

Soc 108 – Advanced Methods: In-Depth Interviewing
University of California, Berkeley
Thursdays 2-4pm, Barrows 104
Instructor: Edwin Lin, Spring 2019

Instructor: Edwin Lin

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Office Hours: 487 Barrows Hall, Thursdays 10am-1pm or by appointment

Sign-up for OH 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—you must gather new data as part of the course. 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.

Office Hours:

Please sign up for office hours if you know in advance that you'd like to come in. Information is above. If you do not sign up, you are still welcome to drop in, but I do sometimes step out of the office when there is no appointment to run a quick errand. Also, if the door to my office is closed during office hours, feel free to knock (loudly). I try not to run late with my appointments but it does happen—if you notice me running late and have time constraints with your assigned time, please feel free to politely interrupt and let me know.

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%
In-Class Poster Session Presentation	5%
Final Research Paper	35%

Late assignments are not accepted! All assignments will be posted on the bCourses 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.

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. In-class participation includes sharing about your project, working with other students, and providing comments to other students in the class about their projects.

This class is run 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 ask questions and share about your struggles and your experiences with your project. The more you are able to share about your project and ask questions regarding your work, the more you and other students will benefit, and the better the class will be as a result.

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. 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 have posted some such resources on bCourses under "Files" and "Writing Resources." You can also check out the Student Learning Center (SLC) at their website <http://slc.berkeley.edu> for more information.

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 approximately a week before the assignment's due date to discuss changes in the due date. I am more than willing to provide DSP accommodations, so please do not hesitate to keep me in the loop. Please try to avoid the situation where you are asking me the day before something is due—if so, I am under no obligation to oblige, and depending on the assignment, you may not receive 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 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 (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! Assignments that are “handed out” means they will be explained in class and available on bCourses. Be sure to read the readings with your own project in mind!

Week 1- January 24

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
- See Week 1 Readings (on bCourses) for some resources
- Start readings for next week (more than usual)

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

Week 2- January 31

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 Monday, February 4*****

Week 3- February 7

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- February 14

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- February 21

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**.
- 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 Monday, February 25*****
*****CITI Training Completed, Upload Results by Wednesday, February 27*****

- Week 6- February 28** Ethical Imperatives
- Adler, Emily Stier and Roger Clark. 2011. "Chapter 3: Ethics and Social Research" Pp 39-70 in *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. Fourth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
 - Katherine S. Newman. 2002. "Qualitative Research on the Frontlines of Controversy." *Sociological Methods and Research* 31(2): 123-130.

*****Draft Questionnaire DUE Wednesday, March 6*****
Bring a printed copy to class on March 7!

- Week 7- March 7** Conducting the Interview, Gaining Entrée
- Hermanowicz, Joseph C. 2002. "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed." *Qualitative Sociology* 25 (4): 479-499.

- Week 8- March 14** Dilemmas and Challenges
- Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 5.
 - Khan, Shamus, and Colin Jerolmack. 2013. "Saying Meritocracy and Doing Privilege." *The Sociological Quarterly* 54(1): 9-19.

- Week 9- March 21** Transcriptions and Understanding Interviews
- 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 10- March 28 *****SPRING BREAK NO CLASS*****

Week 11- April 4 **Mandatory Office Hours** in place of regular class
*****Complete at least one interview by this Office Hours!*****

*****Completed Transcript DUE Wednesday, April 10*****
Bring a printed copy of your transcript to class on April 11!

Week 12- April 11 Workshop Your Interviews and Quantitative supportive data
- 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 13- April 18 Coding: 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.
*****Preliminary Coding Analysis Assignment Handed Out via bCourses*****
*****In-Class Presentations Assignment Handed Out via bCourses*****

Week 14- April 25 Writing and Presenting Results
- Lindlof and Taylor (2002) "Authoring and writing," In Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, 2nd ed., pp. 279-312.

Week 15- May 2 *****Presentations in Small Groups*****
*****Preliminary Coding Analysis Assignment DUE Saturday, May 4*****

Final Paper DUE Friday, May 17