Interviewing

Some of the most interesting and inspiring sociological studies have utilized interviewing as their principal methodological approach to the subject of interest. Moreover, the vast majority of social scientific research employs interviewing in one form or another. Given its central place within the toolkit of sociological approaches to research, this course is designed to deepen the students’ knowledge of interviewing as a research method. We will look at the ethical dilemmas and research challenges it poses, as well as become familiar with the details of employing it as one’s methodology.

Since the best way of learning about a methodology is to practice using it, students will be required to conduct a research project during the course of the semester that relies primarily upon interviewing. Thus, students will begin by conceiving of a research question, relating it to the relevant theoretical literatures, and defining the precise methodology that will be employed in studying it. They will, then, move on to carry out the research (including at least 8 interviews during the Fall 2016 semester), code and analyze the data, and prepare a final paper based upon the project. A brief description of the research question/project is due by 9:00 AM on Friday, 2 September; a project proposal will be due on 20 September; a short paper based upon interviews conducted to date will be due on 25 October; and the final paper will be due by 12:00 noon on 7 December.

In addition, students will share their work with the rest of the seminar participants by making an initial presentation about their project (between Weeks 6-8) and presenting their final results (between Weeks 12-14).

Course Materials:
A reader of required articles has been put together for the course, which can be purchased by the students. (These are indicated with an * in the Course Readings listed below.) In addition, one required book can be purchased from ASUC Bookstore.

Course Readings:
Week 1: Introduction. (30 August)
Week 2: Why Use Interviewing as a Methodology/An Example of a Research Project That Employed Interviewing  (31 August-6 September)

Required Reading:


*Blauner, Bob, Black Lives, White Lives: Three Decades of Race Relations in America. Read the Introduction and the Intro. to Part I; skim Chapters 1 and 4; read the Methodological Appendix; and read the The Author’s Story (pp. 1-41; 89-106; 327-330; and 349-359). Berkeley: University of California Press (1989).

Recommended Reading:

Week 3: How to Start the Interviewing Process/Another Example of a Research Project That Employed Interviewing  (7-13 September)

Required Reading:
Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. Chapters 2 and 3 (15-60).


Recommended Reading:

Week 4: The Interviewing Process Itself/Another Example of a Research Project that Employed Interviewing  (14-20 September)

Required Reading:
*Luker, Kristin, Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood. Read the Introduction; skim Chapters 5-6; and read the Appendix 1: Methodology (pp. 1-10; 92-157; 247-256). Berkeley: University of California Press (1984).

Recommended Reading:

**Week 5: Learning to Listen/Some Issues in Interviewing** (21-27 September)
**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 6: Issues in Interviewing** (28 September-4 October)
**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**
Week 7: More Issues in Interviewing  (5-11 October)
Required Reading

Required Reading:

Week 8: Analysis of Data/Problem Solving  (12-18 October)
Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Week 9: Analysis of Data/Problem Solving  (19-25 October)

Week 10: General Discussion Geared to Assist You in Analyzing Your Data  (26 October-1 November)

Week 11: Writing up your Results  (2-8 November)
Required Reading:
  Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers.  Chapter 7 (pp. 183-206).
*Lofland, John, and Lyn H. Lofland, Analyzing Social Settings. Chapter 10 (pp. 204-229).

Recommended Reading:
- Strauss, Anselm, Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists. Chapter 12 (pp. 249-264).

**Week 12: Individual Presentations** (15 November)

**Week 13: Individual Presentations** (22 November)

**Week 14: Individual Presentations** (29 November)