

Soc 108 – Advanced Methods: In-Depth Interviewing

University of California, Berkeley

Instructor: Edwin Lin, Fall 2015

Instructor: Edwin Lin

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Office Hours: Barrows 434

Tuesday 8-9:30am, 11am-2pm, 3:30-4:50pm; Thursday 8-10am

Sign-up at <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/icwie>

Overview of Course Content:

Scientists primarily use different methods of observation to gather data about their subjects. Social scientists go a step further and instead of just observing their subjects, they also ask them questions directly to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences, motivations, and ways of thinking. This course teaches students in a step-by-step manner how to conduct in-depth interviews for the purpose of research. We will learn how interview data is used, how to determine who to talk to, how to develop good questions, and how to gather and interpret interview data. A key part of the course is writing a sociological research paper using interview data that you will gather as a result of the class. This course requires a high amount of individual and outside-of-lecture research, and is especially relevant for students who have a social research question that they want to answer.

Grade Breakdown:

Participation and Attendance	10%
Research Proposal	5%
Existing Literature and Method Proposal	10%
CITI Training	5%
Draft Questionnaire	10%
Transcription of an Interview	5%
Preliminary Coding Assignment	10%
Poster Session Presentation	10%
Final Research Paper	35%

Late assignments are not accepted! All assignments will be posted on the bCourse website for the class. **Attendance to class is mandatory; missing more than two classes will result in a penalty on your grade.**

Assignments worth 5% are simply graded on whether or not you completed the assignment. All other assignments will be graded out of 10 points.

Participation and Attendance:

Please come to class prepared to discuss the week's reading and how you see it relating to your own project. Your participation during class is crucial to learning and understanding the course material. "Participation" does not mean simply speaking out a lot. The content, quality, and depth of your participation is more important than how many times a week you speak. At the same time, showing that you are constantly engaged in our class discussions is also important.

This class is run somewhat like a workshop, which means that while I do give lectures and assignments, I also expect you to engage with the material and to be ready to share about

your struggles and your experiences with the project so far. The more you are able to share about your project, the more other students will benefit, and the better you will do in the class.

For those of you who may dislike participating in large groups or spontaneous participation, there are several options that I am happy to work out with you—please send me an email or talk to me after class. If you are at all concerned about participation, please see me *early* in the semester in office hours to talk about this. But due to the nature of this course's subject matter, sharing about your project in class is truly an important and critical part of the course.

*****If English is not your first language**, or you have trouble writing in English, there are resources on campus to help in writing your papers. I am happy to point you to some of them, just send me an email. Also, if you are part of the **Disabled Students' Program (DSP)** and require any special accommodations, please talk to me and/or send me an email within the next two weeks.

Research Proposal (1-2 pages) due September 3:

In this short proposal, you will be asked to introduce your topic and your research question to me. Explain why you are interested in this research question and why you think qualitative interviews would be a good way to answer your question.

Existing Literature and Method Proposal (4-5 pages) due September 24:

In order for you to conduct research on any topic, it is essential that you understand what others have already said. A literature review provides an overview of the subject that you are studying to help explain to your readers what the scholarly debates are on a particular topic and to show that you have read, evaluated, and comprehended the published research in the field. In this assignment, you will be asked to read three (3) academic articles on your topic and put them in conversation with one another. What are the main arguments of each article? On what points to the authors agree or disagree?

After providing this discussion between your academic articles, propose what you will do to contribute to this existing knowledge. Why are qualitative interviews an effective method? Who will you interview and how will you obtain these interviews? What kinds of questions will you ask?

CITI Training due October 1:

These are training modules completed online. For this class, you will complete two (2) modules, which should take about two hours. Specific instructions will be handed out on how to complete this assignment.

Draft Questionnaire due October 8:

You will hand in a draft of your questionnaire. Bring a copy to class to share, discuss, and receive feedback.

Transcription of an Interview due October 29:

Transcribe an entire interview and bring a copy to class.

Preliminary Coding Analysis Assignment (3-4 pages) due November 12:

Provide some insight and analysis to the interviews that you have completed. Suggest some themes, issues, similarities/differences, and key concepts and theories that help explain and answer your research question.

Poster Session Presentation on December 3:

You will give a short presentation with PowerPoint slides on the results you have discovered so far. You will present your research question, your method, and some of your interview data along with your analysis.

Final Research Paper (12-16 pages) due December 17:

The final product will be a complete research paper including an introduction, literature review, method section, a data analysis/findings section, and a conclusion.

Reading List and Semester Schedule

Week 1- August 27

Introduction

- Brainstorm ideas of research projects you want to do for this class; they must use qualitative interviews as the core method
- Start readings for next week (more than usual)

Week 2- September 3

Observing how in-depth interviews are used; Library tour

- Hochschild, Arlie. 2012 [1989]. *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home*. Penguin. Ch. 1, 2, and 4.
- Smith, Sandra Susan. 2007. *Lone Pursuit: Distrust and Defensive Individualism Among the Black Poor*. NY: Russell Sage Foundation Press. Ch. 1 and 3.

*****Research Proposal Due*****

Week 3- September 10

Literature Review and contribution

- Murray Davis, "That's Interesting!" *Phil Soc Sci*, (1), 1971
- Kathryn Edin and Maria Kefalas, *Promises I Can Keep: Why Poor Women Put Motherhood Before Marriage*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007, Chapter Four: What Marriage Means."

Week 4- September 17

Questionnaires and research design

- 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. Appendices B and C.

Week 5- September 24

Sampling and Generalizations

- Mario Small. (2009) "How Many Cases Do I Need? On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research." *Ethnography* 10 (1): 5-38.
- Smith, Sandra Susan. 2007. *Lone Pursuit: Distrust and Defensive Individualism among the Black Poor*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Appendix A.

*****Existing Literature + Method Proposal Due*****

Week 6- October 1

Ethical imperatives

- Yanow, Dvora & Peregrine Schwartz-Shea. 2008. "Reforming Institutional Review Board Policy: Issues in Implementation and Field Research." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 41: 483-494.
- Katherine S. Newman. 2002. "Qualitative Research on the Frontlines of Controversy." *Sociological Methods and Research* 31(2): 123-130.

*****CITI Training Completed*****

Week 7- October 8

Conducting the interview, gaining entree

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

*****Draft Questionnaire Due; Bring a copy to class!*****

Week 8- October 15

Dilemmas and challenges

- Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 5.
- Riessman, Catherine Kohler. 1987. "When Gender is Not Enough: Women Interviewing Women." *Gender and Society* 1(2): 172-207
- Khan, Shamus, and Colin Jerolmack. 2013. "Saying Meritocracy and Doing Privilege." *The Sociological Quarterly* 54(1): 9-19.

Week 9- October 22

Mandatory Office Hours – No Class

*****Complete an Interview!*****

Week 10- October 29

Transcriptions and understanding interviews

- Roth, Wendy D. and Jal D. Mehta. 2002. "The Rashomon Effect: Combining Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches in the Analysis of Contested Events." *Sociological Methods and Research* 31(2): 131-173.
- 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.

*****Bring a complete transcription of an interview to class!*****

Week 11- November 5

Analyzing interviews

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

Week 12- November 12

Quantitative supportive data

- Roth, W. and J. D. Mehta. (2002) "The Rashomon Effect: Combining Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches in the Analysis of Contested Events." *Sociological Methods & Research* 31(2): 131.
- Bazeley, P. (2002) "Issues in Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Research," Presented at 1st International Conference - Qualitative Research in Marketing and Management, University of Economics and Business Administration, Vienna.

*****Preliminary Coding Analysis Assignment Due*****

Week 13- November 19

Writing and presenting your results

- Wolcott, H. (2002) "Writing up Qualitative Research...Better." *Qualitative Health Research* 12:91.
- Lindlof and Taylor (2002) "Authoring and writing," In Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, 2nd ed., pp. 279-312.

Week 14- November 26

No class – Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15- December 3

Poster sessions

*****Poster Session Presentation Due*****

Final Paper due Thursday, December 17