how to plan and carry out a qualitative content analysis research project using appropriate software tools
10. how to write an article-length sociological research paper based on qualitative content analysis of a particular body of data.
Texts
There will be a coursepack available at Professional Image on King St.
You may also want to purchase a manual for MS Access, but wait to do so until the first class.

Weekly Schedule

January 12 Introduction and Initial Class Exercise on Range of Uses of Content Analysis
Powerpoint: QCA#1 What is Qualitative Content Analysis?
Handouts: Managing your work for the QCA seminar
Assignment #1 Planning Your Research Project
Class Activity: Research using content analysis

For class discussion:
How is content analysis being used, based on class activity
What you plan to do
What you will need for the course

January 26 Different Approaches to Content Analysis
Reading for this class:

Reading Questions: How do these two views of content analysis differ? What elements are similar? Extract some basic principles of content analysis to discuss in class.

Assignments DUE:
1. homework portion of initial class exercise.
2. Select project and complete first assignment worksheet to turn in. Go as far as you can on the worksheet (I, II, maybe III).

Powerpoint: QCA#2 Sampling and Units of analysis
Assignment #2: Fill in more of Research Project Plan (III, IV) see description below

For class discussion:
Basic components of content analysis
How content analysis is currently being used in sociology (results of homework exercise)
Initial discussion of each person’s project and data source
Forms of data and what you can do with them.
When and how to sample.
Units of Analysis for content analysis projects

February 2 Uses of Computers for Qualitative Content Analysis
Reading for this class:

Assignment II DUE for Class: Using the Research Project Plan worksheet, develop a basic data plan for your project and do a brief write-up of the data source, data parameters, sampling
procedure if needed, and identify the basic unit(s) of analysis. Fill in the relevant parts of your worksheet and be prepared to report in class as well as hand in the latest version of your worksheet.

**Powerpoint:**  QCA #3 Starting to Manage Data for Content Analysis  
**Handouts:**  Six Ways to Mark Text in Word  
**Assignment #3**  Beginning to Work with the Texts  
**Class Activity:**  Start on six ways to mark text in Word

For class discussion:
- What kinds of content analysis do you think your material will support?
- When might it be useful to use CAQDAS software and when not?

**February 9  Conceptual Aspects of Coding Qualitative Data**

**Reading for this class:**

**Assignments Due for Class:**
1. Samples from Assignment #3.  
2. Bring in 3 or more examples of your data source in their naturally occurring form. If they need to be transformed to be usable, try out the possible transformations and bring these examples to class along with the originals. Note how much time it takes you to do the transformation. If the data are already in computerized form, bring both the files and a printout. Get familiar with your examples so you can see what sorts of information they contain.

**Powerpoint:**  QCA#4 Basic Concept of Data Coding  
**Assignment#4:**  Starting to Code Data  
**Class Activity:**  Begin Assignment #4 with index cards on sample data

For Class discussion:
- How do Lewins and Silver help you prepare to code your data?
- What can we learn about systematic qualitative content analysis from the two studies?

**February 23  Developing a Coding and Recording System**

**Reading for this class:**

**Assignments Due for Class:**
1. Preliminary Coding. Use your sample cases to do preliminary coding and try different methods following instructions in the assignment#4 handout. Bring your coding examples to class and be prepared to analyze and discuss the process you used and the kinds of coding you did.
2. Go to a big bookstore (Barnes and Noble or Borders, not UH) and in the computer section, look through the various MS Access manuals. Look at the level of detail and the style of explanation. If you like having a manual for new software, buy the most appropriate one for the version of Access you are using. Be careful, because there are differences between Access 2003 and Access 2007 and having a manual for the wrong version will drive you crazy. You can also check out the online help support that is available within Access and see if that will be sufficient. If you purchase a manual, bring it to class (after reading the basic information about data types and tables so you are ready to start working in Access).

Powerpoint: QCA#5 Understanding Relational Databases
Assignment #5: Getting Started in Access
Handout: Starting a Database in MS Access
Class Activity: Begin making your own database

March 2 Making Your Access Database Work to Streamline Coding

Class Demo: Interactive demo instead of a Powerpoint
Handout: How to Make a Data Entry Form in Access
Class Activity: Start making a data entry form for your database
Assignments: Main Coding Assignment for next 3 weeks
Review and update your research project plan

Assignment Due for Class: Bring in the initial stages of your Access database on your laptop, following the instructions in the assignment sheet and handout. We will work on your database in class and develop forms for data entry. Bring in some of your data so you can get started on real coding.

March 9 Analyzing Content Data

Powerpoint: QCA#6 Using Queries in Access
Class Activity: Try some queries in your database
Workshop session to deal with any data or coding problems

Assignments Due for Class:
1. Bring in your database and any problems you are having with it.
2. Turn in your updated Research Project Plan with all the parts you now can complete.

March 16 Writing a Content Analysis Paper

Powerpoint: QCA#7 Doing Qualitative Analysis with Content Data
Handout: Basic Outline for a Content Analysis Paper
Class Activity: Workshop session on individual problems
Class discussion on getting from data to research paper

Assignments Due for Class:
1. Bring in your database and any problems you are having with it.
2. Find and read three published sociological articles that relate directly to your project in some way and use them to begin shaping your research paper. Add them to your Research Project Plan and be prepared to tell us in class how they relate to your paper conceptually or methodologically.
March 23-27 Spring Recess

March 30  Special Methods: Event Analysis and Even History Analysis of Newspaper data

  Powerpoint:  QCA#9 Protest Event Analysis and Related Topics
  Class Activity:  Workshop to resolve problems in your project
                  Discussion of applicability of these methods

April 6  Special Methods: Event Sequence Analysis and Narrative Analysis methods

Assignment due in Class: First Draft of Research Paper Due

  Powerpoint:  QCA#8 Narrative and Sequential Approaches

April 13  Special Methods: Network Relations and Network Analysis Methods

  Powerpoint:  QCA#10 Network Analysis

April 20  Special Methods: Conceptual and Spatial Mapping Methods

  Powerpoint:  QCA#11 Spatial Analysis Using Content Analysis Data

April 27  Student presentations in class

May 4  Student presentations in class, Final Draft of Research Paper Due