

**Soc 108 – Advanced Methods: In-Depth Interviewing**  
**University of California, Berkeley**  
**Tuesdays 10am-12pm, Barrows 402**  
**Instructor: Edwin Lin, Fall 2016**

Instructor: Edwin Lin

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Office Hours: 487 Barrows Hall, Tu/Th 2-5pm

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 keystone 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 or project 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	10%
Preliminary Coding Assignment	10%
Poster Session Presentation	5%
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 to your grade.**

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

***Participation and Attendance:***

Please come to class prepared to discuss that 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. I

do keep track of participation (you may see me doing this) as a way to ensure no personal bias against you when it comes to determining your participation grade.

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 your project. 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 to make early arrangements for any such accommodations.

### ***Research Proposal (1-2 pages):***

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):***

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 academic articles on your topic and put them in conversation with one another. What are the main arguments and debates? On what points do 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:***

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 and upload your results to the bCourses website.

### ***Draft Questionnaire:***

You will hand in a draft of your questionnaire. Bring a copy to class to share, discuss, and receive feedback. See bCourses "Files" for some examples of questionnaires.

### ***Transcription of an Interview:***

Transcribe an entire interview, as word for word as possible—this could take several hours! Bring a copy of this to class. We will discuss some of your results, thoughts, reflections, and insights in your interview and make some suggestions to each other about how to improve.

***Preliminary Coding Analysis Assignment (3-4 pages):***

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 Presentations:***

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):***

The final product will be a complete research paper including an introduction, literature review, method section, a data analysis/findings section, and a conclusion. More details on this will be provided, but an example outline and checklist can also be found in the “Files” section of the bCourses site.

## **Reading List and Semester Schedule**

\*\*\*Please note the rather 'strange' due dates of assignments and pay close attention to them!

### **Week 1- August 30**

Introduction: Choosing a Topic and Research Question

- 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)

**\*\*\*Research Proposal Handed Out via bCourses\*\*\***

### **Week 2- September 6**

Observing how in-depth interviews are used and Research tips

- 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 Friday, September 9\*\*\***

### **Week 3- September 13**

Literature review and Contribution

- Murray Davis, "That's Interesting!" *Phil Soc Sci*, (1), 1971
- Lin, Edwin, "Big Fish in a Small Pond," *International Migration Review*, 48 (1), 2014: pp. 181-190.

**\*\*\*Existing Lit + Method Proposal Handed Out via bCourses\*\*\***

### **Week 4- September 20**

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.

### **Week 5- September 27**

Questionnaires and Research design

- Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. 2012. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.
- Review Example Questionnaires and come with any questions you might have!

**\*\*\*Draft Questionnaire Assignment Handed Out via bCourses\*\*\***

**\*\*\*CITI Training Handed Out via bCourses\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Existing Literature + Method Proposal Due Friday, September 30\*\*\***

**\*\*\*CITI Training Completed, Upload Results by Monday, October 3\*\*\***

**Week 6- October 4**

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.

**\*\*\*Draft Questionnaire Due Monday, October 10\*\*\*  
Bring a printed copy to class on October 11!**

**Week 7- October 11**

Conducting the interview, Gaining entrée, Dilemmas and challenges

- Hermanowicz, Joseph C. 2002. "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed." *Qualitative Sociology* 25 (4): 479-499.
- Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 5.

**Week 8- October 18**

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.

**\*\*\*Transcription Assignment Handed Out via bCourses\*\*\***

**Week 9- October 25**

Mandatory Office Hours – No Class

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

**Week 10- November 1**

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.

**\*\*\*Preliminary Coding Analysis Assignment Handed Out via bCourses\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Completed Transcript due Monday, November 7\*\*\*  
**Bring a printed copy of your transcript to class on November 8!****

- Week 11- November 8**      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): 131-173.
  - 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.

- Week 12- November 15**      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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 279-312.

**\*\*\*Preliminary Coding Analysis Assignment Due Friday, November 18\*\*\***

- Week 13- November 22**      **\*\*\*Poster Presentations in Small Groups\*\*\***

- Week 14- November 29**      South Africa Conference – No Class

**Final Paper due Friday, December 16**