

## **Sociology 108**

### **Advanced Methods: Interviewing**

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This advanced-methods seminar trains students in a range of interview research; from highly-structured schedules to naturalistic ethnographic fieldwork; from interpretive phenomenological analysis to the structure of social process; from induction to deduction. Instruction of explicit knowledge includes carefully-selected material for each stage of the research process. Instruction of implicit knowledge includes a progressive sequence of hands-on tasks that invite students out into the field to learn through first-hand practice and guidance.

On one hand, we focus on practical techniques of data generation related specifically to interview research. On the other, students will develop their methodological minds, transcending the limitations of “methods alone” into the analytical promised land of methods in relation to theory. Be prepared for a rigorous-yet-exciting journey, and consider that all your hard work will culminate in a theoretically-interesting paper based on original data that you might develop into an honor’s thesis, MA paper, or publication.

#### **Course Requirements**

Below is a list of assignments and due dates for this course. A brief description of each assignment follows it. More-detailed instructions about each assignment will be provided in class.

Participation.....	10%	Every meeting
In-Class Writing.....	10%	Every meeting
Research Proposal.....	5%	February 2
Interview Guide.....	5%	February 16
Transcription.....	5%	March 1
Coding.....	5%	March 8
Analytical Memo I.....	5%	March 29
Literature Review.....	10%	April 12
Analytical Memo II.....	5%	April 19
Presentation.....	5%	April 26 or May 3
Final Paper.....	35%	May 10 by 2pm in my box in 410 Barrows

#### **CITI training**

This requires completion of two online modules on the ethics of doing research with “human subjects.” If you think you might use your research in a publication, you should complete all modules and submit your proposal for Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) approval. Must be completed by February 23.

### **Participation**

Since this is a seminar and not a lecture course, be prepared to engage in regular discussions about the readings. Also, we will check-in regularly about how your research is coming along. Attendance is mandatory; however, you should not come to class if you do not feel well-enough to do so. Please do not email me if you miss class! Your participation grade will not suffer unless you miss more than a two classes. If you miss more than two classes, you will lose points for each class you miss. Regular attendance is required—but does not guarantee—a high participation grade. Students are expected to come prepared with enough knowledge of the week's reading to participate thoughtfully in discussions.

### **In-class writing**

Students will write a short (less than a page) response to each week's readings in class. The topics/prompts will vary. You must know the course material in order to successfully complete—and receive credit for—these response memos. They must be completed in the time allotted in class. There will be no make-ups under any circumstances for any reason. You can miss up to two classes without losing points on this.

### **Research Proposal**

Write one or two pages about what you plan to study using the interview data that you generate through this course! This proposal includes your topic and research question, whom you plan to interview, as well as a discussion of how these interviews will help you answer your question. It is not a binding contract for your research design, but a preliminary agenda with the possibility to evolve.

### **Interview Guide**

Interview guides are tools that help researchers structure their interviews. They take many forms, varying from questionnaire-like schedules that dictate the flow of questions asked to a list of topics and questions that loosely-guide highly-flexible conversation-like interviews. .

### **Transcription and Coding**

This course requires students to audio record, transcribe, and code at least five interviews. Transcription involves writing down, verbatim, everything that was said in an interview. It also includes a description of the setting and the non-verbal aspects of the interaction, such as behavior and emotional tone. After transcribing each interview, you will analyze and code it. Analysis and coding involves identifying and indexing important, theoretically interesting themes, patterns, processes etc.

### **Analytical Memos**

After you transcribe and code a few interviews, you will write a three to four-page analysis of promising themes, processes, patterns, etc. This is an opportunity to both communicate your ideas and to use your writing as a tool further develop them.

## **Literature Review**

Your literature review situates your study within the larger scholarly context of work on your topic. In three to five pages, you will discuss what other researchers have found, how they arrived at those findings, and what remains unanswered. You will highlight the main themes and debates in the literature most relevant to your study. Then, you will discuss how your study might contribute to research on your topic.

## **Presentations**

Each student will give a brief (five to ten minutes), informal presentation about their research. They will highlight the study design, the interviews completed, analysis, findings, and any remarkable experiences etc. This is also a chance to receive feedback.

## **Final Paper**

The course culminates in your final paper (15-20 pages), which includes an introduction, a literature review, a methods section, a data analysis/findings and discussion section, and a conclusion. How exciting!

## **Course Materials**

The course reader will be available at Replica Copy, 2138 Oxford St. You will need an audio recorder, as well.

## **Recommended supplemental reading**

Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press.

Gubrium, Jaber and James Holstein. *Handbook of Interview Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2002.

Becker, Howard. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986

## **Course Schedule**

### **Unit One: Research Design**

**Week One; January 19** Overview of the course; thinking about a research topic and constructing a question

**Week Two; January 26** Designing a study

Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 1, "Introduction."

Alford, Robert. (1998) *The Craft Of Inquiry : Theories, Methods, Evidence*. New York: Oxford University Press. Ch. 1, "The Craft of Inquiry" and Ch. 2, "Designing a Research Project."

**Week Three; February 2** Research ethics and recruiting participants

\*Research Proposal due

\*Begin CITI training

Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 2, "Respondents: Choosing Them and Recruiting Them."

Morrill, Calvin, David B. Buller, Mary Klein Buller, and Linda L. Larkey. (1999) "Toward an Organizational Perspective on Identifying and Managing Formal Gatekeepers." *Qualitative Sociology* 22: 51-72.

**Week Four; February 9** Designing an interview guide

\*Begin finding participants

Foddy, William. *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires*. NY: Cambridge, 1996. Ch. 9, "Reducing Question Threat."

Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. 2012. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 3rd edition. Sage. Ch. 9 and 10 (pp. 131-169).

Smith, Sandra Susan. 2007. *Lone Pursuit: Distrust and Defensive Individualism Among the Black Poor*. NY: Russell Sage Foundation Press. Appendix B.

**Unit Two: Interview Techniques**

**Week Five; February 16** Conducting interviews

\*Interview Guide due in class

Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 4, "Interviewing."

Hermanowicz, Joseph C. 2002. "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed." *Qualitative Sociology* 25 (4): 479-499.

**Week Six; February 23** Common challenges

\*Complete one interview this week

Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 5, "Issues in Interviewing."

Terry Arendell. (1997) "Reflections on the Researcher-Researched Relationship: A Woman Interviewing Men." *Qualitative Sociology* 20 (3): 341-68.

**Unit Three: Data Analysis**

**Week Seven; March 1** Analysis and coding I

\*Transcription of first interview due in class

Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 6, "Analysis of Data."

Auerbach, C. F. and L. B. Silverstein. (2003) *Qualitative Data: An Introduction to Coding and Analysis*, New York: New York University Press, pp. 31-53.

**Week Eight; March 8** Analysis and coding II

\*Coding of first interview due in class

Anselm Strauss. (1987) "Codes and Coding," in *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. Cambridge University Press, pp. 55-81.

Lofland, John and Lyn Lofland. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings*, 4th edition. "Strategy Three: Coding," "Strategy Five: Diagramming," and "Strategy Six: Thinking Flexibly."

**Week Nine; March 15** Interpretation of data

Katherine Borland. 1991. "That's Not What I Said": Interpretative Conflict in Oral Narrative Research," *In Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, edited by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, pp. 11-25. New York: Routledge.

Holstein, James and Jaber Gubrium. *The Active Interview*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 1995. Ch. 6, "Constructing Meaning within the Interview."

**Week Ten; March 22** No class

**Unit Four: Writing Research Papers**

**Week Eleven; March 29** Components of a research paper; transforming preliminary analysis into findings

\*First analytical memo due in class

Department of Sociology, UC Berkeley. *Writing for Sociology*. 2008. Ch. 5, "Thesis Statements and Arguments." Available online from the department's website (go to "Undergraduate Program: resources")

Wolcott, H. (2002) "Writing up Qualitative Research...Better." *Qualitative Health Research* 12:91.

Laurel Richardson. (2005) "Writing: A Method of Inquiry," pp. 959-978 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Third Edition, edited by Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage.

**Week Twelve; April 5** Doing a literature review

Hart, Chris. *Doing a Literature Review*. London: SAGE, 1998, Ch. 2, "Reviewing and the Research Imagination."

Becker, Howard. *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986: Ch. 8, "Terrorized by the Literature."

**Week Thirteen; April 12** Methodological considerations

\*Literature review due in class

Burawoy, Michael. "The Extended Case Method." *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Mar., 1998), pp. 4-33.

Glaser, Barney, ed. *More Grounded Theory Methodology: A Reader*. Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press, 1994. Ch. 4, "The Grounded Theory Method: An Explication and Interpretation."

**Week Fourteen; April 19 Week Fifteen; April 26** Informal presentations

\*At least five interviews should be completed by this week.

\*Second analytical memo due in class

**Week Sixteen; May 3** Informal presentations

**\*\*\*Final Paper due in my box, 410 Barrows, by 2pm on May 10\*\*\***