

Sociology 108  
Fall 2019

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Office hours: Wed. 4:00-5:30 PM  
Thurs. 4:00-5:00 PM  
<https://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/jobii>

### Advanced Methods: In-Depth Interviewing

Scientists often use observation to gather data in conducting research. However, social scientists may go beyond observation to also incorporate interviews with those they are studying. This allows for the possibility of learning about people's motivations, attitudes, feelings, and their lived experience more generally. These kinds of information are best obtained through interviews, although this methodology can be combined with other methodologies for triangulation purposes, as well as to expand the range of information generated through the research process.

This course will train students in how to carry out research-oriented interviews. In the process, we will learn how to develop a researchable question, how to identify and recruit people to interview regarding it, how to prepare a comprehensive set of interview questions, how to conduct the interviews themselves, issues that can arise while conducting interviews, how to code and analyze interviews, and how to present one's findings at the end of a project. A keystone of this course is writing a sociological research paper using interview data that you gather for this class. You must gather new data – by conducting at least 8 interviews - as part of the course. This course requires a substantial amount of out-of-class individual work, and is most relevant for students who have a research question that they are interested in exploring.

#### Pre-Requisites:

Successful completion of Sociology 5; or, with the permission of the instructor, completion of an equivalent course.

#### Course Requirements:

Developing, completing, and writing up a research project is challenging. In order to keep you on track through this process, a number of tasks and steps are required of you (where due dates are relevant, they are listed in the week-by-week schedule for the course):

#### Grade breakdown:

- |                                      |     |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| - Class attendance and participation | 10% |
| - Research proposal                  | 5%  |
| - Literature Review                  | 5%  |

- Draft of interview guide 10%
- Completion of CITI modules 5%
- Transcription of an interview 5%
- Preliminary coding assignment 10%
- Analytical memo 5%
- In-class poster session presentation 10%
- Final research paper 35%

*Assignments:* All assignments worth 5% will be evaluated on a simple “check,” “check+” or “check-” basis. Assignments worth 10% or more will be given grades.

*Seminar participation:* This course is organized as a seminar. Seminars depend on the engaged and active participation of their members. But, the quality of that participation will be more important than quantity, as we discuss the readings, and the research of the students in the course. Given the essential nature of students’ participation, attending class is a requirement; and missing more than two classes will result in a penalty to your grade. You are also required to participate in class discussions.

*Research proposal:* This short proposal (1-2 pages, double-spaced) will introduce your research question. Explain why the topic is of interest to you and why you think qualitative interviews are the best approach to researching it.

*Literature review:* Identify at least 3 books or articles that are relevant for your research question and how they speak to one another. Please provide the full bibliographic reference and a short abstract of each. Make sure your abstract specifies how interview data are used in the research project they are writing about. Do not just copy and paste the abstract from another source.

*Draft of interview questions:* You will hand in a draft of your interview questions. Bring a copy to class to share, discuss, and receive feedback on.

*CITI course:* These are training modules completed online. For this class, you will complete two modules – “Introduction” and “Students in Research” - which should take about 2 hours. More instructions to follow.

*Transcription of an interview:* Transcribe an entire interview, word for word. This can easily take several hours, depending on how long the interview goes. Bring a copy to class. We will discuss some of your results, reflections, and insights, and make suggestions to each other about how to improve.

*Preliminary coding assignment:* Suggest some themes and issues that are emerging from your interview data.

*Analytical memo:* After completing, transcribing, and coding several interviews, please write a two to three page (double-spaced) analysis of promising themes, processes, patterns, etc.. This will, hopefully, become a piece of your final paper.

*Poster session presentation:* You will give a short presentation on poster paper that states your research question, your methodology, some of the themes that have emerged from coding, and some of your analysis.

*Final paper:* The final product from your research project will be a complete paper that includes an introduction, a literature review, a methods section, a data analysis/findings section, and a conclusion. It should be between 12-16 double-spaced pages (12 point font, 1 inch margins). It will be due by mid-night on 15 December.

### Materials for class:

- A reader of required articles has been put together for the course, which can be purchased by the students at University Copy (2425 Channing Way; 510-549-2335); and its contents are also available on bCourses (in "Files"). (These are indicated with an \* in the Course Readings listed below.)
- In addition, *one required book* can be purchased from ASUC Bookstore. It is: Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. New York: The Free Press (1994).
- You will need to have *an audio-recorder*.

### Course Readings and Assignment Dates

#### Week 1: Introduction (28 August)

##### *Assignment:*

-Brainstorm ideas of research projects you want to do for this class; they must use qualitative interviews as the core methodology

##### *Readings:*

\*No required readings – start on the readings for next week now!

#### Week 2: How do we use in-depth interview data? (4 September)

##### *Readings:*

\*Hochschild, Arlie, The Second Shift. Read Chapters 1 and 2; skim Chapters 4 and 6; and read the Appendix: My Study - A Naturalistic Approach (Pp. 1-21; 33-58; 75-94; and 289-293). New York: Avon Books (1989).

\*Luker, Kristin, Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood. Read the Introduction; skim Chapter 6; and read the Appendix 1: Methodology (pp. 1-10; 126-157; 247-256). Berkeley: University of California Press (1984).

For each reading: 1) Identify the author's key research question(s); 2) How she characterizes the existing empirical research (that is, what data exist and what are the problems with these data?); 3) How she justifies the use of in-depth interviews (explicitly or implicitly); and 4) Identify how in-depth interview data are used by the author to develop her argument. Be prepared to discuss your analysis in class.

Week 3: Uses of interviewing/Literature review (11 September)

*Assignment:*

- **Research proposal due**

*Readings:*

Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. Chapter 1 (pp. 1-14). New York: The Free Press (1994).

\*Hart, Chris, Doing a Literature Review. Chapter 1 (pp. 1-29). London: Sage Publications (2018).

Week 4: Who do we interview? (18 September)

*Assignments:*

– Begin finding study participants

-**Submit literature review**

*Readings:*

Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers. Chapter 2 (pp. 15-37).

\*Small, Mario Luis, "How Many Cases Do I Need? On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research," Ethnography 10, 1 (2009): 5-38.

Week 5: How do we develop questions? (25 September)

*Assignment:*

– **Interview Guide due**

*Readings:*

Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers. Chapters 3 (51-59) and 4 (read pp. 61-83; skim pp. 83-119).

\*Rubin, Herbert J., and Irene S. Rubin, Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition). Chapters 9-10 (pp. 131-169). Los Angeles, CA: Sage (2012)

\*Smith, Sandra, Lone Pursuit: Distrust and Defensive Individualism among the Black Poor. Skim Appendices B and C (pp. 179-193). New York: Russell Sage Foundation (2007).

Week 6: How do we protect those we interview? Ethical Imperatives (2 October)

*Assignment:*

**Complete Citi Training:** Hand in a print-out of the screen showing you have completed it.

*Readings:*

- \*Newman, Katherine S., "Qualitative Research on the Frontlines of Controversy," Sociological Methods and Research 31, 2 (2002): 123-130.
- \*Adler, Emily S., and Roger Clark, An Invitation to Social Research: How it's Done. Chapter 3 (pp. 39-71). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth (2011).

Week 7: How do we conduct a productive interview? Gaining entrée (9 October)

*Assignment:*

**- Complete one interview this week**

*Readings:*

- \*Hermanowicz, Joseph C., "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed," Qualitative Sociology 25, 4 (Winter 2002): 479-499.
- \*Morrill, Calvin, David B. Buller, Mary Klein Buller, and Linda L. Larkey, "Toward an Organizational Perspective on Identifying and Managing Formal Gatekeepers," Qualitative Sociology 22, 1 (1999): 51-72.

Week 8: Interviewing dilemmas and challenges (16 October)

*Readings:*

- Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers. Chapter 5 (pp. 121-150).
- \*Riessman, Catherine Kohler, "When Gender is Not Enough: Women Interviewing Women," Gender and Society 1, 2 (June 1987): 172-207.
- \*Khan, Shamus, and Colin Jerolmack, "Saying Meritocracy and Doing Privilege," Sociological Quarterly 54 (1): 9-19.

Week 9: Coding and analysis: Transcription (23 October)

*Assignment:*

**– Transcription of first interview due**

*Reading:*

- \*Auerbach, Carl F., and Louise B. Silverstein, Qualitative Data: An Introduction to Coding and Analysis. Chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 31-53). New York: New York University Press (2003).
- \*Lofland, John, and Lyn H. Lofland, Analyzing Social Settings. Chapter 9 (pp. 186-197). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth (1995).

Week 10: More on coding and analyzing data (30 October)

*Assignment:*

**- Coding of first interview**

- Complete *at least* two more interviews.

*Readings:*

Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers. Chapter 6 (pp. 151-182).

Week 11: No class meeting (6 November)

*Assignments:*

- **Analytical memo due** (submit electronically)
- Complete your remaining interviews
- Move forward in your transcribing and coding

Week 12: More on coding and analyzing data (13 November)

*Assignment:*

-Move forward in your transcribing and coding.

*Readings:*

- \* Borland, Katherine, "That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research." In Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History, edited by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, pp. 63-75. New York: Routledge (1991).
- \*Roth, Wendy D., and Jal D. Mehta, "The Rashomon Effect: Combining Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches in the Analysis of Contested Events," Sociological Methods and Research 31, 2 (2002): 131-173.

Week 13: Writing up (20 November)

*Assignment:*

– Bring in sections for your poster presentation (in hard copy form): 1) Research question and its place in the existing literature; 2) Methods (Sampling, recruitment, etc.)

*Reading:*

Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers. Chapter 7 (pp. 183-206).

Week 14: No class (27 November)

*Assignment:*

-Move forward in your coding and data analysis.

Week 15: Poster sessions – sharing early results (4 December)

*Assignment:*

**-Bring in your poster to present your project.**

**Final Paper due by mid-night on 15 December .**

## Academic Dishonesty - Definition

Academic dishonesty consists of any deliberate attempt to falsify, fabricate or otherwise tamper with data, information, records, or any other material that is relevant to the student's participation in any course, laboratory, or other academic exercise or function. Most, although not all, such attempts fall into one or more of the following three categories:

**Plagiarism:** Deliberately presenting work, words, ideas, theories, etc., derived in whole or in part from a source external to the student as though they are the student's own efforts. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to the following:

- Failing to use proper citations as acknowledgment of the true source of information included in a paper, written or oral examination, or any other academic exercise.
- Presenting any work completed in whole or in part by any individual or group other than the student, as though the work is the student's own, in any academic exercise.
- Buying, selling, bartering, or in any other fashion obtaining or distributing material to be used fraudulently as part of any academic exercise.

**Cheating:** Disseminating or receiving answers, data, or other information by any means other than those expressly permitted by the instructor as part of any academic exercise. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to the following:

- Copying answers, data, or other information (or allowing others to do so) during an examination, quiz, laboratory experiment, or any other academic exercise in which the student is not expressly permitted to work jointly with others.
- Assuming another individual's identity or allowing another person to do so on one's own behalf for the purpose of fulfilling any academic requirement or in any way enhancing the student's grade or academic standing.
- Using any device, implement, or other form of study aid during an examination, quiz, laboratory experiment, or any other academic exercise without the faculty member's permission.

**Other Academic Misconduct:** Falsifying or fabricating data, records, or any information relevant to the student's participation in any course or academic exercise, or tampering with such information as collected or distributed by the faculty member. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to the following:

- Falsifying, or attempting to falsify, attendance records, graded exercises of any kind, or any information or document intended to excuse the student from participation in any academic exercise.
- Inventing, fabricating, or falsifying data as part of the completion of any academic exercise.
- Knowingly furnishing false information (or facilitating the furnishing of false information) to a faculty member. The foregoing list of offenses is not intended to be fully exhaustive of all potential instances of academic dishonesty. Faculty and administrators may identify cases of academic dishonesty not herein contemplated.